

## Overlord 791

### Chapter 791: Exchange of Hearts Between Brothers

"N-Nothing," answered Wu Zhijun with an unnatural expression.

Xiang Shaoyun shot her a glance but did not intend to press her for answers. Perhaps she was finding it hard to believe that he was a Dragon Phoenix Academy disciple. As for Liang Zhuangmin, he completely believed in Xiang Shaoyun. That was the only explanation for Xiang Shaoyun's rapid growth in strength.

"I have long known you are an extraordinary individual, brother. Back then at the Pavilion, you defeated the likes of Lightning Kid even when you had a lower cultivation level. Now that you're a member of the Four Great Ancient Academies, your future will be full of promise," said Liang Zhuangmin sincerely.

Liang Zhuangmin had heard of the Four Great Ancient Academies as well. Back when he was traveling the world, he had heard of the recruitment. But since his strength was still lacking at that time, he wasn't qualified to even take the test.

Although he was also growing rapidly, his growth was still rather slow and lacking in comparison to Dragon Phoenix Academy disciples. Of course, that was mainly due to the lack of resources on his part.

"Let's not talk about that anymore. You two should wash up. Stay here and recover for now. We will think of a way to escape after your injuries are fully healed," said Xiang Shaoyun.

Although he had a lot of things to tell Liang Zhuangmin, this was not the time and place. Liang Zhuangmin and Wu Zhijun nodded and returned to the room, resuming their recuperation.

As for Xiang Shaoyun, he did not wish to learn the old donkey's Great Farting Technique, so he hid at a corner and entered deep thought. With Old Urchin's protection, he would be safe temporarily. He only had to pay attention to Old Urchin's task.

However, he had no idea what the task was. Why would it require the help of an outsider like him? And why was it being kept secret? It definitely wouldn't be anything simple. The only thing he could do was maintain his optimal condition so he could face any challenge coming his way.

In the worst-case scenario, I will have to allow my big brother and my sister-in-law to hide in my astral cosmos sea before I think of a way to escape. I hope things won't come to that, thought Xiang Shaoyun with a sigh.

Two days later, the Coiling Snake people came again. This group was even stronger than the previous one. When they saw the old donkey standing before the mud house, they ignored the donkey and tried entering the house directly.

Tragedy befell them.

The old donkey used the Turbid Origin Gas Technique, blasting all of them away and nearly killing them with the smell. They vomited everywhere before leaving gloomily with explosive hairstyles.

Once again, the old donkey proved to Xiang Shaoyun the prowess of his Turbid Origin Gas Technique with real action. He even urged Xiang Shaoyun to hurry up and master the technique already.

Xiang Shaoyun was completely speechless, and he swore inwardly, I won't learn it even if you kill me!

In the blink of an eye, three days passed. With the spring water and medicine supplied by Xiang Shaoyun, Liang Zhuangmin and Wu Zhijun were almost fully healed up. Finally, Xiang Shaoyun had the chance to spend some time alone with Liang Zhuangmin, and they started chatting about their experiences during the past few years.

From Liang Zhuangmin, Xiang Shaoyun learned about what had happened to Gong Qinyin, Hua Honglou, Zi Changhe, and the others.

Gong Qinyin was a woman he had known during his time at the Martial Hall Palace. There was initially a misunderstanding between them, but they eventually grew to become close friends. He had also given her a promise that if she could enter the Emperor Realm in 10 years, he would allow her to become his woman.

Before Liang Zhuangmin left the Cloud Margin Pavilion, Gong Qinyin had started cultivating the dao of the zither. She was holed up in seclusion, and he did not know much about her progress.

However, she had an excellent master, Hua Cheng, so she had most likely entered the Skysoar Realm by now.

As for Hua Honglou, she had successfully entered the Skysoar Realm after returning to the Cloud Margin Pavilion from the Land of Soul Springs. However, she had been depressed due to Xiang Shaoyun's departure, and before Liang Zhuangmin left, she even reminded him that if he encountered Xiang Shaoyun during his travels, he should tell Xiang Shaoyun to return and visit her. Otherwise, she would give him a hard time when they met in the future.

As for Zi Changhe, he was now an elder of Cloud Margin Pavilion. He seemed to have decent prospects, but since Liang Zhuangmin wasn't close with Zi Changhe, he only knew that Zi Changhe had received the care of the pavilion master. Thus, Zi Changhe would probably live a good life in the pavilion.

Those three were the only ones Xiang Shaoyun cared about in the Cloud Margin Pavilion. After all, Xia Liuhui and Lu Xiaoqing had both already left the pavilion. Liang Zhuangmin had no news about them.

When thinking of Gong Qinyin and Hua Honglou, Xiang Shaoyun had a gentle smile on his face. He looked forward to seeing them again. Perhaps he was now stronger than them, but they still had a significant status in his heart.

Xiang Shaoyun also told Liang Zhuangmin about what he had encountered in recent years, causing Liang Zhuangmin to lament that Xiang Shaoyun's life was much more exciting.

"Big brother, you don't seem confident about sister-in-law? This is not like you!" Xiang Shaoyun shifted the topic.

Liang Zhuangmin had a bitter smile as he said, "Zhijun is much stronger than me. I'm not a worthy partner for her."

Xiang Shaoyun could sense that Wu Zhijun was a fourth-stage Dragon Ascension Realm cultivator, while Liang Zhuangmin was only a peak King. The gap between the two was rather large. Liang Zhuangmin's lack of confidence was understandable. He could also guess that Wu Zhijun probably had a prominent background.

"Even if you're not worthy of her now, it will not stay that way forever. In any case, she does not seem to have the intention to reject you. I believe she likes you as well, and she's only afraid that

you will be pressured, so she hasn't said anything. If you can catch up with her, she will definitely become my sister-in-law for real," Xiang Shaoyun consoled.

"I don't even know how long it will take for me to become an Emperor. I really don't have any confidence," said Liang Zhuangmin gloomily.

"Don't worry, big brother. With me here, I will help you catch up to her in the shortest time possible," Xiang Shaoyun encouraged.

"You have a way to help me enter the Dragon Ascension Realm?" Liang Zhuangmin asked curiously.

"Of course, but I suggest that you not be in a rush to break through. Suppress your cultivation for a bit and take the opportunity to comprehend the profundity of earth first. Here at the Holy Earth Hall, the power of earth is thick. This is a suitable place for you to cultivate," said Xiang Shaoyun. He took out a storage ring and handed it over. There were some gleamstar water, dragon liquid, and emperor-grade earth elemental materials inside. These items would be enough to help Liang Zhuangmin enter the Dragon Ascension Realm in a short time frame.

Liang Zhuangmin was overjoyed when he saw the contents of the ring. A somewhat embarrassed look covered his face as he said, "Brother Yun, these treasures are too valuable. I can't accept them."

"We are brothers. Don't worry. I have plenty more," said Xiang Shaoyun nonchalantly.

Liang Zhuangmin did not stand on ceremony and engraved his gratitude in his heart, hoping to one day repay Xiang Shaoyun. While the two chatted, Old Urchin returned.

This time, he was here with a task for Xiang Shaoyun.

Chapter 792: Lawless and Unbridled

"Come on, kid. Time to get my task for you done," said Old Urchin.

"Senior Urchin, can you tell me what the task is now?" Xiang Shaoyun asked.

"You will know when you're there," said Old Urchin.

When Xiang Shaoyun saw that Old Urchin was still unwilling to tell, he was helpless. After telling Liang Zhuangmin and Wu Zhijun about it, he left with Old Urchin. As usual, Old Urchin had Xiang Shaoyun drive the donkey carriage while he rested inside.

Filled with shame, Xiang Shaoyun sang the Great Donkey Driving Technique song, not daring to meet anyone's gaze. Old donkey knew where Old Urchin wanted to go, so Xiang Shaoyun did not even need to point the direction. In a leisurely fashion, he pulled the carriage to their destination.

