

Overlord 211

Chapter 211: Submit!

The Nether Dragon Soul Headband was a sinister tool capable of mind control. The moment it was put on someone, escape was near impossible. Only when the gap between the soul power of the mind controller and the victim was too large that there was a chance for the victim to escape the headband's influence.

Xiang Shaoyun had decided to use the Nether Dragon Soul Headband for two reasons. Firstly, he wanted to test the strength of the Nether Dragon Soul Headband. Secondly, he wanted to see if he had sufficient soul power to control Long Hui, who was already in rather bad shape.

The Nether Dragon Soul Headband was a high-level equipment that ordinary equipment and weapons couldn't compare to. A proof of that was the sight of the Nether Dragon Soul Headband streaking unobstructed across the lava without suffering any damage whatsoever. In the blink of an eye, the headband arrived before Long Hui. There, it enlarged before wrapping itself around Long Hui's head.

In order to escape the destructiveness of the millennium earthcore fire, Long Hui was fully focused on fleeing. He had not expected to be attacked in this manner at all. Before he even understood what was going on, the headband was already snugly wrapped around his head.

"What is this? F*ck off!" Long Hui howled as he tried ripping the headband off.

Xiang Shaoyun quickly chanted the Nether Dragon Soul Curse mantra, sending numerous ancient symbols drifting forward to the Nether Dragon Soul Headband.

"Roar! Roar!"

The Nether Dragon Soul Headband had seemingly transformed into a devilish dragon that started wreaking havoc in Long Hui's mind. Thundering dragon roars sounded in his mind, putting him in intense pain.

"Ahhhh!"

The dreadful and devilish curse almost seemed like it was actually a dragon devouring the victim's soul. The process was excruciatingly painful, and Long Hui felt like his head had completely gone out of control; the throbbing pain gave him the sensation that his head was about to explode.

He resisted endlessly, but his physical body was being burned by the millennium earthcore fire at the same time. His king-grade armor was already on the verge of completely falling apart. With the two sources of suppression, escape was nearly impossible for Long Hui.

"Submit!" Xiang Shaoyun channeled his will into the Nether Dragon Soul Headband, forcing Long Hui to submit.

Long Hui was clear that if he dared to keep struggling, his soul would be completely destroyed. In any case, the pain his very soul was experiencing was too much for him to handle. Thus, he answered without the slightest hesitation, "I am willing to submit! I submit!"

The moment he agreed to submit, Xiang Shaoyun withdrew a large portion of the flame power assaulting Long Hui. He increased the speed in which he chanted the mantra, imprinting a brand in Long Hui's soul.

Long Hui was given no chance to resist. Everything proceeded smoothly, and before long, the Nether Dragon Soul Headband sank into Long Hui's head and encased itself around his soul.

The original Nether Dragon Soul Headband flew back into Xiang Shaoyun's head, leaving behind a duplicate around Long Hui's soul. This duplicate was actually a soul brand created by the headband, and it was also the brand Xiang Shaoyun would use to control Long Hui.

One could say that the brand was a seed of the Nether Dragon Soul Headband and that the actual Nether Dragon Soul Headband was something akin to a queen capable of exercising full control over its seed. This was the marvelous part of the Nether Dragon Soul Headband.

After completing the process, Xiang Shaoyun felt his soul power weaken considerably, to the point he felt slightly lightheaded. That was the side effect of soul power exhaustion. It proved that using the Nether Dragon Soul Curse wasn't easy after all.

"Luckily, it was a success." Xiang Shaoyun smiled smugly.

At present, a strand of Long Hui's soul brand had appeared in his head. This soul brand was under control of the Nether Dragon Soul Headband, and the moment he chanted the mantra of the curse, Long Hui would be tormented by an excruciating pain. Apart from that, if he erased this soul brand, the brand in Long Hui's soul would immediately explode, destroying Long Hui's soul.

This was a form of absolute control that nobody could hope to escape. Even after Xiang Shaoyun died, the disappearance of his soul power would also result in Long Hui dying together with him. The only way Long Hui could regain his freedom was by having Xiang Shaoyun personally remove the curse from him.

"Leave and make sure nobody approaches this place," Xiang Shaoyun issued his first command.

"Yes!" Long Hui was already fully under Xiang Shaoyun's control. He also knew what Xiang Shaoyun was capable of doing to him. Thus, he agreed without hesitation and flew away.

After Long Hui left, Xiang Shaoyun was still able to sense his soul undulations, giving him a clear picture of Long Hui's location at all times.

"What an exquisite curse," Xiang Shaoyun told himself gleefully.

In the future, he would have a King Realm guardian by his side. Things would be much safer for him, and the power under his control would also grow. This was an excellent start to the growth of his personal faction.

Xiang Shaoyun then started replenishing his soul power with the Nether Dragon Soul Curse. He would only leave after recovering to an optimum condition. At this time, Xiao Wenbo had already returned. When he saw the sorry look on Long Hui, he quickly asked, "Long Hui, what happened to you? You look terrible with all the burns on you."

Long Hui replied nonchalantly, "It's nothing. I tried searching under the lava and got myself in this sorry state."

"Haha, are you trying to get your hands on the millennium earthcore fire as well? Forget it. If the pavilion master found out, both of us will suffer," Xiao Wenbo said with a smile.

"Of course not." Long Hui refused to admit the truth. He paused for a bit before asking, "So is the millennium earthcore fire over there fake?"

"It's most likely a strand of the millennium earthcore fire's flame instead of its actual body," Xiao Wenbo said.

"Um. Let's continue guarding out there then. Let the kids continue what they're doing," Long Hui said.

"How about what's down there?" Xiao Wenbo pointed at the lava pool and asked.

"There's nothing there. Come on, let's go," Long Hui said and left.

Xiao Wenbo was still feeling doubtful, but he did not push further. He did not cultivate the power of flame anyway. Any secret the place had would have nothing to do with him. Furthermore, he was not as strong as Long Hui. It would be better for him to obey.

After Xiang Shaoyun recovered, he peeked out from the lava again.

"Time to leave. Staying will only cause more problems," Xiang Shaoyun muttered to himself before quickly climbing out of the lava. Without the two Kings, he was able to easily reach the edge of the crater. When he appeared, the flame beasts noticed him and immediately wanted to attack.

Xiang Shaoyun allowed some of Yun Flame's power to leak, and he bellowed, "Scram!"

When the flame beasts sensed Yun Flame's power, they instantly became deferential and retreated from Xiang Shaoyun. After extending his senses to his surroundings to ensure there was nobody around, he left. As he traveled, he ripped the human skin from his face.

"A lot of people saw me drop into the lava. If I show myself with that face, they will be able to guess that I have obtained the millennium earthcore fire. It is time to return to my real face," Xiang Shaoyun muttered to himself.

Chapter 212: Call Me Young Master From Now On

Xiang Shaoyun was finally out of the volcanic crater. He had stayed in the crater for 13 months in total—a long period of time. Now, he was already a 17-year-old young man. Back when he first joined the Martial Hall Palace, he was still only 15 years old. Two years had passed, and he had grown considerably since then.

His height had grown, and his physical body was much sturdier than before. His temperament had improved greatly as well. All those were the results of his hard work in cultivation.

From a weak and frail scholar, he had transformed into a peak seventh-stage Transformation Realm expert, a level high enough to accord him some sort of status as he wandered the world of cultivation.

Xiang Shaoyun did not go far from the Flame Mountain. He found a water source nearby and quickly washed up. After putting on a new set of clothes, he looked handsome and elegant enough to cause a maiden's heart to flutter at his sight.

"Finally, I see the sun again. This is such a refreshing feeling," said Xiang Shaoyun as he spread his arms and bathed under the sunlight.

Life in a lava pool for more than a year was incredibly dull. That period of time helped him further appreciate how beautiful the outside world was. Concurrently, Yun Flame was also transmitting a feeling of joy toward him. It could also sense the outside world, and it placed it in a great mood. Out here, it was able to absorb the power of extreme yang contained in the sunlight, which would only help it grow faster.

"Looks like you like the outside world as well. In the future, you will have the chance to witness even more wondrous sights," said Xiang Shaoyun.

He then sank into thought, pondering his next steps. He had to first look for Mo Mo and see if she was still waiting for him or if she had left. After that, he had to consider if he should bring Long Hui on his adventures. Leaving Long Hui in the Cloud Margin Pavilion to help gather news was an option as well. And after he was done with all that, he would continue doing whatever it took to grow stronger.

