

I Am Overlord

Chapter 26: Earth Star Spring!

In a very isolated corner of Martial Hall Palace, a group of youths were gathered together. These youths were none other than Xiang Shaoyun, Mo Buhui, Mei Lianhua, Lu Xiaoqing, and Xia Liuhui.

“Lianhua and I know that there is an Earth Star Spring in the outskirts of the Hundred Beast Mountain Range!” Mo Buhui told the group of people listening to him.

“E-Earth Star Spring?! Are you referring to the spring with liquified starlight? Once you take a drink from it, your stars will awaken! It is the Earth Star Spring that leaps you straight into the Astral Realm?” Xia Liuhui cried out in shock. Even the usually quiet and elegant Lu Xiaoqing could not help but feel moved upon hearing what they were talking about.

Xiang Shaoyun was also visibly surprised as he said, “An Earth Star Spring? It can help anybody below the Transformation Realm! Why are you sharing it with us instead of keeping it for yourselves?”

An Earth Star Spring was rumoured to be the result when starlight from the heavens fell onto spring water. Over time, an Earth Star Spring would begin to form. However, such springs were rarely seen. Even having one of them form among tens of thousands of mountains and hills was extremely rare. The rarity was further compounded by the fact that an Earth Star Spring was a spiritual spring that would only form if all conditions were met, and the conditions were all extremely rare.

Not only could the spring invigorate one’s astral energy, it also had the ability to directly strengthen it and increase one’s power. It posed an extremely tempting allure to any cultivator below the Transformation Realm. Even the calm and collected Xiang Shaoyun began to feel perturbed upon hearing the news.

He had already wasted 10 of his golden years for cultivation and had to grow stronger within 10 years for his revenge. The Earth Star Spring was something that could aid him in increasing his strength without any drawbacks at all; this was key for him!

“Although the Earth Star Spring is valuable, it’s not that easy to obtain. Near the spring itself reside numerous demonic beasts, including several giant demonic beasts!” Mo Buhui sternly said.

“Since it’s in such a dangerous location, how did the two of you find out that there was an Earth Star Spring there?” Lu Xiaoqing could not help but ask.

"We gained this information via mouth from a hunter that we had passed by who was about to die. Furthermore, at the time of his death, he was clutching a map in his right hand! It shouldn't be fake," Mei Lianhua said with absolute certainty. She then added, "We're aware that the two of us alone lack the strength to reach the spring, so we planned to invite a few more powerful peers to journey with us. Perhaps, we'd have a sliver of a chance then."

"Although the Elemental Star Spring is attractive, you need to be alive to be able to partake of it. This is way too dangerous! I feel like we should tell this matter to the overseers and elders to have them personally secure the spring! Perhaps then we'll get some form of reward for it!" Xia Liuhui suggested.

"Hmph! Opportunities are left to the fated ones. Since you're scared, you might as well back out now. You won't be able to help much anyway, with your pathetic initial eighth-stage Basic Realm!" Mei Lianhua coldly retorted.

Having been chastised as such by Mei Lianhua, Xia Liuhui's face immediately reddened. She was unsure of what to say.

"Indeed. Although the place is fraught with dangers, the map that we have illustrates a safer path. This path will allow us to avoid numerous strong demonic beasts, letting us enter the deeper parts of the mountain range. However, whether or not we're able to get to the spring will depend on our luck!" Mo Buhui explained.

"A safe route can only be so safe, right? We'll definitely encounter various demonic beasts along the way, correct?" Xiang Shaoyun asked.

"Naturally. The Hundred Beast Mountain Range hosts innumerable demonic beasts. Even the outskirts are full of danger. Without absolute power, going in is akin to throwing your life away," Mo Buhui gravely stated the situation. He then turned to Xiang Shaoyun and asked, "Does Brother Xiang still wish to venture in with us?"

"Heh heh. As long as you're not scared of me taking the Earth Star Spring as my own, I'm not afraid of anything!" Xiang Shaoyun said, full of his usual confidence.

