

Overlord 801

Chapter 801: Activating the Formation

Looking at Xiang Zixuan, Xiang Shaoyun sneered, "After suffering losses, you're sending me over? Do you take me for a fool?"

He was right, as since a Sovereign like Xiang Zixuan had failed to destroy the tower, how would he be able to destroy it? Even if he could, he wouldn't do so as he had managed to grasp something. The secret did not lie in the tower's destruction. Rather, it lay with the tower itself.

Since he was no longer in a rush, he planned to keep watching and see if Xiang Zixuan would have any other ideas. That wasn't blind confidence, but he had guessed that Xiang Zixuan was completely unqualified to grasp the tower's secret. That was a knowledge his instincts were telling him after that momentary flash of comprehension he had toward the tower.

When Xiang Zixuan saw that Xiang Shaoyun had not fallen for his trick, he sneered and said, "If so, this no longer has anything to do with you. You can get out of here now."

"Hehe, you're speaking as if you can actually reveal the secret. Do it if you really can," Xiang Shaoyun mocked.

Xiang Zixuan stood up and drew a shiny purple sword. Confidence covered his face as he said, "Before my saint sword, this tower shall cease to exist."

Xiang Shaoyun was getting slightly anxious, worried that the saint sword could really destroy the tower.

"Don't mess around. This is the restricted zone of the Holy Hall. If you activate some formation accidentally, both of us will die here," warned Xiang Shaoyun.

"Hehe, now you know fear? Even if I activate a formation, you will be the one to die," said Xiang Zixuan with a sinister smile on his face. As a scion from the Xiang Clan, he had a rich amount of trump cards. He was confident in his self-preservation ability.

He then swung the sword at the tower. This time, he did not dare to approach, afraid that he would be blasted away again by the same power.

Bang!

A purple lightning sword energy struck the tower, creating a loud rumbling. Once again, earthly energy surged out and bounced the sword strike back at Xiang Zixuan. Eyes wide with shock, Xiang Zixuan quickly plopped down onto the ground, avoiding the slash.

The purple lightning sword energy landed on the ground and left a deep mark where it struck. If it had hit a person instead, that person would have been split into two. Xiang Shaoyun wasn't feeling very good either. Although he wasn't attacked, the tower had erupted with a much stronger power this time, forcing him to take several steps back.

Apart from that, the nearby stone towers also started emanating earth energy. The numerous bursts of energy crisscrossed, flooding the surrounding area with light. Xiang Shaoyun and Xiang Zixuan had not expected that the surrounding stone towers would also react. Both were struck by the bursts of energy, suffering heavy injuries.

"Damn that bastard," cursed Xiang Shaoyun as he was thrown away by an energy blast.

Fortunately, he had reacted fast enough to move away when the energy erupted. He only suffered a glancing blow at his waist instead of a direct hit, suffering a comparatively lighter injury.

On the other hand, Xiang Zixuan suffered a direct hit. However, he was protected by high-tier armor. Even so, the impact heavily injured his organs.

That was merely a start, unfortunately. The stone towers demonstrated their real power, sending sweeping earth energy across the surroundings. It wouldn't be an easy task dodging all that.

Xiang Zixuan reacted speedily and soared to the sky without hesitation and flew away to avoid the bursts of energy. As for Xiang Shaoyun, his entire body was on the ground as he rolled until he found a crack he could hide from the energy waves. Otherwise, he wouldn't be able to escape death.

The energy bursts released by the towers were incredibly terrifying, far from something either of them could withstand.

At that moment, a complete connection was established between the main tower and the over 20 towers in its surroundings to envelop the area in a curtain of light, isolating the space from the outside world.

Inside the space covered by the curtain of light, dangers were still abound, seemingly capable of killing any cultivator.

Xiang Zixuan was overjoyed. "Is this the tower's secret?" He raised his voice, "First elder, I solved the mystery. The tower is the core of a formation!"

His voice reverberated out, but no response came.

"Is this only the location of the actual secret?" Xiang Zixuan's expression turned gloomy. When he looked down, he saw that Xiang Shaoyun was stuck in a certain corner and was running out of space. At the sight of that, he couldn't resist laughing, "You're going to die now, right?"

Xiang Shaoyun was in a precarious situation. Any movement from him and he would be struck by the energy, instantly getting himself killed in the formation. Thus, he had been forced to hide in the tiny crack he had found.

However, no trace of fear could be seen on his face. Instead, excitement was plastered all over it. He seemed to have come to a certain understanding of this place.

There is indeed a formation here. Xiang Zixuan had activated the power of the tower, activating about a tenth of the entire formation. The formation's destructiveness is still limited. If that fellow had attacked with an even stronger attack, the entire formation would have activated, and this place would have turned into a land of absolute death, thought Xiang Shaoyun, rejoicing that Xiang Zixuan wasn't any stronger.

What Xiang Shaoyun needed to do now was to break the formation. Only then would he be able to obtain the tower's secret. He wasn't good with formations. So how was he supposed to solve his current issue? His plan was to use the profundity of earth to solve this crisis.

When Xiang Zixuan first attacked the tower, Xiang Shaoyun had already gotten the idea. He believed that the markings on the tower should be related to the secret, with the secret itself being something only a cultivator who had comprehended the profundity of earth could grasp.

That was why he was so confident that Xiang Zixuan wasn't qualified to grasp the tower's secret. Now that Xiang Zixuan had been pushed outside the curtain of light, he could no longer come back to fight for the secret. Thus, a chance had arrived for Xiang Shaoyun.

He withdrew his aura and started sensing his surroundings. He used the profundity of earth the best he could, blending his body with the land around him. Sure enough, he immediately sensed the strands of energy aboveground that were linked with the towers to envelop the entire area.

Numerous runes started appearing in his head, allowing him to instantly understand the path of survival within the formation and the complexity of the formation itself. He learned that breaking the formation was not required. He only needed to move in accordance with the path of survival, and he would be able to avoid the formation's dangers. He would then be able to arrive before the stone tower once more.

Chapter 802: Secret of the Stone Tower

The profundity of earth allowed Xiang Shaoyun to clearly sense the earth in his surroundings and manipulate the power of earth with better precision and control. This formation was formed from the stone towers, and the sweeping energy bursts were all pure earth energy. This made it easier for Xiang Shaoyun to see through the formation.

With every aspect of the formation clearly imprinted in his head, Xiang Shaoyun slowly stood up. He reached out and controlled the weak links of the energy around him, gradually pushing the energy away, and started heading in a certain direction.

The path he was walking was also filled with earth energy, but the earth energy was different—there was some sort of emptiness to it. It had no offensive power and seemed more like it was there only to scare others.

Using the profundity of earth to slowly erase the empty earth energy, Xiang Shaoyun was able to pass through safely.

"Huh, I wasn't wrong, after all," muttered Xiang Shaoyun as he wiped his cold sweat.

Although he could clearly sense his surroundings, the area was still filled with dangers. A single misstep would spell his doom. Thus, it was understandable that he would be under great pressure.

Using the same method, Xiang Shaoyun moved around repeatedly, approaching the stone tower in the process. In the sky, Xiang Zixuan saw everything that was happening. His eyes widened in shock, and he couldn't believe that Xiang Shaoyun could actually start walking around in the formation.

"How is this kid doing that?" Xiang Zixuan was alarmed. He was getting anxious, and he charged down, trying to give it a try himself.

However, the moment he approached the curtain of light, he sensed a terrifyingly destructive force. He stopped midair, afraid that if he went deeper, the formation would kill him.