Xiang Shaoyun took a detour around the Flame Mountain and returned to the fringe of the mountain. When he arrived at the place where he separated with Mo Mo, he found that she was no longer there. Somewhat disappointed, he muttered, "Looks like even she thinks I am dead."

Nevertheless, Xiang Shaoyun wasn't overly bothered. Mo Mo still wasn't important enough for him to go all melancholic over her.

"I'll think of my next step after a trip to Cloud Margin City," Xiang Shaoyun decided after giving it some thought.

But before that, he had to look for Long Hui and have a proper chat with him. Although Long Hui was now under Xiang Shaoyun's control, he was still able to act as before and think freely. The only difference was that he now had to obey Xiang Shaoyun's command.

Xiang Shaoyun returned back to the vicinity of the Flame Mountain. He would encounter the occasional cultivator on his way, but they mostly ignored him. Everyone assumed that he was yet another young man here to temper himself.

Along the way, he managed to overhear a lot of people talking about the fire on Flame Mountain suddenly extinguishing. When he heard that, he felt somewhat smug as he thought inwardly, Sorry guys, the millennium earthcore fire is already mine!

After he arrived at a random remote corner, he summoned Long Hui.

Long Hui and Xiao Wenbo were both only here on a Cloud Margin Pavilion mission to watch over the area and to not allow any Kings to harvest the millennium earthcore fire. Normally, they would remain hidden. Regular Transformation Realm cultivators would not even realize that the two were there.

It did not take Long Hui long to arrive beside Xiang Shaoyun. With an unhappy look, he stared at Xiang Shaoyun and asked, "Are you the one who did that to me?"

Xiang Shaoyun gazed at Long Hui and smiled. "Surprised?"

"Die!" Long Hui suddenly attacked.

But the moment he thought of attacking, Xiang Shaoyun was notified. He immediately chanted the Nether Dragon Soul Curse's mantra. Numerous incorporeal symbols drifted toward Long Hui, and before he could even get near Xiang Shaoyun, he felt like his head was going to explode.

"Ahhhh!"

He clasped at his head and wailed. The terrible pain he was experiencing caused him to instantly collapse where he stood. Just like that, a sixth-stage Skysoar Realm King was tortured to the point he was rolling around on the ground. It was quite a sorry sight. Xiang Shaoyun felt no pity whatsoever. He only stopped when Long Hui started begging for mercy.

"If you dare think of harming me again, you will immediately explode and die," said Xiang Shaoyun indifferently.

"Y-yes, I-I won't dare to try that ever again," said Long Hui, fear covering his face.

After that experience, he was truly afraid of Xiang Shaoyun. The torturing of one's soul was a kind of torture nobody could resist.

"Get up. Call me young master in the future. I am your master, and my every word is the law for you. Disobedience is not an option," said Xiang Shaoyun.

"Yes, young master," Long Hui stumbled back up and said deferentially.

"Ok. Let's start with you. Tell me about yourself," Xiang Shaoyun said.

Thus, Long Hui told Xiang Shaoyun about himself, including his position in the Cloud Margin Pavilion. After listening to him, Xiang Shaoyun was overjoyed as he thought, A high-level elder of Cloud Margin Pavilion? Sixth-stage Skysoar Realm cultivator? Not bad at all.

"Will there be a problem if I want you to leave with me immediately?" Xiang Shaoyun asked.

"There won't be a problem, but I need to report my departure to the pavilion," Long Hui said.

"I'm returning to Cloud Margin City anyway. Let's go back together, then," said Xiang Shaoyun. He added, "Oh, why don't you take me for a stroll at Cloud Margin Pavilion? You should have enough authority for that, right?"

"Yes, but only the outer pavilion. Only those with an official position in the pavilion can enter the inner pavilion," said Long Hui.

"Just show me around first," Xiang Shaoyun said.

Long Hui then left Xiao Wenbo a message before heading toward the Cloud Margin Pavilion with Xiang Shaoyun. The Cloud Margin Pavilion was located at a mountainous area outside the suburbs of Cloud Margin City.

This was a place with imposing mountains, lush forest, and rare plants growing everywhere. In fact, it was incredibly scenic. Numerous buildings were constructed on the mountain ridges. Shrouded among clouds, the buildings looked spectacularly imposing and wondrous.

Just the pedestrians alone made up no fewer than 10,000 people. Each of them were dressed in martial outfits, looking healthy and spirited, displaying the might of the Cloud Margin Pavilion.

This was how a tier-3 organization looked. Its size was not something regular organizations could compare with. In the eyes of the people here, this was an absolutely magnificent organization.

At present, Xiang Shaoyun had just arrived at the outer pavilion with Long Hui. He was only here to take a stroll, but surprisingly, he actually stumbled upon someone he knew. Moreover, that person seemed to have encountered some sort of trouble which caused the person to fume.

Chapter 213: Brother in Suffering

The Cloud Margin Pavilion was separated into the inner and outer pavilion. Naturally, the inner pavilion was an important place where only inner disciples could enter. There, the environment and facilities were much more optimal for cultivation. As for the outer pavilion, that was where the outer and common disciples resided, and it was considered the low-level zone of the Cloud Margin Pavilion.

The outer pavilion was located at the foot of the mountains. Numerous buildings stood tall, with some of them being special areas for different cultivation needs. Here, over 3,000 outer disciples and common overseers resided.

Even so, the environment of the outer pavilion was already much better than the academies of the various towns. As for the disciples, they were naturally far stronger than the regular town disciples as well.

Not a single one of these disciples were below the Astral Realm, and most of them were above mid Astral Realm. There were a large number of Transformation Realm disciples as well. These were all

proud geniuses gathered from Cloud Margin City. All of them had only managed to become a disciple after going through a harsh selection process.

Xiang Shaoyun had just arrived with Long Hui. From far away, he saw a gate several dozen meters tall framed by two towering pillars. In between the pillars, the large words "Cloud Margin Pavilion" were carved.

Each of the three words emanated a majestic feeling capable of giving others an incorporeal sense of pressure. It was clear these words were personally carved by a supreme expert, leaving behind a trace of that person's presence in the words.

In fact, the words were carved by the first generation pavilion master of the Cloud Margin Pavilion. Standing in front the gate were eight sturdy fully armored guards. They were staring straight ahead with solemn expressions.

All eight of them were Transformation Realm cultivators. Just the fact that Transformation Realm experts had to serve as guards was proof of the Cloud Margin Pavilion's strength.

When the guards saw Long Hui coming with Xiang Shaoyun, they deferentially saluted Long Hui and greeted, "Greetings, Elder Long Hui!"

Long Hui nodded nonchalantly before sauntering through the gate with Xiang Shaoyun. Not a single one of them dared to say anything. This was the prerogative enjoyed by high-level elders, something common elders couldn't compare to.

"Young master, do you want to enter the inner pavilion with me or do you want to stay at the outer pavilion?" Long Hui asked.

"I'll look around the outer pavilion first," Xiang Shaoyun said. He only came to have a look around because he had nothing to do anyway. He had yet to think of what his next step would be. He was also trying to see if there were any good cultivation spots that would be helpful to him.

Long Hui brought Xiang Shaoyun to the outer pavilion overseer and told the overseer that Xiang Shaoyun was his distant relative and that Xiang Shaoyun was going to rest at the outer pavilion for a bit. The overseer naturally did not dare to slight Xiang Shaoyun after hearing so. He even wanted to set a feast to welcome Xiang Shaoyun in hope of buttering up to Elder Long Hui.

However, Xiang Shaoyun rejected the offer as he only wanted to stroll around freely. The overseer did not dare to say anything against it. After telling Xiang Shaoyun about the outer pavilion's forbidden zones, he left Xiang Shaoyun to his own devices.

Looking at the youngsters dripping in sweat as they trained, Xiang Shaoyun lamented inwardly, It has been a year. I wonder how Xia Liuhui and Lu Xiaoqing are doing nowadays.

Xia Liuhui and Lu Xiaoqing were among the very few friends Xiang Shaoyun had made during his time at the Martial Hall Palace. The scene of the hardworking youngsters stirred his memories, causing him to think of them. However, as he arrived at the corner of the training field, his attention was attracted by a certain silhouette.

"What is he doing here?" Xiang Shaoyun muttered joyfully.

He then quickly walked toward that person. There, a spar was going on. One of the combatants just happened to be one of the friends Xiang Shaoyun was thinking about just a short while ago.

It had been a year, and Xia Liuhui was now an eighth-stage Astral Realm cultivator. His growth had been astonishingly outstanding. However, the opponent he currently faced was far stronger than him—a ninth-stage Astral Realm cultivator.