"As I previously mentioned, just by these words of yours, I am willing to bring you along to the Earth Star Spring! We will naturally have a share as well, right?" Mo Buhui hurriedly asked.

"Of course!" Xiang Shaoyun nodded his head in reply.

"Then what are we waiting for?! Let's set out at once!" Mei Lianhua said, excited beyond belief.

"Don't be so hasty. We should prepare a bit for the trip; otherwise, it really will be a road of no return," Xiang Shaoyun warned.

“Indeed, we can’t afford to rush the matter. Three days—we’ll set forth in three days,” Mo Buhui said. Looking at the quiet Lu Xiaoqing, he politely asked, “Lu Xiaoqing, will you be joining us?”

“If you don’t mind me coming along, I’d be happy to,” Lu Xiaoqing replied without hesitation. This was a chance to propel herself into the Astral Realm! She wouldn’t miss it for the world.

“I also want to go!” Xia Liuhui boldly said, as though he had a sudden change of heart.

“Only the top 10 disciples of the outer court are allowed to go in and out of Martial Hall Palace freely. You, unfortunately, don’t have a chance,” Mei Lianhua mercilessly said. Ever since she fell for Xiang Shaoyun, Xia Liuhui was no more than an eyesore to her.

“Xia Liuhui, you should stay here and cultivate. Going to the Earth Star Spring with your strength would be forcing it. If your boss is able to get his hands on the Earth Star Spring, I will surely share a drop with you!” Xiang Shaoyun nobly promised.

“Boss is truly the one who treats me best!” Xia Liuhui was moved.

“Wow, Shaoyun! You’re so generous!” Mei Lianhua purred, her beautiful eyes sparkling.

The manliest of men not only needed to have a heroic appearance but also sufficient charisma. One’s charisma was fueled by their character and strength. Although Xiang Shaoyun was slightly narcissistic, he was easygoing and generous, greatly fueling his personal charisma. As such, Mei Lianhua had already begun to throw herself at him.

After discussing for a while more, the group fixed a gathering time and dispersed. Having no plans to train, Xiang Shaoyun ran to the Medicine Hall. Before setting out on a journey, not preparing sufficient medicines was a no-go. With 2,000 points, he could at least afford a few old medicines. If he were to properly mix the old medicines together, it would greatly strengthen their medicinal properties.

He used 600 points to exchange for a few younger herbal medicines as well as several stalks of old medicines before leaving the Medicine Hall. After that, he ran to the Battle Technique Hall. This was not the outer court’s Battle Technique Hall but the one within the inner court.

Within the inner court’s Battle Technique Hall were battle techniques of varying styles and tiers. If one had enough points, one could exchange for a new battle technique. Right now, all Xiang Shaoyun had were tier-1 battle techniques. These were all insufficient for him.

He needed to master a tier-2 battle technique in order to be more thoroughly prepared. Then, if he were to encounter a mid-tier demonic beast along the way, he would be able to protect himself.

After entering the inner court's Battle Technique Hall, he found that the viscosity of its formation was much thicker compared to the ones at the Medicine Hall and the Weapon Hall.

"The formation is much more potent here! It seems that Martial Hall Palace places a lot of emphasis on the Battle Technique Hall," Xiang Shaoyun muttered to himself.

At the same time, he also realized that the one handling the Battle Technique Hall was not an ordinary overseer but an unfamiliar elder. This could be inferred from his manner of dress as well as the title plate on his chest.

Bowing respectfully, Xiang Shaoyun politely said, "Greetings to elder!"

This wizened old elder opened his eyes slightly before he feebly said, "The first floor has tier-1 and tier-2 battle techniques; the second floor has tier-3 battle techniques. As long as you have enough points, you can get whichever skill you want."

After his explanation, he once again closed his eyes, as if nothing else here had anything to do with him.

Chapter 27: Star Destroying Finger!

"Bone Breaking Palm, primary tier-2 battle technique. A single palm is enough to damage internal organs and break bones; 1,500 points.

