

Overlord 591

Chapter 591: If I Tell You I Want You

1 Dragon Villa.

This was the residence with the best environment to cultivate in among all the disciple residences, including the personal disciple residences. Those staying here enjoyed the highest glory a disciple could be accorded. In the past, a disciple could only be assigned this residence after going through a rigorous series of tests.

Of course, Xiang Shaoyun had also gone through a year of trial. But with his cultivation level, he really wasn't qualified to stay at the villa. Because of that, Xiao Wei had released news that anyone on the Serpent Fowl List capable of defeating Xiang Shaoyun would become the new owner of 1 Dragon Villa.

In a way, this was a test for Xiang Shaoyun. If he couldn't pass, then he really wasn't meant to stay there. Naturally, even if he managed to survive the challenges, more tests would come. The tests would only stop when he was undeniably worthy of 1 Dragon Villa.

After the duel, Xiang Shaoyun, Lady Shura, and the Han Clan sisters all returned to 1 Dragon Villa. As for Tang Longfei and Ning Wenhua, they returned to their own residences and resumed cultivating.

In the villa, Han Qianwei questioned Xiang Shaoyun, "Why did you do that? Don't you trust us?"

Han Xuewei remained silent, but her eyes were filled with the look of someone who had been wronged. They couldn't understand why Xiang Shaoyun would ask them to join Han Chenfei.

After a slight hesitation, Xiang Shaoyun sighed and said, "There is something that I don't really want to tell you this early, but since Han Chenfei has already said it, I think both of you should be able to sense the issue of your bodies as well. That was why I wanted the two of you to join her. It will be to your benefit."

The sisters sank into deep thought. They were no fools. In the past, they had only been ignorant due to a lack of information. With Xiang Shaoyun telling them so blatantly what was wrong, they would be completely stupid if they didn't realize the truth.

"C-can it be that there really is an issue with our bodies?" Han Xuewei asked anxiously.

Xiang Shaoyun nodded. "Yes. Do you remember that I had someone check your physiques before coming to the academy? I was planning to search for a solution here at the academy, but something else happened to me during the past year, so I haven't been able to start my search. Now, Han Chenfei has figured out what is wrong with your physiques the moment she approaches you. I believe she has a Yin Frost Physique as well. Perhaps she will be able to help cure both of you!"

At this point, Xiang Shaoyun no longer wanted to hide anything from them. In any case, he already considered the Han Clan sisters his friends. He wouldn't watch them die without doing anything to help. Unfortunately, it wouldn't be easy to get Han Chenfei's help.

The sisters now knew that they had misunderstood Xiang Shaoyun, and guilt covered their faces. At the same time, a curtain of anxiousness covered their faces as well. It was understandable that they would be worried. After all, their lives were on the line. But at the same time, they had already expressed that they would not leave Xiang Shaoyun. That was a matter of principle.

Xiang Shaoyun then promised them that he would try his best to help them solve this issue. Finally, after sending the sisters away, he spent some time alone in thought. He then left the villa and headed toward Han Chenfei's villa.

Han Chenfei was a personal disciple of a certain elder who was either a previous generation elder or a grand guardian. She was one of the top 10 disciples on the Dragon Phoenix List, and the villa she resided in was also one of the top 10 disciple residences.

Thus, Xiang Shaoyun was able to easily locate her villa. Her villa's name was 2 Phoenix Villa. Just from that name alone, her status among the disciples was apparent. When Xiang Shaoyun arrived, someone blocked his way.

"Please pass on the message that Xiang Shaoyun is here to visit," Xiang Shaoyun told the person guarding the entrance.

The person hesitated slightly before deciding to go inside and pass on the message. Soon, the person returned and made an inviting gesture, allowing Xiang Shaoyun to enter. After entering, Xiang Shaoyun found that the villa looked even more elegant than his. It was indeed a suitable residence for a woman. He saw Han Chenfei standing alone under a tree of blooming flowers. She was the brightest of the flowers; all others dimmed in her presence.

"Greetings, Palace Master Han," greeted Xiang Shaoyun politely.

"You are too polite, Young Master Xiang. Just call me Chenfei, or if you don't mind, you can call me Big Sister Han too," said Han Chenfei with an enchanting smile.

In fact, she wasn't that much older than Xiang Shaoyun. At most, she was about two or three years older, but she still looked like she was 17 or 18. At that age, she was able to enter the top 10 of the Dragon Phoenix List. It was clear how terrifying her strength was.

Xiang Shaoyun smiled and did not answer. Instead, he went straight to the point. "I believe you are aware of the reason I'm here. I wonder what would you need in order to help them?"

"Looks like they are quite important for you, then?" Han Chenfei asked instead of answering.

"They are my friends!" Xiang Shaoyun declared firmly.

"Just friends?" Han Chenfei pressed on.

Xiang Shaoyun shrugged. "Yes. If you really want a precise answer, they are my followers. I don't want to see them die young, not when they have a chance to live a longer, better life. What would you need to help them?"

When Han Chenfei saw how seriously Xiang Shaoyun was speaking, she did not continue her line of questioning. Instead, she sat down before a stone table and gestured at Xiang Shaoyun to take a seat as well.

Xiang Shaoyun did not refuse the invitation. He walked over and sat down opposite Han Chenfei. There, he found Han Chenfei staring at him with her icy eyes, a faint smile on her alluring face. Any other man put in his position would probably think that he had managed to catch Han Chenfei's heart. That was not the case for Xiang Shaoyun. He met her gaze nonchalantly, not showing any sort of emotion.

After staring at him for a bit, Han Chenfei flashed him a charming smile and asked, "What if I tell you I want you?". Her choice of words was rather thought provoking.

"Me? I don't understand," Xiang Shaoyun said.

"Everyone knows you have a high-grade nine-star physique. One can say that you have the strongest physique a human can possibly have. Even my physique is inferior to yours. For the Glacier Palace, if you join us, it will be akin to adding a pair of wings to a tiger. Of course, the premise for that is for you to focus on cultivating only one power from now on," said Han Chenfei.

Xiang Shaoyun smiled helplessly. "If I am willing to do that, do you think I would have been banished to the Back Graveyard as punishment?"

He was indirectly admitting that the banishment to the Back Graveyard was a punishment due to his choice of cultivation.

"Can't that be changed at all?" Han Chenfei asked with a frown.

"No. You should think of a different term," said Xiang Shaoyun solemnly.

Chapter 592: I'm Telling You, I'm Her Husband

"I don't have anything else in mind. But if you really want to save them, they have to become a Glacier Palace member through and through. The way of saving them relates to a secret technique of the Glacier Palace. If that is not possible, you guys can look for a different solution," said Han Chenfei seriously. She added, "It's a pity that they seem to have made up their mind to stick with you."

Her final sentence was making it clear that she would be worried that even after joining, the Han Clan sisters might not stay loyal.

Xiang Shaoyun sank into thought for a bit before saying, "Your worry is understandable. Since that is the case, I will try to think of something else. Bye."

He then stood up, preparing to leave. The price had been named. Too bad it was something he couldn't agree to. There was nothing he could do about that. But he had only taken two steps when Han Chenfei said, "Why the hurry? I never said that I wasn't helping."

Xiang Shaoyun stopped and turned. "Palace Master Han, can you finish your words all at once?"

"What a surprise. You're actually such an impatient person," teased Han Chenfei. "Like I said, so long as they can become Glacier Palace members, I can save them. We don't have to talk about their loyalty for now. You only need to owe me a favor. When I need your help in the future, you can't reject it. Of course, I won't make you do something you are totally against."

Without hesitation, Xiang Shaoyun agreed, "Ok. I agree."

This really wasn't an excessive request. He only needed to give her a promise. Of course, he wouldn't know when he would need to fulfill the promise.