And as expected, facing such an opponent, Xia Liuhui was constantly suppressed. After a few exchanges, Xia Liuhui was already bleeding all over. He was completely disadvantaged in the spar.

His opponent said smugly, "Cheap dog, kneel down and kowtow to your grandpa, and swear to stay away from Lu Xiaoqing. I will then consider sparing you."

The opponent was a young man in black. His name was Ye Lingyun, an outer disciple of Cloud Margin Pavilion. He was a year younger than Xia Liuhui, yet he was already a ninth-stage Astral Realm cultivator. It was obvious there was a large gap between the two's talents.

"Screw that. Just kill me if you can!" Xia Liuhui was a much more resolute person nowadays, and he refused to agree no matter what.

"Is that so? Let's see how long you can last!" Ye Lingyun sneered as he started beating Xia Liuhui up again.

Xia Liuhui tried his best to resist the beating, focusing only on defending to reduce the amount of injuries he would suffer. Unfortunately, he was unfamiliar with the concept that defense alone would always result in eventual defeat. Thus, he was once again stepped into the ground by his opponent. The disciples in the surroundings also started heckling.

"This Xia Liuhui sure is weak. He can't even fight back? Pfft, someone from a small town is indeed useless."

"That's right. Just with his puny strength he dares to offend Ye Lingyun? He is probably tired of living."

"I heard Ye Lingyun had taken a liking to a junior sister who had come with Xia Liuhui. However, Xia Liuhui refused to let anyone approach her. That was how all this started."

"Yeah, I heard the same rumor as well. That junior sister is called Lu Xiaoqing. She is quite the beautiful one. A lot of brothers are interested in her."

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Xiang Shaoyun who had arrived by now witnessed everything unfold. What he saw and heard ignited a raging fury in his heart. He once only saw Xia Liuhui and Lu Xiaoqing as regular friends that he would forget after leaving. But when he saw Xia Liuhui being a subject of bullying like this, he couldn't help feeling furious.

His anger was further compounded when he heard the reason, which also deepened his affection toward Xia Liuhui, making him feel like this was a good friend worth protecting. In fact, this person was worthy of being his brother!

Brother, a heavy term not easily used. Touching his brother was akin to touching upon a taboo.

"Cheap dog, stay far away from Lu Xiaoqing in the future. She is a woman I have taken a liking to. She is not someone the likes of you can hope to touch. Disobey and I will beat you up each time I see you. You have to know that here in the outer pavilion, private battles are allowed. Here, might makes right. Understand?" said Ye Lingyun with his foot on Xia Liuhui's face.

"D-dream on!" Xia Liuhui spat with great difficulty.

"Looks like you haven't been taught enough yet. Well, maybe I need to make you eat some feces," said Ye Lingyun as he squatted down and lifted Xia Liuhui by the hair. Just as he was about to rub Xia Liuhui's face against the ground, he was interrupted.

"Remove your hands or die," rang a voice filled with murderous intent.

Chapter 214: Tired of Living?

The voice rumbled like a sudden thunderclap, leaving a buzzing in the ears of the people in the area. Ye Lingyun, who was stepping on Xia Liuhui, was startled when he felt the sensation of having two sharp blades framing his neck, forcing him to release Xia Liuhui by instinct.

As for Xia Liuhui, when he heard the voice, he trembled for a bit before he emotionally shouted, "It's boss!"

That's right. That voice belonged to none other than Xiang Shaoyun. Xia Liuhui strode through the crowd toward Xia Liuhui a step at a time, his heart filled with a sense of guilt. If he had shown himself earlier, Xia Liuhui wouldn't have been bullied so terribly. If he had given Xia Liuhui better battle techniques, Xia Liuhui wouldn't have been bullied so badly. It was all a result of his negligence.

"Impudent! Who are you to interfere with the affair of this young master?" Ye Lingyun shouted at Xiang Shaoyun who was striding over.

Xiang Shaoyun did not even spare Ye Lingyun a glance. He walked toward Xia Liuhui, crouched down, and said, "Can you still stand?"

"B-boss, it's really you?" Xia Liuhui asked with disbelief.

Xiang Shaoyun smiled. "Apart from me, who else will come save you?"

As he said that, he grabbed Xia Liuhui's shoulder and helped him back on his feet. The movement triggered Xia Liuhui's injuries, causing him to clench his teeth in pain. However, he did not so much as groan. He couldn't embarrass his boss any more than he had.

"This is a healing pill. And here, take these two stalks of spirit medicines as well. Heal up first," Xiang Shaoyun said as he nonchalantly gave Xia Liuhui some items.

Around them, someone with a pair of sharp eyes immediately cried out in alarm, "That is a mid-grade spirit medicine, moonwater flower, and the other's a low-grade spirit medicine, rejoining grass!"

"That rejoining grass is only worth a few low-grade spirit crystals, so it's nothing special. As for the moonwater flower, it is quite a special item. It is one of the best mid-grade spirit medicines and is worth a few dozen low-grade spirit crystals. It is a very good medicine for internal injuries, and it's also very helpful to cultivators who cultivate the power of water," said a different person.

When the other disciples heard that, they started stirring. Yes, they were outer disciples of the prestigious Cloud Margin Pavilion. However, it still wasn't easy for them to get even one spirit medicine, especially mid-grade spirit medicines. They could only get one if they had a backer. Otherwise, they would have to reach the Transformation Realm before they could rely on themselves to get one.

In their eyes, this youngster here was incredibly generous and wealthy for him to so casually give something this valuable to his follower. At the same time, they wondered who this young man was, as they did not recall seeing him before.

"I don't care who you are. Get on your knees and kowtow right this moment. Also, hand over everything on you. Otherwise, you will suffer the same fate as that cheap dog," said Ye Lingyun with an expression of greed.

Ye Lingyun did not think very highly of Xiang Shaoyun. In his eyes, Xiang Shaoyun was the same as Xia Liuhui—someone from a small town. How strong could a person like that be?

Xia Liuhui pulled Xiang Shaoyun's arm and said, "B-boss, l-let's leave! Ignore him!"

Xia Liuhui had only been in the Cloud Margin Pavilion for a short period of time. Nevertheless, he still knew something about this place. Although this Ye Lingyun might not be a match for his boss, he was the cousin of an inner disciple. That cousin was a Transformation Realm expert.

Xia Liuhui was afraid that his boss would provoke big trouble. That was why he persuaded his boss to leave, but his action caused Ye Lingyun to further underestimate Xiang Shaoyun's strength.

"Leaving? Have you asked for my permission?" Ye Lingyun sneered before waving his hand, sending a few young men to surround the two.

These young men were Ye Lingyun's henchmen, and they were all slightly weaker than Ye Lingyun. Even so, getting surrounded by a group of people like this was enough to frighten many ordinary disciples.

"Ye Lingyun, don't push it!" Xia Liuhui shouted furiously.

"Haha, I am going to push it even more, just wait till you see what I'm going to do next. Everyone, step on this kid!" Ye Lingyun roared with laughter. At his command, his henchmen charged Xiang Shaoyun.

"Boss..." Xia Liuhui looked at Xiang Shaoyun helplessly.

Xiang Shaoyun waved his hand and said, "You don't have to say anything anymore. Just wait."

"Eat your grandpa's fist, kid!" shouted the first young man to arrive as he punched Xiang Shaoyun.

This young man was only 15 years old, yet he was already an eighth-stage Astral Realm cultivator. He was far more talented at cultivation than the so-called geniuses of the town academies. However, this strength was nothing before the current Xiang Shaoyun. Xiang Shaoyun kicked him without even bothering to spare him another glance.

Bang!

The kick landed on the young man's stomach, instantly sending him flying far away while coughing up blood. Everyone's eyes widened in astonishment. None of them could believe what they were seeing. The other attackers all stopped in their tracks; the sight of what happened to the first attacker caused them to shiver.

Bang! Bang!

In the blink of an eye, these young men also suffered the same fate as the first young man: all of them were sent flying away and coughing up blood. If Xiang Shaoyun hadn't been holding back on purpose, he could have easily killed them all on the spot. He then ignored the young men who hadn't even realized what was going on and dashed toward Ye Lingyun.

"W-what are you trying to do? I-I'll have you know that my cousin is..." Ye Lingyun shivered and started speaking while retreating. But before he could finish his words, Xiang Shaoyun slapped him on the face.

Pa!

The slap sent the shocked Ye Lingyun flying, and he crashed heavily on the ground. Two teeth flew out of his mouth, making him look extremely sorry.