He flew backward to pull some distance from the formation. With a ruthless look in his eyes, he said, "If I can't get the secret, you can forget about it!"

He then swung his purple sword at the formation below. He was planning to trigger more of the formation's power and get Xiang Shaoyun killed.

Rumble!

The loud explosion scared Xiang Shaoyun so much he stood frozen where he was, not daring to move at all. Fortunately, although the explosion sounded scary, it had failed to actually affect the formation. He was still unharmed.

As for Xiang Zixuan, he was once again struck by the backlash. This time, the backlash was even stronger. He was blasted away before he could even do anything. With a miserable wail, he crashed into the ground far away, and a fountain of blood sprayed out of his mouth.

The first elder appeared. He grabbed Xiang Zixuan and quickly left.

"No, I have yet to figure out the tower's secret! I can't leave!" Xiang Zixuan struggled with the last bit of consciousness he had.

"From the moment you were pushed out of the formation, you lost your chance at finding the tower's secret," said the first elder.

"No! I can return inside the formation! I will unveil the tower's secret! I beg you, first elder. Give me another chance!" Xiang Zixuan was unwilling to admit his defeat, and he started pleading.

However, the first elder was completely unmoved. He brought Xiang Zixuan outside and tossed him toward the Black and White Guardians. "He failed."

The expressions of the Black and White Guardians dimmed as they nodded and stepped forward to help Xiang Zixuan. By this point, Xiang Zixuan knew there was nothing else he could do. He did not want to make a spectacle of himself before so many people, so he sat down cross-legged and started recovering.

"Haha, I knew this kid wouldn't be able to get through the trial, but you guys had refused to believe me," said Old Urchin as he clapped smugly.

The third and seventh elders had unsightly expressions. Xiang Zixuan was a genius they had their eyes on. They also hoped that the Holy Hall could form an alliance with the Xiang Clan. Such an alliance would benefit them greatly.

Alas, Xiang Zixuan was eliminated from the trial, and with Old Urchin jeering at them, they felt terrible.

"Don't get too happy yet. The other kid might not be able to get through the trial either," said a random elder who couldn't stand Old Urchin's smugness.

"Hehe, I am also hoping that the kid won't get through the trial," said Old Urchin with a sly look on his face.

The elders couldn't decide if Old Urchin was speaking the truth. They all assumed that he was only saying those words to irritate them.

To the side, Tuoba Wan'er heaved a sigh of relief. Good thing he failed. I can now wait peacefully until grandfather leaves seclusion and decides on my marriage.

In her eyes, Xiang Shaoyun would not be able to get through the trial. After all, his cultivation level was obviously lower. He had only passed the earlier trials through luck. The final trial would not be something he could pass so easily.

The first elder ignored all the discussions and stepped into the forest of towers once again. By this point, Xiang Shaoyun had already arrived near the main stone tower. The closer he was, the more dangerous he found his surroundings were. It was getting increasingly harder to find a safe path.

Xiang Shaoyun stood calmly, carefully sensing the energy around him. Finally, he found another spot with empty energy, and he slowly moved toward that spot. After a while, he was standing before the stone tower again.

He couldn't help but sigh, "We were here so easily earlier, but he did not appreciate it, forcefully turning everything dangerous before knowing how precious it is. What a bastard."

Xiang Shaoyun was able to see something from the tower. The markings on the tower were glowing, with rays of light shining from the markings connected to the formation. The glowing markings seemed to be projecting numerous humanoid silhouettes, but no matter how he focused, he couldn't see what was so special about the silhouettes.

"These silhouettes are most definitely the key to unveiling the secret. But how should I go about it?" Xiang Shaoyun rubbed his chin as he sank into thought.

After some observation using the Light of Wisdom, he finally grasped something. Using the profundity of earth, he spread his senses toward the tower. He wanted to try communicating with the silhouettes through the tower.

The moment his energy touched the tower, the remaining portion of the formation became active all at once, scaring him so much he started trembling. If he had somehow triggered the killing desire of the formation, he wouldn't be able to escape death.

He decided to take out the Radiant Saint Armor to protect himself just in case. But he soon found that no attack had been triggered from the formation. Instead, an odd phenomenon had been triggered, and the silhouettes actually started moving. His eyes were wide with shock as he stared at the silhouettes.

Chapter 803: Congratulations, Holy Son-in-law

The silhouettes started glowing in a certain tempo, their movements akin to the movements of an absolute expert, each move containing an indescribable depth that one could easily get lost in.

Xiang Shaoyun stared unblinking at the movements, imprinting everything in his mind. The silhouettes moved quickly, and it almost seemed like they had only flickered for a few times before all of them dissipated. It was also at that moment that the tower withdrew all its power.

The formation vanished, and peace returned, as though all that had happened was a dream. Xiang Shaoyun stood there in a daze, the movements of the silhouettes replaying in his mind repeatedly.

For anyone else, remembering the movements in such a short period of time would be difficult. But for Xiang Shaoyun, who possessed the Nether Soul Domain, that wasn't an issue.

Through watching the silhouettes, he instantly understood that their movements were related to the essence of the Phantom Shift technique. It had been completely out of his expectations that a secret technique like that was hidden in the tower. This was quite a large harvest for him.

The superiority of the Phantom Shift was that it could allow one to instantly shift one's position, avoiding any incoming attacks while giving one an opportunity to counterattack. In a way, this was a misdirection technique.

Different from regular footwork techniques, it did not provide the practitioner with a method of long-distance movement. It also did not contain any offensive abilities. Its sole function was to shift one's position, and that alone was enough to make it a precious technique.

Xiang Shaoyun analyzed the movements repeatedly before connecting them with what he saw during his battle with the hall master's clone. Soon, he learned the technique's core points.

When he opened his eyes once more, excitement was plastered all over his face as he said, "This third trial comes bearing a big gift!"

The Phantom Shift would allow him to catch his enemies by complete surprise during battle. Still remaining where he was, he started practicing it in accordance to the movements of the silhouettes.

Initially, his moves were stiff and awkward, but after several repetitions, he became better at it. Finally, he gained the ability to quickly shift between positions, but of course, he was still unable to do it as fast as the hall master's clone.

Even so, him grasping the technique in such a short period of time was proof of his monstrous talent. After spending some time practicing, he stopped. He had now grasped the Phantom Shift, with the technique deeply imprinted in his head.

In the future, he only needed to practice hard at it to improve his mastery of the technique. There was no need to continue training here.

The moment he stopped, a silhouette appeared before the tower. It was yet another clone, this time looking much more solid than any of the hall master's other clones he had seen before. Even the facial features of this clone could be clearly seen.

The hall master was a handsome and imposing man, and his firm facial features looked like they were sculpted rather than natural. His eyes were as bright as torches, seemingly capable of seeing through everything, as though no secret could stay hidden before his eyes. His noble temperament gave one a sense of shame just facing him. This was the hall master, the supreme leader of the Holy Hall.

"I greet the hall master," Xiang Shaoyun quickly saluted and offered his greetings.

"You can be at ease. Since you have grasped the Phantom Shift technique, you have successfully passed the third trial," said the hall master with a faint smile on his face.

"Good to know, good to know," said Xiang Shaoyun with excitement.

So long as he completed Old Urchin's mission, he would be able to leave safely.

"Are you happy and excited that you can finally become the Holy Hall's son-in-law?" asked the hall master.

The smile faded from Xiang Shaoyun's face as he waved his hand. "No...not at all."

"What is it, then?" the hall master pressed.