"You're a straightforward person, Young Master Xiang. Go back and tell them to come, then. Remember to explain things to them clearly. I don't want them to keep thinking about you even after coming here," reminded Han Chenfei.

Xiang Shaoyun nodded and left.

Looking at the departing Xiang Shaoyun, a look of regret covered Han Chenfei's eyes as she muttered, "Since ancient times, many have tried creating miracles. But how many of them have actually succeeded?"

After leaving Han Chenfei's villa, Xiang Shaoyun did not return to his villa immediately. Instead, he headed to a different villa. His destination wasn't too far from Han Chenfei's villa. In fact, it stood facing his own villa. It was known as 1 Phoenix Villa, a residence representing a glory that was even higher than Han Chenfei's 2 Phoenix Villa.

Before Xiang Shaoyun could approach the villa, he was stopped. "Who are you? Unrelated individuals are not allowed to approach!"

The speaker was an average-looking woman. She looked to be over 30 years old, so she was most definitely not a disciple of the academy. She was most likely an overseer. It was clear how much importance the academy attached to the owner of 1 Phoenix Villa since even an overseer was made to guard the villa.

Xiang Shaoyun cupped his hands in greeting and said, "Please pass on the message that Xiang Shaoyun is requesting to meet the owner of 1 Phoenix Villa."

Without any trace of politeness, the woman waved her hand and said, "I don't care who you are, but you need to return to wherever you came from. Nobody is allowed to enter without the young lady's summon."

"You sure are putting on a lot of airs. I'm her man," said Xiang Shaoyun as he rubbed his nose.

"Bastard! What nonsense are you spouting!" the woman yelled furiously. A powerful pressure erupted from her and pressed down at Xiang Shaoyun.

"I'm telling you, I'm her husband. It is impossible that she will refuse to meet me. Just go and pass the message," said Xiang Shaoyun loudly, completely ignoring the pressure.

His loud voice successfully attracted quite a lot of attention to him. The people nearby started silently observing what was going on, filling the woman with fury. She was about to teach Xiang Shaoyun a lesson, but it was at this time that he summoned the nether prison devil.

"Not only do you refuse to pass on the message, but you're even thinking of attacking?" Xiang Shaoyun berated the woman.

"Don't think that you can be impudent just because you have a high-level puppet," shouted the woman as she attacked for real.

The nether prison devil puppet charged forth and clashed with her. Sounds of explosion erupted, and the surroundings shook from the impact of the combat. As for Xiang Shaoyun, he took the chance to silently leave, grumbling, "If you don't want me to enter, so be it. Why are you attacking? This is totally unreasonable!"

It was unknown if he was doing it deliberately, but he said it very loudly. After leaving into the distance, he finally summoned the nether prison devil puppet back to him. The woman wanted to teach Xiang Shaoyun a lesson, but she knew that dealing with his puppet would be very troublesome. Thus, she could only stamp her foot in anger and say, "Don't let me see you again, or I'll make sure you suffer!"

As for Xiang Shaoyun, a cocky look covered his face as he put his puppet away and muttered, "I believe news will soon spread that I am the Yu Clan's son-in-law."

The person residing in 1 Phoenix Villa was none other than Yu Caidie. Xiang Shaoyun had not seen her since their previous separation. Now, she was one of the top 10 disciples in the Dragon Phoenix List, and her ranking was even higher than Han Chenfei. It was obvious her strength had reached a terrifying level.

Because of that, many men had their eyes on her. The only reason why Xiang Shaoyun had visited 1 Phoenix Villa was to make his position known, telling his love rivals that she was his and they should forget about her. After all, he could really be considered a Yu Clan's son-in-law.

Naturally, what he did would attract a lot of trouble, but he wasn't afraid. If he couldn't even solve this much trouble, he wouldn't be worthy of Yu Caidie. Currently, Yu Caidie wasn't in the 1 Phoenix Villa. Rather, she was cultivating within one of the academy's unique flame zones.

She was located at a volcanic crater erupting with lava as she battled flame spirits while mounted on a phoenix. The flame spirits were a unique life form created of flame energy. They weren't very intelligent and, like their element, had a fiery temper.

Anyone who approached their territory would be attacked madly. Most of the flame spirits at the zone were at the King Realm, and there were also a number of Emperors, including some who were peak Emperors. One could say that Yu Caidie was rather courageous to explore the volcanic crater all alone.

After parting with Xiang Shaoyun, she had advanced by three stages, reaching third-stage Dragon Ascension Realm. As for her combat prowess, it was now comparable to a late-stage Emperor.

Her weapon moved about without stop as she worked in perfect harmony with her phoenix, killing one flame spirit after another. While killing, she also gathered the flame essence of the dead flame spirits. The flame essence was extremely helpful for any flame cultivator. After a while, she retreated with her phoenix. She was able to leave when it was appropriate without getting too greedy.

As she brushed her somewhat messy hair, a smile bloomed on her face as she muttered, "Want to catch up to me? Work hard, then."

Chapter 593: I Hope You Can Get Through This

After returning to his villa, Xiang Shaoyun called the Han Clan sisters over for a conversation.

"Qianwei, Xuewei, I have already talked it out with Han Chenfei. From now on, both of you are Glacier Palace members. You don't have to stick with me anymore," said Xiang Shaoyun in a forthright manner.

The two were stupefied. They had not imagined that both of them would be given away to someone else after just half a day. Although they knew Xiang Shaoyun was doing this for their own well-being, they still didn't feel too good about it. After all, both of them harbored feelings for him and were hoping to one day be his lovers. If they were to leave him, would they still have a chance?

"Is she the only one who can help us?" Han Xuewei asked as she started sobbing.

Xiang Shaoyun sighed. "Your yin frost aura was born with you, but it is incomplete. If you continue cultivating, it will grow stronger. Even now, it is already starting to invade your bodies. Only by transforming both your physiques into true Yin Frost Physiques will you be able to live past 50. Even 50 is a conservative estimate. There is a chance that you won't be able to live much longer than now, like Han Chenfei had said. For now, I really have no solution. Making you join Han Chenfei is also a decision out of helplessness. I hope you can treasure this opportunity. I don't wish to see both of you die young."

They were both grateful and sad, their emotions mixed.

"Since you already knew this, why had you still decided to bring us to the academy with you?" Han Qianwei asked.

"I guess you can say it was due to the promise I made Uncle Han," said Xiang Shaoyun after thinking about it for a bit.

The words were rather cruel, but he couldn't lie as that was the truth. After all, he did not owe them anything. Rather, he had saved them several times. He already saw them as friends, but he couldn't let that show too much. He did not want them to make a rash decision based on emotions.

The sisters knew that, but after hearing the words from his own mouth, they still felt terrible. They hoped he would lie to them, telling them that he liked them or something. At this point, they no longer knew what to say. After bowing to Xiang Shaoyun, the two left with sorrowful looks on their faces.

Looking at their departing backs, Xiang Shaoyun sighed inwardly, I hope you can get through this.

At this time, Lady Shura walked out from a different room and said softly, "They really like you a lot. Hearing those words from you has hurt them badly."

"Nothing good will come out of not being firm when necessary. They will understand in the future," said Xiang Shaoyun. "How are your injuries?"

"I'm all fine now," said Lady Shura.

"Since that is the case, you should focus on entering the Dragon Ascension Realm. For the coming few days, you don't have to go to the ring with me. Otherwise, you won't be able to keep up with me, and that is not something I want to happen," said Xiang Shaoyun seriously.

"Ok. When I further complete my draconic aura, I will enter the gold zone to attempt my breakthrough," said Lady Shura.

"It will be even better if you can go there after the breakthrough. After all, you are already close to breaking through. If you can calm down and focus, you will be able to advance smoothly. You can then go there to consolidate and further increase your cultivation base," said Xiang Shaoyun. Lady Shura nodded, expressing her agreement.