Before long, Xiang Shaoyun saw the Holy Hall. Inwardly, he was alarmed, What a majestic palace. Is this the main base of the Holy Hall?

Unsurprisingly, the old donkey headed straight to the palace's entrance. The imposing aura surrounding the palace gave Xiang Shaoyun a shock.

This palace was even more majestic than many buildings in the Dragon Phoenix Academy. It also had a simple yet ancient aura around it, as if this palace was a product of the long passage of time.

Xiang Shaoyun immediately recalled the flawless young lady he had met before. He was confident she was an important individual residing in the palace. Ignoring the strict security, the old donkey strode right inside. In fact, the guards were even deferentially saluting the carriage. Old Urchin's status here was evident.

After entering, they first arrived at a garden courtyard. Numerous side palaces of different styles could be seen, with the main palace located right in front of them. The perfectly straight stone pathway connecting to the main palace was framed on two sides by 108 guards, giving it a solemn and dignified feeling.

Here, the old donkey was finally stopped by the guards.

"Entry into the Holy Hall is not allowed!" a guard shouted.

Old Urchin sat up and shouted, "You bastard, do you not recognize this elder?"

The guard saluted Old Urchin and pointed at Xiang Shaoyun, saying, "Elder, you may enter, but he can't."

"Audacious! He is my honored guest. Why can't he enter?" Old Urchin roared as a powerful aura crushed forth at the guard.

Like a kite with a broken string, the guard was sent flying. This was an important location of the Holy Hall. Combat was prohibited, more so for anything that could cause injury. Breaking this rule was punishable with death, yet Old Urchin had ignored the rule and had injured a guard directly.

Even Xiang Shaoyun was having an odd feeling as he thought, Is Old Urchin here to create trouble?

The other guards became nervous, not knowing what to do.

At this time, a voice rang out from above them, "Old Urchin, you're going overboard."

A figure appeared before the carriage like a phantom. Xiang Shaoyun was unable to see how the person had arrived. It was as though he had appeared out of thin air.

"Hehe, who do you think you are? It's not your place to criticize me. I, Old Urchin, have only left for a few years. The moment I come back, you try to give me a show of power? You're really capable, number seven," said Old Urchin with a disdainful smile on his face.

The old man before them was the seventh elder, responsible for the security of the Holy Hall. He had 18 commanders under him.

The seventh elder's face contorted as he said, "Old Urchin, you are disregarding the Holy Hall's rules. You have committed the crime of disrespect toward the hall master!"

"Ok. You may piss off now. I'll go inside right now and see if the hall master is of the opinion that I have committed a crime," replied Old Urchin unyieldingly.

At that, the old donkey continued walking forward. Fury was apparent in the seventh elder's eyes. He had never expected that the Old Urchin would show him so little respect before so many guards.

Old Urchin met the seventh elder's gaze and said, "What? Are you thinking of having a spar with me? Just with that tiny strength you have, you want to pick a quarrel with me?"

After a slight hesitation, the seventh elder snorted, "This is an important place. I won't fight recklessly here."

He then turned and left without looking back.

Old Urchin sneered, "Hah, you think I, Old Urchin, is a wimp? When I was peeing in the Holy Hall, you were still playing with mud!"

Xiang Shaoyun stealthily gave Old Urchin a thumbs up as he thought inwardly, Truly a lawless and unbridled individual. If I have his strength, I can act so fearlessly as well!

Old Urchin looked at Xiang Shaoyun and said smugly, "What do you think, kid? Don't you think I look so cool?"

Xiang Shaoyun laughed dryly, "Indeed."

"Then you need to learn from me. Don't embarrass me," said Old Urchin proudly. By this time, they had arrived right in front of the main palace.

The old donkey stopped there, not daring to step inside. Xiang Shaoyun got off the carriage and followed Old Urchin inside. Old Urchin walked with his head held high and an air of arrogance around him, as though he was afraid nobody would notice him.

As for Xiang Shaoyun, he tried his best to maintain a low profile. He would occasionally steal glances at his surroundings, and what he saw greatly shocked him.

The palace was extremely expansive and luxurious. The walls were decorated with numerous sparkling and translucent mineral statues. The statues were dazzling, ancient, and filled with a sense of mystery. More than ten pillars of over 100 meters in height formed the skeleton of the palace, while tens of majestic golden seats were spread on the left and right sides of the hall.

The main hall was already filled with a large crowd, and seated beside the main seat at the middle of the hall was a noble woman with a veil. Only her eyes were revealed, and her amber pupils seemed capable of pulling everyone in. Her tall, slim, and curvy figure was flawless.

Many of the golden seats were occupied, their auras undetectable. At this moment, their gazes landed on Old Urchin and Xiang Shaoyun.

"Grandpa Urchin, you're here," greeted the woman seated beside the main seat before Old Urchin could say anything.

Without a doubt, this woman was the same woman Old Urchin had brought back some time ago. She was Tuoba Wan'er, the sole granddaughter of the current hall master.

"Um. If I'm still not here, some people will start bullying you," said Old Urchin gently.

"Old Urchin, what is the meaning of this?" asked the third elder, who was seated at the second seat of honor to the left side of the hall.

#### Chapter 793: War of Words

"Hehe, I haven't even mentioned any names, yet someone is already jumping out? Excellent!" Old Urchin laughed. He gave the third elder his middle finger and said, "Hu Yanbo, who do you think you are? I am precisely speaking of you. You dare force the young lady to get married? Are you eyeing the hall master's position since he is in seclusion?"

Hu Yanbo stood up and roared indignantly, "Old Urchin, don't you dare slander me!"

"Why are you in such a rush to speak out, then? And if you aren't feeling guilty, why is your reaction so intense?" questioned Old Urchin.

"I merely cannot stand your crazy antics. I heard you even harmed a guard on your way in. You are truly lawless! Elders, please execute judgment for his actions!" Hu Yanbo demanded loudly.

The seventh elder, Sha Hanbiao, agreed, "That's right. He is completely disregarding the rules. He needs to be heavily punished."

A few other elders also voiced their agreement. Obviously, Old Urchin did not enjoy much popularity. Xiang Shaoyun could also see that Old Urchin was in a bad position. He started getting nervous as he thought, If this geezer is here to create trouble, he shouldn't have brought me with him!



Old Urchin scanned the elders before roaring with laughter, "Hahaha, you cowards. If you are really that capable, come arrest me. All of you can come together. You think I'm afraid of you guys?"

He stopped laughing, and an insanely terrifying aura erupted from his body. A heavy pressure fell upon everyone present, making them suffocate. The elders all had extraordinary strength, but by himself, Old Urchin was actually capable of suppressing them. It was evident how terrifying his strength was.

"Enough, we still have honored guests here. Are you not embarrassed to get into an internal conflict before them?" an aged voice rang out.

The speaker was the person seated on the first seat to the right. He looked like a senile old man, yet his eyes exuded a sharp glint. With a snake staff in hand, he exuded a dreadful aura.

This person was the first elder of the Holy Hall, number one beneath the hall master in authority. As for Old Urchin, he was in truth the second elder. His position was lower than the first elder, and from that, one could see just how strong the first elder was.

Old Urchin also withdrew his aura and sat down in his seat. He crossed his legs, looking rather lackadaisical. Xiang Shaoyun tried to follow, but he had only taken two steps when someone asked, "Old Urchin, who is this kid? Why are you bringing him to the hall?"

It was unknown who had asked the question, but it was enough to fill Xiang Shaoyun with nervousness. He couldn't even sense the strength of most of the people present. They were definitely freakishly strong experts. Any carelessness and he would be easily pinched to death.

"He is my honored guest. What are you waiting for? Offer him a seat," said Old Urchin unhappily.