"I...was feeling happy because I managed to learn a new technique. Thank you, hall master, for imparting that technique upon me," Xiang Shaoyun replied nervously. He was afraid a wrong answer would cost him his life.

"Is that so?" asked the hall master.

Xiang Shaoyun quickly nodded. "Yes, of course."

"Bastard!" the hall master suddenly raged.

Xiang Shaoyun panicked, not knowing how he had angered the hall master.

"Do you not care about my granddaughter at all?" the hall master finally voiced his question. His gaze was locked onto Xiang Shaoyun, as though he would attack the moment he got a wrong answer.

Only then did Xiang Shaoyun realize his mistake. It turned out the hall master cared most for his granddaughter.

He hurriedly replied, "The young lady is as beautiful as a fairy and is one of the prettiest women I have ever met in my life. Getting her as a wife would be one's greatest fortune. How would I dare disregard her?"

"At least you're smart. Since you have passed all three trials, you are now qualified to be the Holy Hall's son-in-law. Wait until I leave seclusion, and I will conduct the wedding ceremony for you two," said the hall master somewhat unhappily. He looked in a certain direction and said, "First elder, come."

Whoosh!

A figure appeared like a phantom. He was none other than the first elder.

"Hall master," the first elder greeted respectfully.

"This is a candidate sent by you guys. He is decent in all aspects, but his cultivation level is a tad bit low. Think of a way to increase his cultivation. After I leave seclusion, I will personally conduct the wedding ceremony for them," commanded the hall master.

"Your subordinate obeys," said the first elder.

This time, Xiang Shaoyun was finally anxious for real. However, he did not dare to voice his concerns, afraid that the hall master would tear him apart after finding out the truth.

Fortunately, he was quick-witted and was able to come up with something. "Lord hall master, I think the current me is still not worthy of the young lady. Why don't we talk about marriage after I catch up with the young lady in my cultivation?"

His only solution was to drag this out. Things would be much simpler for him after escaping this place.

"Wan'er has excellent talent, so it won't be easy for you to catch up with her. You can slowly catch up after marriage. Alright, this is all," said the hall master as he vanished into thin air.

Xiang Shaoyun wasn't given any chance to say anything else.

The first elder turned around and saluted, "Congratulations, holy son-in-law."

The salute gave Xiang Shaoyun a shock, and he hurriedly said, "This is too much respect for me!"

"You have passed the three trials and have received the acknowledgment of the hall master. Thus, you are now the son-in-law of the Holy Hall. After marriage, the relationship will be formalized. Thus, you are more than worthy of receiving my salute," said the first elder. "Come, holy son-in-law. I'll bring you out. The others must be getting anxious now."

He then led the way out of the forest of towers while Xiang Shaoyun followed, still in a daze.

Chapter 804: Come and Greet the Holy Son-in-law

Xiang Shaoyun had most certainly considered the possibility of passing all three trials, but that was mainly for his self-preservation. His ultimate aim remained smoothly leaving the Holy Earth Hall. He had never considered staying here long term, and he had certainly not considered actually taking Tuoba Wan'er as his wife.

Naturally, it wasn't that he thought lowly of her. Rather, he personally believed that he was still not worthy of her. In any case, he wasn't the type of man who would lose his mind at the sight of any beautiful woman. He cared more about the feelings, and if he was going to take a wife, his first choice would naturally be Yu Caidie, not a woman he just met. Although the woman had saved his life, he wouldn't offer his body to thank her.

If any other man knew what he was thinking, he would probably spit at him. A woman so beautiful and talented with a great background to boot was the dream girl of many. And here was Xiang Shaoyun, unwilling to take her as his wife. Anyone would think that he must have been hit on the head.

Xiang Shaoyun followed the first elder outside. The people there saw his dazed expression.

Sha Hanbiao couldn't help but laugh, "I knew it. The third trial is not something one can get through easily. Only a genius without equal can get through it."

"Since that is the case, I propose to pick the best from what we have. Xiang Zixuan's strength is closer to the young lady, and he has a matching background. We should just make him the holy son-in-law," suggested Hu Yanbo.

Some of them nodded in agreement, while some remained silent, still focused on the first elder. They were evidently waiting for the first elder's decision.

As for Old Urchin, he objected, "What benefits have you two accepted from them? You're actually working so hard to match the young lady with that kid?"

"What nonsense are you saying? We are doing this for the young lady's sake, for the good of the Holy Hall!" Sha Hanbiao retorted emotionally.

"That's right! The young lady is reaching 40 years old! The hall master had commanded that a son-in-law needs to be selected before then. We can't drag this on anymore!" Hu Yanbo said. He looked at Old Urchin and questioned, "Or perhaps you have always disregarded the hall master's command?"

He was obviously using the hall master's name to suppress Old Urchin.

Just as Old Urchin was about to offer a retort, Tuoba Wan'er said, "Grandpas, stop arguing. Let's hear what first grandpa has to say."

The first elder glanced at Hu Yanbo and Sha Hanbiao before saying, "Come, greet the holy son-in-law."

Everyone's mouth fell wide agape, disbelief in their eyes. As for Tuoba Wan'er, she shivered, not expecting this to be the result.

Impossible, how could he solve the stone tower's secret? Xiang Zixuan glared at Xiang Shaoyun, indignantly roaring inwardly.

Even Old Urchin blanked out momentarily. He then waved his arms and cheered, "Haha, I knew it. This kid is greatly talented. Future son-in-law? Splendid!"

The first elder looked at the silent elders and snorted, "Are you all deaf? Did you not hear what I said?"

The first elder had always been someone who stood aloof from worldly affairs. Apart from the Hall's internal affairs, he had ignored everything else. As for Old Urchin, he had always been acting unconventionally with his odd temper.

Thus, the external affairs of the Hall had always been managed by the third elder, Hu Yanbo. Many elders had been subjecting themselves under his command. Despite that, the first elder still held the highest prestige in the Hall after the hall master. When he started raging, the others immediately felt fearful.

"Greetings, holy son-in-law," the elders saluted unwillingly.

These were all people of status and power, but they were all forced to show Xiang Shaoyun respect.

Xiang Shaoyun was aware that he couldn't do anything now, so he helplessly said, "Rise, seniors."

"Good kid. Good kid. Not bad at all. Hahaha," Old Urchin approached Xiang Shaoyun, circled him, and praised.

In truth, he didn't have much hope for Xiang Shaoyun either, but Xiang Shaoyun had actually brought him a big surprise. He felt incredibly smug, and he now found Xiang Shaoyun much more pleasing to his eyes.

"First elder, although the holy son-in-law has successfully passed the hall master's trial, with his strength, he does not seem to be a good match for the young lady? I'm afraid the hall master will be

unhappy when he learns of this after he comes out from seclusion," said Hu Yanbo, still unwilling to accept this result.

"You don't have to be concerned about this. This is a decision personally made by the hall master. We only need to obey it," said the first elder. "Ok, let's return to the main hall. We can continue our discussion there."

After hearing that, Hu Yanbo had no choice but to swallow his dissatisfaction.

Everyone once again gathered in the main hall. As for Xiang Zixuan, due to his failure in the trials, he was no longer qualified to enter the main hall. He was sent to a guest room to rest.

At the hall, the first elder started solemnly announcing Xiang Shaoyun's identity as the future son-in-law. After the marriage ceremony, his position would be formalized.

However, the ceremony would only be held after the hall master left seclusion. Even so, this matter would be publicly announced in advance, allowing everyone in the Holy Earth Hall to know the joyous news.