News of Xiang Shaoyun's visits to the two Phoenix Villas spread over the entire Dragon Phoenix Academy, creating a massive commotion. Both the villas were occupied by the academy's two brightest flowers. Had Xiang Shaoyun set his eyes on both of them?

"That bastard Xiang Shaoyun seems to have successfully met Han Chenfei. Is he going to join the Glacier Palace?"

"I heard that too. It was said that earlier in the morning, Han Chenfei went to watch Xiang Shaoyun's battle. She seemed to have taken a liking to his two followers. Both of them have an ice-related physique that fits very well with Glacier Palace's cultivation method. I heard both of them are now staying in 2 Phoenix Villa."

"Then that explains his visit to 2 Phoenix Villa. But he actually had the guts to claim that he is Beauty Yu's man. Is he suicidal?"

"Yeah. He thinks he can disregard all of us just because he has a nine-star physique? How can Beauty Yu be his? He has to first ask the saber in my hand for permission!"

"Both Beauty Yu and Beauty Han have a lot of white knights. Xiang Shaoyun won't have a good time on the ring tomorrow."

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Sure enough, when Xiang Shaoyun stood on the ring the next day, a large number of challengers appeared, including those at the upper range of the Serpent Fowl List. If it wasn't for the fact that a lot of geniuses were busy cultivating within the unique cultivation zones, there would be even more challengers. All of them adored Yu Caidie and Han Chenfei. Nobody could forgive Xiang Shaoyun for publicly daring to proclaim Yu Caidie his.

That day, Xiang Shaoyun's opponent was someone ranked 507 on the Serpent Fowl List. Someone like this could already be considered an upper-class member of the academy. One ought to know that there were only 100 spots on the Dragon Phoenix List and 1,000 spots on the Jiao Luan List. The rest of the disciples were listed on the Serpent Fowl List, and someone ranked 507 on the Serpent Fowl List was considered the 1,607th strongest disciple in the academy.

As usual, Xiang Shaoyun wagered all the contribution points he had. His challenger met the bet and wagered 30,000 contribution points. As for Tang Longfei, he opened his betting stand yet again. This time, a lot more people were betting at his stand.

After all, although Xiang Shaoyun looked rather impressive, from his previous two duels, his strength did not seem special. Otherwise, why would he have won the two duels with such difficulty?

More importantly, news of Xiang Shaoyun cultivating nine powers had also spread. Everyone started wondering if there was something wrong with his brain. What he did was no different than crushing his future with his own hands. That was the main reason why the disciples no longer feared him.

Xiang Shaoyun would forever be stuck with using only one star, while they could use multiple stars. Thus, he would not be able to gain an advantage over them. More importantly, he was only a peak Skysoar Realm cultivator, his most glaring weakness. To defeat him, someone only needed to have a higher cultivation level and the ability to punch above one's weight.

As for Xiang Shaoyun's previous two victories, everyone believed they were due to the challengers underestimating him too much. But were they right? Nobody would know without personally experiencing his strength.

Chapter 594: Draconic Aura Forming Failure

Three days passed, and Xiang Shaoyun won all three duels during this time. Including his previous two victories, he had now won five duels. His rank on the Serpent Fowl List had now reached 392nd place. On the sixth day since he started his daily duels, there were no longer any challengers.

It wasn't because Xiang Shaoyun was now acknowledged as unrivaled. Rather, it was because a vast majority of the actual experts were in secluded cultivation and were too busy to deal with him, giving him an opportunity to take a break from dueling.

Currently, he was in his villa's gravity room, analyzing all the gains from the five battles he had gone through. Apart from the first battle where he had comprehended some of the profundity of earth, he found that he had not comprehended anything new during his other battles.

That wasn't to say that a problem had occurred with his comprehension capability. Rather, the profundity of the elements represented absolute truth. Apart from comprehension capability, one also needed an accumulation of experience before comprehending the truth of the elements.

As for his feat of comprehending the profundity of earth, apart from luck, it was also due to the fact that earth was everywhere. So long as one lived on the land, one would be able to sense the boundless power of earth. As for the other powers, although they were also present in the air, they could never be felt as vividly as the earth. In a way, this was an environmental factor.

Xiang Shaoyun had just come to understand this point. For example, flame cultivators would be stronger in an area with a dense flame element. That was the so-called environmental factor at work. In other words, to comprehend the profundities of the elements, one had to become one with the world.

Of course, Xiang Shaoyun had still gained a lot from the battles. He gained firsthand experience of the tricks the young geniuses had up their sleeves. Almost all of them were capable of punching above their weight. From that, it could be seen that the so-called geniuses of the dominion were really quite capable.

If it wasn't for his superiority in speed and the teachings from the gravekeeper elder, it would be almost impossible for Xiang Shaoyun to defeat his opponents by relying on a single power. For

now, he did not want to focus too much on the profundity of the elements. He wanted to first grow his cultivation level. That way, he would be better equipped to face his coming trials.

He was sure that the next time a challenger appeared, that challenger would be much stronger than those he had faced thus far. Seated in the cultivation room, he started circulating his nine astral energies again and again.

Apart from gravity suppression, a powerful presence suppression existed in the room as well. The environment here was similar to the stairs he had climbed when taking the academy entrance test; the only difference was that the room's presence suppression was much harsher.

In such an environment, the energy he gained during cultivation would be purer and stronger. This was a unique benefit only core disciples could enjoy. As Xiang Shaoyun circulated his energies, he found that his accumulation had reached a critical point. He could now attempt to transform his energies into draconic aura and get started on reaching the Dragon Ascension Realm.

As for how the draconic aura could be formed, that relied on one's grasp on one's astral energy. The better the control one had, the easier it would be to form one's draconic aura. One without good control would have a problem forming draconic aura, and by extension, one wouldn't be able to reach the Dragon Ascension Realm. That was the main reason why so many peak Kings were stuck at the same cultivation level for life.

The so-called Dragon Ascension was a process of condensing one's energy into a dragon. With a spine akin to a dragon, one could soar above the sky and become an Emperor among humans.

After gathering the energies of his nine stars, Xiang Shaoyun attempted to transform them into draconic aura. However, the process wasn't smooth, and he kept failing as if he was unable to find the trick of success.

Initially, he suspected that his failures were due to the fact that his Heaven Conquering Overlord Manual was incomplete. But he then recalled that the version he had should be sufficient for him to reach peak Emperor. Thus, it couldn't have been the cultivation method.

Ultimately, he concluded that the failures were due to his insufficient grasp on the powers he cultivated. At that realization, he calmed down and started studying all his powers once again, practicing his control of each, one by one. The so-called control wasn't as simple as wielding them. Instead, he needed to control the powers' every detail, using them like they were an extension of his body, fully becoming one with them.

He had the best control over the power of lightning, which was the first power he cultivated, followed by the powers of gold and flame. As for the other powers, he needed more time to improve his control over them. He spent an entire month before he was done deepening his control over all nine powers.

It was worth noting that if not for the Nether Soul Domain and filthless soul that gave his comprehension a boost, he would have taken a much longer time. However, this was only a tiny issue for one cultivating nine powers. The biggest issue was the act of fusing all nine powers together to form draconic aura. Forming his draconic aura with only one power would not work in this situation.

Xiang Shaoyun's spine was an innate lightning bone covered in dragon scales. That was why he was able to form dragon projections after he had gained control over the power of presence. But that dragon projection wasn't exactly draconic aura. The very nature of the two was different.

Xiang Shaoyun tried using his lightning power as the base for the other eight powers to work on, but he still failed, as the nine powers still separated at the end. He had no way of forming his draconic aura. Even with great control over his nine powers, he still encountered the same result, and it filled him with indignation.