"Old Urchin, what kind of honored guest can a mere third-stage Dragon Ascension Realm kid be? Are you joking with us?" said the third elder, Hu Yanbo.

"Only you can invite guests, and I can't? Are you stupid?" Old Urchin scolded. He looked at the first elder and said, "Boss, I'm not kidding. This kid is my candidate to challenge the three trials. Even if you are unwilling, you will have to allow this. Without the hall master around, both of us have the authority to do some things for the young lady."

"With his strength, aren't you being too casual about this?" said the first elder unhappily after shooting Xiang Shaoyun a glance.

"We'll let the young lady decide, then," said Old Urchin.

Tuoba Wan'er hesitated slightly before she said, "I'll follow Grandpa Urchin's suggestion."

Of the many elders present, she was the closest with Old Urchin. Although she had no idea what he was trying to do, she was confident he wouldn't harm her.

"I knew it. The young lady is wise," said Old Urchin. He then shouted at the guard, "What are you waiting for? Get a seat for him!"

The guard did not dare to tarry and quickly carried a golden seat over for Xiang Shaoyun. A table was also placed before the seat, and the guard only left after serving some spirit fruits on the table.

The moment Xiang Shaoyun sat down, he sensed a pair of sharp eyes focusing on him. He raised his head and found that a handsome purple-haired youth was looking at him. That person's face was filled with haughtiness, and his eyes were filled with enmity.

Xiang Shaoyun had no clue what was happening, but he did not show any weakness. He glared back at him before he started eating the fruits on the table.

"Ok. Let's return to the topic. This time, all the elders are summoned so we can talk about the Holy Hall's son-in-law. Based on our past experiences, the son-in-law would usually be the most talented youth of the Holy Earth Hall. But before the hall master entered seclusion, he told us to form more connections with the outside world to build a network of beneficial exchanges with outside organizations. Thus, this time, we will be selecting the son-in-law from the outside world as well," said the first elder solemnly.

He looked at the young man opposite Xiang Shaoyun and said, "The third elder and many other elders had discovered an outside genius, Xiang Zixuan. He hails from the ancient Xiang Clan of the Western Desert. Does everyone agree with this?"

Xiang Zixuan stood up and saluted the elders present, "Xiang Zixuan greets the lords."

He was neither servile nor overbearing, showcasing the grace of someone from a major clan. Xiang Shaoyun had not expected that this young man was actually someone from the Xiang Clan. His gaze turned cold.

His father once told him they were the descendants of the Xiang Clan as well. But due to some unique reasons, his father had to leave the clan, and because of that, Xiang Shaoyun never had a favorable opinion of the clan.

"Xiang Zixuan is a young genius I had personally tested. He is not even 40 years old yet, but he is already a Soul Foundation Realm cultivator. Not only is he brave and good at combat, he is also wise and resourceful. He will be the perfect match for the young lady," said Hu Yanbo.

Sha Hanbiao added, "That's right. Xiang Zixuan is also capable of fighting those three stages above him. This is a rare talent, and both he and the young lady are akin to a match made in heaven."

The other elders looked pleased as well, seemingly finding this future son-in-law agreeable to have.

At this time, Old Urchin said, "This kid looks fancy on the outside, but he is spoiled on the inside. How is he worthy of the young lady?"

#### Chapter 794: This Has Nothing to Do With Me

"Old Urchin, what exactly are you trying to do?" Hu Yanbo shouted gloomily.

"I'm not trying to do anything. I simply don't think this kid is a good match for the young lady. Am I not qualified to voice my objections?" replied Old Urchin.

"You are obviously trying to create trouble," said Hu Yanbo furiously.

"Say whatever you want. You guys brought a kid here out of nowhere. Are you not afraid of leading a wolf into the house? What you did is against the hall master's original goals," said Old Urchin with a sigh. He looked at Tuoba Wan'er and said, "The young lady has the right of opinion in regard to this as well, yet all of you came to this decision without even consulting her. You are treating the young lady with complete disrespect!"

The seventh elder, Sha Hanbiao, spoke up, "We are selecting a good match for the young lady for the hall master's sake, and we are also doing this for the young lady's well-being. How can you call us picking her a good match an act of disrespect?"

"We'll need to ask the young lady about that," said Old Urchin as he looked at Tuoba Wan'er.

Tuoba Wan'er said, "Elders, you have worked hard for the Holy Hall, and you have worked untiringly for my affairs as well. You are all indeed the pillars of the Holy Hall. However, shouldn't we wait for the hall master's decision when it comes to selecting a son-in-law for the Hall?"

The first elder said, "The hall master commanded that the young lady would need to get married before 40 years old. Therefore, we need to select a son-in-law. This is a task entrusted to me by the hall master."

Tuoba Wan'er's eyes rippled when she heard that. With a sigh, she said, "I'll have to trouble the first elder, then."

Helplessness was thick in her voice, and she probably wasn't feeling very well at the moment. Children of influential clans like this never had freedom when it came to their marriage.

"Before the hall master entered seclusion, he told me that the son-in-law needs to be a young hero capable of going through the three trials he had personally created. Only someone who can pass the trials can be the Holy Hall's son-in-law. The third elder has recommended you, Xiang Zixuan as a candidate. Are you willing to take the trials?" asked the first elder.

Xiang Zixuan agreed unhesitatingly, "I am willing."

"Then let's not delay this. Get Xiang Zixuan going already," urged Hu Yanbo impatiently.

He did not want to give Old Urchin any chance to mess this up.

Alas, Old Urchin was firm in his intention to make things difficult for Hu Yanbo. He said to the first elder, "That kid is the third elder's choice, while this kid is my choice. I believe he has the qualifications to be the Holy Hall's son-in-law."

"Haha, with that tiny bit of strength he has, is he not embarrassed about wanting to be the Holy Hall's son-in-law? Old Urchin, are you sick?" Sha Hanbiao roared disdainfully.

"What about his strength? What's important is the fact that the young lady likes him, and he likes the young lady. That alone is enough," said Old Urchin firmly.

What? Since when did she start liking me, and since when did I start liking her? He is obviously pushing me into a pit of fire! Xiang Shaoyun complained inwardly.

He had never imagined that the task Old Urchin had for him was to snatch the bride. If this was a joke, it was a bad one.

More importantly, Tuoba Wan'er was also winking at Xiang Shaoyun as she said, "Yes, I like Shaoyun."

The instant she said that, Xiang Zixuan's gaze locked onto Xiang Shaoyun. If glares could kill, Xiang Shaoyun would have instantly died.

The other elders also looked at Xiang Shaoyun in astonishment, causing him to feel like he was sitting on a pincushion. He really wanted to shout loudly that this had nothing to do with him.

Unfortunately, he did not dare to do so. If he dared to say that, even Liang Zhuangmin and Wu Zhijun would suffer Old Urchin's wrath.

"You hear that? The young lady likes the kid, and he likes her as well. He is also an individual of great talents. I personally think they are a match made in heaven. Excellent, this is it, then," said Old Urchin, his hands waving around excitedly.

"What a joke. This concerns the young lady's marriage, and this also concerns the Holy Hall. How can we be so casual about it?" an elder objected unhappily.

"That's right. Old Urchin, stop creating trouble. This kid will never get our approval," objected a different elder.

A few more elders voiced their objections as well. They clearly had a bad first impression of Xiang Shaoyun. Some were even calling Xiang Shaoyun a boy that still stank of his mother's milk. Finally, the insults crossed Xiang Shaoyun's bottom line.

He stood up, smiled, and addressed all the elders, "Am I really that bad, seniors?"

"If you're smart, you should get lost," a displeased voice rang out.

Seated opposite Xiang Shaoyun, Xiang Zixuan formed a sneer on his face. Inwardly, he thought, Truly a kid that doesn't know the immensity of heaven and earth. But why is he surnamed Xiang as well? And why does he resemble that statue so greatly? Is he related to the clan?