While listening to the commands the first elder was giving out, Xiang Shaoyun smiled bitterly and thought, Looks like I need to escape as soon as possible, or things will get even more complicated.

Finally, the meeting ended and everyone left. As for Xiang Shaoyun, a place of residence within the palace was arranged for him, and he did not even get the chance to speak with Old Urchin. He was given a lavish and massive residence with gorgeous decorations that were comparable to the palace of any royalty.

"Holy son-in-law, please allow us to attend to you as you shower and get changed," said two women with excellent looks.

They were dressed in revealing outfits. They had plump chests, slim waists, and perky rears. They were practically brimming with allure.

Xiang Shaoyun was used to beauties, but the sight of these beauties of unique flavors still caused his blood to boil. After all, he was still a perfectly healthy virgin filled with vigor.

The two women laid down the bathtub, poured water inside, and added some petals and herbs into the water. Instantly, the room was filled with a certain fragrance that caused one's imagination to wander.

"Holy son-in-law, the bathwater is ready. Let us help you undress," said the two as they stepped over, about to help Xiang Shaoyun undress.

By instinct, Xiang Shaoyun stepped back and covered his body with both arms. Bashfully, he said, "This...I can do this myself."

The two giggled at his reaction. One of them stepped forth and said, "Holy son-in-law, please don't make things difficult for us, or we will get punished for failing to carry out our duties."

Chapter 805: A Song of the Free and Unfettered

The two maids were respectively Qiu Yue and Qiu Shui, outstanding maids trained from their childhood by the Holy Hall. Not only were they excellent looking, but they also had prodigious talent in cultivation. Both of them were at the peak of the Skysoar Realm.

Reaching such levels at such a young age, they would be considered elites even in tier-6 and tier-7 organizations. Xiang Shaoyun stood his ground and insisted on taking the bath himself. But when they saw the pleading expressions of the two women, he clenched his teeth and agreed to have them help him.

Soon, he was cleanly stripped. He could feel the cold breeze brushing against his skin. His body was one that had been tempered by lightning. It was well-proportioned, robust, slender, and fit, causing the emotions of the two to ripple at what they saw.

The braver of the two, Qiu Yue, said with a red face, "The holy son-in-law has an excellent figure."

She even reached out and gently scratched Xiang Shaoyun's skin with her finger, causing him to shiver and say, "Cough, cough, I'm going into the bathtub."

He quickly jumped into the bathtub. Qiu Yue and Qiu Shui walked over with their faces red. They still needed to scrub his back, and since he wasn't given an option to refuse them, he could only allow them to do as they wished.

The two went to work. One was in charge of kneading Xiang Shaoyun's head while the other was gently rubbing his back. A certain pleasant fragrance was constantly invading Xiang Shaoyun's nostrils. He did not know if the fragrance originated from the bathwater or the two, but it did cause his blood to boil. He started getting the urge to drag both of them into the bathtub as well.

Fortunately, he was able to put his urges under control. He started chanting the Serene Clearheart Mantra, suppressing his desires. No matter how the two teased him, he would no longer feel anything.

After about an hour, the two women were done and left the room after dressing him up. Standing outside the room, they looked at each other with a crafty look on both their faces. They then headed toward a nearby room.

That room belonged to Tuoba Wan'er. She was currently seated before a dressing table, looking into the mirror with mixed emotions in her eyes. As someone born in a family of rulers, she lived a life of luxury. However, she also lived the life of a caged bird with no freedom. In a way, her life was sad.

Qiu Yue and Qiu Shui entered the room after knocking on the door. They saluted Tuoba Wan'er and said, "Greetings, young lady."

"Um. Are you done attending to the holy son-in-law?" asked Tuoba Wan'er.

"Yes, young lady," answered the two.

"How did he act?" Tuoba Wan'er asked.

Qiu Yue answered, "The holy son-in-law is a gentleman. At first, he was somewhat stiff, but he later eased up and allowed us to help him with the bath and dressing up."

"Exactly. The holy son-in-law is an upright person, always treating us with respect," said Qiu Shui.

Tuoba Wan'er sank into thought before she said, "Ok. You two will continue attending to him for the next few days. Agree to all his requests."

"Yes, young lady," the two answered obediently.

After sending the two away, Tuoba Wan'er sighed and muttered, "Being together with a man I don't know is easier said than done."

Meanwhile, Xiang Shaoyun looked extremely bored in his room. His mind was completely on the matter of escaping. Thus, he wasn't even able to focus on cultivation.

That damnable Old Urchin is actually not coming to see me. What should I do now? Xiang Shaoyun cursed inwardly.

In truth, he was entirely capable of leaving undetected now, but he still couldn't bring both Liang Zhuangmin and Wu Zhijun with him. His only hope was Old Urchin, and he could only hope that Old Urchin would show up and take him away soon.

Otherwise, he would be paraded around with Tuoba Wan'er in half a month, having his identity as the holy son-in-law announced to the entire city. At that time, leaving would no longer be an option.

While pacing the room bored, Xiang Shaoyun noticed a zither resting before the window. He walked over and sat down before it.

He softly ran his finger through the zither strings, causing melodic sounds to ring out in the air. It reminded him of Gong Qinyin, and he muttered, "I wonder how her zither skills are, nowadays."

At that thought, he started plucking the strings, playing a song. He had barely touched a zither after his escape from the Ziling Sect. Thus, his skills with the zither had deteriorated somewhat. However, his basics were still solid, and he quickly regained his familiarity with the instrument. A song titled "Free and Unfettered" started playing from his fingertips.

The joy of the free and unfettered, the boundless freedom, the boundless delight. Moving alongside the wind, roaming the world...

A cheerful song traveled out of the room, reaching a certain room nearby. Tuoba Wan'er started listening out of curiosity, and it did not take her long to be completely engrossed.

Freedom was exactly what she wanted.

The song seemed to be describing the exact kind of life she longed for. Thus, she was completely pulled into the world of the song, slowly losing herself in it.

After an unknown amount of time, the song changed. It became a song of longing. It was obvious from the tune that the one playing the song was missing someone far away. Within the gentleness of the song was a trace of sorrow.

After the song ended, Tuoba Wan'er left the room and walked toward Xiang Shaoyun's room.

Instead of knocking, she used voice transmission and said, "Is the holy son-in-law willing to meet me at the garden?"

Soon, Xiang Shaoyun left the room. Tuoba Wan'er no longer had the veil on her face, and he was slightly stunned by her beauty. With a smile, he said, "I was bored inside, so your invitation came at the perfect timing, young lady."

The two headed toward the stone table and chairs in the garden before sitting down. After getting the servants to deliver some fruits and liquor, she sent them all away.

Xiang Shaoyun lifted the cup and said, "A toast to thank the young lady for saving my life."

He then downed the liquor in the cup. Whatever happened, Tuoba Wan'er was indeed someone who had once saved his life. Thus, he was grateful toward her.

Tuoba Wan'er lifted her cup and drained the liquor as well. After putting the cup down, she looked at Xiang Shaoyun and asked, "Are you proficient with the art of the zither? The song I heard earlier is very beautiful."

Xiang Shaoyun had a self-mocking laugh as he said, "During my frivolous youth when I was without learning or skill, I was great at all forms of entertainment. Yes, I know a little about the zither."

Up until his teenage years, he had spent his life eating, drinking, and fooling around, wasting all those years not cultivating. Every time he recalled his past, he was filled with regret.

"Can you tell me about your childhood?" Tuoba Wan'er asked curiously.