If he couldn't form his own draconic aura, he wouldn't be able to transform his astral energy. In that situation, his cultivation level would be stuck. Finally, he recalled the ancient mantra. When he tried using the mantra while fusing the nine powers, something unexpected happened. The nine powers indeed fused, but something crucial still seemed to be missing, preventing a complete fusion.

However, Xiang Shaoyun had still gained some vague insight during the process, an insight that signified that he would be able to fully display the strength of the nine powers in the future. It was also closely related to whether he would be able to proceed further in his path of cultivation. After spending some time in thought, he shifted his focus to his astral cosmos sea.

In the records he had read, the astral cosmos sea was something a cultivator formed to serve as a special storage space. However, he had not once read that the astral cosmos sea could also store life. His astral cosmos sea was obviously different from others', as he could store living beings in it. It seemed more like an independent space filled with vitality.

He had never understood the reason. But now, he started having a feeling that to form his own draconic aura, he would have to do it through the astral cosmos sea because a complete fusion of the nine powers had never succeeded outside of it.

Inside the astral cosmos sea, however, the nine powers seemed capable of changing automatically, turning into the nine-colored fog that could also be considered a new power that was a perfect fusion of the nine powers. That new power represented both life and destruction. Additionally, the new power was also capable of unleashing an unimaginable might.

Chapter 595: Ninety Percent Draconic Aura

Sure enough, after Xiang Shaoyun channeled the nine energies into his astral cosmos sea, the energies transformed into the nine-colored fog. This was completely unlike the situation outside the astral cosmos sea where the nine energies refused to mix. He then extracted the nine-colored fog and sent it to his spine.

His spine was also his lightning bone, but many of his other bones had also turned purple. Once all his bones turned purple, he would possess the strongest Lightning Bone Physique of the Xiang Clan. It was the Xiang Clan's legendary physique, one that, apart from the clan's ancient ancestor, only Xiang Dingtian had ever possessed.

It was not something Xiang Shaoyun was deliberately working toward. After all, he did not have a good opinion of the lightning bone. Or, to be precise, he did not have a good opinion of the Xiang Clan's bloodline. Otherwise, he would have stuck with cultivating only the lightning power long ago.

When the nine-colored fog reached his spine, the nine stars started flickering in unison. As he circulated his cultivation method, the nine-colored fog started transforming into draconic aura.

"Roar!"

Suddenly, the lightning bone's purple dragon roared and started fusing with the newly formed nine-colored draconic aura, helping increase the speed at which the draconic aura formed and grew. At the tip of the spine, the draconic aura surged with power. His spine, which seemed to have transformed in a dragon's spin, released the vivid projection of a dragon.

Swish! Swish!

The draconic aura formed without stopping. From 10 percent, it reached 20 percent, then 30 percent, and continued until 90 percent when Xiang Shaoyun forcefully stopped it. The speed at which his draconic aura formed stunned Xiang Shaoyun.

He had thought that he would be lucky to form even 10 or 20 percent of his draconic aura. However, its completion rate had actually shot straight to 90 percent, almost reaching 100 percent and directly breaking through into the Emperor Realm.

As for why he suppressed his draconic aura instead of breaking through, it was because he was wholly unprepared to attempt a breakthrough. He needed to first reach optimal condition, and he wasn't sure what would happen if he made the attempt now. When he observed the newly formed draconic aura, he found that it was a colorful dragon that looked very different from what others had. It exuded a divine sensation.

Overjoyed, Xiang Shaoyun muttered to himself, "This is the draconic aura formed of nine energies. Looks like the astral cosmos sea is crucial for cultivating nine powers."

Prior to this, he was so terrified after listening to the gravekeeper elder that he started wavering in his path of cultivation. Now, he had once again reaffirmed his chosen path, and nobody would be able to change his mind anymore.

After a month, Xiang Shaoyun finally ended his seclusion. There was now something different about his temperament, a change brought about by the forming of his draconic aura.

After taking a bath, he looked at his empty villa and sighed, "Looks like I need to find a butler that can look after the villa for me."

The Han Clan sisters had been sent to the Glacier Palace, Lady Shura was in seclusion at her own villa, and Tang Longfei and Ning Wenhuan were busy cultivating. Thus, they weren't able to stay with him all the time. At this time, he forcefully summoned Money and the three birds out of his astral cosmos sea.

"Boss, do you need anything?" Money asked, still maintaining his original form instead of turning into his human form.

"Is the nine-colored fog really that attractive for you guys? None of you ever want to leave!" Xiang Shaoyun asked.

"Yes, it's very attractive. After all, it is a very pure energy capable of advancing my strength and bloodline," said Money forthrightly.

"But your innate element is lightning, whereas the nine-colored fog is formed of nine different powers. Is it really that helpful for you?" Xiang Shaoyun asked in confusion.

"Yes, it is. I don't really know why, but absorbing that energy is really very helpful. Just look at those three. It's obvious. It has only been a year, and they are already at the King Realm," said Money as he swept his gaze at the three birds.

In response, the three big-winged vicious birds cried out cheerfully, expressing their joy. Due to their nature as vicious beasts, their intelligence had been rather low in the past. But now, it seemed like their intelligence had grown considerably and that they possessed a potential surpassing what their original bloodline allowed. That was most likely a benefit the nine-colored fog had brought them.

Xiang Shaoyun was pleased with what he learned. In any case, the stronger the nine-colored fog seemed, the more confidence he had. Currently, he was no longer planning to allow them to enter the astral cosmos sea anymore. He needed to make them accustomed to the outside world, which would be beneficial for their growth.

And thus, Money and the three birds became the villa's guards. Taking the opportunity of the fact that nobody knew he was out of seclusion yet, he went to the academy's Book Pavilion.

During the past four years, he had been focused on cultivation and had not gotten any chances to grow his knowledge. Now that he had a chance, he planned to properly browse through the Book Pavilion. As he walked down one of the academy's serene paths, the disciples walking by recognized him.

After all, he was renowned in the academy for reaching the top 300 ranks on the Serpent Fowl List without being a Dragon Ascension Realm cultivator. That feat spoke volumes about his capabilities.

Many of them quickly spread the news so the geniuses who had recently left seclusion could challenge Xiang Shaoyun. It was as if everyone was in a rush to beat him down before he could enter the Dragon Ascension Realm. If they waited until he entered the Dragon Ascension Realm, probably only those freaks on the Jiao Luan List would be able to deal with him.

As Xiang Shaoyun walked, numerous people pointed at him and whispered, but he did not seem to care. Rather, he flashed each of them a friendly smile. When the female disciples received his smile, they became smitten.

"Hey, did you see that? Xiang Shaoyun smiled at me. Has he taken a liking to me? What should I do? I'm not ready yet!"

"Which eye are you using to see that he looked at you? He was obviously looking at me! He must have fallen for me. Although his strength is nothing impressive, he is still quite good looking. If he can confess to me, I won't mind forcing myself to accept him. I am not very good at saying no."

"I have seen a lot of shameless people, but not someone as shameless as you. You rank below 3,000 on the Serpent Fowl List, and look at how flat your figure is! And you actually have the gals to complain about Xiang Shaoyun? Are you not disgusted by yourself?"

"Hey, I think he likes me. Maybe if I take the initiative, I will be able to make him bow before my skirt."

...

Xiang Shaoyun heard everything, and his mood improved. No men disliked receiving the adoration of women. Soon, he arrived before an imposing building. He could sense powerful auras concealed all around the building. He could also sense that a powerful and complicated formation was protecting the building. This place was one of the most important locations within the Dragon Phoenix Academy, the Book Pavilion.