"You dare bully the little brother of this young master? Are you tired of living?" Xiang Shaoyun immediately reappeared before Ye Lingyun again before stomping his foot down.

Ka!

The stomp pushed Ye Lingyun's body into the ground. He coughed blood repeatedly, feeling as if he was going to soon die. The crowd that had been watching on around them were all greatly frightened. They quickly ran away, with someone even shouting, "Murder! Murder!"

Private battles were allowed at the outer pavilion, as they would stimulate competition and allow the disciples to grow stronger. But killing a fellow disciple was taboo. As the crowd shouted, the outer pavilion enforcers arrived.

"Boss, he's still alive, right?" asked Xia Liuhui as he looked at Ye Lingyun nervously.

"If you want him dead, I can kill him right now," said Xiang Shaoyun indifferently.

"No, not at all. Boss, this is enough. Please don't kill him, or we will be in great trouble," Xia Liuhui quickly said.

Chapter 215: Gathering of Brothers

The enforcers stared at Xiang Shaoyun and Xia Liuhui the moment they arrived and asked, "Are you the ones creating trouble and committing murder here?"

As for the leader of the enforcement squad, he was none other than the overseer Long Hui had introduced to Xiang Shaoyun earlier. The overseer had not expected that Xiang Shaoyun would be involved in a murder so soon after he arrived. Inwardly, he cursed, This distant relative of Elder Long Hui's is too insensible!

"Sir overseer, he is still alive," Xiang Shaoyun said as he picked the unconscious Ye Lingyun up.

The overseer heaved a breath of relief. He then said, "As long as nobody died, all is well. Not even I can help you if someone was killed."

The overseer had someone drag Ye Lingyun away and left without even bothering to ask what happened. It stupefied the people there. Although the overseer had not said much to Xiang Shaoyun, the little he did say was enough to display the absolute bias the overseer had toward Xiang Shaoyun.

"He is definitely a senior brother from the inner pavilion. Otherwise, how would the lord overseer let him off so easily?"

"But I don't recall seeing him before this at all. Then again, he really is crazy strong."

"I wonder what this senior brother's name is. He is just so cool and handsome. How good would it be if he sets his eyes on me?"

"Stop dreaming. Work hard to become an inner disciple first, and you will stand a chance."

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The people there automatically assumed that Xiang Shaoyun was an inner disciple. Even Xia Liuhui drew the same conclusion.

"Boss, I did not expect that you would have joined Cloud Margin Pavilion much earlier than me. Back then at the Golden River Valley, I thought something bad happened to you," said Xia Liuhui emotionally.

The people Xia Liuhui respected most in the Martial Hall Palace was Xiang Shaoyun, and that remained true even now.

"Let's stop talking for now. We will chat after we deal with your wounds," said Xiang Shaoyun. He then left with Xia Liuhui. After looking for a place they could sit down comfortably, he started treating Xia Liuhui.

The combination of consuming medication and externally applying medication would always be the best method of treatment for any wound. The worst of Xia Liuhui's injuries were all external injuries, and he did not suffer many internal injuries. After consuming the rejoining grass Xiang Shaoyun gave him, he was much better.

As for the moonwater flower, he couldn't bear to use it. He returned it and said, "Boss, this moonwater flower is too valuable. I can't take it from you."

"Sure, go feed it to a dog or something then. Your boss is too rich to care about something like this," Xiang Shaoyun said.

Xia Liuhui immediately kept it away and said, "Feeding me is better than feeding a dog."

"Hah, you are still as cheap as ever," Xiang Shaoyun teased.

"Boss, you can't insult me like that! I'll fight you with my life!" Xia Liuhui said and feigned anger.

Xiang Shaoyun glowered at Xia Liuhui and said, "Ohh, so you are all grown up now and are going to step on your boss too?"

Xia Liuhui laughed dryly and said, "Boss, you will forever be my boss. How would I dare?" He continued, "Boss, why are you in the Cloud Margin Pavilion as well? Do you know how much my sister-in-law has missed you during the past year?"

His words caused Xiang Shaoyun to recall that graceful silhouette. A sense of guilt welled up in him as he said, "Tell me about how you two got here first."

"How we came here is somewhat related to you, boss. Elder Zi is the one who brought us here," said Xia Liuhui as he started explaining how they got here.

After the Golden River Valley incident, Xiang Shaoyun had gone missing, and it caused a large uproar within the Martial Hall Palace. Elder Zhen Peng seemed to have turned mad as he directly charged into the Gateflag Academy demanding an answer. He caused a scene and nearly dismantled their signboard from their gate.

The Gateflag Academy lost all their prestige from their inability to deal with Elder Zhen Peng. From then on, they no longer dared to mess with the Martial Hall Palace. It was also rumored that Elder Zhen Peng had even personally entered the Golden River Valley. Unfortunately, he couldn't find Xiang Shaoyun's whereabouts at all.

One ought to admit that Elder Zhen Peng was truly loyal to Xiang Shaoyun. He knew that Xiang Shaoyun's best friends in the Martial Hall Palace were Xia Liuhui and Lu Xiaoqing. Thus, he personally guided them in their cultivation, helping them grow faster.

With the guidance of a King like Elder Zhen Peng and the assistance of resources from the Martial Hall Palace, the two were able to grow at a lightning speed. Perhaps inwardly they did not want to fall too far behind Xiang Shaoyun. Thus, they had been working insanely hard in cultivation as well.

Three months ago, Zi Changhe's master, Liu Xinji, who was once the vice palace master of Martial Hall Palace, had returned to the palace. Liu Xinji was an expert who had become a King a few years before Elder Zhen Peng.

After becoming a King, he left the Martial Hall Palace for a position in the Cloud Margin Pavilion, which was one of the reasons why the Martial Hall Palace had no King Realm expert before Elder Zhen Peng had become a King.

Liu Xinji had returned to bring his disciple Zi Changhe to cultivate at the Cloud Margin Pavilion. Although Zi Changhe could no longer become a Cloud Margin Pavilion disciple, it still wasn't a problem for him to stay there thanks to Liu Xinji's status as a King.

That was when Zi Changhe begged Liu Xinji to bring Xia Liuhui, Lu Xiaoqing, and Wang Zhenchuan to the Cloud Margin Pavilion. It was his way of repaying Xiang Shaoyun.

Initially, Liu Xinji refused. But Zi Changhe insisted that he would not go if the three did not come with them. That coupled with Elder Zhen Peng's persuasion made Liu Xinji agree. It wasn't that Liu Xinji respected Elder Zhen Peng very much. Rather, Elder Zhen Peng had gifted Liu Xinji almost all his wealth to make him agree. After all, most people prioritized personal benefit above all else.

That was how Xia Liuhui, Lu Xiaoqing, and Wang Zhenchuan had come to be outer disciples of the Cloud Margin Pavilion. In fact, they were only able to become outer disciples through Liu Xinji's backdoor authorization. Otherwise, they would have never been accepted.

As for Xia Liuhui and the others, they naturally continued working hard on cultivating when they arrived at the Cloud Margin Pavilion. But Lu Xiaoqing was a fatally attractive female and had attracted Ye Lingyun's attention. He kept trying to approach her, and because of that, a conflict erupted between him and Xia Liuhui.

Today, Xia Liuhui was alone when he was caught by Ye Lingyun, and that was how everything that had happened today started. When Xiang Shaoyun heard the simple explanation, he smiled. "Looks like my decision to come is correct. Otherwise, I would never have known that you were all here."

"What do you mean, boss? Aren't you an inner disciple?" Xia Liuhui asked in astonishment.

"Hehe, I am not even an outer disciple, so how can I be an inner disciple?" Xiang Shaoyun laughed. He continued, "I will tell you the whole story later. Can you contact Lu Xiaoqing and Wang Zhenchuan first? Also, don't forget my senior Zi Changhe. It is time for us to have a good gathering!"

"Sister-in-law is in a secluded cultivation. As for Senior Brother Wang Zhenchuan, he is a fanatic cultivator, so I don't know where he is hiding and cultivating alone right now. As for Elder Zi, he is currently in the inner pavilion. He has to be the one to come look for us, not the other way around," Xia Liuhui said.

Xiang Shaoyun was about to reply when he noticed someone rushing toward them.

Chapter 216: I Don't Want to Ruin Her Life

"It's Senior Brother Wang!" Xia Liuhui said when he got a clear look at who the newcomer was.

Xiang Shaoyun saw who the newcomer was as well. The newcomer was none other than Wang Zhenchuan whom he had once helped become Zi Changhe's disciple.