Looking at the elder who had spoken, Xiang Shaoyun replied, "Yes, I am quite smart. I am only a third-stage Dragon Ascension Realm cultivator right now, but I'm only 23 years old. I wonder what your cultivation level was back when you were 23, elder?"

"Impudent! You think you can disrespect everyone just because of the little talent you have? Do you want me to kill you with a slap?" the elder replied furiously, standing up like a cat whose tail was stepped on.

In fact, this elder was someone who had only gotten some achievements at old age. During his youth, he had suffered. Only during his old age when he had stumbled upon a fortuitous encounter did his strength manage to grow to his current level. Thus, what Xiang Shaoyun just said was akin to rubbing salt on his wound.

"Truly an ignorant kid. Have you not heard of young prodigies dying untimely deaths?" said someone else with disdain.

In their eyes, it was completely ridiculous for Xiang Shaoyun to be acting so arrogantly before them.

Although Xiang Shaoyun's feat of reaching this cultivation level at his current age was nothing less than stunning, it was not like they had never seen such geniuses before. A genius needed to first grow, and not all geniuses could grow to reach their potential.

More importantly, none of them knew Xiang Shaoyun. They knew nothing of his origin, and they did not know his relationship with Old Urchin. Thus, it was understandable why they were unwilling to see him fight for the son-in-law's position.

"Sigh. Looks like fellow seniors really don't like me. But my feeling for the young lady is genuine. Dear seniors, please do give me a chance," Xiang Shaoyun pleaded earnestly.

Just a moment ago, Xiang Shaoyun was behaving unyieldingly. But suddenly, his attitude took a 180-degree change. He was evidently someone that was strong in appearance but weak in reality.

"Don't worry. With me here, you will be given a chance," said Old Urchin with an admiring gaze. He looked at the first elder and said, "First elder, both of us have the right to recommend a candidate. What do you think about letting both of them take the trials? The one to get through the trials shall be the son-in-law."

"Fine, since Old Urchin and the young lady approve of him, I will give him a chance," said the first elder with a nod. He looked at Xiang Shaoyun and Xiang Zixuan as he said, "Listen well. To be the Holy Hall's son-in-law, you need to get through the three trials put in place by the hall master himself. If you fail, you will lose your qualification."

#### Chapter 795: Facing the Trials Together

And thus, Xiang Shaoyun became a prospective son-in-law. Of course, this wasn't something he wanted to do, but he had no choice but to play along with Old Urchin and muddle the waters, so to speak.

That was the only way Old Urchin would allow him to survive after all this was over. Old Urchin might seem sloppy all the time, as if he would never be serious. In truth, for people at his level, killing one or two people was nothing.

More importantly, Xiang Shaoyun himself also did not have any good opinion of Xiang Zixuan. In fact, he even found his competitor somewhat annoying.

"Hold on, I don't mind him facing the trials, but what kind of an organization is the Holy Hall? Without any sort of background, this kid will not be a qualified match for our young lady," said Sha Hanbiao.

With that, a series of objections rang out from the elders yet again. One could say that most of these elders were supportive of the third and seventh elders.

"Hehe, who says that I don't have a background?" Xiang Shaoyun smiled. A lofty look covered his face as he said, "This young master is a core disciple of the Dragon Phoenix Academy, the chief disciple of the grand elder."

"Dragon Phoenix Academy?" The expressions of many elders shifted as they heard that.

The Desert of Despair was one of the nine major cultivation grounds of the Dragon Phoenix Academy.

Thus, the academy had long gotten in touch with the Holy Earth Hall. Although the connection did not run deep, the Holy Earth Hall had long known that the Dragon Phoenix Academy was not an organization to be underestimated. They were greatly influential even in the entirety of the dominion.

They had not imagined that this kid actually possessed such a background.

At this time, Xiang Zixuan sneered, "The Dragon Phoenix Academy is only an academy, recruiting geniuses from the entire dominion. However, they would only train their disciples for 100 years. After that, the disciples would disperse and go their separate ways."

He was telling the elders that Xiang Shaoyun was merely trying to scare them with his background, but he would have nothing after the period of 100 years was up. Sure enough, many elders voiced their agreement with his statement.

"You blind fools. You know very well what kind of a place the Dragon Phoenix Academy is. Every single disciple coming out of that place will be a giant among men with boundless prospects. It is the most sensible choice to match the young lady with him. In the future, our Holy Hall will also be able to reach new heights through this union," Old Urchin said.

The other elders were about to say something, but the first elder interjected, "Stop arguing. Let both of them face the trials. The trials won't be passed so easily."

With the first elder making his stand, the others shut their mouths. In the Holy Hall, the first elder was the strongest man after the hall master. Even Old Urchin had to show him some respect.



The elders brought Xiang Shaoyun and Xiang Zixuan to the Holy Hall's rear court. That was where the first trial was.

Xiang Shaoyun couldn't help asking Old Urchin through voice transmission, "Senior Urchin, will this be dangerous?"

Would a trial set by the hall master be something simple? Xiang Shaoyun couldn't stop himself from wondering about that. It was impossible for him to not feel any nervousness when facing such a trial.

"Of course it will be dangerous, but it won't kill. Don't worry," said Old Urchin confidently.

Suddenly, Xiang Shaoyun had a feeling that the more serious Old Urchin was, the more unreliable he was.

Soon, they all arrived at the rear court. The first elder pointed at a room and said, "This is the first trial. Two hours later, the one capable of leaving the room will be considered to have passed."

"Are they going one by one or together?" asked an elder.

The first elder replied, "They will go together."

Both Xiang Shaoyun and Xiang Zixuan stepped forth. When the two stood together, the former looked more handsome and graceful, his unyielding bearing intersected refinement, making him look even more impressive. The latter carried a ferocious air around him, and there was an overbearing look in his eyes that seemed incapable of attracting anyone's affection.

Both were elite prodigies, both with their own pros and cons. Thus, it would be up to their own selves whether they could display their potential and get through the three trials.

"Stop overestimating yourself. The Holy Hall's young lady is not someone you can touch. If you're smart, piss off. I can allow you to live," threatened Xiang Zixuan through voice transmission.

"Those are big words. Let's speak after you get through the first trial," said Xiang Shaoyun, who really couldn't be bothered with bickering with this fellow. He walked straight toward the room.

"Good. I hope you don't die before knowing what happened later," said Xiang Zixuan with a sneer as he approached the room as well.

After the two entered, the elders remained outside, waiting for the result. Although they were all individuals with power and status, they still placed great importance on matters concerning the Holy Hall's future son-in-law. All of them wanted to see if the two youths could smoothly pass the first trial.

At this time, Old Urchin called out toward Hu Yanbo, "Hu Yanbo, interested in making a bet with me?"

"What bet?" Hu Yanbo asked.

"Of course, we're betting on which of the two will pass the trial," answered Old Urchin.

"Ok, I'm in. I'll bet on Xiang Zixuan's success."

"Looks like you're very confident about him. Then I can only place my bet on Xiang Shaoyun."

"Of course. What are you placing as the bet?"

"Well, let's have a friendly bet of one spirit crystal. What do you think?"

"Hehe, you must be joking, right?"

"Wow, you're quite smart! I was joking! A stalk of saint medicine, how about it?"

...

Inside the room, Xiang Shaoyun and Xiang Zixuan had yet to encounter any difficulties. A phantom appeared before them and said, "Welcome to my first trial."

The appearance of the phantom was unclear, and the only thing they saw was a lofty and imposing figure facing them with his back.

Just from looking at that back, they felt some sort of pressure crushing down on them. It was as if they were having an audience with someone of immense power, causing them to inevitably start feeling nervous.

"Greetings, lord hall master," the two greeted at the same time.

