

I Am Overlord

Chapter 16: A Conspiracy Appears!

Wu Mingliang was not around. Furthermore, practically nobody knew of Xiang Shaoyun challenging him. Not bothering to press the issue further, Xiang Shaoyun invited Xia Liuhui to eat at the restaurant.

Although Xia Liuhui was a slightly unloyal chap, Xiang Shaoyun thought that he had some points that made him good to be around. At the same time, he also wished to understand more about the situation of the outer court.

“Boss, the Purple Lightning Marquis really treats you well! He’s even given you a jade plate to dine here, how truly enviable!” Xia Liuhui spoke enthusiastically. This was the first time he’d set foot into the restaurant, and he felt like he’d truly chosen to follow the correct person. From now on, with such a boss as his backer, he would have very little to fear.

Thinking about all that, Xia Liuhui’s heart was filled with utmost joy. After ordering various dishes, Xiang Shaoyun asked the most pressing question in his heart, “What kind of people are the top 10 outer court disciples? How is the top 10 decided?”

“Boss, you might be unaware of a few things since you have just arrived at the Martial Hall Palace a few days ago. Let me give you a rough rundown of things,” Xia Liuhui replied before he continued, “All of us outer court disciples went through an aptitude test before we were allowed into Martial Hall Palace as disciples. Those who pass the test would then participate in a martial competition with each other. This is also how the top 10 will be decided. Wu Mingliang is ranked fourth, behind Eldest Brother Leng Han, Second Brother Mo Buhui, and Third Sister Mei Lianhua. Speaking of which, Senior Sister Lu Xiaoqing is ranked sixth. Furthermore, she’s also one of our top 10 outer court beauties. Numerous disciples are trying to court her.”

Hearing Xia Liuhui’s careful explanation of the outer court, Xiang Shaoyun gained a general understanding of the situation. Only the top 10 outer court disciples were entitled to hold a jade plate. If others wanted to get ahold of a jade plate, they would have to get a place in the top 10. With a jade plate, they would be able to earn points. Only with said points would they be able to dine anytime they wanted at the restaurant.

Apart from that, Xiang Shaoyun now knew more about the usefulness of the jade plate. Points could also be exchanged for weapons at the Weapon Hall as well as herbs at the Medicine Hall. Basically, so long as one had enough points, one could get almost everything they needed within Martial Hall Palace with the jade plate.

Furthermore, as part of the top 10 outer court disciples, they would have the freedom to go out of Martial Hall Palace. This was the highlight for most outer court disciples. They were all restless youths whose mindsets had yet to mature. Nobody wished to be perpetually stuck cultivating. What a joy it would be if they were able to freely enter and leave Martial Hall Palace as they liked!

“How does one become one of the top 10 outer court disciples?” Xiang Shaoyun asked Xia Liuhui.

“Simple. If you challenge and successfully beat any one of the top 10 disciples, you’ll take over their previous ranking,” Xia Liuhui replied.

“Heh heh, not bad. That top 10 spot is going to be mine soon!” Xiang Shaoyun confidently chuckled.

“Boss, do you not understand even after I’ve repeated myself so many times? All the top 10 outer court disciples are at ninth-stage Basic Realm. You...you’re only at the third stage! Even if you are a heavenly genius, you still wouldn’t be able to beat any of them! Boss, one needs to be realistic when doing things,” Xia Liuhui seriously warned Xiang Shaoyun.

“It’s fine, I know what to do. You just wait to be the glorious sidekick of one of the outer court’s top 10 disciples.” Xiang Shaoyun did not bother explaining himself to Xia Liuhui. Right now, he was not merely at the third stage, but rather at the peak of the sixth stage, with the capability to break through to the seventh stage at any given time. Most importantly, his combat prowess was equal to that of a ninth-stage Basic Realm cultivator.

Outside Martial Hall Palace, at a luxurious mansion where the head of Wu Town resided:

“Greetings, father.” A youth bowed and greeted a middle-aged man.

If Xiang Shaoyun was around, he would’ve definitely noticed that the youth was Wu Mingliang. The middle-aged man was thus naturally his father, Wu Hongxi.

Wu Hongxi seemed no older than forty and was currently at the peak of his life. Not only was he a Transformation Realm expert, he was also the head of Wu Town, holding the topmost position in all of Wu Town.

“Rise.” Upon seeing his beloved son, Wu Hongxi could not help but let out a tender smile. He had seven sons with varying amounts of talent. His seventh son was the one he had the most hopes for. This son, however, was still slightly unruly. This wasn’t a huge matter, though, since it would go away with age.

“Father, why did you call me back here?” Wu Mingliang asked.

"It's like this. The day before yesterday, I noticed a bright light being emitted from your Martial Hall Palace, one that is similar to the five stars illuminating the sky phenomenon. Do you know who it was that triggered it?" Wu Hongxi asked.