"Junior Brother Xia, are you fine?" Wang Zhenchuan asked when he arrived. All his attention was on Xia Liuhui, so he did not even notice Xiang Shaoyun. In any case, Xiang Shaoyun had changed a lot over the past year, and his temperament was entirely different now. Thus, it was understandable that Wang Zhenchuan couldn't recognize Xiang Shaoyun right away.

"Look at how swollen my face is. Do I look fine?" said Xia Liuhui while pointing at his fully wrapped face.

"Damn it! This must be the work of Ye Lingyun and his lackeys, right? I'll take revenge for you later. He thinks he can bully everyone just because his cousin is an inner disciple?" Wang Zhenchuan said furiously.

Wang Zhenchuan was already a peak ninth-stage Astral Realm cultivator. Transformation Realm was not far away. He had an ordinary aptitude, but he made it up by being insanely hard-working. Breaking through several stages in a row in a year and half was a pretty decent accomplishment. Of course, part of that was also due to the care Zi Changhe had given him.

"Senior Brother Wang, did you not hear that Ye Lingyun was nearly crippled when you were on your way here?" Xia Liuhui asked. He then pointed at the person beside him and said, "Look who's here."

Finally, Wang Zhenchuan's gaze landed on Xiang Shaoyun. His face was immediately filled with emotion as he quickly greeted deferentially, "Greetings, Martial Uncle Xiang."

"Haha, my martial nephew, it has been a while. Looks like you have been doing well," said Xiang Shaoyun with a hearty laugh. Back then, he assumed the identity of Zi Changhe's junior apprentice brother. With Wang Zhenchuan being accepted as Zi Changhe's disciple, he naturally became Xiang Shaoyun's martial nephew.

"Everyone thought you were...never mind that. Master will be very happy to know this, the same goes to Elder Zhen Peng as well!" said Wang Zhenchuan happily. He was a person of few words, but he was too excited to see Xiang Shaoyun and couldn't stop talking.

He still remembered the help Xiang Shaoyun had given him in the past. Xiang Shaoyun had recommended him to become Zi Changhe's disciple and had even given him a portion of the Earth Star Spring liquid. Those two favors were enough to make him stay grateful to Xiang Shaoyun.

"Alright, let's find a place we can chat over a drink," said Xiang Shaoyun, who was also in a fabulous mood.

"Sure, let's go to the restaurant," said Xia Liuhui.

Thus, the three headed to a restaurant in the outer pavilion.

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Within a certain courtyard in the inner pavilion, a good-looking woman had just received news that caused her to be furious. She said, "Audacious! That person dares to hit him even after knowing he is the cousin of me, Wang Jiaohua? That person is completely looking down on me!"

Beside the woman was a young man. He had his arm gently wrapped around the woman's waist as he asked, "Jiaohua, what happened to make you so angry?"

"A blind fool has injured my cousin. I need payback for it," answered the woman.

"Some outer disciples? I'll come as well and help cripple all of them for you," said the young man.

"Sure, come with me then. We will show them how insignificant non inner disciples are," declared the woman dauntlessly. And thus, the pair rushed out of the inner pavilion.

At this time, Xiang Shaoyun, Xia Liuhui, and Wang Zhenchuan were happily drinking and chatting in the restaurant. Xiang Shaoyun had given them a simplified explanation as to what he had experienced over the past year. Of course, he still withheld information that shouldn't be released.

Even so, both Xia Liuhui and Wang Zhenchuan still sighed endlessly as they listened to the story. But they were still confused as to how Xiang Shaoyun had managed to enter the Cloud Margin Pavilion.

"Oh, about that, I got to know a high-level elder through coincidence. He was dead set on making me his disciple, but I refused so he forced me to come here instead," said Xiang Shaoyun jokingly.

But Xia Liuhui and Wang Zhenchuan did not find it funny at all. Xiang Shaoyun was someone who was already capable of battling Transformation Realm cultivators when he was an Astral Realm cultivator. This ability to punch above his weight was something rare even in the Cloud Margin Pavilion. It was completely unsurprising that a King was trying to take Xiang Shaoyun as a disciple.

"Looks like my boss is already a Transformation Realm expert. Why don't you agree to that elder's request? You can become an inner disciple here and can take care of us in the future. In fact, we will be able to do as we like from then on," said Xia Liuhui with excitement.

"That's right. You should join the Cloud Margin Pavilion. I trust you will be able to shine brightly here," said Wang Zhenchuan. The persuasions caused Xiang Shaoyun to actually start considering joining.

He had been thinking about his next steps, thinking about what to do to grow quickly. The Cloud Margin Pavilion would most likely be a decent place for him to cultivate and grow for a bit. Moreover, his enemies wouldn't be able to find him immediately anyway. Staying here would be a good choice.

"I'll think about it," Xiang Shaoyun hesitated. He did not agree right away as he did not want to tie himself up. He would make his decision after he discussed it with Long Hui.

"Boss, what do you need to think about? Do you have a better cultivation spot? Or you don't want to stay at Cloud Margin City anymore?" Xia Liuhui asked.

"It's not a good thing to know too much," Xiang Shaoyun grumbled before shifting the topic and asking about Lu Xiaoqing.

Lu Xiaoqing was doing well and was much more hardworking in cultivating nowadays. She was currently trying to break through into the Transformation Realm to meet the requirements of becoming an inner disciple.

And now that they were speaking about Lu Xiaoqing, Xia Liuhui started lamenting her loyalty to Xiang Shaoyun.

"My sister-in-law has been missing you all the while. Each time we're together, she would be asking about you. She has been repeating that you are definitely alive and will appear before us again. Looks like her intuition was right all along!" said Xia Liuhui.

Xia Liuhui admired Lu Xiaoqing's loyalty to Xiang Shaoyun. In his heart, she was already his sister-in-law. That was also why he had been willingly guarding her from other men.

"Don't simply call her what she is not. I don't want to ruin her life," said Xiang Shaoyun with a sigh. He had never considered furthering his relationship with Lu Xiaoqing. It was not that he didn't find her pretty enough, but for now, he had no time for romance.

"In any case, I already consider her my sister-in-law. If you are going to find me other sister-in-laws, you first have to acknowledge my current sister-in-law!" Xia Liuhui persevered.

"Sure, sure, as long as you're happy," said Xiang Shaoyun, who couldn't be bothered to continue the argument. He would just let nature take its course.

At this time, Xiang Shaoyun suddenly sensed fast footsteps outside the restaurant. A vision appeared in his Nether Soul Domain, and he sneered, "Looks like our little gathering is going to be interrupted soon."

Right after he said that, a young man and a woman entered the restaurant. A small crowd was following behind them as well.

Chapter 217: Swatting Two Houseflies

The two newcomers were inner disciples of the Cloud Margin Pavilion, both Transformation Realm cultivators. The woman was Wang Jiaohua, Ye Lingyun's cousin. As for the man, he was Wang Jiaohua's lover, Wen Jinrui.

Some curious disciples had noticed the two and had followed them to see what was happening. They were able to guess that Wang Jiaohua was most likely here to take revenge for Ye Lingyun.

"Who's Xia Liuhui? Get your ass over here!" shouted Wang Jiaohua the moment she entered the restaurant.

When Xia Liuhui heard her, he shivered and whispered to Xiang Shaoyun, "Boss, trouble has arrived!"

Wang Zhenchuan had a solemn look on his face as well. "Worse comes to worst, we'll just fight it out with them."

Someone pointed at Xia Liuhui, immediately causing all gazes to focus on them. Wang Jiaohua and Wen Jinrui also looked over before walking over.

"Boss, what should we do now?" Xia Liuhui grew anxious.

"Calm down. Nothing will happen. Your boss is here," Xiang Shaoyun said calmly.

He then glanced over at Wen Jinrui before sneering, "I did not expect to see him again this quickly. Looks like it's time for me to get some payback."

The Wen Clan had moved against him numerous times. In fact, he had been suspecting that the sudden appearance of a King at the Flame Mountain also had something to do with Wen Jinrui. He would need some payback for that.

Wen Jinrui saw Xiang Shaoyun, but he was unaware that Xiang Shaoyun and Overlord Xiang were the same person. He only remembered Xiang Shaoyun as the kid who had played some tricks on him during their time at Wu Town.

That is quite a surprise. You're in Cloud Margin Pavilion as well, kid? Good, we can settle debts old and new together! thought Wen Jinrui with a sneer.

"You're Xia Liuhui? And these two must be your accomplices? Get your asses over here! You dare to harm my cousin? Nobody can save you today!" said Wang Jiaohua overbearingly.