"So, both of you are the challengers? It looks like the elders look highly upon you," said the hall master. "This trial is simple. Those capable of withstanding my clone's presence for an hour will pass. I hope you don't disappoint me."

As he said that, an incorporeal presence pressed down at Xiang Shaoyun and Xiang Zixuan. The two felt like the weight of an entire mountain was bearing down on them, making even standing straight hard.

Like a housefly that had been swatted, Xiang Shaoyun was smashed heavily onto the ground. His organs were displaced from the impact, and blood started dripping out of his mouth.

On the other hand, Xiang Zixuan handled it much better. His posture was bent, but he was still on his feet.

## Chapter 796: First Trial

Xiang Zixuan was a first-stage Soul Foundation Realm cultivator. With his talent and strength, he was comparable to the top disciples of the four academies. Thus, it was completely understandable that he could withstand the hall master's force of presence.

The hall master's clone was only exercising a tiny portion of the main body's power to test the son-in-law candidates. This was meant to be a test, and the clone's power level naturally wouldn't be too high.

The pressure he gave off was at the level of a fifth-stage Soul Foundation Realm cultivator. Facing it with his cultivation level of first-stage Soul Foundation Realm cultivator, Xiang Zixuan proved that he had strong foundations.

As for Xiang Shaoyun, he was suffering miserably. This level of power was completely out of his league, and he found himself smashed into the ground.

This was the kind of sensation he felt when he had first entered the Martial Hall Palace's Hall of Gravity. At that time, he had encountered something similar and was faced with a pressure he couldn't withstand.

With his body slightly bent, Xiang Zixuan sneered, "An idiot asking for suffering."

He erupted in strength as he started contending against the hall master's clone in a battle of willpower. However, the pressure became stronger, reaching a point beyond his limits as well.

Why is this pressure growing stronger? Damn it! Xiang Zixuan grumbled inwardly.

Meanwhile, Xiang Shaoyun was having a terrible time sprawled on the ground, feeling like his body was going to burst apart from the pressure. However, he found that the physical pressure wasn't the worst. The mental suppression was even more fatal.

The mental suppression was subjected to his very soul, making it hard for his soul to offer any sort of retaliation. Learning that, Xiang Shaoyun immediately used his soul power to withstand the mental pressure.

This was the scariest kind of suppression, but he was an owner of a filthless soul. His soul had reached the level of a third-stage Sovereign. Moreover, he had the Nether Dragon Soul Headband protecting his soul. Thus, he was more than capable of withstanding the pressure on his soul.

After successfully blocking the mental pressure, Xiang Shaoyun felt much better. It even caused the pressure on his body to reduce greatly. The suppression became less unbearable, and he quickly used a drop of lightning liquid to heal his injuries.

The healing made him feel even better. He was about to stand back up when he saw Xiang Zixua's back bend lower and lower. A massive amount of sweat was pouring out of him. It was obvious he wouldn't be able to last much longer.

"I will hang on!" Xiang Zixuan roared as purple lightning started cackling around his body, allowing him to straighten his back somewhat. But that did not last long as he was smashed heavily onto the ground shortly after.

"Impossible! A mere clone is trying to suppress me? Soul foundation, rise!" Xiang Zixuan howled indignantly and released his soul foundation.

A layer of translucent soul foundation appeared. It emanated a unique aura, and with formidable soul power, it withstood the hall master's pressure, allowing him to slowly get back on his feet.

The soul foundation was something formed by soul power and astral energy. It was a crystallization of a cultivator's accumulation.

Xiang Zixuan's soul foundation was several times bigger than the soul foundation of a regular first-stage Soul Foundation Realm cultivator. From that, it was obvious he was several times stronger than those of his rank, capable of easily punching above his weight.

Once again, he was back on his feet. However, he had exhausted a massive amount of soul power by doing so. It was unknown if he could still last an entire hour after this.

Glancing at Xiang Zixuan, Xiang Shaoyun thought, The Xiang Clan was once the strongest ancient clan of the Western Desert. Although it has declined since Xiang Dingtian's death, which had caused the clan to be besieged on all sides, the clan must have recovered decently after 10,000 years of recuperation.

For some reason, he had mixed emotions whenever he thought of the Xiang Clan. He felt some sort of closeness toward the clan, but he felt even more loathsome toward it.

The tiny bit of closeness he felt probably originated from the blood coursing within his veins, or it was some other reason. In any case, he couldn't get rid of this feeling even if he wanted to.

He threw the matter to the back of his mind and stopped trying to get up as well. Rather, he stayed on the ground. In fact, his rate of exhaustion was much lower sprawled on the ground like that.

This place was, after all, not the Hall of Gravity. He was subjected to mental suppression, and so long as his soul could withstand it, the pressure on his body would be greatly reduced. Thus, he

wasn't feeling much discomfort at all. He only needed to wait until the time was up before standing up and leaving the room.

Sure, he wouldn't look too impressive, but it did not matter so long as he could pass the trial. If he didn't have the Nether Dragon Soul Headband, he would probably be struggling bitterly like Xiang Zixuan.

Soon, an hour was over. Xiang Zixuan was once again sprawled on the ground, having exhausted most of his soul foundation's power.

Now, he was hanging on by sheer willpower. Looking at Xiang Shaoyun, who was sprawled beside him, he muttered, "This kid is already dead. I only need to wait until the time is up, and I will pass the first trial."

The Holy Hall's young lady was incomparably noble. Obtaining her was equivalent to obtaining the Holy Hall's support. Although Xiang Zixuan was one of his clan's most talented youths, he still had rivals back in the clan. Thus, he definitely didn't want to fail on his very first trial.

This fellow sure is resilient, Xiang Shaoyun sighed inwardly.

The hall master's pressure had not reduced with the passage of time. Rather, it grew increasingly strong, gradually reaching the level of a late-stage Sovereign. Even with the Nether Dragon Soul Headband, Xiang Shaoyun could still feel a formidable power surrounding his soul. The pressure on his body was growing as well.

Although the power assaulting him was incorporeal, it still wasn't something even ordinary Soul Foundation Realm cultivators could easily handle.

In other words, the lowest requirement of being the Holy Hall's son-in-law was to reach the Soul Foundation Realm and be someone capable enough to withstand the pressure in this room.

Naturally, there was also the requirement that the candidate must not be too much older than Tuoba Wan'er. Otherwise, one would not be a good match for her. When the time was nearly up, the elders waiting outside were starting to be filled with expectation. Even Tuoba Wan'er was feeling the same.

Although she was the hall master's granddaughter, she couldn't even control her own marriage. She felt completely helpless, and she hoped that both candidates would fail the trial. That way, her freedom would be extended.

And if either of the candidates were going to succeed, she was more inclined to see Xiang Shaoyun be the one to pass. She had already discussed this with Old Urchin. If Xiang Shaoyun succeeded, Old Urchin would be putting him under control. They would be able to drag out this affair long enough to wait for her grandfather to leave seclusion.

It was unfortunate that her grandfather had been in seclusion for more than 10 years. Nobody knew his current status. If her grandfather wasn't in seclusion, she would have a much wider range of options.

Finally, the two hours were up, and the room's door slowly opened.

#### Chapter 797: The Second Trial Begins

The door opened, and Xiang Zixuan was the first to appear before everyone. He walked unsteadily, looking completely drained of energy. Right after he strode out of the door, he collapsed onto the ground. The Black and White Guardians quickly dashed over and held him up.

"Splendid. I knew Xiang Zixuan would pass this trial," praised Hu Yanbo.

"Yes, he's doing very well for someone his age. That is, after all, a trial the hall master had set personally," said Sha Hanbiao with a satisfied look.

The others also started raining praises on him. They seemed to be in a good mood.

Hu Yanbo smugly began, "Old Urchin, remember the bet—"

A second person leisurely strolled out the door before he could finish his sentence.

"If you can't withstand it, don't force yourself. Youngsters nowadays really care about their reputation more than life," nagged Xiang Shaoyun with the tone of an elder.