"Seven Cries Fist, primary tier-2 battle technique. With a single fist, the energy of seven animal cries will sharply converge and attack its opponent with massive destructive power; 1,700 points.

"Quick Revolving Spear, mid tier-2 Battle technique. Practicing this makes one's spear fluid as water, providing reliable coverage all around; 2,000 points."

Xiang Shaoyun was leisurely browsing the inner court's Battle Technique Hall, taking a look at each and every battle technique description he passed by. On his face was plastered a bitter smile. Right now, he only had 1,400 points remaining. Wanting to exchange for a tier-2 battle technique was not going to be easy.

"I used to think that 2,000 points was quite a lot, but now I realize that I am really a poor man!" Xiang Shaoyun grieved.

After browsing through the entire first floor, his eyes fell on a battle technique called the "Star Destroying Finger".

Star Destroying Finger, an incomplete tier-3 battle technique. One finger contained enough explosive power to utterly kill and obliterate one's enemies—3,000 points.

"These are all incomplete tier-3 battle techniques, which is probably why they were placed here instead of the second floor. However, its price is still staggering!" Xiang Shaoyun gasped in shock as he stared at the nearby battle techniques. After a while, he continued, "Star Destroying Finger! This is a rarely seen finger technique! Although it's incomplete, if I'm able to unleash a tiny portion of its full power, it'll be enough to threaten those at the Astral Realm!"

The more Xiang Shaoyun looked at this battle technique, the more he desired it. How he wanted to exchange for it! What a pity it was that he only had half of the required points needed to exchange for the skill.

"Don't bother looking anymore. The requirements to cultivate the Star Destroying Finger are extremely strict! Even if you're able to gather enough points to exchange for it, it'll merely be a waste," a nearby voice said from beside Xiang Shaoyun.

Turning his head, he found that it was the person who had a fateful connection with him, Wang Zhenchuan. Previously when Xiang Shaoyun first dined in the restaurant, it was Wang Zhenchuan who protected him from Wang Yan's attacks.

"Greetings, senior brother. May I know what difficulty there is in practicing the Star Destroying Finger?" Xiang Shaoyun humbly asked.

"The Star Destroying Finger is an incomplete battle technique, making it extremely difficult to practice. Most importantly, one's bones must be extremely sturdy. Otherwise, one won't be able to bring out even half of its power," Wang Zhenchuan emphasized. Pausing for a while, he then added, "Those who have tried practicing this skill have mostly given up."

"It's that hard to learn?!" Xiang Shaoyun gasped in astonishment.

"Indeed. Since you're carrying a saber on your back, why don't you go and choose a tier-2 saber skill for yourself? It's much more practical that way," Wang Zhenchuan patiently suggested.

"Many thanks for senior brother's kind reminder," Xiang Shaoyun gratefully said. He then proceeded to ask, "Senior brother, could you be so kind as to lend me 1,500 points? In the future, I'll be sure to pay you back with interest!"

"Borrowing 1,500 points?" Wang Zhenchuan lightly pondered, scratching his head. Even for an inner court disciple such as him, this was still quite a hefty sum.

Thinking that Wang Zhenchuan did not believe in him, Xiang Shaoyun took out his own jade plate and said, "This is a jade plate from the Hall of Limits. I believe that after a short while, I'll have even more points in here! At that time, returning senior brother's points shouldn't be an issue."

Upon seeing the jade plate in Xiang Shaoyun's hand, Wang Zhenchuan marvelled to himself, saying, "He is indeed worthy of being the genius who triggered the five stars illuminating the sky! He's able to clear the Hall of Limits' challenges!"

Thinking for a brief moment, he then replied, "I can lend you the points, but you must promise me something."

"What would senior brother like me to help you with? As long as I, Xiang Shaoyun, am able to do it, I will carry it out without question!" Xiang Shaoyun promised as he patted his chest.

"If it's possible, please introduce me to the Purple Lightning Marquis. I wish to have him as my master," Wang Zhenchuan replied very honestly.