"So father also took notice of that!" Wu Mingliang replied. With a smug expression, he then said, "He's a new disciple who has just joined Martial Hall Palace, merely at third-stage Basic Realm. I had even thoroughly bullied him yesterday! He's mere trash."

"Third-stage Basic Realm? Good, very good!" Wu Hongxi laughed loudly before saying, "Son, do you have any means of luring him out of Martial Hall Palace?"

Wu Mingliang guessed, "Does father wish to make him a servant of our household? Fantastic! He will know what I can do when he becomes our servant."

Wu Hongxi merely replied, "You do not need to bother about what I intend to do with him. As long as you're able to lure him out of Martial Hall Palace or get him to leave of his own accord, inform me at once. This matter was ordered by your grandfather; failure will not be tolerated. Do you understand?"

"Grandfather? He actually caught grandfather's attention? Then I'll go back to make some arrangements. I hope he isn't dead yet," Wu Mingliang said as his tone turned grave.

"What?! He's going to die?" Wu Hongxi asked, completely shocked.

Wu Mingliang gave a brief recap of what had happened between him and Xiang Shaoyun before proceeding to say, "With his little strength, trying to stay in the first room of the Hall of Limits for even half an hour is difficult, much less a whole hour. I'm afraid he really might have died!"

"He won't die. How can Martial Hall Palace bear to let a genius of his calibre perish like that?" Wu Hongxi said with certainty after he'd finished listening. Waving his hands, he then said, "You'd best go back quickly. If you're unable to accomplish it alone, wait for your two elder brothers to come back from their expedition and get them to help."

"Father can be at ease. Your son will not fail you," Wu Mingliang replied with absolute confidence.

Three days passed in the blink of an eye. Within those three short days, news of the upcoming match between Xiang Shaoyun and Wu Mingliang at the arena had spread like wildfire throughout Martial Hall Palace.

After another four days, the two would settle their grudges in the sparring arena. Nobody was optimistic for Xiang Shaoyun's chances, given their preconceived notion of him being a low-leveled Basic Realm cultivator. Everybody thought he was digging his own grave.

In those three days, Xiang Shaoyun constantly cultivated in the Hall of Limits during the day. At night, he would practice his battle techniques in his own courtyard. As such, his cultivation improved by leaps and bounds.

Whenever Xiang Shaoyun meditated, he would circulate his cultivation, causing ripples in the stars within his body. As energy pulsed through him, his 365 acupoints would light up brilliantly like a starry lake, making him seem like a sacred being.

This was something that normally only peak Basic Realm practitioners would be able to achieve. However, Xiang Shaoyun managed to achieve it while he was merely at the peak of the sixth-stage Basic Realm.

Normally, as long as one's acupoints were full of energy, one would then be able to convert them into astral energy and awaken their natal stars. However, Xiang Shaoyun's physique was too extraordinary. His natal stars had naturally awakened at birth, so he did not need to take such a step!

This was the benefit of being a monstrous genius. Strength coursed through his meridians like a lake as his acupoints constantly flashed brilliantly. Unable to be suppressed any further, the energy within him burst out.

Seventh-stage Basic Realm! Xiang Shaoyun's breakthrough took little to no effort at all. With his current strength, breaking through yet another stage would not be an issue at all. However, he chose to yet again suppress the raging energy, choosing to use the remaining time to further consolidate his foundations.

Chapter 17: I'll Remember This Whip!

Xiang Shaoyun managed to break through smoothly into the seventh stage of the Basic Realm. Yet not a trace of joy was on his face. In his eyes, this strength was way too low. His expectations were extremely high; these were only minor stages that he had to cross for now.

Rushing Qi Fist!

Standing up, Xiang Shaoyun thrust his body forward. Shaping his fist like a rock, he extended his arm, flying his fist forward. The resulting punch was so fierce even hitting pure air resulted in violent reverberations. The strength contained in that one punch was not something a seventh-stage Basic Realm cultivator could block. As he threw his second punch out, there seemed to be movement of qi within his arm meridians, unleashed via the power of his punch.

"Come out!" Xiang Shaoyun shouted. The stars in his body shone brightly, his acupoints all agitated as the qi flew through the meridians like a river before swiftly rushing out of his body.

Pow Pow Pow!

Within the span of a single breath, Xiang Shaoyun unleashed three consecutive punches, each punch containing his full strength, giving him the highest momentum possible. The very moment he released his fourth punch, a staggering burst of qi flowed out from his meridians. The qi was like a fog, but its sheer power was enough to startle people.

Pow!

This particular fist caused a vibration even stronger and more violent than before. Astral energy turning into qi, unleashing qi outwards. This was usually a symbol of one being in the Astral Realm.

After unleashing that punch, Xiang Shaoyun's strength grew even more terrifying than before, as if he had turned mad. He sent out ten consecutive punches—each and every punch was accompanied by qi, leaving a very oppressive feeling lingering in the air after every punch. A sturdy old tree nearby was hit by a blast of his qi, leaving a deep hole outlining the blast of the qi. Unable to support itself anymore, the tree fell.