Xiang Zixuan was so infuriated he was shaking. "You..."

However, he had no words. Although Xiang Shaoyun had remained sprawled on the ground since the very beginning, he had actually stood up right at the end and had easily left the room.

He even wondered if Xiang Shaoyun was cheating, but he did not dare to voice his concern for fear of offending the Holy Hall.

"Haha, well said. Well said. If you're not capable, don't force yourself. I think you might as well give up on the second trial," said Old Urchin with delight. He looked at Hu Yanbo and continued, "Come, remember the bet. Pay up."

Hu Yanbo's mood plummeted, feeling like he had just eaten a housefly.

He replied unwillingly, "Don't worry. I won't run from the bet."

"Alright. Let's proceed with the second trial," said the first elder.

At this time, Sha Hanbiao said, "First elder, should we take a break before that?"

Obviously, he was trying to give Xiang Zixuan some time to recover.

"Hehe, you sure are good at giving a certain someone preferential treatment," Old Urchin mocked.

The first elder replied, "It was not mentioned that breaks would be given in between trials. You two, come with me. We will proceed with the second trial."

Soon, they arrived before a ring. Both Xiang Shaoyun and Xiang Zixuan wondered if they would be required to fight here.

"Kid, you're dead for sure this time," said Xiang Zixuan with a smug grin.

Although Xiang Zixuan had been squeezed dry during the first trial, he had nevertheless benefited greatly from the trial as well. After consuming some recovery spring water, his condition had improved significantly. If this trial required a battle between him and Xiang Shaoyun, he was confident he could slay Xiang Shaoyun with his sword.



As a response, Xiang Shaoyun laughed and said, "Wow, my victory is practically set in stone if this is a duel."

"Ignorant kid," said Black Guardian, who was standing beside Xiang Zixuan.

Black Guardian had a high cultivation level, and he was able to see through Xiang Shaoyun's strength with one look. He did not believe Xiang Shaoyun would be able to defeat Xiang Zixuan. In fact, Xiang Zixuan should be able to win easily. Thus, he found Xiang Shaoyun's words reeking of ignorance.

"You will soon see who's the ignorant one," said Xiang Shaoyun nonchalantly, not bothered to argue.

Standing before the ring, the first elder demanded, "Both of you, step onto the ring."

Xiang Shaoyun and Xiang Zixuan stepped onto the ring at the same time.

On the ring, Xiang Zixuan beckoned at Xiang Shaoyun and said, "Come and die."

Before Xiang Shaoyun could muster a response, the first elder's voice rang out again, "Formation, activate."

Abruptly, curtains of energy rose all around the ring and enclosed the ring entirely. A phantom appeared before the two candidates. This was yet another clone.

"Since you are here, you must have passed the first trial. In this trial, I will personally spar with both of you. I will be restricting my strength to your level, and the one to defeat me will be able to pass the trial," said the clone.

At this time, the many elders outside knelt down and greeted, "We greet the hall master."

"Rise. It seems I have not been forgotten. Just watch. These two kids are somewhat acceptable," said the hall master's clone.

The elders could hear the blame in the hall master's voice, as though rebuking them for selecting poor candidates, or perhaps he was blaming them for presenting him with too few options, limiting his choices. Even the first elder broke out in cold sweat at that realization.

The clone split into two, each facing a candidate as they said, "Come. If you can defeat me, you will pass the second trial."

The two clones were respectively at the third-stage Dragon Ascension Realm and first-stage Soul Foundation Realm, matching the cultivation levels of Xiang Shaoyun and Xiang Zixuan.

When Xiang Zixuan noticed that, he immediately voiced his objection, "Lord hall master, this is unfair."

"How is this unfair?" asked the clone.

"You should treat us equally, not lowering your strength for him. This is unfair for me," said Xiang Zixuan in a manner that was neither servile nor overbearing.

"Hehe, you can earn my approval just by defeating me when we have the same cultivation level. In any case, I hold the sole prerogative to determine what's fair and not," said the clone.

Xiang Zixuan wanted to offer a retort, but he found that Xiang Shaoyun was already making a move on the other clone. Xiang Shaoyun was surprised to learn the nature of this trial, but it was something good for him.

The first trial was challenging enough, but the second trial was against an opponent of the same cultivation level. Xiang Shaoyun had never feared any opponent of the same realm, even if his opponent was the mighty Holy Hall's master.

While Xiang Zixuan was still speaking with the other clone, Xiang Shaoyun did something nobody expected and attacked. He had thought that this would gain him some advantages, but this clone actually reacted speedily. Before his attack could land, the clone had already moved away.

"Not bad. Come at me harder, or you will suffer an ugly defeat," said the clone.

"Hehe, I'm afraid you will be defeated the moment I use my full strength," said Xiang Shaoyun confidently.

The faces of the elders turned unsightly when they heard that. Xiang Shaoyun actually had the gall to look down on their hall master. That was no different than looking down on them, and it strengthened their dislike of him.

As for Old Urchin, he acted as if he wanted to watch the world burn. Roaring with laughter, he said, "I knew I made the right choice. This is how it should be. Beat him up!"

Even Tuoba Wan'er also couldn't help speaking up, "Grandpa Urchin, please don't say that."

The hall master was her grandfather. She would naturally stand on her grandfather's side.

"Not bad. This is the kind of confidence a youth should have," said the clone. With a smile on his face, he made his move.

#### Chapter 798: Battling the Holy Hall Master's Clone

The Holy Hall's master was himself a genius cultivator, one whose legend started during his childhood. He was also lauded as the closest person to the first generation hall master, someone who in the future might reach a height comparable to the first generation hall master.

The clone had his cultivation base suppressed to the level of third-stage Dragon Ascension Realm, but in truth, he was capable of unleashing the combat prowess of a peak Dragon Ascension Realm cultivator.

Instead of trying his best right off the bat, the clone met Xiang Shaoyun with the strength of a late-stage Emperor.

Major Slab Palm!

He used a top-tier emperor technique, releasing a palm thick with the power of earth that pressed down on Xiang Shaoyun. The palm was extremely terrifying. It was as if an entire mountain was collapsing upon him. Rather than dodging, Xiang Shaoyun formed his own fist and punched the incoming palm.

Bang!

The two attacks collided loudly, signaling the start of the battle. The moment the clone attacked, he stopped holding back. The Major Slab Palm lashed about fiercely, forming numerous energy slabs on the ring. It was as if the ring was turning into a completely enclosed space.

The palm attacks were fast and violent and extremely hard to guard against, displaying the hall master's might. This was a combat prowess comparable with any genius disciple of the Dragon Phoenix Academy.

However, Xiang Shaoyun was one of the academy's top freaks. He did not fear taking the hall master's clone head on. Shrouded by the power of lightning, he sent one Lightning Bolt Fist after another, blasting apart the Major Slab Palms around him. His gift of instincts was working at full power, trying to look for an opening.

To his surprise, his opponent had almost zero openings. He was unable to get a hit in, and it seemed his only option was to overwhelm his opponent with pure strength.

At that discovery, Xiang Shaoyun increased the intensity of his attacks. He sent his lightning power everywhere, blasting apart the Major Slab Palms surrounding him to seize the initiative.

While Xiang Shaoyun was using his lightning power, a battle was also ongoing between Xiang Zixuan and the other clone. Similarly, Xiang Zixuan was using his own lightning power. At the sight of that, the elders all had a contemplative look on their faces.

Both these youngsters had the same surname, and they also used the same power. Were they actually related?

Xiang Zixuan's battle with the clone seemed extremely intense, and it did not seem like a victor would be decided anytime soon. Fortunately, the massive ring was now separated into two separate zones. Otherwise, the aftershocks of Xiang Zixuan's battle would definitely affect Xiang Shaoyun.