When a pretty woman talked so overbearingly in public, she did look rather tyrannical. Wang Jiaohua was only 20 years old and was already a fifth-stage Transformation Realm cultivator. With her talent, she had the qualifications to be arrogant. Even so, she still knew the restaurant wasn't a place she could act wantonly. Thus, she held her hands and did not do anything within the restaurant.

Xiang Shaoyun spoke before Xia Liuhui could, "Where did this noisy old lady come from? Is she not aware that the sight of her is enough to cause someone to lose their appetite?"

His words sank everyone into silence. Old lady! That was an absolute insult for any beautiful young woman.

At those words, Wang Jiaohua's face twisted and an imposing aura surged out of her as she bellowed, "I'll kill you!"

Ever since Wang Jiaohua had joined the Cloud Margin Pavilion, nobody had ever spoken to her like that. Xiang Shaoyun was the first. Just as she was on the brink of losing her temper and was about to attack in the restaurant itself, Wen Jinrui pulled her hand and said, "Jiaohua, don't let that get to you. He is purposely trying to anger you so you will attack and break the rules. Let me deal with this."

Wang Jiaohua suppressed her fury and said, "Ok, love. Make sure he suffers."

Wen Jinrui nodded and stared at Xiang Shaoyun with a sharp gaze before saying, "Kid, we meet again."

Xiang Shaoyun grabbed a handful of peanuts from the table before asking, "And who in the world are you? Do I know you?"

When the crowd saw the contempt Xiang Shaoyun was showing Wen Jinrui, they couldn't help but give him an inner thumbs up. They had never seen Xiang Shaoyun before, but the guts he had in order to show inner disciples such scorn was something worthy of admiration. Of course, they were also wondering what would happen to Xiang Shaoyun.

"You are very good at talking, but it's all pointless. If you know what's good for you, come out with me right now and stop hiding here like a coward," said Wen Jinrui after he forced himself to calm down.

"Eh, what's so bad about being a coward? At least one can avoid a beating being a coward," said Xiang Shaoyun shamelessly.

Those words changed the inner thumbs up the crowd was giving him into an inner middle finger. Earlier, they had all thought that the kid was a capable person himself and that that was why he had dared to offend two inner disciples. But it turned out he was just a coward!

Wen Jinrui viewed it as a sign of Xiang Shaoyun shrinking from the fight. He thus roared with laughter and said, "Haha, yes, you are right. But you can't hide forever. You will have to face the music eventually."

He then said to Wang Jiaohua, "Jiaohua, why don't we order some food here as well? We'll take our time waiting for these three cowards to leave before crushing each one of them."

Wang Jiaohua nodded. "Ok, let's wait then. We have plenty of time."

"You might have a lot of free time, but I'm a busy man. Let's go out and settle this right now. The sight of an adulterous couple like you two is making me lose my appetite," Xiang Shaoyun said with disdain as he stood up.

"Boss, it's better if we wait for a bit more," Xia Liuhui advised. He knew Xiang Shaoyun had an impressive combat power, but he did not think Xiang Shaoyun was strong enough to face the likes of Wen Jinrui and Wang Jiaohua.

"I'll go get my master," Wang Zhenchuan decided.

"Don't worry. Just swatting two houseflies." Xiang Shaoyun waved his hand. He then looked at Wang Jiaohua, "I am the one who beat your cousin up. You want payback? Then, come with me, old lady."

He then strode out the restaurant. His heroic bearing caused a number of young women in the vicinity to be smitten. What a resolute and handsome man!

"Senior Brother Wen, I want him to suffer a fate worse than death!" demanded the furious Wang Jiaohua.

Wen Jinrui nodded as a sharp glint crossed his eyes. "Don't worry. He is only a bug from a small town. I will teach him a lesson for offending you."

And thus, the people in the restaurant all left, awaiting the coming "show" to unfold.

The moment Wen Jinrui arrived outside, he prepared to attack, "Die, bug!"

"HOLD ON!" Xiang Shaoyun cried out.

"Hmph. It is too late for regret," Wen Jinrui snorted.

"Do I look like I am begging for mercy? Please, stop imagining things. I only want to ask if there is a good location for a spar here. I'm tired of getting harassed by your enforcers," said Xiang Shaoyun with a shrug.

"Well. Very well. Let's go to the arena then. There, even killing is fine," said Wen Jinrui with a twisted expression.

"Sure. To the arena, then," Xiang Shaoyun agreed indifferently.

Soon, they arrived at an arena. Wen Jinrui was in too much of a hurry to showcase his strength, so he immediately leaped onto the arena before taunting Xiang Shaoyun with his finger. "Come up here to your death."

"Hehe, ignorance does breed bravery it seems," said Xiang Shaoyun with a nonchalant smile. He then said to Wang Jiaohua, "Old lady, you want to come up as well? We can save some time that way."

"Let me deal with the old lady instead," a melodic voice suddenly rang out in the air.

Chapter 218: Man's Affair

The sudden voice attracted the attention of many people there. And when they looked toward the direction the voice came from, their eyes lit up with infatuation.

"It's Senior Sister Gong Qinyin! Is she protecting this young man? Or does she merely have a grudge against Wang Jiaohua?"

"It really is Senior Sister Gong Qinyin! She has been accepted as a personal disciple of the Zither Empress and is recently a rising figure in the inner pavilion. She is also one of the pavilion's top five beauties!"

"Wait, this kid knows Senior Sister Gong? I can't believe his luck!"

"Look who's beside her! It's Lu Xiaoqing! Maybe she was brought here by Lu Xiaoqing?"

"It doesn't matter. Things are going to get interesting."

...

Xiang Shaoyun was also blanking out. He had not expected Gong Qinyin and Lu Xiaoqing to appear suddenly like this.

After a year, Gong Qinyin had become even more enchanting. She had a face beautiful enough to destroy kingdoms, a source of infatuation for many young men; and her curves, which had only grown more alluring as she aged, made the men not be able to take their eyes off her.

She was not wearing the usual martial outfit she used to wear. Instead, she was wearing a thin light muslin outfit. The outfit accentuated her perfect figure, her beauty so flawless one could die just staring at her in a trance. Hanging on her back was a zither, and the combination of her and the zither emanated absolute grace and elegance.

Xiang Shaoyun couldn't help but sigh, "This girl sure has changed a lot."

As for Lu Xiaoqing, she hadn't changed as much as Gong Qinyin, but she had definitely grown prettier as well. Her long hair cascaded down her back, radiating endless gentleness, and her delicate face was incredibly lovable, giving one an urge to pamper her endlessly the moment one laid eyes on her.

At present, a layer of sparkling mist covered her eyes. She stared unblinkingly at Xiang Shaoyun, rich emotions in her eyes. It had been a year and a half, and she had thought that Xiang Shaoyun had died at the Golden River Valley.

She would often recall the time they first met, recall her anger over his shamelessness, and recall how she fell for him more and more. His shamelessness, his unconventional ways, his overbearingness...she loved all of it.

His ultimate disappearance had placed her in a figurative space of ice, making her feel completely at a loss. She could only keep cultivating madly so as to keep her emotions numb with hard work. Now that she was looking at him once again, her frozen heart was slowly thawing.

Before even seeing who the newcomer was, Wang Jiaohua turned while scolding, "Which slut is it? You dare shout at this young lady? Are you tired of living?"

Only after she said those words did she realize that Gong Qinyin was the newcomer. Her face instantly sank.

This woman was not an ordinary inner disciple. Rather, she was a personal disciple of an Emperor, and the number of Emperors the Cloud Margin Pavilion had could be counted on one's fingers. That alone gave her an extraordinary status in the pavilion.

"S-sorry, J-Junior Sister Gong. I did not realize it was you," Wang Jiaohua quickly explained herself. Inwardly however, she was cursing, What a b*tch. If it wasn't for the Emperor, I would have ripped you apart.

"Touching him is equivalent to touching me. Come, let's battle!" Gong Qinyin tossed Xiang Shaoyun a glance before declaring solemnly to Wang Jiaohua. She paused slightly before adding, "Don't worry that my master will trouble you for this. She is unlikely to lower herself to interfere in the affairs of juniors like us."

Before Wang Jiaohua could reply, Xiang Shaoyun spoke, "This is the affair of a man. You have no business interfering. Just stand aside and watch."

The crowd grew resentful when they heard how Xiang Shaoyun was speaking to Gong Qinyin.

"What an ungrateful bastard. Senior Sister Gong, just let him charge to his death."

"Yeah, Senior Sister Gong, he is unworthy of your concern. There's nothing special about him at all."