"So this is the case. Consider it done!" Xiang Shaoyun promised as he placed a fist to his chest. He thought to himself, If he becomes Zi Changhe's disciple, as Zi Changhe's junior brother, I'll become his martial uncle! I won't need to return this debt then, heh heh.

"Good! Let's go over there, then. I'll transfer you my jade plate's points!" Wang Zhenchuan exclaimed.

"Great!" Xiang Shaoyun joyfully replied.

The two of them then proceeded to the front counter where Wang Zhenchuan transferred some of his points to Xiang Shaoyun. Now, Xiang Shaoyun had 2,900 points in his Jade Plate. Adding the Hall of Limits' 20 percent discount, exchanging for the Star Destroying Finger became a non-issue.

After Xiang Shaoyun obtained the Star Destroying Finger, Wang Zhenchuan could not help but gasp, "Didn't I say that the Star Destroying Finger was extremely difficult to cultivate?"

"Just because it's difficult to cultivate does not mean I am unable to do so," Xiang Shaoyun casually replied before further asking, "Senior brother, may I know how to address you? I will definitely recommend you to Senior Brother Zi on your behalf."

"Inner court disciple, Wang Zhenchuan," he earnestly replied.

"Okay. Wait for my good news!" Xiang Shaoyun told him.

Not dallying any further, he bid farewell to Wang Zhenchuan and left.

Within three days, he had to master the Star Destroying Finger so as to guarantee his safety throughout the journey. He could not become food for the demonic beasts just for the sake of the Earth Star Spring!

After going to and exchanging for some food at the restaurant, Xiang Shaoyun returned to his personal compound. Retrieving the method to practice the Star Destroying Finger, he began to meditate on it. He swiftly glanced through the formula as well as the pictures for practicing the Star Destroying Finger. He memorized all of it practically at once.

This was one of his greatest assets—photographic memory.

If one wanted to practice the Star Destroying Finger, the most important prerequisite was that his finger bones needed to be sufficiently sturdy. One's finger bones needed to be at least as sturdy as a tier-1 weapon before being able to practice it to minor completion. The sturdiness of a tier-2 weapon would allow the user to exert an ever greater force, and the hardness of a tier-3 weapon would allow one to practice it to great completion.

Having strong finger bones was key to the practicing of the Star Destroying Finger. This was also why Wang Zhenchuan had relentlessly warned Xiang Shaoyun against practicing this particular battle technique. Normal low-ranking martial artists would find it impossible to have finger bones as hard as tier-1 weapons, hence finding it difficult to practice this particular skill.

"With my current condition, my finger bones should be about as hard as a tier-1 weapon. Practicing this skill should pose no problems for me whatsoever," Xiang Shaoyun muttered to himself. He then lightly sighed and said, "The Star Destroying Finger is only two-thirds complete, missing that final portion. What a pity."

He immediately began to enter into a state of visualization, viewing one image after another within his mind.

Visualization.

This was one of his cultivation gifts, which was also the main reason as to why he was able to quickly comprehend various techniques. He possessed this ability ever since he was young, which set him far aside from his fellow peers.

In the state of visualization, he could quickly grasp the main points behind the movements shown in the images. Once he understood the key points behind the images, practicing it together with the mantra made it such that he was able to achieve twice the result with half the effort.

Pow Pow!

Once he had completely comprehended the Star Destroying Finger, Xiang Shaoyun repeatedly jabbed at a wooden peg. His physical body was already extraordinarily sturdy. Adding the fact that he was concentrating his power into his strong hand, landing blow after blow on the wooden peg did not hurt him one bit.

Right now, the only thing he needed to accomplish was to ensure that his finger would be able to endure the releasing of astral energy. Once he mastered that, embedding his finger with energy would not be an issue for him.

After a single day, he didn't know how many wooden pegs he had jabbed with his finger, which was now completely sore. Unfortunately, he had not been able to reach the point where he could release astral energy in his jabs.

That being said, he still had quite a substantial harvest from his practice. He could feel that the energy within him had begun flowing to his finger. So long as he could gather that energy and release it in a single breath, practicing the skill to minor completion would be a breeze.