Only now did Xiang Shaoyun stop throwing out punches. By then, he was thoroughly exhausted, panting heavily, buckets of sweat dripping down his face.

"Fantastic...this feels so awesome! HA HA HA!" Xiang Shaoyun tossed his head back and roared with laughter. Able to get qi to form attacks externally as a brand new seventh-stage Basic Realm cultivator? This was simply upturning the heavens and creating a new path!

Throughout all Wu Town and even Cloud Margin City, not one person could be said to have accomplished such a heaven-defying act! Even Xiang Shaoyun himself was happy beyond belief.

"I can only release half a meter of qi with my fists, but it's more than enough for me to take care of anyone within the Basic Realm! As for those in the Astral Realm, there still is quite a gap between us. There won't be any after I reach the peak of the Basic Realm, though!" Xiang Shaoyun muttered to himself. Shortly after, he once again pondered, "It's time to train with weapons!"

On the second day, Xiang Shaoyun absorbed purple qi at the start of dawn as per usual. This time, however, he managed to absorb thrice as much as he did previously due to his increase in cultivation. That being said, even as he took in thrice as much as he previously did, the purple qi still failed to cause a single ripple when absorbed into his nine great stars. His nine stars were like a bottomless abyss. Nobody knew just how long it would take to fill them.

Standing up, Xiang Shaoyun left his compound and headed for the Weapon Hall. As an outer court disciple, it was initially not possible for Xiang Shaoyun to skip training sessions. However, he'd been in the Hall of Limits for the past three days! Others may not be privy to this information, but the outer court officer naturally knew all this.

Since this was the case, Xiang Shaoyun was not required to stay in the outer court for training like the rest of the outer court disciples. He was similar to the top 10 disciples in this regard. As for the battle between Wu Mingliang and himself, he had long thrown the matter to the back of his mind. In his eyes, Wu Mingliang was merely a hopping clown not worthy of a second glance.

The Weapon Hall was situated within the inner courtyard, which happened to be where most of the inner court disciples were. The inner courtyard was not like the outer courtyard, which was a vast empty space equipped with simple training tools. Here, there were numerous cultivation rooms built for inner court disciples to self-cultivate in. There was also a large martial field, where elders would hold external lessons at every half a month, speaking about various cultivation techniques, battle techniques, and etc.

Every single inner court disciple was allowed to enter and leave Martial Hall Palace as they liked. Hence, the faces that were seen in the inner courtyard were never constant. As Xiang Shaoyun stepped into the inner courtyard, he saw various heroic and imposing youths riding on different demonic beasts.

"When I have the chance, I should get a mount too. Only then will I be eye-catching," Xiang Shaoyun mused to himself. At that moment, a young lady dressed in fiery-red attire and riding a scorching flame cat rushed straight for the inner court exit.

"Move aside!" the red-clothed lady bellowed at the dazed Xiang Shaoyun.

The inner court exit was large enough that it would be able to fit 10 mounts simultaneously going in or out of the area. Yet this red-clothed lady seemed to be going straight for the still Xiang Shaoyun. This was an obvious disregard of him, and she had decided to brute force her way through. Xiang Shaoyun was unable to get out of her way. The scorching flame cat was simply too fast, closing the gap in what seemed like the blink of an eye.

"Oh no!" Xiang Shaoyun cried out in alarm.

At this critical moment, the red-clothed lady managed to barely control the scorching flame cat, avoiding Xiang Shaoyun by the skin of its teeth.

"Bastard! You dare to block Li Hong'er's path?!" The red-clothed lady herself was in shock. The long whip in her hand viciously shot for Xiang Shaoyun.

Pa!

The whip was stunningly fast. Within the blink of an eye, it landed on Xiang Shaoyun's delicate face. A red wound appeared, traces of fresh blood dripping from it.

It hurts!

A burning pain immediately spread throughout Xiang Shaoyun's body. Not only that, he felt a sense of humiliation that he had never felt before. His handsome face had been ruined!

"This is to teach you a lesson. Good dogs don't block the road!" the lady called Li Hong'er coldly spat before swiftly riding the scorching flame cat out of the inner court.

"Bastard, stop right there!" Xiang Shaoyun came to his wits and yelled in sheer anger at the faraway Li Hong'er. She could've hit him anywhere else but had chosen to specifically hit his deviously handsome face! That was taboo! Sadly, by then, the lady was long gone. How was he to catch up to a mid-tier demonic beast with his speed?

"I'll remember this whip!" Xiang Shaoyun bellowed in the direction of the red-clothed lady.

"Junior brother, you seem very unfamiliar with this place. Are you not aware of who senior sister Li Hong'er is? You even dare to hold a grudge against her," a passing inner court disciple asked, completely surprised.