"Senior Brother Wen, Senior Sister Wang, beat this guy up! Don't spare him!"

...

One could almost hear the sound of hearts shattering when the crowd heard Gong Qinyin's next words.

She merely nodded obediently and said, "Swat them off quickly, then. We'll wait."

They all had assumed that Gong Qinyin would be angry, but she was behaving like she was Xiang Shayun's best friend. No, to be precise, she was so gentle it was like they were a pair of lovers. Many a heart was broken when this scene had unfolded.

Inwardly, Wen Jinrui cursed, Just a little slut who had gotten lucky. Since you are willing to let him fight his own battle, I won't hold back from giving him a good beating, then.

Xiang Shaoyun hopped onto the arena and taunted Wang Jiaohua with his finger. "Old lady, come on up. If the two of you can kill me working together, nobody will pursue this matter any further. I am not a Cloud Margin Pavilion member, so don't worry."

Hearing those words, Wen Jinrui and Wang Jiaohua grew even more confident. They were initially afraid that Xiang Shaoyun would be a personal disciple of some elder. If that was the case, they wouldn't be able to do much to him.

"I'll drop this out of respect for Junior Sister Gong," said Wang Jiaohua after she got on the arena.

For her, offending a personal disciple of an Emperor for a cousin was not worth it at all. Thus, she made the straightforward choice of dropping the whole matter.

"Hehe, too bad I am not willing to let it drop. Of course, I will consider it if you get your cousin to come kowtow to my brother and ask for forgiveness. Otherwise, I won't drop this. What do you think?" Xiang Shaoyun sneered. The other party was at fault anyway. There was no reason for him to let it drop.

"Don't push it!" Wang Jiaohua was once again fuming.

"Enough, don't bother. The fist will always be louder than words. If the two of you can survive one move from me, I will allow the matter to drop," said Xiang Shaoyun nonchalantly.

"What haughty words! Show me then, how are you going to defeat us with one move!" Wen Jinrui himself was an arrogant person. Thus, he could not stand how arrogant Xiang Shaoyun was being. After a roar, he finally made the first move and attacked.

Wen Jinrui moved like the wind; his cultivation base of fifth-stage Transformation Realm erupted fully as he blasted Xiang Shaoyun with both his palms.

Wrathful Bear Palm!

It was as if Wen Jinrui had transformed into a demonic bear as he slammed his palms forward. His palms were as powerful as the paws of a demonic bear with the strength capable of easily disintegrating boulders weighing tens of thousands of catties.

At the same time, Wang Jiaohua, who had offered peace just a moment ago, attacked as well. Her attack was even more ruthless as she aimed her sword straight at Xiang Shaoyun's vital part, trying to kill with one move.

One had to admit that the timing of her stab was incredibly ingenious as it had arrived from an angle nobody had expected. The attack was almost like an ambush that one couldn't guard against.

Wen Jinrui and Wang Jiaohua were nearly equal in strength. When the two attacked together, regular sixth-stage Transformation Realm experts wouldn't be able to easily repel them.

"Shameless!" said Lu Xiaoqing furiously.

"Don't worry, they won't be able to do anything to him," said Gong Qinyin confidently.

Inwardly, she sighed, He is indeed still alive. This is great news.

Chapter 219: There Goes My Chastity

Wen Jinrui's bear paws and Wang Jiaohua's quick sword arrived at the same time from two different directions in a flawless combination. Unfortunately, in Xiang Shaoyun's eyes, their attacks were as slow as a snail.

By the time their attacks arrived, Xiang Shaoyun had already vanished from their vision. Both attacks only hit an afterimage. The two were greatly alarmed, and just as they were about to look for Xiang Shaoyun, his attack arrived from an angle they never expected.

Pa! Pa!

A series of crisp slaps sounded as both Wen Jinrui and Wang Jiaohua felt an aching pain on their faces. The slaps even caused them to feel lightheaded. They couldn't even see how Xiang Shaoyun had attacked. By the time they wanted to strike back, Xiang Shaoyun had already pulled away from them.

"Ten slaps for each of you. That is payback for your mouths. Come again, I will let you attack again, but my next attack will be much less merciful," said Xiang Shaoyun in an uncaring manner as if he had done something that was completely unimportant.

Clear palm marks could be seen on the faces of Wen Jinrui and Wang Jiaohua. Their faces were badly swollen, and blood was dripping off the corners of their lips.

"Y-you dare humiliate me like that? Die!" Wang Jiaohua had never been this humiliated before. With a shout, she erupted with all her strength, preparing to fight Xiang Shaoyun with her full power.

But she was quickly stopped by Wen Jinrui who whispered, "Jiaohua, calm down! He is stronger than both of us!"

One ought to admit that Wen Jinrui was quite the smart one. They hadn't been able to react to Xiang Shaoyun's attack at all. If they really threw all caution to the wind and continued the fight, the two of them would be the ones to die.

Hearing Wen Jinrui's words, Wang Jiaohua lost all her courage. She had been slapped without even seeing how the slaps came. How could she hope to contend against an opponent like this?

Wen Jinrui then gazed at Xiang Shaoyun and said, "We admit defeat. Do whatever you want."

Xiang Shaoyun looked at Wen Jinrui in astonishment as he had not expected that the latter would be able to swallow the humiliation like that. But because the two had submitted, it would be improper for him to keep on attacking.

"Scram. If you dare bully my brother Xia Liuhui and my martial nephew Wang Zhenchuan again, you won't be spared so easily," said Xiang Shaoyun unhappily.

The only reason he had even agreed to fight them was to establish his dominance, to reduce the amount of unnecessary trouble Xia Liuhui and Wang Zhenchuan might suffer during their time here.

Wen Jinrui and Wang Jiaohua quickly slipped away, cutting sorry figures doing so. At this point, the crowd was already looking at Xiang Shaoyun in a completely different light.

"Who is he exactly? Why have I never seen him before? Even two inner disciples were made to leave without daring to fight back."

"I have never seen him before, but he is probably a year or two older than us. At such an age, he is already so powerful. Is he a hidden disciple of some elder?"

"No, that isn't right. Didn't he say that he wasn't a Cloud Margin Pavilion disciple? Maybe he is a genius from some other organization? No wonder he has the respect of Senior Sister Gong!"

"Hmph. Look how arrogant he is. If the true geniuses of our pavilion show themselves, he might not necessarily be able to stay so arrogant anymore."

...

They couldn't guess who Xiang Shaoyun was, and they were embarrassed to ask him to his face, so they left one after another.

Xiang Shaoyun left the arena and smiled at Gong Qinyin and Lu Xiaoqing before saying, "It has been a while."

In truth, Lu Xiaoqing was the main recipient of his words. After all, he had not seen her in a longer amount of time compared to Gong Qinyin. On top of that, he felt some sort of resentment, as Gong Qinyin hadn't been completely honest to him during their trip to the Flame Mountain. Right after he spoke, a figure pounced into his arms and hugged him tightly.

Xiang Shaoyun was stunned. He had not expected Lu Xiaoqing to bravely hug him in public like this.

There goes my chastity! Xiang Shaoyun grumbled inwardly.

If others heard what he was thinking, they would definitely think that this fellow was asking for a beating! Look at him complaining even after benefiting! For some reason, Gong Qinyin felt sour when she saw the scene. She couldn't help but to look away from them.

As for Xia Liuhui, his eyes were wet as he was so touched by the scene that he was crying. He knew clearly how Lu Xiaoqing had felt during the past year. Finally, her wait was over.

Xiang Shaoyun felt that it would be rude to push her away so he could only say, "Lu Xiaoqing, calm down! There's still a lot of people here!"

He knew how thin-skinned Lu Xiaoqing was. Those words would be enough to make her let go of him. But he had guessed wrongly this time. Instead of letting go, Lu Xiaoqing started hugging him even tighter than before. She even started sobbing.

"Why are you crying, Lu Xiaoqing? Who bullied you? Tell me. I will beat him up so badly his mom won't recognize him anymore!" said Xiang Shaoyun as he patted Lu Xiaoqing's back. Her sobbing had caused his heart to go gentle.

"You are the bully! You are the bully!" Lu Xiaoqing replied in between sobs.

Xiang Shaoyun replied awkwardly, "Cough, cough, I still need to make a living with my face, but fine, I'll allow you to hit my face as punishment."

Lu Xiaoqing pushed Xiang Shaoyun away and said, "Bah, shameless!"

Looking at the tears on Lu Xiaoqing's cheeks, Xiang Shaoyun felt his heart aching. He raised his hand and gently wiped her tears. "Don't cry anymore, girl. If you keep crying, you won't be pretty anymore."