Xiang Shaoyun looked at Tuoba Wan'er in astonishment, and he started telling the story of his naughty childhood self.

Back then, he was completely free and unfettered. He would do anything he wanted, and he had done a lot of ridiculous things. Now that he recalled the past, he could see how ignorant he was back then. His life then was too comfortable, leading up to the eventual tragedy.

Tuoba Wan'er listened with keen interest, her eyes rippling with envy.

"Don't you think that the previous me was incredibly ignorant?" Xiang Shaoyun asked in a self-mocking manner after he was done with his story.

A flowery smile bloomed on her face as she answered, "Not at all. I think that is a very joyous way of life. It is free and unrestrained, a life one can really yearn for."

Xiang Shaoyun was completely stunned by her smile. Still in a daze, he said, "You're so beautiful when you smile."

That came out of nowhere for Tuoba Wan'er, causing her eyes to shift around as a blush covered her face. She said, "Am I not beautiful when I'm not smiling?"

Xiang Shaoyun hurriedly waved his hands and said, "How is that possible? But you're much more beautiful when smiling. You should smile more."

Tuoba Wan'er sighed, "I want to smile more as well, but living at the Holy Hall, my every word and action is bound by restrictions. It's really hard to find a reason to smile."

"I thought you and Senior Urchin had just returned from a tour?" asked Xiang Shaoyun.

Tuoba Wan'er replied, "That was an accidental chance I got to leave."

Xiang Shaoyun could see Tuoba Wan'er's helplessness from her eyes. Seeing her misery, he started sympathizing with her. After all, the Holy Earth Hall was cut off from the rest of the world. As the Hall's future holy maiden, Tuoba Wan'er did not have the freedom many had.

Affected by the sympathy he was feeling, Xiang Shaoyun said, "If there is a chance, I will take you around the world. There are a lot of sceneries we have never seen before, different races, fortuitous encounters, and much more."

"Will there be such a chance?" Tuoba Wan'er asked, but the question was more for herself.

"Of course! This is a world where the strong reigns supreme. If we are strong enough, smashing through a cage is nothing!" declared Xiang Shaoyun, brimming with confidence.

At this moment, Tuoba Wan'er found Xiang Shaoyun exuding a certain indescribable aura. This man, who was even younger than her, seemed to have the ambitions to reach the heavens, a man worthy of her respect.

Xiang Shaoyun was someone who had seen much of the world, and he started telling Tuoba Wan'er what he had seen and heard. The more she listened, the more she yearned for freedom. The two chatted without noticing the passage of time, and night arrived unknowingly.

Little did they know, this harmonious scene was being observed by someone. That someone was the first elder. With a smile on his face, he muttered, "The young lady and the holy son-in-law seem to get along nicely. Excellent!"

He then vanished.

"Without realizing it, night has arrived. It has been a while since I have had such a nice chat," Xiang Shaoyun lamented.

There were things he had kept repressed in his heart for too long. With a beautiful listener like Tuoba Wan'er, he couldn't resist pouring out his mind, talking about things he never had a chance to before.

Tuoba Wan'er had an apologetic look as she said, "Sorry, I have wasted your time."

"Haha, you're too polite, young lady. I am very happy that you're willing to be my listener. I should be the one apologizing for holding up your time," said Xiang Shaoyun.

Tuoba Wan'er smiled. "True, you're now the Hall's son-in-law. There is nothing wrong with talking with me."

For some reason, she suddenly found herself approving of Xiang Shaoyun. Perhaps being with him would not be too bad after all. He was handsome, humorous, talented, amiable, and approachable. He also possessed the overbearingness a man should have. Was he not the perfect partner to have?

Xiang Shaoyun was surprised that he would actually earn her approval by talking to her like this. He did not know whether he should laugh or cry.

Rubbing his nose, he said, "Young lady, you jest." He then shifted to voice transmission, "I know you're being forced to do this as well. Just wait until Senior Urchin comes. After I leave, you no longer need to obey the first elder's arrangements."

Tuoba Wan'er's face dimmed as she said, "Got it."

She then stood up and returned to her room. Xiang Shaoyun was completely confused, not knowing why she was suddenly angry. Not even the Light of Wisdom could help him understand women!

He finished the remaining liquor and returned to his room as well. There, he chanted the Serene Clearheart Mantra, throwing all unnecessary thoughts out of his mind, and started cultivating.

He channeled strand after strand of energy from his nine stars to his astral cosmos sea. Through the astral cosmos sea, he sent the energy to his spine, causing his draconic aura to reveal itself. A dragon that was about 34 percent solid showed itself.

This was proof that he had reached the middle of the third-stage Dragon Ascension Realm. Although this was a decent advancement speed, it still wasn't good enough for him. There were many geniuses in the academy advancing faster than him. If he couldn't maintain a high growth speed, it was only a matter of time before they left him in the dust.

Done with energy channeling, Xiang Shaoyun observed the changes in his astral cosmos sea. He found that the aura inside seemed completely different, as if the nine-colored fog had filled the

entire astral cosmos sea, nourishing all life forms inside. The vicious tiger gold lotus, the blaze flower, the mysterious tree, and everything else...they had all undergone considerable changes.

Xiang Shaoyun had a feeling this wasn't caused by the nine-colored fog alone. The solidification of the astral cosmos sea also played a role, turning the space into fertile soil. He even wondered if the astral cosmos sea would turn into an actual world if this continued.

The night passed quickly. Early the next morning, Qiu Yue and Qiu Shui arrived and handed him the things he needed to wash himself before saying, "The young lady would like to invite you for breakfast at the side hall, holy son-in-law."

After washing up, Xiang Shaoyun went with them to the side hall. Following behind them, he looked at their swaying rears. He was no longer as stimulated as before, and he now treated them as mere beautiful and pleasing scenery. Of course, it was undeniable that being attended to by two beauties like them was pleasing.

He soon arrived at the side hall. Tuoba Wan'er was already waiting there.

Tuoba Wan'er gave Xiang Shaoyun a slight salute as she said, "Good morning, holy son-in-law."

Xiang Shaoyun quickly saluted her back and said, "Young lady, you treat me with too much courtesy."

"Holy son-in-law, you should start calling me wife, now," said Tuoba Wan'er.

Chapter 807: Candid Honesty

Xiang Shaoyun's mouth was wide agape, and he didn't know what to say. They had had an amiable conversation yesterday, but they were conversing as ordinary friends. However, from her current expression, it seemed like she was starting to take their relationship seriously.

"What? Am I wrong?" Tuoba Wan'er asked, somewhat unhappy with Xiang Shaoyun's response.

Xiang Shaoyun smiled helplessly. "Yes, you're right, wife."

Since even she didn't mind being called that, what was there to hesitate for him?

Tuoba Wan'er had not expected Xiang Shaoyun to change his attitude so fast, and she laughed a laugh so beautiful the world around her seemed to dim.

Xiang Shaoyun sat down and started having breakfast with Tuoba Wan'er. As for the others, they tactfully withdrew from the room. The breakfast was extremely exquisite, consisting of some pastries, bland congee, and fresh tea. This was quite a unique combination of flavors that was enjoyable in its own way.

For high-level cultivators like them, they could go more than 10 days without food. Of course, they still enjoyed the feeling of having a meal, especially when surrounded by such a serene environment.

Xiang Shaoyun chewed his food in silence, thinking of a way to handle his relationship with Tuoba Wan'er. He found it hard to believe that Tuoba Wan'er had truly taken a liking for him. Perhaps he had merely sparked her curiosity, and she would get tired of him in a few days.