Shaking his head, Xiang Shaoyun said, "This young one is a new disciple here, so I'm not acquainted with any such vicious females. I ask for senior brother's enlightenment."

"She's the daughter of the thirteenth elder, Li Xuemeng. If you dare to go against her, the thirteenth elder might just kick you out of Martial Hall Palace!" the inner court disciple kindly said to Xiang Shaoyun before hurriedly walking away.

So she's the daughter of the thirteenth elder! No wonder she's so cocky, Xiang Shaoyun thought to himself. Eyes flashing with killing intent, he said, "Even if it were the palace master's daughter who hit my face, she would still die!"

Xiang Shaoyun, who was initially planning to visit the Weapon Hall, headed straight for the Medicine Hall to seek herbal medicine to heal himself, lest a scar would be left on his face. The Medicine Hall was not far from the Weapon Hall. As he drew closer, the scent of herbs drifted by.

Xiang Shaoyun hurriedly entered the premises and asked the overseer inside the hall, "Great overseer, do you have the spirit medicine blood-clotting grass for the stopping of external blood flow and the healing of wounds?"

"The blood-clotting grass is a high-tier spirit medicine from the legends! Kid, are you here to get a laugh out of our Medicine Hall?" The overseer angrily harrumphed.

Chapter 18: Concocting Medicinal Solutions!

Tier-1 to tier-3 medicinal herbs were also known as old medicines. The age of these herbs were at least 100 to 300 years old. If the herbs used were 400 to 600 years old, the produced medicines would be known as spirit medicines. Any older than 600 and the result would be known as king medicines.

The blood-clotting grass was a tier-6 spirit herb, which also meant to say that it needed to grow for at least 600 years before it reached maturity. As a high-tier spirit herb used for healing wounds, it was extremely uncommon. Normal people would rarely chance upon such a herb, which grew in vast, dangerous forests where high-tier demonic beasts abounded.

Martial Hall Palace was merely a cultivation ground in a small town. Even if they had several Transformation Realm experts, wanting to get the high-tier blood-clotting grass would be no easy feat.

“Overseer, how could I be here to make fun of your hall? You yourself can see what has happened to my face! If you don’t have the blood-clotting grass, give me your best spirit herbs for healing wounds! I need them now.” Xiang Shaoyun was dumbfounded. It was only then that he considered that for a place as small as Martial Hall Palace, getting high-tier spirit herbs would be no easy task. Even if they had any, the elders would surely keep it for themselves and not bring it to the Medicine Hall to sell.

Seeing the wound on Xiang Shaoyun’s face, the overseer no longer pursued the matter of him making fun of them and replied, “We don’t have high-tier spirit medicines here, but we do have a low-tier spirit medicine here—reconciliation flower!”

“Reconciliation flower? The medical efficacy of this 400-year-old spirit medicine is a far cry from that of the blood-clotting medicine! But it’ll do for now,” Xiang Shaoyun replied, slightly unhappy.

“Kid, you sure talk big! The reconciliation flower is on that shelf over there. Go take a look first.” The overseer was left utterly speechless at Xiang Shaoyun’s choice of words.

Hastily walking over, Xiang Shaoyun caught sight of a sparkling, dark green flower placed in a transparent jade box. This was, without a doubt, the reconciliation flower used for treating wounds.

Just as he was about to take ahold of the box, he found that there was a price tag attached to the box. Upon taking a look, he reeled back in horror, “Five thousand points or five pieces of low-tier spirit crystal?”

During the past few days, Xiang Shaoyun had been taking note of a few details surrounding Martial Hall Palace. One of the things he noted was that 1 point at Martial Hall Palace was roughly equivalent to 1 gold coin. This meant that 5,000 points was

roughly equivalent to 5,000 gold coins. And 1 low-tier spirit crystal cost about 1,000 gold, so using 5 low-tier crystals in place of 5,000 points was reasonable.

However, this amount of currency was difficult for many households to take out. Truthfully, he had never imagined that mere low-tier spirit medicine would cost this much. What surprised him more was the realization that he had once used low-tier spirit medicines like these as food for demonic beasts!

“Kid, even if you’re the junior brother of Elder Zi, you shouldn’t have 5,000 points on you, should you? For your wound, you should go to Elder Zi himself. He’s bound to have spirit medicines for treating wounds,” the overseer, recognizing Xiang Shaoyun, kindheartedly advised.

Waving his hand, Xiang Shaoyun did not answer the overseer but continued to quickly browse through the different herbs in the Hall.

“Snake agility vine, low-tier spirit medicine. One can increase one’s speed and learn Snake Step.

“Moonstar flower, low-tier spirit medicine. Shaped like a moon with a lustrous glow, it can greatly increase one’s astral energy.

“Three transformations grass, mid-tier spirit medicine. It strengthens the body, temporarily granting a threefold increase in combat power.”