The longer the battle dragged on, the more ferocious Xiang Shaoyun was. Even the hall master couldn't help praising him, "Excellent. Very strong. I'm going to get serious now."

As he said that, a boundless surge of earth energy converged onto the clone, greatly increasing the clone's strength.

Profundity of earth!

Meteor Fall!

The clone casually activated the profundity of earth, and as his palms waved about repeatedly, the earth energy converged and formed numerous massive meteors that dropped down at Xiang Shaoyun.

The meteor attack had definitely reached the level of a peak Emperor. It was obvious how much of a freak the hall master was back when he was still a Dragon Ascension Realm cultivator.

After all, skipping over five or six stages of power when one was a third-stage Emperor was a feat only achievable by the best of the best, someone with an incredibly bright future.

"Haha, this is more like it. Now, the fight will get more interesting. Otherwise, it will be boring to defeat you when you're restricted to my cultivation level," Xiang Shaoyun roared with laughter as he fully activated his astral energy and lightning bone. At the same time, he also used the profundity of lightning. A storm started brewing in the sky.

Rumble! Rumble!

Like a lightning dragon, Xiang Shaoyun shot toward the clone. His destructive lightning power blasted the numerous meteors apart, opening a free path for him through sheer force. As he neared the clone, he released an overbearing attack.

The clone raised his brow as he pulled in the power generated by the profundity of earth. Clumps of earth energy rose before him to form layers of powerful defenses that met Xiang Shaoyun's incoming fist, creating a series of rumbling sounds.

The defenses were nearly fully destroyed, and at this time, he used a technique nobody had seen coming—Phantom Shift! Instantly, the clone shifted to a different position. An afterimage was left at his original position, making it completely unclear that the original clone had already moved.

Even Xiang Shaoyun had not expected the hall master's clone to suddenly move out of his way. His attack landed on the afterimage, and his back was fully exposed. The clone took the opportunity to release a flurry of attacks toward his back.

A barrage of attacks bombarded Xiang Shaoyun, putting him in great pain. Even his organs were starting to bleed. Evidently, he had been injured.

The clone pressed on, not planning to give Xiang Shaoyun any chance to recover. He attacked with powerful techniques again and again, the might behind his attacks growing increasingly scary.

Fortunately, Xiang Shaoyun's body had amazing toughness. He was able to survive the bombardment without losing consciousness. Otherwise, his defeat would be certain.

The moment Xiang Shaoyun was struck, he shifted the element of his power and used the profundity of earth as well. A gravity field formed around him, forcefully slowing down the clone's attacks.

"Huh? You cultivate the power of earth and have such deep understanding of it as well?" said the clone in astonishment.

The instant the clone was slowed, Xiang Shaoyun shifted his power again, using the profundity of wind. His body turned into a phantom as he reappeared behind the clone. The powers of lightning and wind erupted from him, engulfing the clone in a storm.

Wind and Lightning!

The wind and the lightning were akin to ferocious beasts, shaking the ring with their might.

The hall master's clone reacted speedily, using his Phantom Shift to avoid the attack. Unfortunately for him, Xiang Shaoyun would not fall for the same trick twice. The storm spread and wreaked havoc on a wide area around him, completely submerging the clone in a storm that was roaring like tigers and dragons.

The storm was so thick it was hard for the audience to even see what was going on. Even the elders who were watching found themselves shocked.

"Apart from the power of lightning, this kid also cultivates the powers of wind and earth? And he seems to have great proficiency on all of them as well?"

"Seems like not even the hall master's clone can fully suppress him. That kid obviously has a strong foundation. He is indeed a Dragon Phoenix Academy disciple."

"By combining the powers of wind and lightning, he was able to unleash an attack comparable to a peak Emperor. This kid has some skills."

"Hmph. He will have a bleak future cultivating so many powers. He won't go far in life."

#### Chapter 799: Those Refusing the Advice of the Elderly Will Be the Ones to Suffer

Finally, the storm faded away, revealing the hall master's clone and Xiang Shaoyun once again, both separated from the other.

Blood was dripping from Xiang Shaoyun's mouth, and his expression was somewhat pale. Evidently, he had sustained rather serious injuries. His vicious counterattack had further exacerbated his condition. As for the clone, he had grown translucent and looked like he couldn't last any longer.

"You're not bad, kid. It's my defeat," said the clone with a praising look on his face. Noiselessly, his body melted into the ring.

The eyes of the elders widened in shock. Evidently, none of them had expected Xiang Shaoyun to actually defeat their hall master.

"Haha, good kid. I have not made a misjudgment, after all. You have defeated the hall master," shouted the excited Old Urchin.

"Hmph. Don't talk drivel, Old Urchin. That is only a clone," said Hu Yanbo coldly.

"Yes, but that's still the hall master's clone. A defeat is a defeat. Why can't we talk about it? Even the hall master himself has admitted defeat!" said Old Urchin. "Look, the kid you guys found doesn't seem to be doing well. He looks to be on the verge of losing."

Sure enough, at the other side of the ring, Xiang Zixuan was in an intense battle with the other clone. The clone was holding the absolute upper hand, delivering a punishing beating to Xiang Zixuan.

Before the battle, Xiang Zixuan had used some herbs and spring water to recover to his peak condition. But he was still not the match of the hall master's clone even when the two had the same cultivation level.

It was becoming increasingly apparent that Xiang Zixuan was heading toward the path of defeat. Thus, the third and seventh elders wore ghastly expressions. If only Xiang Shaoyun managed to pass this trial, they would hear no end of it from Old Urchin.

As for the Black and White Guardians from the Xiang Clan, they had awkward expressions. They had never imagined that even with Xiang Zixuan's strength, he still couldn't defeat the hall master when both were at the same level. It was obvious how powerful an individual the hall master was.

Looking at Xiang Zixuan, who was on the verge of defeat, Xiang Shaoyun smiled and said, "Although this fellow is strong, he still can't compare with the hall master when their cultivation levels are even."

So long as Xiang Zixuan suffered a defeat, Xiang Shaoyun would be the sole victor. He believed Old Urchin would stop making things difficult for him after that.

Just as the hall master's clone was about to land a finishing blow on Xiang Zixuan, he changed his weapon. A much sharper weapon appeared in his hand, and a rain of purple lightning suddenly fell down from the sky. A sea of lightning was created as if a natural calamity was happening.

Rumble! Rumble!

Even Xiang Shaoyun was alarmed by the prowess demonstrated by the rain of lightning. In fact, he did not doubt that he would be immediately reduced to nothingness facing that attack himself.

After a while, the rain of lightning finally stopped. With a purple sword in hand, Xiang Zixuan stood on the ring, forcing his body to remain standing.

The clone turned incredibly translucent. Softly, he said, "Pass," before dissipating into nothingness.



"Shit, that kid actually used a saint weapon!" Old Urchin cursed.

Many of the elders saw what happened, and they had complicated expressions. Even so, none of them said anything.

"Since even the hall master himself gave him a pass, there is nothing wrong with using a saint weapon," said Hu Yanbo. He looked at the first elder and continued, "First elder, both candidates are greatly exhausted. Should we give them an hour to rest?"

The first elder waved his hand and said, "We continue with the third trial. Come with me."

He then led the group somewhere else. The others followed, not daring to say anything.

"Hey, if you can't keep up, just give up. Don't force yourself," said Xiang Shaoyun provocatively.

Although his injuries weren't light, he had already used a drop of lightning liquid and some emperor-grade spring water. He was healing quickly, and he was in a much better condition than Xiang Zixuan.

"Dream on!" Xiang Zixuan gave an unyielding response.

He also used some high-tier spring water to increase his recovery speed. He was, after all, a prodigy from the Xiang Clan who had reached the Soul Foundation Realm. Thus, he had his own astral cosmos sea. It wasn't particularly large, but it was enough for him.