At this time, Tuoba Wan'er reached for his face with a towel in hand. He instinctively wanted to move back, but she said, "Don't move. You have something on your mouth."

Xiang Shaoyun stopped moving and allowed Tuoba Wan'er to gently wipe his mouth. Her face nearer to his than ever, he felt his heart thumping as an odd emotion started rising within him.

"Done. You need to be careful when eating this pastry, or you will make a mess out of yourself," said Tuoba Wan'er.

Xiang Shaoyun nodded. "Thanks."

"There is no need for so much politeness between us," said Tuoba Wan'er with a smile. She lowered her head and resumed eating, but a blush had crept onto her cheeks. That was the very first time she had been so intimate with another man apart from her grandfather.

When breakfast was over, the first elder appeared before them. A rare smile formed on his face as he said, "Greetings, young lady, holy son-in-law."

"First grandpa, you are too courteous. Do you need anything?" Tuoba Wan'er asked.

"I'm here to talk about the parade, to see if you want anything changed," said the first elder. He took out a book and handed it to Tuoba Wan'er.

To his surprise, Tuoba Wan'er handed the book to Xiang Shaoyun and said, "Let the holy son-in-law deal with this. I'm fine with anything."

The first elder's eyes lit up as he said, "You're right. Take a look, holy son-in-law."

Xiang Shaoyun blanked out momentarily before saying, "I don't really know much about this. First elder, just do as you see fit. I believe you can arrange it nicely. However, my parents are not around. Should we not delay this matter somewhat?"

"The parade is not the wedding ceremony itself, so it doesn't matter if your parents aren't around. In any case, we will only hold the ceremony after the hall master leaves seclusion. It won't be too late to invite your parents then," the first elder gave an impeccable reply. It left Xiang Shaoyun with nothing to say and could only allow them to do as they wished.

After the first elder left, Tuoba Wan'er proposed that Xiang Shaoyun play the zither for her. He had no reason to reject, so he did as told. Tuoba Wan'er was completely engrossed in the music, and her gaze when looking at Xiang Shaoyun became increasingly gentle.

After playing a few songs in a row, Xiang Shaoyun stopped. He looked at Tuoba Wan'er with a solemn expression and asked, "Is this really how you want to live the rest of your life?"

He had decided to lay all his cards on the table. He needed to have a proper talk with her before he could decide on his next course of action.

Tuoba Wan'er's clear eyes blinked as she asked, "Don't you want this?"

"No," Xiang Shaoyun replied firmly. The moment he said that, Tuoba Wan'er's eyes dimmed. Her face also paled somewhat, and just as she was about to say something, he spoke again, "I want to take you away and show you the world. I thought we had agreed on that yesterday? Why must we limit ourselves to only this place?"

Color returned to Tuoba Wan'er's eyes as she said, "You're serious?"

Xiang Shaoyun nodded. "Of course. Although our meeting is by sheer coincidence, if you don't mind having me around, I will also be willing to be your man and spend a lifetime caring for you. I can show you the world and give you a happier life. Naturally, you might think that this is merely a lie I cooked up in my attempt to escape. But I want you to know that I mean every word I said. How will I be willing to give up on a wife as beautiful as you? Of course, if you're unwilling to be with me, I won't force you either. But I still hope you can allow me to leave."

Xiang Shaoyun had thought up many excuses and lies, but he ultimately decided that the truth was the best. That way, he would also be able to show Tuoba Wan'er just what kind of a man he was, letting her understand what he wanted to do. As for her choice, that would be up to her.

Tuoba Wan'er stared at Xiang Shaoyun blankly, evidently not expecting him to suddenly say all that. For a moment, she was at a loss for words.

The two looked face to face for a while before she looked away and sighed, "Actually, the moment you passed the three trials and obtained my grandfather's acknowledgment, our marriage became inevitable. It won't change unless I can persuade my grandfather to change his mind, but he never changes his mind easily. Before this, I did have the thought of persuading him after he left seclusion. But after our talk yesterday, I found myself unable to dislike you, even if your cultivation level is lower than mine and you are younger than me. You have seen much more of the world, and you have far greater ambitions. You can also play the zither well. I think I can try being with you. Perhaps we can really spend a lifetime together.

"Nevertheless, you are right. You will leave this place sooner or later. That is something I need to face. Will you leave alone, or will I go with you? I also don't want to make things hard for others. This is a hard choice. Can you give me some time?"

Xiang Shaoyun smiled. "Of course. I'm just glad I got to be honest with you."

Chapter 808: Shameless Old Urchin

After the talk, the two smiled gladly. They were akin to old friends who had known each other for a long time. The relationship between them had not cooled from the conversation. Rather, it became much more candid, and the initial barrier between the two had vanished.

In the coming few days, they continued staying together all the time. Their relationship improved quickly, as though both were doing their best to adapt to their new identities.

One day, Old Urchin finally showed himself.

He brought Liang Zhuangmin and Wu Zhijun with him. As for Yang Lingdong, who had fallen under Xiang Shaoyun's control, he was left behind. Both Liang Zhuangmin and Wu Zhijun were still completely confused, not understanding what was going on.

When they saw Xiang Shaoyun walking out with Tuoba Wan'er, their eyes lit up. When they saw Tuoba Wan'er, both were stunned by her captivating beauty.

"Big brother, sister-in-law, you're here," said Xiang Shaoyun happily.

These days, he had been thinking of leaving the palace to visit them. But he was afraid of attracting trouble to them and had been conflicted as to what to do. Now that Old Urchin was bringing them here, he was very happy. But he also knew that he had most likely gotten Liang Zhuangmin and Wu Zhijun involved with his affairs once again.

"Brother Yun," Liang Zhuangmin said, but he did not know what else to say. He had a lot of questions, but before outsiders, he couldn't voice them.

"Holy son-in-law, I did a great job, right? Look how I brought your brother and sister-in-law here!" said Old Urchin smugly.

"Thank you, Senior Urchin," said Xiang Shaoyun with a smile. He said to Tuoba Wan'er, "Wan'er, can you take care of my big brother and sister-in-law for a bit? I need to have a talk with Senior Urchin."

Tuoba Wan'er nodded and smiled. "Big brother, sister-in-law, please come with me. I'll show you around."

Liang Zhuangmin and Wu Zhijun still didn't know the relationship between this woman and Xiang Shaoyun, but they could only do as told.

After they left, Xiang Shaoyun said, "Senior Urchin, I already completed your mission. What do you think you should do now?"

"Mission? What are you talking about?" asked Old Urchin shamelessly.

Xiang Shaoyun finally learned the extent of Old Urchin's shamelessness. He said, "Senior Urchin, you said yourself that you would help me leave after I complete your mission. What is the meaning of you bringing my big brother and sister-in-law here? Are you reneging on your words?"

"Hey, hey, you're now the holy son-in-law. You can naturally leave any time you want. Nobody is stopping you," replied Old Urchin after taking a sip of tea.

Xiang Shaoyun sank into a momentary silence before he said, "You're saying I can leave any time I want?"

"Yes, you can leave this palace any time you want," answered Old Urchin.

Xiang Shaoyun said gloomily, "Senior Urchin, can you be serious for once? If I really go ahead and complete the act of a man and woman with Wan'er, it will be too late to change anything."

"Haha, that's even better! Excellent! That way, there will be some babies for me to look after. No, wait. Babies will shit and piss everywhere. I won't be able to look after them. Yes, this is a job for someone else," said Old Urchin, seemingly amused by his own ramblings.