The gentleness deeply touched something in Lu Xiaoqing's heart and caused her to hug him and start crying again. This time, she was crying because she was moved. That was the first time he had ever been so gentle with her. Had he accepted her finally?

"Alright, a lot of people are looking at us. Let's find a place to sit down and properly catch up," said Gong Qinyin, who couldn't keep watching their intimate interactions any longer.

Like a startled rabbit, Lu Xiaoqing quickly bounced off Xiang Shaoyun with a blushed face.

"Boss, you can chat with my sister-in-law and Senior Sister Gong. I'll go get myself treated with Senior Brother Wang," said Xia Liuhui tactfully before dragging Wang Zhenchuan away.

Holy shit, it seems like Senior Sister Gong is interested in boss as well! The heavens are unjust! Boss is only slightly more handsome than me, why is the difference so big? Xia Liuhui howled inwardly.

"The two of you know this place better so just take me on a stroll, then," said Xiang Shaoyun with a shrug.

"Everywhere you go you will be attracting everyone's attention. Just come to my place. We can have more peace there," suggested Gong Qinyin. In truth, she should have left and allowed Xiang Shaoyun and Lu Xiaoqing some time alone as well, but she was obviously not willing to do so.

"That's not proper, right? Shaoyun is not an inner disciple," said Lu Xiaoqing.

"It doesn't matter. Nobody will dare to say anything if I only want to bring one person," said Gong Qinyin. With her new status, she had grown much more confident as well.

"That's not necessary. We can just talk at a restaurant," said Xiang Shaoyun.

Chapter 220: I'll Stay Then

The restaurant was nearly empty as most of them had left earlier to watch the "show". The "show" was now over, but not many of them returned. Thus, Xiang Shaoyun was able to enjoy some peace when he returned with Gong Qinyin and Lu Xiaoqing.

The three sat down, but none of them spoke first. The mood turned heavy. Xiang Shaoyun remained silent because he did not know who he should speak with first. Gong Qinyin remained silent because she did not know what to say. As for Lu Xiaoqing, she had too many things to say and did not know where to start. The thoughts of these youngsters could be pretty elusive at times.

Ultimately, Xiang Shaoyun was the first to break the silence. After taking a sip of liquor, he said, "Are both of you well?"

"Yes," the two replied at the same time.

But they sank into silence afterwards.

Xiang Shaoyun smiled helplessly and said, "Since both of you are not saying anything, let's drink in silence, then. I don't really mind either way."

"You...," Gong Qinyin and Lu Xiaoqing said at the same time again. They then looked at each other and said together, "Senior sister (Xiaoqing), you first!"

That caused the two to burst out laughing. And finally, the awkward mood was lifted. Xiang Shaoyun stared at the two women who looked like two flowers blooming when they smiled. Their beauty radiated like the sun. He couldn't help but praise, "When the two of you smile, even flowers lose color. How beautiful!"

"Are you mainly praising Senior Sister Gong and are only including me just because I am here as well?" Lu Xiaoqing asked bashfully.

Her question revealed the lack of confidence she had before Gong Qinyin. Gong Qinyin was a natural beauty with a flawless face and figure. In terms of strength, she was also stronger than Lu Xiaoqing. Thus, Lu Xiaoqing found herself completely incomparable to Gong Qinyin.

The only thing Lu Xiaoqing could compete for was that she had met Xiang Shaoyun first. She could sense that this Senior Sister Gong had some sort of feeling toward Xiang Shaoyun as well, which caused Lu Xiaoqing to instinctively feel a sense of crisis. Her way of coping was to compare herself to Gong Qinyin.

"Xiaoqing, what are you talking about? You are as pure as the purest lotus. Men would fight each other for you. Of course his praise is directed to you," said Gong Qinyin with a smile.

"Alright, stop praising each other. Both of you are beautiful in your own ways," said Xiang Shaoyun.

He thought those words could placate the two, but the two actually rolled their eyes, causing him to inwardly grumble, I'm praising them right? What is that reaction?

Finally, they managed to start a conversation when Lu Xiaoqing asked about Xiang Shaoyun's disappearance at the Golden River Valley and his appearance at the Cloud Margin Pavilion.

Xiang Shaoyun thus repeated the same story he told Xia Liuhui and Wang Zhenchuan. Like the two before, Lu Xiaoqing also sighed endlessly at the story. At the same time, she also lamented the excellent luck Xiang Shaoyun seemed to always have. Beside her, Gong Qinyin had some questions as well. But since Lu Xiaoqing was present, she was too embarrassed to ask anything.

The three continued chatting while the crowd in the restaurant grew. More and more people started paying attention to the three. Of course, most of the gazes were in fact focused on Gong Qinyin. There was no helping that as she was a disciple of an Emperor.

In fact, wherever she went in the Cloud Margin Pavilion, she would be the center of attention. As for Lu Xiaoqing, due to her pure and adorable appearance, she attracted many gazes as well.

For the disciples here, she did not feel as unreachable as Gong Qinyin, who was on a pedestal so high up they could only look up at her. For them, Lu Xiaoqing would be an easier woman to court.

Meanwhile, gazes of astonishment were also centered on Xiang Shaoyun. They had no idea who this young man was who had obtained the favor of the two beauties. The three couldn't stand being stared at, so they quickly paid the bill and left.

While strolling along a trail in a forested area within the outer pavilion, Gong Qinyin asked, "What do you plan to do next?"

"No plans for now. I will probably look for a place I can continue my cultivation in peace," said Xiang Shaoyun after rubbing his nose.

"You said Elder Long Hui wanted to accept you as his disciple, right? Why don't you agree to that? You can then stay and cultivate with us!" Lu Xiaoqing said expectingly. She was afraid that Xiang Shaoyun would leave once again, and she hoped dearly that he would stay.

Gong Qinyin also echoed the sentiment, "The Cloud Margin Pavilion is the best cultivation spot in the entirety of Cloud Margin City. If you stay, I believe your cultivation will skyrocket."

"Hehe, you really want me to stay?" Xiang Shaoyun asked with a faint smile.

"Yes," the two answered.

"Fine, I'll stay," Xiang Shaoyun agreed.

"Great! We can cultivate together in the future!" said the overjoyed Lu Xiaoqing.

A smile also bloomed on Gong Qinyin's face. Evidently, she was happy to hear that as well. Xiang Shaoyun then told the two to leave first as he could sense that Long Hui had arrived nearby.

Lu Xiaoqing couldn't bear to part with him. Before leaving, she reminded him repeatedly to stay. She also told him that if he was going to leave, she was willing to wander the world with him.

Xiang Shaoyun could sense the sincerity in her words, causing him to have a heavy feeling as he couldn't decide what to do about her. The current him had no romantic interest in any woman whatsoever. It was too hard to heal the wound he suffered from the woman he once loved.

After the two left, Long Hui met Xiang Shaoyun and brought him to a spot with no other people. There, he bowed slightly and said, "Greetings, young master. I'm done settling my affairs."

Xiang Shaoyun smiled and said, "You spent quite a while in there. Have you been looking for ways to break the curse?"

Long Hui shivered and quickly said, "N-no, young master."

"I can sense everything you do clearly. You won't be able to fool me," said Xiang Shaoyun with a sneer. He added, "Not even Emperors can break the curse. If I am unlucky enough to die, you will die as well. Think very carefully about what you will do next."

By this point, Long Hui was completely drenched in sweat. He did not dare to question any of what Xiang Shaoyun had told him and quickly declared his loyalty, "Long Hui will not dare to pull something like that anymore! In the future, I will stay deadly faithful to you, young master!"

Facing the prospect of death, the dignity of a King seemed so inconsequential.

"That better be true," warned Xiang Shaoyun. He added, "I need a suitable identity to stay and cultivate at the Cloud Margin Pavilion. However, I don't want to be a disciple here either. Any idea how to accomplish that?"

Long Hui thought for a bit before saying, "Then I will have to trouble the young master to assume the identity of my follower. But the resources a follower can enjoy is not comparable to what an inner disciple can enjoy."

"That doesn't matter. Follower it is then. So long as I can maintain my freedom, I don't mind," said Xiang Shaoyun indifferently. He would only stay temporarily anyway. He did not care about his identity here.

"Alright. Please come with me to the inner pavilion, then, young master. I need to tell you more," said Long Hui.

Thus, Xiang Shaoyun followed Long Hui into the inner pavilion. Little did he know that his decision to stay would court himself quite the amount of trouble in the days to come.