Chapter 596: Book Pavilion

Although it couldn't be said that the Dragon Phoenix Academy's Book Pavilion contained all the books in the world, it definitely had a massive collection of books that ordinary organizations couldn't compare with.

Xiang Shaoyun was a well-read person, but the Ziling Sect was a relatively young organization despite being tier-7. Thus, the collection of books it had was slightly lacking compared to older tier-7 organizations even though they had a better collection than most tier-5 and tier-6 organizations.

It had been a few years since Xiang Shaoyun had gotten the chance to properly read some books. Thus, he wanted to make use of the free time he had to stuff his brain with more knowledge.

As he grew in strength, he found that his understanding of the dominion was still incredibly shallow. He believed that the Dragon Phoenix Academy would be able to make up for his lack of knowledge.

When he arrived at the Book Pavilion, he found an old man seated on a lounge chair with his eyes shut in rest, his hand slowly waving a feather-fan, looking incomparably relaxed and carefree.

Xiang Shaoyun saluted the old man as he said, "Lord, this kid wishes to enter the Book Pavilion and read some books."

Without bothering to open his eyes, the old man said, "Read the instructions beside me."

Only then did Xiang Shaoyun see the notice hanging on the side of the door. He started reading the contents of the notice. A look of astonishment covered his face as he cursed inwardly, This is too much of a scam!

The contents of the notice were quite simple. For two hours of reading on the first floor, 500 contribution points were required. For an entire day of reading, 6,000 contribution points were required. The second floor was even more expensive. Two hours required 2,000 contribution points. On the third floor, two hours required 10,000 contribution points. On the fourth floor, two hours required 100,000 contribution points. As for the fifth floor, the price tags listed were in the millions...

If the price listed was for an entire day of reading, it would be much more acceptable. It was excessively expensive for only two hours of reading. One ought to know that just to finish reading a simple book or a battle technique, a long period of time was required even for geniuses.

Since the Dragon Phoenix Academy set their prices in accordance to reading time, things could get very expensive. After winning five battles in a row, Xiang Shaoyun's contribution points had increased from 10,000 to 320,000. That was quite a large sum of wealth for many disciples. However, that was only enough for six hours of reading on the fourth floor.

Xiang Shaoyun said to the old man, "Lord, I understand. This is my jade plate. Please take it."

He then placed his jade plate on the table before entering the Book Pavilion. The moment he entered, he sensed that he had arrived within a unique space completely isolated from the outside world.

He was dazed when he saw the rows upon rows of neatly arranged books. There were probably at least 100,000 books. The Dragon Phoenix Academy indeed lived up to the name of being one of the Four Great Ancient Academies. No ordinary organization would have such an abundant collection.

Xiang Shaoyun gulped as he quickly started browsing through the bookshelves. He found that each shelf was clearly labeled, such as historical records, general records, battle techniques, cultivation methods, and so on. Each shelf was its own category.

However, the battle techniques and cultivation methods weren't of a high tier. All of them were tier-5 books. For the academy's genius disciples, such battle techniques and cultivation methods didn't mean much. Their only value was to serve as a reference during cultivation.

After all, the different battle techniques were akin to different routes to the same destination. Those high-tier battle techniques were mostly a product of improving the low-tier battle techniques. That was why these low-tier battle techniques were even collected here.

Xiang Shaoyun understood that very well, but he really wasn't very interested in them. He cared more about the historical records, the general records, and the books containing information of the numerous races in existence. He calmed down, took one of the books, and started reading it with rapt attention.

It was unknown if Xiang Shaoyun simply did not care about the contents of the book in his hands or if he was trying to save time, but his reading speed was extremely fast. He looked like he was simply flipping through the pages in a rush instead of properly reading the book.

In truth, Xiang Shaoyun possessed a photographic memory. It was an ability he had since young. He suspected it was one of the talents that the Nether Soul Domain had granted him. Despite his rapid browsing, after a day, he was only able to memorize a tiny portion of the books available.

Even so, he still felt the price he had paid was worth it. That was because the collection was very well-rounded. Regardless of whether it was an event from ancient times or recent times, detailed records were available, allowing him to understand the things he never had a chance to know before. More importantly, he had also finally found the records concerning the Imperial Nether Clan.

About 500,000 years ago, a massive war erupted between the humans and the devils. During that war, the Imperial Nether Clan broke through humanity's defensive line, resulting in a portion of the

Imperial Nether Clan members settling down on the surface world, snatching a piece of territory for themselves in the dominion.

However, after snatching the territory, the Imperial Nether Clan lived peacefully and didn't clash too much with the humans. Even though the humans tried to encircle and destroy them many times, the Imperial Nether Clan focused on defense and did not launch any intense counterattacks.

In fact, the repeated clashes taught the humans how strong the Imperial Nether Clan was, and they eventually lost their courage to keep attacking. Instead, they reached an agreement to coexist in peace.

In truth, the humans had a different plan in mind for the Imperial Nether Clan. They hoped to obtain the bloodline of the Imperial Nether Clan, stealing their unique talents. Unfortunately, the Imperial Nether Clan prohibited marriage with a different race. Thus, the humans failed at their scheme.

After learning all that, Xiang Shaoyun felt himself grow calmer. All along, he had been worried that others would discover his devil bloodline, but it seemed the grudge between the humans and the Imperial Nether Clan wasn't as bad as he had believed. Things would be much more flexible then.

However, he was still puzzled about his mother's identity. Was she a member of the surface Imperial Nether Clan or the Devil Domain's Imperial Nether Clan? His father was probably the only person that could answer the question.

Apart from that, Xiang Shaoyun also learned that the bloodlines of the Undying Devil Clan and the Imperial Nether Clan were among the strongest bloodlines in the world. The unique undying trait was one of the strongest and most mysterious bloodlines in existence.

During one of the many wars between the dominion and the Devil Domain, some Undying Devil Clan members appeared and slaughtered a massive number of human experts. If it wasn't for the fact that the humans also had their own super experts, the dominion would have been conquered by the devils long ago.

Of course, the so-called dominion and Devil Domain was merely a part of the world, not the entirety of the world. Beneath the vast starry sky, there were many other habitable places and numerous other races in existence.

Chapter 597: Don't You Have Any Finesse?

Xiang Shaoyun spent three days on the third floor. Over the three days, he had read a large number of books, enriching his brain with knowledge. He now had a general understanding of what was commonly known and the many organizations of the dominion. All that knowledge would benefit him in the future.

After all, as he grew in strength, he could no longer focus on a single city or region. After regaining what was rightfully his, he would most likely travel across the dominion to expand his horizons. Of course, that was all for the future.

During these three days, many people were looking for him. A large number of them wanted to challenge him, as Xiao Wei had just announced that those on the Jiao Luan List could now challenge him as well. Those who could defeat Xiang Shaoyun would gain 1 Dragon Villa in addition to a reward of one million contribution points. It drove a lot of people crazy.

Just 1 Dragon Villa alone was enough to attract the envy of many, and now, one million contribution points were added to sweeten the deal. Not even those on the Jiao Luan List could easily accumulate that many contribution points. Everyone guessed that this was probably the academy's trial for Xiang Shaoyun to see if he was worthy of staying at 1 Dragon Villa.

Whatever the reason, everyone wanted to be the first to locate Xiang Shaoyun and defeat him. When Xiang Shaoyun learned of that at the Book Pavilion, he was dumbstruck. He couldn't help cursing inwardly, Others can earn one million contribution points after defeating me, yet I don't get anything out of defeating my opponents? How am I supposed to make a living?

He did not mind the challenges. He only minded the fact that the same reward wasn't offered to him. At that thought, he had the urge to look for Xiao Wei and reason with him, but then he realized that he had no idea where to find Xiao Wei. More importantly, he did not have the guts to storm the meeting hall himself since he wasn't qualified to go there without being summoned.