Xiang Shaoyun was speechless. He cursed inwardly, Why did I even let myself fall for this old bastard's scheme?

Looking at how Old Urchin was behaving, it was clear Old Urchin didn't intend to fulfill his promise. There was nothing Xiang Shaoyun could do about it.

Looking at Xiang Shaoyun's troubled expression, Old Urchin said unhappily, "Kid, learn to appreciate what you have. Our young lady is an unrivaled beauty. No men would dislike her. You're actually being all grumpy here? Do you want me to teach you a lesson? You think I won't dare to touch you now that you're the holy son-in-law?"

Xiang Shaoyun laughed, "Hahaha. Come, then. Beat me up if you have the guts. Just watch out for what I will say in front of the hall master and first elder."

"Kid, you think your position is all stable now?" said Old Urchin with a frown.

"You're the one forcing my hand," said Xiang Shaoyun, assuming an equally shameless stance.

"You think I'll be afraid of your threats? I, Old Urchin, am not afraid of anything! Nobody can scare me! You, kid, need to be taught a lesson," said Old Urchin as he pressed forth toward Xiang Shaoyun, preparing to attack.

As a response, Xiang Shaoyun stood there, looking every bit someone willing to take everything coming his way.

Old Urchin ultimately did not attack for real. Rather, he smiled. "Kid, you have backbone. But you're quite stupid. With your current identity, so long as you complete the marriage with the young lady and obtain a Holy Hall Token for yourself, you can easily leave anytime you want. What is the point of going against me?"

Xiang Shaoyun had naturally thought of that solution long ago, but he did not wish to wait that long. He wouldn't have wasted his breath talking with Old Urchin otherwise.

"Forget it. Seems like you're really an unreliable geezer. I'll have to think of something else," said Xiang Shaoyun as he shook his head.

Old Urchin said unhappily, "Are you looking down on me?"

"Exactly. You don't seem that big of a deal in the Holy Earth Hall, after all."

"Kid, you think you can make me work by reverse psychology? Dream on."

"You think too highly of yourself. As you said, I am now the holy son-in-law. It won't be hard for me to leave this place in the future. Furthermore, Wan'er seems to like me as well. What are you for me? I was merely testing you earlier. You are as disappointing as I thought you would be."

"Hahaha, I can take you out right this moment, and nobody will find out!"

"What's so amazing with taking me out? If you're really so amazing, take my big brother and sister-in-law along as well."

"You think I can't do that?"

"Of course you can't."

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The two bickered endlessly, neither willing to back off. They looked more like two street thugs engaged in a shouting match.

"If you can really bring us out before the engagement, I will acknowledge that you're amazing," said Xiang Shaoyun after ensuring that Old Urchin had properly taken the bait.

Alas, Old Urchin seemed to have smartened up at this moment as he said, "Kid, you really are treacherous. I nearly fall for your scheme! Since the young lady has fallen for you, just stay here obediently and wait until she willingly lets you go!"

He then ignored Xiang Shaoyun and left the palace. Watching Old Urchin depart, Xiang Shaoyun shook his head helplessly as he thought, This old geezer is really quite smart.

He then returned to the backyard, preparing to update Liang Zhuangmin and Wu Zhijun on what had happened. At least he could alleviate their worry that way.

Chapter 809: A Conspiracy Appears

Xiang Zixuan and his men were still residing within a certain guest residence. After challenging the three trials, he had sustained some injuries. He was thus forced to recuperate in silence, temporarily setting everything else aside.

Today, he was finally done with recuperating and was prepared to leave. He couldn't accept his defeat, and he couldn't turn back time. Thus, his indignation no longer mattered.

He left the room and said to the Black and White Guardians, "Let's go back."

"There is no rush, young master. Hu Yanbo informed us that he has something to tell you after you have recovered," said the White Guardian.

"What's the point? The marriage is no longer possible," said Xiang Zixuan as he shook his head in a dispirited fashion.

"Don't rush to a conclusion, young master. Perhaps there is still a chance to change things," said Black Guardian.

Xiang Zixuan looked at the two guardians. Seeing the odd expressions they had, he realized that they must have learned something. He nodded. "Fine, I'll meet the third elder."

They thus went to pay the third elder a visit. When they arrived at the third elder's place, they found the seventh elder, Sha Hanbiao, there as well. Evidently, the two had been waiting for them.

Xiang Zixuan saluted them politely. "Greetings, seniors."

"Zixuan, are you fine?" Hu Yanbo asked.

Xiang Zixuan answered, "I'm all fine now. Thank you for asking."

"That's good to hear. If anything bad happens to you, I wouldn't know what to tell your grandfather," said Hu Yanbo. "Are you feeling discouraged right now?"

Xiang Zixuan nodded. "Yes, it is quite a hard defeat to swallow. Look at that kid's cultivation level. He had only been able to get through the trials through sheer luck."

"You're right. He had merely gotten lucky, but he won't stay lucky forever. Zixuan, you can't give up," said Hu Yanbo.

Xiang Zixuan's eyes lit up as he asked, "Senior, do you perhaps have a way to salvage this? I really like Lady Wan'er. I believe you don't wish to see a flower like her be matched with a pile of manure, right?"

"Of course. The young lady is talented and beautiful. Only a young hero like you is a worthy match for her," said Sha Hanbiao. "Based on what we know, that kid has offended the Coiling Snake, an organization within our city. The Coiling Snake is really nothing in our eyes, but they are more than enough to deal with that kid. We only need to watch on as they exact their revenge on him. With his death, you will naturally be the new son-in-law."

Xiang Zixuan was overjoyed. He thanked gratefully, "I will have to thank you for your assistance, then."

"Haha, just wait for a good show to unveil before us," said Hu Yanbo as he roared with laughter.

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Within the palace, Xiang Shaoyun had given Liang Zhuangmin and Wu Zhijun a rough description of all that had happened. Both were filled with disbelief after listening to his story.

A look of envy covered Liang Zhuangmin's face as he said, "Brother Yun, you really have great luck with the ladies. What you get here will allow you to shave hundreds or even thousands of years of hardship. How enviable."

He spoke the truth, as anyone managing to get someone like Tuoba Wan'er as wife would obtain both her person and her wealth. He would no longer need to seek out cultivation resources alone, and there would no longer be any need for him to build an organization to prove himself. He could obtain everything here through marriage alone. There was no one who would not be envious of him.

Xiang Shaoyun smiled helplessly. "Be that as it may, it won't be easy for us to just leave. In any case, I don't want to be tied down by this identity."

Although he definitely had feelings for Tuoba Wan'er, taking her as his wife would turn him into a member of the Holy Hall. His responsibilities and duties would change, and he could no longer be free to act as he wished.

Of course, the Holy Hall would be a great help in his endeavor to reclaim his sect, but what he wanted more was to do the reclaiming with his own strength. One could say that this was one of the few principles he upheld, his value as a person.

"Shaoyun, you are probably worrying over it so much because you already have someone else in your heart," said Wu Zhijun with a smile.

Xiang Shaoyun scratched his head and gave a hollow laugh, "Yes, that is one of the reasons."

"Shaoyun is truly a loyal person," praised Wu Zhijun.

As a woman, the mere sight of Tuoba Wan'er gave her a sense of inferiority. She couldn't imagine any man who could reject the temptation. Xiang Shaoyun's attitude had proved that he was not a man who would be blinded by lust.