Chapter 28: People Flee at the Sight of Trouble!

Come nighttime, Xiang Shaoyun chose not to practice the Star Destroying Finger any further. Instead, he ground some of the medicines he had exchanged for earlier into a paste and wrapped them around his battered finger.

The Star Destroying Finger was not a simple tier-1 battle technique. Although it was incomplete, despite it being a tier-3 battle technique, the difficulty of practicing it was 10 times more difficult than practicing another tier-3 skill. Xiang Shaoyun was but a seventh-stage Basic Realm cultivator. To have that much level of comprehension within a single day was amazing in itself.

"My current self should have already reached the later phase of seventh-stage Basic Realm. If I factor in the speed in which the Heaven Conquering Overlord Manual is aiding my cultivation, I need at least 10 days to reach peak phase, even when factoring in the Hall of Limits. However, this little bit of strength is negligible when it comes to the Hundred Beast Mountain Range. If I want to protect myself there, I'll have to think of another plan," Xiang Shaoyun muttered to himself as he munched on some food before planning his next step.

In order to regain everything he had lost, Xiang Shaoyun had to carefully take into account every step he took. He did not wish for his heroic years to be cut short, nor did he wish to fail to live up to certain people's expectations.

"I know! I'll cultivate the Overlord's Nine Nether Steps! It'll help me raise both my speed and my combat ability!" Xiang Shaoyun exclaimed, his eyes sparkling.

The Overlord's Nine Nether Steps was a movement technique. Just like Heaven Conquering Overlord Manual, Xiang Shaoyun found it in a secret realm when he was younger. That being said, unlike the latter, the former was a complete technique.

When the Overlord's Nine Nether Steps was practiced to perfection, with one step upward, one could reach purgatory, and with one step downward, one could reach the

nine hells. This was an ultimate movement technique. Normally, the higher the tier of a battle technique, the stronger one needed to be in order to practice it.

However, movement techniques were different. Although they do not provide a significant increase in strength from the start, they could be cultivated nonetheless, just that the results wouldn't be as obvious.

Although this was the case, if one was able to comprehend just a sliver of a top-tier movement technique, it would be enough to last most low-ranking martial artists for a while. Upon deciding his next course of action, Xiang Shaoyun began to meditate on the Overlord's Nine Nether Steps.

Two hours later, Xiang Shaoyun smiled bitterly as he lamented, "Worthy of being a peak-rank movement technique. Even with my ability, I'm only able to understand a tenth of its key points. If I want to fully comprehend it, I'll need to at least reach the Transformation Realm!"

Getting up on his feet, Xiang Shaoyun revolved the Heaven Conquering Overlord Manual as his mind started visualizing the intricate technique. Simultaneously, his body also started flickering all over the place.

Ta! Ta!

One step, two steps, three steps...

In his compound, Xiang Shaoyun endlessly practiced his movement technique, seemingly emitting a profound aura. This was due to the compatibility between the Heaven Conquering Overlord Manual and the Overlord's Nine Nether Steps. Otherwise, it would not have been so easy for Xiang Shaoyun to reap such great benefits within a short period of time.

Two days passed quickly, and the time to enter the Hundred Beast Mountain Range arrived. Xiang Shaoyun, Mo Buhui, Mei Lianhua, and Lu Xiaoqing were all gathered together.

"All of us are here. Let's quickly set off! It'll take at least two days to reach the Hundred Beast Mountain Range!" Mo Buhui said.

"If only we had a mount to take us there. It would've taken us less than a day to reach it." Mei Lianhua lightly sighed.

"The Hundred Beast Mountain Range contains innumerable demonic beasts. It's not impossible to tame a beast to be our mount, but we also require the strength to do so," Mo Buhui unhurriedly replied.

"As soon as I break through to the Astral Realm, I will definitely be able to tame a mount!" Mei Lianhua declared with confidence. Following that, she softened her eyes as she drew closer to Xiang Shaoyun and coyly said, "Shaoyun, the Hundred Beast Mountain Range is full of dangers. You must protect us all, OK?"