Helpless, he was forced to spread the news that he would not be accepting the challenges from those who couldn't wager at least 200,000 contribution points. Since the academy wasn't offering him any rewards, he could only rely on his own hard work to make some contribution points.

Not long after Xiang Shaoyun made the announcement, he received a challenge. The challenger was Lin Yang, someone within the Serpent Fowl List's top 100. During the physique test, it was revealed he had a primary-grade seven-star physique. He also possessed an Innate Flame Physique and was a core disciple.

Lin Yang was 30 years old. Thus, he was very glad that he was able to join the Dragon Phoenix Academy before he became too old to join. He wasn't from an influential and rich family. However, he had always worked hard on cultivation. He was now a peak first-stage Dragon Ascension Realm cultivator. He only needed to take one more step forward to reach the second stage. He could then start challenging those on the Jiao Luan List.

In truth, his combat prowess wasn't much weaker than those at the bottom of the Jiao Luan List. He was only challenging Xiang Shaoyun because he was a member of Flaming Sun. His mission was not only to defeat Xiang Shaoyun but also to recruit him into the Flaming Sun. That was Li Li's idea. She believed Lin Yang would be able to complete this mission.

On the ring, Lin Yang stood with a crimson dagger in hand, nonchalantly picking his nails with it, looking completely calm and composed. He wasn't a handsome person, but he had a steadfast face that wasn't annoying to look at. He also had a stern bearing about him, one that many women liked.

Alas, when Xiang Shaoyun appeared, he grabbed all the attention from Lin Yang. Not only was Xiang Shaoyun handsome, but he also had a graceful temperament that many women liked. He exuded the feeling that he was the son of a god, and nobody was worthy of competing against him. One could say that Xiang Shaoyun was starting to shine like a star. Although his brilliance wasn't exactly unrivaled among his peers, few could compare with him.

"Do you have 200,000 contribution points prepared? If not, I won't waste any time with you," said Xiang Shaoyun the moment he stepped onto the ring.

Lin Yang's face turned ghastly as he cursed inwardly, Don't you have any finesse? Why is this the first thing you ask?

"Yes. Win it from me if you can," said Lin Yang as he played with the dagger in his hand. The dagger shone with a dazzling crimson radiance, revealing that it was not an ordinary weapon.

"Good. I hereby announce that those with 200,000 contribution points are allowed to challenge me. Today, this young master will be staying on the ring. Let's see if anyone can make me leave the ring," said Xiang Shaoyun with a look of madness.

For some reason, after discovering the academy's new announcement regarding him, anger welled up within him. He decided he was not going to remain low-profiled any longer. Otherwise, everyone would think they could bully him. He wanted to prove to the grand elders that his choice of cultivating nine elements was not wrong.

An uproar erupted among the crowd when they heard his announcement.

"Has he gone mad? Does he really think he's undefeatable? That is no different than suicide!"

"Yeah, with his combat prowess, fighting a battle or two in a row will be fine. Any more than that will probably exhaust him to death. Is he deliberately setting himself up for a defeat because he can't take the pressure anymore?"

"Looks like he has gone mad from being driven into a corner. But that's good as well. Although he has an impressive physique, cultivating nine powers is the same as destroying his own future. Now would be a good chance to teach him a lesson and make him restart his cultivation from scratch. He might still have a chance to rise in the future instead of wasting his physique away like this."

"Let's see if he can even survive Lin Yang's challenge."

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"Are you saying that your victory against me is certain?" asked Lin Yang with a frown.

"Why are you asking a question you already know the answer to?" said Xiang Shaoyun with a shrug.

"You're courting death!" Lin Yang shouted as he erupted with power and flooded the ring with a boundless flame power. Unfortunately, Xiang Shaoyun moved in advance before he could attack.

Overlord's Nine Nether Steps.

Moving like the wind stage, flawless mastery.

As he drew from his wind star, the yin devil wind's power started coursing through his body. With his exquisite footwork and footwork intent, he transformed into wind and instantly appeared beside Lin Yang.

Seven Scorching Sun Claws!

No longer hiding anything, he converged Yun Flame's power around his palms and clawed at Lin Yang. The might of the Seven Scorching Sun claws had increased substantially after he had gained the teachings of the gravekeeper elder. The attack was clean and efficient, each motion flowing smoothly and erupting with abundant power as it shot towards Lin Yang's vitals.

Lin Yang had not expected Xiang Shaoyun's attack to come so quickly. Its speed was already comparable to a fourth-stage Emperor. Before he could even react, red bloomed from his body.

Chapter 598: Step Suppression

Lin Yang was having a terrible time. He had thought that he could defeat Xiang Shaoyun easily. But when Xiang Shaoyun attacked, he couldn't even react before he was hit. The claw attack sliced his undefended arm, tearing his flesh apart and leaving wounds deep enough to show his bone. Before he could even do anything with his dagger, it left his grip.

Xiang Shaoyun's other hand reached for Lin Yang's neck. Before Lin Yang could do anything, Xiang Shaoyun grabbed his neck, digging in his five fingers. So long as Lin Yang tried anything, he would be immediately killed. One should never doubt Xiang Shaoyun's ability to kill in this situation, or one would suffer gravely for it.

Looking at Lin Yang coldly, Xiang Shaoyun declared, "You lost."

Lin Yang met Xiang Shaoyun's gaze with indignation, his eyes filled with fury. He wanted to put his life on the line and try resisting, but when he sensed the forceful grip on his neck, his fury slowly vanished. A chill then crept up his spine, reaching deep into his marrow. It was the sensation that he was hovering on the edge of life and death. He no longer dared to resist.

He even lost the courage to meet Xiang Shaoyun's gaze, and his presence dispersed. With great difficulty, he said, "I-I lose."

He was sure that a single word of disobedience would get him killed. Sure, killing was prohibited in the academy, but what if an accident happened? Lin Yang did not dare to joke around with his life.

The crowd was completely dumbfounded by what just happened. They had never imagined that the battle would end so quickly. Only a single move was used, and this expert on the Serpent Fowl List's top 100 was defeated. Was there a scheme at play?

One ought to know that during Xiang Shaoyun's previous five battles, he had won each of them with great difficulty. Lin Yang was obviously much stronger than the previous opponents, and the crowd found it hard to believe that Lin Yang would be defeated so quickly. Only after Lin Yang transferred 200,000 contribution points to Xiang Shaoyun did an uproar erupt among the crowd.

"What happened? Lin Yang was defeated? How is that possible?"

"Xiang Shaoyun's speed was so fast. I couldn't even see what he did! Is that his actual speed? That must be the case. Lin Yang had been too careless!"

"That's probably the case. Xiang Shaoyun had attacked unexpectedly and gained a major upper hand over his opponent."

"What do you know? Xiang Shaoyun is obviously pretending to be weak to catch his opponent by surprise. He has fooled all of us. His true strength is definitely terrifying. The academy wouldn't have allowed the experts on the Jiao Luan List to challenge him otherwise."

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Xiang Shaoyun ignored all the discussions and asked, "Who's next?"

After visiting the Book Pavilion, he had realized he had too few contribution points. Only by gathering more contribution points would he be able to read more ancient texts.

"Zhao Ritian, your turn," said Di Shang, standing in the corner.

"Sure, but remember what you promised me," said the other person, his voice tinged with a slight arrogance.

"Don't worry. So long as you can defeat Xiang Shaoyun, I will be able to convince my brother. You will receive an answer you're pleased with," said Di Shang.

"Good. Let me kick Xiang Shaoyun away on your behalf then," Zhao Ritian conceitedly said as he started walking on empty air and heading toward the ring.

Once Zhao Ritian landed on the ring, he said, "I, Zhao Ritian, shall be your challenger."