"Stop praising me, sister-in-law. My big brother is the true man here," Xiang Shaoyun did not forget to speak on Liang Zhuangmin's behalf.

Liang Zhuangmin laughed and said, "Haha, us brothers should really stop praising each other. It's getting embarrassing. So what should we do now? Do we stay or what?"

Xiang Shaoyun sank into contemplation before saying, "I've thought of it. After the engagement, I will have her send you away."

"How about you?" Liang Zhuangmin asked.

Wu Zhijun replied on his behalf, "After becoming the holy son-in-law, he won't be able to leave easily."

"Don't worry. After sending you away, I will be able to escape by myself. But if you stay, it will be much harder for me to escape," said Xiang Shaoyun seriously.

"Fine. Do you need us to do anything after our departure?" Liang Zhuangmin agreed readily as Xiang Shaoyun's argument was convincing.

"If possible, please help me send a message to the Bloodsin City," said Xiang Shaoyun after giving it some thought.

"Bloodsin City!" Liang Zhuangmin's expression visibly changed when he heard that.

He had long heard of the infamous Bloodsin City. However, he had never dared step foot there. After all, he was still too weak.

"Say it. We'll help," said Wu Zhijun.

"I'll thank you in advance, then," said Xiang Shaoyun. "After reaching the Bloodsin City, look for the Ghostface Sect. Look for someone called Devouring Ghost with this token in hand and tell him to come wait for me at the Dragon Phoenix City."

He then handed over the token Devouring Ghost had given him. He reminded them about the things they needed to take note of to avoid unnecessary trouble at the Bloodsin City.

Liang Zhuangmin slapped his chest solemnly and said, "Don't worry. Unless I die, I will definitely complete this task!"

"You don't have to be so serious. Just remember to be careful," said Xiang Shaoyun.

Chapter 810: Public Assassination

The fifteenth day of the month was an auspicious day. That was the day the Holy Hall's holy maiden would be engaged. The holy son-in-law would be parading through the city with the holy maiden to celebrate the occasion.

The entire city was fully decorated in lanterns and colored banners. Joy and laughter were everywhere, and the atmosphere was jovial. The people of the city were all excitedly talking about the engagement.

"I wonder which clan's son has won the holy maiden's favor. How enviable."

"The holy maiden is the prettiest woman in the Holy Earth Hall. She was born favored by the heavens, and his man is most certainly a genius blessed by the heavens as well."

"This news is too sudden. Why had they not opened the son-in-law recruitment to the public? I have been preparing myself all this while, but now, my goddess has landed in someone else's embrace. I can't accept this!"

"I shall see just what kind of a man is worthy of the holy maiden. He better not be disappointing."

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Drumrolls erupted from the palace, flooding the air with a festive mood. The residents of the city started gathering around the palace.

From the palace, a group of people emerged. There were hundreds of them, each dressed in a festive outfit. They formed two rows as they marched forward. Those at the front were in charge of playing the music instruments, while those behind them were mostly guards and a few beautiful servants.

At the very end of the procession were a group of servants carrying numerous gifts for the happy occasion, gifts that would be handed out to the people of the city during the parade.

At the very middle of the procession was a luxurious carriage being pulled by eight dragonblood horses. The red satin walls of the carriage drifted about gently. The vague silhouette of a beauty could be seen within. A servant was scattering flowers in the air as the carriage moved forward.

Right before the carriage was a handsome steed with a heroic youth mounted on it. His eyes were as bright as the sun and the moon, and his aura was akin to the blazing sun. He looked like he had descended from the heavens, looking incredibly noble and majestic. This was the holy son-in-law.

A cacophony of voices broke out when the son-in-law appeared. There were praises, there were jeers, and there were also envious words. Seated high atop his steed, Xiang Shaoyun looked down at the cheering crowd, and he couldn't help but form a prideful smile on his face.

Tuoba Wan'er was loved and respected by everyone in the city. It was understandable why he would feel proud at having such a woman as his fiancée.

When the parade started handing out gifts to the crowd, the excitement in the air grew. Sounds of cheers broke out again and again, well-wishes resounding throughout the city.

Seated on the carriage, Tuoba Wan'er had a slight blush on her face. Her emotions were mixed, with traces of joy among them. She had long known that a day like this would come, but when it finally arrived, it felt unreal.

Looking at Xiang Shaoyun's straight posture, gentleness surfaced in her eyes. After spending half a month together, she found herself getting used to his presence. Her feelings toward him had grown as well, and now, she felt that this marriage was perhaps something good after all.

The procession moved slowly and would take an entire day to tour the main streets of the city and share the joy with everyone.

Just as they reached a fork in the street, a shrill cry rang out, "Ahhh, snakes! A lot of snakes!"

The shrill cry failed to overcome the sheer noise of the bustling environment, but it soon caused a small disturbance. More and more people started shouting, and chaos spread. Numerous snakes emerged from the ground, and the crowd started fleeing in panic. Chaos and confusion erupted among the crowd.

As for the guards in charge of protecting the procession, they were on full alert. One of them shouted, "Stop moving! All of you, stop moving!"

Unfortunately, with their lives on the line, the disorderly crowd was not very keen on obeying. Many of them even charged into the midst of the procession in their search for safety.

At this time, Xiang Shaoyun commanded, "Protect the holy maiden and speed up."

He could sense that something was odd. Perhaps someone was coming after him again. Numerous snakes shot over, bombarding Xiang Shaoyun's mount with attacks. The horse trampled around furiously, stomping numerous snakes to death. However, there were too many snakes for the horse to kill, and it was eventually struck.

Xiang Shaoyun was forced to kill all the snakes around him. The streets sank into complete chaos. The guards were all surrounding Tuoba Wan'er to protect her, with a much smaller number of them around Xiang Shaoyun.

At that moment, several people broke through the defensive perimeter before they abruptly hurled attacks toward Xiang Shaoyun.

The attackers disguised themselves very well, hiding their aura completely. Thus, nobody had been able to sense their strength. But the moment they attacked, it was revealed that they were actually late-stage Emperors. In fact, there were even peak Emperors among them.

Powerful attacks shot out from their weapons and surrounded Xiang Shaoyun. Their cooperation was exquisite, and this barrage of attacks was enough to easily kill a peak Emperor.

Xiang Shaoyun had been on guard, so golden light immediately erupted from his body. Six layers of golden plates appeared around him, and he soared into the sky.

Rumble! Rumble!

Accompanied by a deafening rumble, the horse was turned into mincemeat. As for Xiang Shaoyun, he was sent flying. Where he crashed, a person was waiting. That person lifted his saber and brought it down right at Xiang Shaoyun's head.

It was unknown if the guards were really that useless, but none of them had arrived in time to help Xiang Shaoyun, watching on helplessly as he was attacked.

"Damn it! Protect the young master!" Tuoba Wan'er roared furiously. She flew out of the carriage and sent a powerful chain flying toward the attacker.

But she was too far away, and there were too many people in her way. Thus, her advance was obstructed. Just as the saber was about to land, Xiang Shaoyun vanished.

Phantom Shift!

Using the Holy Hall's secret technique, he avoided the attack and appeared beside the attacker. He erupted with full strength and launched a storm of palm attacks at the man.

Major Slab Palm!

Since the attacker had tried to kill him, Xiang Shaoyun wouldn't hold back. The person before him was a ninth-stage Dragon Ascension Realm expert but was still helplessly turned into mincemeat. Unfortunately, the true danger only revealed itself now. A powerful soul foundation energy suddenly wrapped around Xiang Shaoyun, causing his hairs to stand on end.