By taking a mere look at their names, Xiang Shaoyun was able to discern their uses. It was just a pity that he could not afford these spirit medicines for the time being. He did not linger any longer, and he headed to the area for old medicines.

These were all medicines around the age of 100 to 300 years old. Although their medical efficacy could not compare to spirit herbs, they were all that he could afford. It was more important that he treat his wound first.

“Old medicines definitely cannot match up to spirit medicines, but with so many of them here, I might be able to refine a pill or even a medicinal solution! Then, the effectiveness will definitely not be inferior to that of a spirit medicine!” Xiang Shaoyun muttered to himself.

Very quickly, he selected three different old medicines—100-year-old haemostatic vine, a 200-year-old skin-healing grass, and a 300-year-old stainless flower. Although they were merely three old medicines, they cost him a hefty 800 points, even after a 20 percent discount!

Xiang Shaoyun initially thought he’d be able to dine without worry for a whole year with 1,000 points, but within the blink of an eye, he was merely left with slightly over a 100 points. If he exchanged them for a regular weapon, he would be broke. However, not

once did he hesitate, immediately handing over his jade plate to purchase the three old medicines.

“This is the jade plate from the Hall of Limits! Not bad at all, kid! I’d thought that Elder Zi personally gave you your jade plate! It seems that the matter of you clearing the first room of the Hall of Limits is true!” The overseer at the Medicine Hall took a look at the jade plate in Xiang Shaoyun’s hands and laughed jovially. A genius who was able to break through the limits was sure to have a boundless future.

“Great overseer is praising me too much,” Xiang Shaoyun humbly replied before speaking up again. “Can I also ask overseer to lend me a tool for grinding medicines?”

The overseer naturally had no reason to refuse such a small request. After borrowing the grinding tool, Xiang Shaoyun immediately threw the three old medicines into the grinder and began fiddling with it. Watching the actions of Xiang Shaoyun, a trace of surprise flashed in the overseer’s eyes as he thought to himself, Does this kid know how to concoct pills and solutions?

Although Xiang Shaoyun had no experience with the dao of pills, concocting a few medicinal solutions was a piece of cake for him. Since he was young, he had watched his father use various solutions to strengthen his body. Just from his own powers of observation, he was able to gather quite a few things.

After mashing the three old medicines into a pulp, he wrapped the resulting solution with a silk cloth, forming a makeshift medicinal pouch. Pressing the medicinal pouch against his face, he squeezed it with a bit of force, resulting in some medicine flowing onto his face.

Pshhhhhh!

As he held the pouch against his face, a sharp pain shot from his face, causing him to take a sudden gasp.

“Li Hong’er, this young master won’t ever forget this whip!” Xiang Shaoyun swore to himself. As the solution dripped onto his wound, his wound felt cool almost at once. The pain had also lessened, and he was feeling much better. After an hour, feeling a slight itch on his face, he lowered the medicinal pouch.

The overseer, who had been paying close attention to Xiang Shaoyun, lightly gasped, “Your wound has formed a scab already?”

Hearing the overseer’s words, Xiang Shaoyun lightly touched the place where the wound had been. Finding that there was indeed a scab, his mood brightened a lot. “It seems that the efficacy of such medicinal solutions is not bad at all!”

After he finished speaking, he cupped his hands towards the overseer before leaving the Medicine Hall. His wound would not heal at once, but he would definitely regain his previous looks within two to three days. It was only after settling this matter that he rushed to the Weapon Hall.

The Weapon Hall was indeed worthy of being a shop of weapons. There were various weapons—sabers, swords, spears, pitchforks, and so on. All sorts of weapons of varying ranks were arranged neatly within the store, making it a sight to behold.

“Bluefish Sword, a tier-2 primary-grade sword, 580 points.

“Fierce Marking Spear, a tier-2 mid-grade spear, 750 points.

“Sawtooth Saber, a tier-3 primary-grade saber, 1,800 points.”

Weapons were different from medicinal herbs. Each and every weapon required large amounts of resources and manpower to forge. A weapon at the same corresponding rank as its herbal counterpart would cost much more.

Chapter 19: Prelude to the Battle!

Although the Weapon Hall was a feast for the eyes, all Xiang Shaoyun could do was watch sadly. He simply did not have the points required to purchase a weapon. Even tier-1 weapons cost at least 200 points. Even if he could get a 20 percent discount with his jade plate from the Hall of Limits, he would be extremely hard pressed and would have no points left to dine at the restaurant.

“Nevermind, I must have a weapon. At the very most, I’ll go to challenge the Hall of Limits’ second room.” In the end, Xiang Shaoyun decided that even if he had to use up all his remaining points, he would get hold of a weapon. Browsing through the section for tier-1 weapons, his eyes fell upon a saber.

Heavy Cleave Saber, a tier-1 saber. Weighing 139.2 kilograms, it was the heaviest weapon among all tier-1 weapons.