He ranked in the top 50 on the Serpent Fowl List and had recently advanced into second-stage Dragon Ascension Realm. He hadn't gotten the chance to climb higher in the ranking list before Di Shang invited him over to provide support.

These genius disciples were all capable of fighting those two or three stages higher. Thus, Zhao Ritian's combat prowess was most likely above Lin Yang's. Although he had joined the Di Alliance, he was not required to obey Di Shang with his strength, even if Di Shang was Di Lin's elder brother. Therefore, Di Shang had to agree to a few conditions to receive his help.

Xiang Shaoyun lifted his brow and asked, "Do you have 200,000 contribution points?"

"Hehe, I won't embarrass myself by coming without the points. Bring it on. Let me witness how impressive a nine-star physique is," said Zhao Ritian with a sneer.

"Sure. Open your eyes wide and witness me," said Xiang Shaoyun. Instead of attacking unexpectedly as he had in his previous battle, he stepped forward and faced Zhao Ritian head on.

Abruptly, an inconceivable presence swept out of his body as the projections of a roaring dragon and a roaring tiger appeared behind him. In his head, his filthless soul emanated waves of spiritual presence. The two presences combined and crashed down upon Zhao Ritian.

Immediately, Zhao Ritian felt an intense pressure. The arrogance on his face vanished as he erupted with all his strength to withstand the suppression. No matter what, he was a second-stage Dragon Ascension Realm cultivator. He could completely ignore the suppression of a regular fourth-stage Dragon Ascension Realm cultivator.

However, the sensation Xiang Shaoyun gave him was the same as a late-stage Emperor's, or even a peak Emperor's. Zhao Ritian had a hard time dealing with the suppression. Xiang Shaoyun advanced leisurely, but with each step he took, the pressure Zhao Ritian faced became stronger.

"Get out of my face!" Zhao Ritian roared as his seven stars started shining brightly and erupted with full strength. A boundless power surged into the sky, attempting to repel the pressure Xiang Shaoyun was emanating.

Xiang Shaoyun did not seem to care. He took his next step, stepping on empty air. Next, an indescribable power appeared and crashed down at Zhao Ritian. That one step completely suppressed Zhao Ritian's eruption of strength.

"Not possible! Die!" Zhao Ritian was overwhelmed with shock, and he roared and threw a punch at Xiang Shaoyun with all his might.

Reverse Sun!

Strands of extreme yang energy gathered on his fist, surrounding it with a dreadful power akin to the sun. Fist intent further powered his punch, pushing his punch's might to its limit. Just with this attack, entering the top 10 on the Serpent Fowl List was entirely possible for Zhao Ritian.

However, Xiang Shaoyun also ignored this attack and took another step forward. Thunderclaps rumbled as a wave of buzzing silver lightning spread out from him. And with that step, Zhao Ritian's attack crumbled apart.

The crowd opened their eyes wide in shock.

Chapter 599: Too Strong

The punch Zhao Ritian threw was extremely dreadful. Not many people present were confident they could withstand the attack. And yet Xiang Shaoyun had destroyed it in a manner nobody had expected. With that odd step he took, he stomped the punch into nothingness.

That was an exceedingly overbearing display of power from Xiang Shaoyun, especially the lightning power that had appeared. It seemed to be just as powerful as an actual mutated lightning bolt. Zhao Ritian retreated, and a flaming sword appeared in his hand. He attacked once again with another one of his trump cards, trying to defeat Xiang Shaoyun with a single move.

"You dare look down on me? Let me show you my actual strength!" Zhao Ritian roared while withstanding Xiang Shaoyun's pressure. Clumps of flame appeared on his body, turning his entire body red. Power akin to a volcanic explosion surged out of his seven stars, pushing his strength to the peak.

Crimson Flame Slaughtering Sword!

When he swung his sword, the veins on both his arms became visible, as if they were going to pop out of his skin. A flame attack tinged with the power of blood shot toward Xiang Shaoyun from an extremely tricky angle. The attack pressured the people around the ring, causing their expressions to turn grave.

Many of them weren't confident they could survive the attack. Zhao Ritian's attack was comparable to the attack of a peak fourth-stage Dragon Ascension Realm cultivator. In fact, it even reached a level comparable to a regular fifth-stage Dragon Ascension Realm cultivator.

However, Xiang Shaoyun, who was hovering in midair, did not even bat an eye. The projections of the tiger and the dragon behind him grew clearer as his lightning bone rippled with lightning power, causing dark clouds to gather in the sky. Silver lightning bolts rained down.

Xiang Shaoyun took his third step. The entire world shook as a heavy rain of silver lightning bolts flooded the ring with so much lightning that it seemed like a silver ocean had formed. A total of 81 silver lightning bolts dropped, each possessing a might beyond one's imagination.

Each bolt was as thick as a bucket and rained down loudly like a roaring silver dragon. The sight was etched deeply into the hearts of everyone present, causing them so much pressure they could no longer breathe.

Zhao Ritian was supposed to be strong enough to withstand the silver lightning bolts. However, Xiang Shaoyun's steps seemed to contain an indescribable power that made it seem like each step had landed in Zhao Ritian's very heart. Zhao Ritian felt terrible as Xiang Shaoyun's unrivaled pressure crashed down at his willpower.

He clenched his teeth tightly as he withstood the suppression exerted on him. He could not allow himself to fall. Unfortunately, with a berserk rain of lightning falling on him, he couldn't spare the attention to deal with the pressure. Ultimately, his presence crumbled, and everything seemed to fall apart.

Rumble! Rumble!

Lightning flooded the ring, causing the flame from earlier to seem inferior. After a while, all the powers on the ring dispersed, and the graceful figure hovering in midair attracted everyone's eyes. He seemed to have just completed his final step, his foot landing on Zhao Ritian's chest, stomping him into the ring's surface.

If it wasn't for the fact that the ring was constructed of durable materials, the crash would have cracked it into pieces. Not only was Zhao Ritian being stepped on by Xiang Shaoyun, but his clothes had also been reduced to rags. He only had an armor covering his body, and he coughed blood without end, looking incredibly sorry.

Everyone's eyes were wide open in shock, and everyone seemed to have lost the ability to talk. With just a few steps, someone as strong as Zhao Ritian was defeated? The same thought appeared in everyone's minds, This Xiang Shaoyun is way too strong, isn't he?

Xiang Shaoyun then removed his foot and looked at Zhao Ritian, who was badly injured. He said, "It's your defeat. Hand over your contribution points and leave. I'm continuing with my next match. Don't get in the way."

The words infuriated Zhao Ritian so much he coughed even more blood. Not only had he been defeated, but he was viewed with such contempt. How could he accept it? However, it no longer mattered how he felt. He had no choice but to take everything thrown his way. After all, he had indeed been defeated. There was nothing he could say.

Xiang Shaoyun's strength had far surpassed his expectation. Before even entering the Dragon Ascension Realm, Xiang Shaoyun could completely crush him, Zhao Ritian, an Emperor capable of punching above his weight. The thought made him rather sullen. As for Di Shang, he was still in the corner, looking at the defeated Zhao Ritian with a ghastly expression as if someone had slapped his face.

Not even Zhao Ritian can deal with that dog? Looks like I have to think of something else after my brother leaves seclusion. We can't let Xiang Shaoyun keep growing, Di Shang thought before leaving gloomily.

Due to Zhao Ritian's defeat, their previous agreement was naturally void. After transferring the contribution points over, Zhao Ritian staggered off the ring. When he failed to find Di Shang, he cursed inwardly, What an ungrateful bastard!

On the ring, Xiang Shaoyun looked somewhat exhausted. However, his battle intent was still high as he shouted, "The next challenger needs to prepare a bet of 500,000 contribution points!"