"You had such a hard time passing the previous two trials, so you will definitely stand no chance against the last trial. Remember, those refusing to listen to the advice of the elderly will be the ones to suffer," said Xiang Shaoyun with the tone of some senior cultivator.

"You had merely gotten lucky. You have no right to act all smug before me," said Xiang Zixuan as he glared at Xiang Shaoyun.

"We'll see," said Xiang Shaoyun, his head raised smugly.

In truth, he was feigning this arrogance. He felt that the final trial would be the hardest, and he wasn't confident he could get through it. But at this point, it was too late for him to withdraw. Perhaps he would get lucky and pass the final trial as well?

Shortly after, the group arrived at a certain location.

Hu Yanbo asked, "First elder, why are you bringing us to the restricted zone?"

"The third trial will be inside the restricted zone. Wait here, all of you. I'll bring both of them in," said the first elder.

The restricted zone at the rear court of the Holy Hall was a place filled with stone towers. Each stone tower held a different position, and one could easily get lost amid the stone towers.

The forest of towers was actually an ancient formation that contained an indescribable power. With Xiang Shaoyun and Xiang Zixuan in tow, the first elder went deeper into the restricted zone.

"Stick with me, or you'll be trapped here forever," the first elder's voice rang out.

While following behind the first elder, Xiang Shaoyun released the senses of his Nether Soul Domain, trying to map out his surroundings. However, he found that although his senses could spread out, he couldn't study his surroundings. It was as if some sort of power was obstructing his senses.

This is indeed a restricted zone. One won't be able to casually scan this place, thought Xiang Shaoyun.

After a short while, the three arrived before a certain stone tower. This tower was taller than the other towers. They could see numerous green scars on it, and the tower itself emanated an ancient vibe.

"The first one to comprehend the secret of this stone tower will pass the third trial," said the first elder before he turned and left. His words left Xiang Shaoyun and Xiang Zixuan staring at the stone tower blankly.

Both Xiang Shaoyun and Xiang Zixuan were convinced that the third trial would be extremely difficult, and they had braced themselves for whatever suffering awaiting them. Thus, when they heard the first elder, they couldn't believe the third trial would be something with so little danger.

After a momentary daze, their gazes refocused onto the stone tower. Apart from its ancient aura, the tower did not look special at all. The two couldn't make any sense of it. They exchanged gazes but quickly looked away the moment their eyes met.

Xiang Zixuan walked around the tower, trying to see what was so special about it. As for Xiang Shaoyun, he also started studying the tower in detail. However, he failed to learn anything.

"Stop wasting your time. Someone like you won't be able to learn anything. Time for you to get lost," Xiang Zixuan suddenly shouted at Xiang Shaoyun.

"Hehe, if anyone should be leaving, it is you. Don't think you can scare me just because you have a higher cultivation level," said Xiang Shaoyun with a nonchalant smile.

"Is that so? Even if you refuse to leave, I have plenty of ways to kick you away," said Xiang Zixuan coldly as he unleashed the power of his soul foundation. It wrapped around the tower and pushed Xiang Shaoyun away.

Xiang Shaoyun had not expected Xiang Zixuan to have the galls to actually attack. Furious, he shouted, "You're courting death!"

"Don't think that I won't be able to do anything against you just because I'm still injured," said Xiang Zixuan smugly.

Xiang Shaoyun was tempted to release his Nether Soul Domain to confront Xiang Zixuan, but he soon got his emotions under control. Voice calm, he said, "I'll allow you to study the tower first. Let's see if you can actually learn the tower's secret before me."

"Haha, with my comprehension ability, the secret is practically in my grasp already," Xiang Zixuan howled with laughter. He then used the power of his soul foundation and focused on the tower, trying to decode the tower's secret.

As for Xiang Shaoyun, he ignored Xiang Zixuan and sat down cross-legged. He focused on recovering himself. He was remaining calm because he believed that the third trial wouldn't be that simple. One would not be able to learn the secret so easily.

Thus, he might as well allow Xiang Zixuan to try and fail first. He would take the time to bring himself back to his optimal condition before taking his turn at the tower.

Under the nourishment of his spring water, the injuries he had suffered during the battle with the hall master's clone started to heal. He also started replenishing his energy, and he even found that he had grown again from the intense battle. He could form a few strands of new draconic aura right now if he wanted to.

In his brain, he replayed the combat technique used by the hall master's clone repeatedly. He sank into a state of comprehension, as though he was able to fully understand the battle technique.

As he entered this sudden state of comprehension, his filthless soul and Light of Wisdom worked together, greatly boosting his comprehension. It did not take him long to figure out the Major Slab Palm.

The Major Slab Palm was most definitely a top-tier emperor technique. In fact, it was even comparable to some of the more ordinary sovereign techniques, capable of unleashing extraordinary might. The Meteor Rain was an even stronger technique. It was much harder to comprehend but not too difficult for him.

As for the other technique, the Phantom Shift, Xiang Shaoyun had only managed to comprehend a tiny portion of it. After all, this was a secret technique and was unlike a combat technique. It contained more profundities, and it would be hard for one to learn it after seeing it once.

Even so, Xiang Shaoyun was very satisfied with his harvest. He had the power of earth, yet he had yet to cultivate any related battle techniques. Both the Meteor Rain and Major Slab Palm were earth elemental battle techniques, and they would work nicely for him.

He was also very happy with the growth of his comprehension capability. In the future, perhaps he could steal even more techniques from his opponents.

After an unknown amount of time, Xiang Shaoyun woke up from his meditation. He found that he had completely recovered and was full of vigor. He turned his head to look at Xiang Zixuan and

learned that he was still studying the tower. From his tightly furrowed brows, it was obvious he hadn't gained much.

Xiang Shaoyun was tempted to take advantage of this and make a move, but after some hesitation, he decided against it. Instead, he shifted his focus to the other towers.

The stone towers here weren't particularly tall, about seven or eight meters each. Their tops were pointed and sharp, while their bodies were akin to dragons and separated into five segments. Each segment was decorated with runes, while each tower looked completely the same. It was hard to distinguish each tower from the other.

There are at least 300 or 400 towers here, but I wonder what roles they play. As for this single unique tower, what kind of secret is it hiding? Xiang Shaoyun sank into thought. Is this unique tower perhaps the eye of a formation?

He was certain that the towers' positioning was related to some formation, but unfortunately, he did not know much about formations. Otherwise, he would have been able to learn more.

Relying on the senses of his Nether Soul Domain, Xiang Shaoyun studied the unique stone tower. Not even Xiang Zixuan's soul foundation could block his senses. Although Xiang Shaoyun was staying farther away from the tower, with his Nether Soul Domain, he was still able to see the entire tower clearly.

He scanned the tower again and again, looking it over with extreme scrutiny. However, he still found nothing, as if the tower hid no secret whatsoever.

Generally, any secret a structure could have would come in the form of a battle technique or a cultivation method carved into the structure in question. From the carvings, one could comprehend the carved technique, and that would be considered as having solved the secret.

However, the runes covering the tower did not seem to be pointing toward any battle technique or cultivation method. Also, no special symbols could be found on the tower. It was really hard to believe that the tower was actually hiding a secret.

At this time, Xiang Zixuan seemed to have thought of something. The energy around his body rippled as his soul foundation withdrew inside him. He then sent a lightning palm toward the tower.

"Bastard, what are you trying to do?" Xiang Shaoyun cried out in alarm.

Alas, he was too late as the attack had struck the tower.

Bang!

The palm connected loudly, and an indescribable power erupted from the tower. An earthly energy undulated outwards, blasting Xiang Zixuan away. He crashed heavily into a different stone tower, blood spraying out of his mouth like a fountain.

Xiang Shaoyun was stunned, and he seemed to have understood something at that moment.

"The secret is in the tower. Break it!" Xiang Zixuan suddenly said.