“Kid, this saber has been soaked in a small amount of blackiron. It’s just a pity that the quality of the blackiron wasn’t the best, or it wouldn’t have been a stretch to forge a tier-2 weapon. This weapon is extremely heavy; normal Basic Realm cultivators will be unable to wield this saber deftly.”

For a saber weighing close to 150 kilograms, anybody third-stage Basic Realm and above would be able to lift it. However, to become adept with the weapon, one required sufficient arm strength as well as an unyielding will. Most Basic Realm cultivators wielded weapons weighing at most 100 kilograms.

“Overseer is indeed correct. Most Basic Realm cultivators will be unable to use it well. However, it is suitable for me, Xiang Shaoyun, to use!” Xiang Shaoyun replied immediately.

“Oh? You’re that confident? Give it a try then! This overseer will give you a 10 percent discount,” the overseer said as his eyes sparkled.

“A discount of 10 percent? Great! Adding onto the 20 percent initial discount from the Hall of Limits, in total, I’ll get a 30 percent discount! I’ll have enough points then!” Xiang Shaoyun said joyfully.

The Heavy Cleave Saber was not a cheap weapon. Priced initially at 260 points, after a 20 percent discount, Xiang Shaoyun would still be short by a little over 10 points. However, with the additional discount from the overseer, he had just enough points to make it work—and even enough to live on for the next few days.

“Brat, your jade plate is actually from the Hall of Limits! You should’ve said so earlier! I’ll make a loss now,” the overseer cried out in surprise.

“How can you be making a loss? Whenever I dine at the restaurant, I always get a 40 percent discount while the Medicine Hall and Weapon Hall only give me a 20 percent discount.” Xiang Shaoyun was still slightly unsatisfied.

“What do you know? Food can easily be gotten anywhere! On the other hand, weapons and medicines aren’t that easily obtainable! A 20 percent discount is the most we give to all the personal disciples!” the overseer replied.

Lightly sneering, Xiang Shaoyun chose not to speak further, leaving the Weapon Hall with the Heavy Cleave Saber in hand. The Heavy Cleave Saber was his weapon of choice only for now. The stronger he grew, the more unsuitable the Heavy Cleave Saber would be for him.

Once again heading for the restaurant, Xiang Shaoyun exchanged all his remaining points for food in preparation for entering secluded cultivation to hone his saber techniques. This could be considered preparation for his battle with Wu Mingliang.

Among the five tier-1 battle techniques he had obtained from the outer court’s Battle Technique Hall, there was a technique called the Heavy Cleave Technique, which nicely corresponded to the Heavy Cleave Saber. This was the first and foremost reason why he chose the Heavy Cleave Saber as his weapon.

Maybe the Heavy Cleave Saber was forged to complement the Heavy Cleave Technique? The emphasis for the Heavy Cleave Technique was naturally on the word “heavy”. Only a saber heavy enough would be able to unleash the full potential of the Heavy Cleave Technique.

Images depicting the Heavy Cleave Technique flashed through Xiang Shaoyun's mind. As he strung a few of them together, the imagery became much more vibrant, as if a saber user was demonstrating the technique right in front of him. Done with his imagery, he used the mantra for the Heavy Cleave Technique to begin his saber training.

Xiang Shaoyun's comprehension of battle techniques was at a level others could not begin to fathom. As he sent out slash after slash, he quickly furthered his understanding of his saber technique. Just like that, he holed up in his personal compound for four days straight.

Eventually, the day of Xiang Shaoyun and Wu Mingliang's arena battle arrived. Around the outer court's sparring arena were seated more than 100 outer court disciples, each and every one of them eagerly anticipating the start of the fight.

One of the participants was the fourth-ranking outer court disciple whose combat power among Basic Realm cultivators was at the peak, and the other was the genius who had triggered five stars illuminating the sky; it was merely a pity in the eyes of others that he was only at the third stage of the Basic Realm.

No matter how one looked at it, everybody believed that the latter would most definitely lose.

"Look, look! Isn't that Senior Mo Buhui? Practically nobody's seen him ever since the day of the examination!" Everybody present gasped with surprise towards a certain direction.

In one corner, there was a handsome young man carrying a sword. He was much taller than most of his peers, making him seem like a crane among chickens. Furthermore, his eyes, filled with utter indifference, made him seem like an existence a thousand miles away.

This stalwart young man was Mo Buhui, the second-ranked Basic Realm practitioner in the entire outer court. It was confirmed that he was already a nominal disciple for one of the various elders.

Standing beside him was a girl with extraordinary looks dressed in floral clothing, and the various colors on her dress seemed to light up the scenery around her. She was Mei Lianhua, ranked third among all outer court disciples.

"Senior Sister Mei has come as well! Even the two of them want to know just how extraordinary this Xiang Shaoyun is!"

"Precisely! Wu Mingliang isn't a match for either of them. They're definitely not here to watch him!"

“Brother Mo, is it really worth our time to watch this match?” Mei Lianhua asked in a dignified manner as she tidied her fringe.