He had no choice but to increase the bet. After all, this was much more tiring for him as the defender than for the challengers. He deserved to earn more contribution points. In any case, his challengers would only grow stronger, and they would most definitely be wealthy. When the people present saw that Xiang Shaoyun was intending to continue fighting, they hissed in shock.

"Is he actually a human or not? He's continuing? Is he still hiding his strength?"

"Wasn't it said that cultivating nine different powers would result in a lack of combat prowess? What in the world happened earlier then?"

"No wonder the academy allowed those on the Jiao Luan List to challenge him as well. It turns out the academy actually knows his strength very well. Looks like those not on the Jiao Luan List will have a hard time taking him down."

"True. And the moment he enters the Dragon Ascension Realm, he can probably enter the Dragon Phoenix List immediately. Looks like we can never underestimate anyone with a nine-star physique."

...

With the increased stakes, no new challengers appeared for a while. Xiang Shaoyun did not mind and directly sat down cross-legged on the ring to recover his strength. After summoning the lightning bolts, he had absorbed some silver lightning energy. As a result, his draconic aura had been further refined. It wouldn't be long before he fully formed his draconic aura to enter the Dragon Ascension Realm.

Li Li, who was standing among the crowd, smiled and muttered, "I really want to defeat this fellow personally, but I think I should keep watching and see how many other trump cards he has."

Before Xiang Shaoyun could sit for long, someone shouted, "Xiang Shaoyun, I'll fight you!"

Chapter 600: Suppressing a Breakthrough Opportunity

Xiang Shaoyun fought three more battles, winning all of them easily. All three battles were against the geniuses on the Serpent Fowl List. One of them was in the top 10 while the other two were in the top 50. There were two main reasons they had appeared. They wanted to test their own strength and take advantage of Xiang Shaoyun's exhaustion from his repeated battles.

Unfortunately for them, Xiang Shaoyun had reached a level where he could endlessly regenerate his energy. Any energy exhaustion wouldn't take long to recover. In fact, his cultivation base was also growing with each fight. A freak like him could only be defeated by an expert capable of dealing an overwhelming fatal blow to him in one go.

As Xiang Shaoyun revealed his combat prowess, the entire academy was shocked. Many geniuses on the Jiao Luang List were tempted to challenge him as well. But at this time, Xiang Shaoyun suddenly found that he was ready for a breakthrough. He found it wholly unexpected, and he wasn't prepared to break through yet.

After the repeated battles, he had actually completely formed his draconic aura. His cultivation base stirred, reaching the point that he could barely suppress it anymore. An ethereal nine-colored dragon swayed about behind him, looking incredibly mighty and extraordinary.

The people around the ring noticed it as well, and their faces were covered with mixed emotions at their realization. Many of them were Dragon Ascension Realm cultivators themselves. Thus, they were clear what Xiang Shaoyun's current condition signified.

They became too embarrassed to continue challenging him in this situation, or they would look too much like a scoundrel, and their reputation in the academy would suffer. They knew that the moment Xiang Shaoyun entered the Dragon Ascension Realm, not even those on the Jiao Luan List could be his opponents anymore.

However, Xiang Shaoyun did not seize the opportunity to break through. Instead, he suppressed his draconic aura, compressing it and reducing its completion to 95 percent. In doing so, the dragon behind him became more solid, but he had also forcefully changed the timing of his breakthrough.

The onlookers gasped in alarm when they noticed what Xiang Shaoyun did. They were all shocked at his courage.

"That Xiang Shaoyun actually suppressed his breakthrough? What is he doing? A lost opportunity can't be regained easily!"

"What a freak! He was actually able to hold himself back? He is obviously trying to further purify his draconic aura. That way, during his eventual breakthrough, his foundations will be much more solid, and the process will be much smoother. This frame of mind is remarkable."

"Looks like there is a reason for his strength. We need to learn more from him."

"You know what? I'm done watching. I need to focus on cultivation. This is giving me way too much stress."

...

The one saying that was a genius at the bottom of the Jiao Luan List. After seeing Xiang Shaoyun suppress his breakthrough opportunity, the genius lost all interest in fighting. He turned and left without hesitation.

Inwardly, he cursed, I should just focus on preserving my current ranking. There is no need for me to become someone else's stepping stone.

He was clear that Xiang Shaoyun's combat prowess was not to be underestimated. Even though Xiang Shaoyun couldn't fully unleash the strength of all nine stars at the same time due to cultivating nine powers, Xiang Shaoyun was still not an opponent the genius could confidently take down.

On the ring, after suppressing his cultivation base, Xiang Shaoyun shouted, "Who's next?"

Not only had his condition returned to his optimal state, it seemed to have even grown. His imposing aura was at its peak, scaring many potential challengers away. After waiting for a bit, Xiang Shaoyun left the ring in disappointment. Since he had just suppressed his cultivation base, it was also best for him to not fight again. Otherwise, his cultivation base would probably start stirring for a breakthrough yet again.

He did not intend to advance anytime soon. He wanted to deepen his comprehension of the Dragon Ascension Realm to allow himself to step into the realm naturally. That would be a much more perfect method of advancement. As Xiang Shaoyun left the ring, the crowd split and opened a path for him. Their eyes were filled with reverence. Evidently, his strength had obtained their acknowledgment.

After leaving the ring, he did not immediately return to his villa. Rather, he went to the Book Pavilion again. This time, he still remained on the first floor. For now, he had no lack of battle techniques. What he lacked was more experience and comprehension. Thus, he started going through the books related to what he wanted to learn.

After a while, he found an ancient scroll titled "Serene Clearheart Mantra", an ordinary Buddhist scroll. Without thinking much, he took the scroll and started reading it. He did not have the habit of picking the books he read. Instead, he would memorize everything he could before deciding what to

do with the knowledge. But after reading the Serene Clearheart Mantra, he found that he couldn't shift his attention away.

The mantra was capable of helping one calm one's mind. The incantations were incredibly ingenious and wondrous, as they were capable of entering the depths of his heart and washing away his worries, forcing him into a calm and serene state. He felt like he was lying down below a gentle sun, bathing in the warm rays of light that kept his mind at a peaceful and comfortable state.

His nine stars started emanating numerous mild rays of light, interweaving with each other within his body. They slowly spread throughout him to nourish his meridians, acupoints, inner organs, and so on. Under the nourishment, he recovered from the injuries and exhaustion he had accumulated in his recent battles. His body even grew tougher.

After an unknown amount of time, Xiang Shaoyun finally woke up. When he noticed the changes within him, he was overjoyed. "This Serene Clearheart Mantra actually has such an effect?"

After thinking about it for a bit, he confirmed that the Serene Clearheart Mantra possessed a supportive effect, but it wasn't something he could use all the time. However, after a massive battle or when encountering an intense activity, he could use the mantra to calm his heart and enhance his concentration.

After putting the Serene Clearheart Mantra back on the shelf, he moved on to a different book. The book contained important information all cultivators should know, and it comprehensively introduced each of the different cultivation realms and their key points.

For example, a detailed introduction about the Dragon Ascension Realm, which Xiang Shaoyun was about to advance into, could be found in this book.

Dragon Ascension Realm, transforming energy into a dragon, using the spine as the dragon, nourishing the body with the dragon, transforming into the dragon.

First, one needed to transform one's astral energy into draconic aura. Then, one needed to use one's spine as the starting point to allow the draconic aura to nourish one's bones, inner organs, and body to give one's essence, vigor, and soul the might and vitality of a dragon.

Not only was the draconic aura related to one's astral energy, but it was also related to one's soul power. Only by perfectly combining the two would one be able to enter the Soul Foundation Realm.

It was also noted that excellent control over one's astral energy was required to completely transform into a dragon, soar beyond the skies, and become an Emperor.