“I just wish to see how special the boy who triggered five stars illuminating the heavens truly is. Even daring to challenge the ninth-stage Wu Mingliang at merely the third stage...,” Mo Buhui indifferently replied.

Mei Lianhua gave her thoughts on the situation: “Even if he has an extraordinary physique, he would’ve been able to raise his cultivation by at most one stage. Unless the Purple Lightning Marquis used various spirit medicines to forcefully raise his cultivation several stages, he’s bound to lose this fight.”

“The Purple Lightning Marquis wouldn’t be so stupid so as to prematurely cut short the growth of a genius. That would be utter foolishness.” Pondering to himself briefly, Mo Buhui then added, “If he really is able to pull off the impossible, we should consider pulling him into our plans.”

“No way! Isn’t that just giving him a free ride there?” Mei Lianhua protested.

“The matter isn’t as simple as you imagine it to be. It’ll be hard for just the two of us to swallow the whole thing there by ourselves. Besides, pulling him into our plans may not be as straightforward as giving him a free ride,” Mo Buhui said, various thoughts flashing through his mind.

“Young Master Wu is here!” With a single shout, the entire arena looked towards a direction.

Wu Mingliang and his lackeys swaggered into the arena. Arriving before the arena, Wu Mingliang leapt onto the arena platform. With a spirited expression on his face, he possessed an otherworldly aura.

“Xiang Shaoyun, get your ass on the platform so that I can kill you!” Wu Mingliang mockingly shouted. His voice was particularly sonorous, his words reaching every corner of the outer court.

“Are you that eager to reincarnate? Let me help you then!” a distinct voice replied from a distance.

One could see Xiang Shaoyun sauntering over, the wound on his face already gone. He looked much more refined than when he had first arrived, having specifically combed his hair for the occasion, adding immensely to his heroic bearing.

Chapter 20: I’ll Defeat You in Three Moves!

“I just realized that Xiang Shaoyun is actually really handsome! No wonder I hear that Lu Xiaoqing is interested in him!”

“He really is quite handsome! He seems rather gentle and considerate, just my type!”

“I really hope that he somehow manages to win! He’s much more likeable than that stinky Wu Mingliang.”

“He may be handsome, but he’s completely useless! I’m afraid he’ll be beaten to a pulp by Wu Mingliang soon!”

Many of the female disciples in the arena began swooning over Xiang Shaoyun, with some of them even casting furtive glances at him. Xiang Shaoyun felt extremely gratified. He had not felt admiration from the masses in a very long time. What a pity it was that his good mood was utterly ruined by a certain fellow.

“Boss, do your best! I have my eyes on you, so don’t lose too terribly, ok?” Xia Liuhui cheered, a towel wrapped around his forehead as he waved a white flag in support. This fellow was dressed up as if he was there to offer surrender. And after hearing his words, Xiang Shaoyun almost felt like coughing out blood on the spot.

“This damned bastard,” Xiang Shaoyun cursed to himself then walked up steadily onto the arena, no longer turning to look at the audience.

At this moment, Xiang Shaoyun was carrying a large saber on his back. His entire bearing had transformed since he entered Martial Hall Palace; he no longer looked like a mere scholar but more of an upstanding young saber wielder.

“Xiang Shaoyun, you really came! Young Master Wu will teach you a lesson!” a voice filled with resentment came from below the arena. The one who spoke was none other than Wu Mingliang’s number one lackey, Gou Zi. His injuries had not yet healed, his head still wrapped like a dumpling, making for an extremely comical sight.

Xiang Shaoyun looked down and coldly laughed, “It’s a pity I don’t have a brick here, or I would’ve given your Young Master Wu the same treatment!”

“You really like to talk big for someone who can only rely on their physique to boast! You even dare to stand before me, a ninth-stage Basic Realm cultivator, with your pathetic bit of cultivation? Naive!” Wu Mingliang shouted, utterly despising Xiang Shaoyun.

“We’ll know just who the naive one is after the battle!” Xiang Shaoyun replied confidently. Thinking back to just a few days ago when he was humiliated in the canteen, his heart burned with rage. From being a lofty young master with much influence, he fell to the point where he was made fun of by mere Basic Realm cultivators. He had to settle this particular debt.

Just then the officer, who had been waiting in the arena for a long time, said, “I don’t care what your grudges are, but you must settle them in this arena today! But I must

make this very clear—no matter whether who wins or loses, neither of you are to attempt to take the other's life. Those caught trying to do so will immediately be expelled from Martial Hall Palace! Do you understand?"

"Yes!" Wu Mingliang and Xiang Shaoyun simultaneously replied.

"Good. I declare the start of the match!" the Martial Officer shouted.

"Xiang Shaoyun, if you're willing to concede now and swear fealty to me, I can spare you from suffering. Furthermore, I can offer resources to help you fully grow! What do you think?" Wu Mingliang suggested before the fighting even started.

"You? Hah hah! This really is the greatest joke under heaven! Come and accept death, you braggart! I'll defeat you within three moves!" Xiang Shaoyun threw his head back and roared with laughter.

"Looks like you are an idiot through and through, even dreaming of defeating me within three moves. This young master will make you kneel with one move!" Wu Mingliang loudly berated Xiang Shaoyun. Wasting not another moment, he charged straight for Xiang Shaoyun.

Rushing Qi Fist!

Wu Mingliang's first move was Martial Hall Palace's tier-1 battle technique available to all. The punch contained considerable power within it, seeming to have 70 percent of its comprehension as a whole. This meant that Wu Mingliang's Rushing Qi Fist had 30 percent left until perfection. Furthermore, adding Wu Mingliang's personal strength and ability, the resulting force from the Rushing Qi Fist caused a humming sound throughout the arena.

A punch with a force of 500 kilograms! This was the strongest strength possible for someone at the ninth stage of the Basic Realm. Even as spectators, the outer court disciples felt great pressure exuding from it. Everybody began to wonder whether Xiang Shaoyun would be able to withstand the punch.

"I'm taking your place in the ranking today!" Xiang Shaoyun yelled. Without dodging or hiding, he assumed a forward horse stance, and in return, sent out a punch like the wind. This was the exact same battle technique, Rushing Qi Fist.

Pow!

A collective gasp of surprise came from the crowd. Nobody had thought that Xiang Shaoyun, a lower-ranking Basic Realm practitioner, would dare to clash with a peak Basic Realm practitioner head on.

Just when they thought that Xiang Shaoyun's bones were all going to be broken and that he was going to be forced out of the arena, they found that he was standing steadily, still standing where he was. On the other hand, Wu Mingliang had been forced back several steps, and he was clutching his fist, as if in a lot of pain. At this moment, all the outer court disciples exploded into a flurry of discussion.

"H-how can this be possible?! Xiang Shaoyun has such great strength that even Wu Mingliang was forced back?"

"This can't be real, right? Could it be that Xiang Shaoyun was hiding his strength all along and only revealed it today?"

"This doesn't seem too plausible, does it? Remember his first day of trying to get food from the canteen? Even I could hit him! Do you think he was faking that too?!"

"Maybe this is the doing of the nineteenth elder! If he gave Xiang Shaoyun a spirit medicine, it's not too exaggerated for his strength to have risen to this degree."

"Watch closely, here's my second move!" Xiang Shaoyun yelled. Pressing the attack, his body rushed forward swiftly like a sprinting demonic beast, carrying a terrifying momentum.

This was the rushing intent of the Rushing Qi Fist. The next step in this sequence of moves was to accumulate the force from this rush to be released at the right moment later. Again, Xiang Shaoyun repeated a Rushing Qi Fist. This time, he unleashed 90 percent of the might of this battle technique, which added no less than 50 kilograms of weight to his punch.

Xiang Shaoyun wanted to use Wu Mingliang to show everybody his strength. He intended to end the match within three moves, not wanting to give his opponent too many chances to counterattack.

Wu Mingliang's title as one of the top 10 outer court disciples was not just for show. Reacting almost immediately, he changed his fist form and shouted viciously, "I'll let you see this young master's true strength!"

Tier-2 battle technique, Rippling Punch. The moment he sent his fist forward, ripples started forming in the air. This punch contained more destructive power than the Rushing Qi Fist. This was the sheer difference between a tier-2 fist skill and a tier-1 fist skill. This battle technique was not part of Martial Hall Palace's gallery of battle techniques but was one of the Wu Clan's heirloom skills.

The two fists once again met in the air; both fighters actually managed to stand their ground this time. Neither of them retreated.

“How is this possible?! The Rippling Fist should enable me to unleash 650 kilograms of force even if I’ve only comprehended 20 percent of the skill! But this brat actually managed to block it?” Wu Mingliang was incredulous at the sight.

One must note that even most ninth-stage Basic Realm cultivators would not be able to take this punch straight on. Could Xiang Shaoyun actually have reached ninth-stage Basic Realm already?

Just as Wu Mingliang was still in a daze, Xiang Shaoyun changed his move. This time, he chose not to punch but rather sent a Gale Winds Kick straight at Wu Mingliang. The Gale Winds Kick did not increase one’s strength, unlike the Rushing Qi Fist. However, its specialty was to allow one to unleash kicks in rapid succession, making it extremely difficult to block every kick.

Xiang Shaoyun sent a flurry of five to six kicks at once towards Wu Mingliang, each kick containing 500 kilograms of weight.

Pow Pow!

Wu Mingliang had underestimated his opponent in the beginning of the match. And now toward the end of the match, he was distracted. He had not once considered that Xiang Shaoyun would change his skill all of a sudden, and he was unable to prepare himself before getting kicked square in the stomach and thrown completely out of the arena.

Thud!