"Senior Mei is treating me as an outsider. The four of us are going there together; of course we should take care of one another!" Xiang Shaoyun replied.

"Okay, let's get going," Mo Buhui grumbled.

As such, the four of them left Martial Hall Palace together.

"It's been half a month since I first entered Martial Hall Palace. Finally, a chance for me to have a breath of fresh air!" Xiang Shaoyun was secretly delighted.

Martial Hall Palace was situated right in the middle of Wu Town. The moment they walked out of Martial Hall Palace, they were on Wu Town's main road. They needed to exit Wu Town before journeying another two days south before being able to reach Hundred Beast Mountain Range.

The four of them were equally anxious, and they very quickly exited Wu Town's central hub. At this point, Mo Buhui retrieved a separate map and let Xiang Shaoyun and Lu Xiaoqing briefly view it. This was essentially proving to the both of them that he and Mei Lianhua were being completely sincere and weren't holding anything back.

Xiang Shaoyun swiftly recorded the map deep within his mind. At that moment, Xiang Shaoyun suddenly felt as though he was being watched.

"Shit. We were overly excited just now and forgot to take note of our surroundings. Could it be those two bastards have found my tracks? Impossible. This area is far away from their sphere of influence; they should not be able to find me within a year! Could it be someone else?" Xiang Shaoyun pondered to himself. The moment he noticed he was being watched, several shadows started popping up from everywhere.

These people were all carrying their own weapons, and their faces were covered, making it difficult to determine their identities. Xiang Shaoyun's group of four was instantly alerted.

Mo Buhui sternly asked, "Who are you?! We are disciples of Martial Hall Palace!"

Within Wu Town, Martial Hall Palace was considered a rather powerful entity. Few groups of people would dare provoke Martial Hall Palace, save a few such as the Wu Family. However, they had actually been surrounded by this group of masked people.

"This brat stays. The rest of you, get lost!" the leader of the masked men bellowed, pointing at Xiang Shaoyun.

Needless to say, this group of people had come here specifically for Xiang Shaoyun.

"What the hell do you want to do to him?! He's also a disciple of Martial Hall Palace!" Mei Lianhua shrieked.

"If you don't get lost, I'll kill the rest of you as well. Your Martial Hall Palace won't be able to easily figure out who we are anyway," the masked man said, his voice not masking his killing intent one bit.

At that moment, the aura of the Astral Realm started bearing down on them. Mei Lianhua, expression ugly, was forced into a retreat by this aura.

"You guys leave first. I'm their target; they won't hurt you," Xiang Shaoyun calmly said.

He thought to himself, They're only at the Astral Realm! So they weren't sent by those two after all.

Hearing Xiang Shaoyun's words, Mo Buhui and Mei Lianhua both showed signs of backing out. Although they were not weak, in front of an Astral Realm expert, they had no ability to resist whatsoever.

"No! We just agreed that we must help one another! If they're targeting you, they're targeting all of us!" Lu Xiaoqing's delicate face flashed an expression of pure resolution.

"Heh heh, this little girl doesn't know how to appreciate good things! We can always take you back and have fun together," the leader lasciviously said as he licked his lips.

Upon hearing his words, the other men sneered as they drew closer.

"Xiang Shaoyun, I can't help you anymore. This is your personal matter," Mo Buhui quickly said before turning around to leave.

Pursing her jade-like lips, Mei Lianhua looked at Xiang Shaoyun with a difficult expression and sighed. "Take care of yourself, Shaoyun."

After she finished, she also left Xiang Shaoyun. Only Lu Xiaoqing drew closer to Xiang Shaoyun. He watched on as they left, his expression unchanging. He had experienced something similar, after all. People fled at the sight of trouble; only then would one realize who one's true friends were.

"You can leave, but you cannot go back to Martial Hall Palace. Otherwise, we'll kill you on the spot!" the masked man harshly warned the Mei Lianhua and Mo Buhui.

Chapter 29: A Lucky Escape!

Under the threat of the masked men's leader, Mo Buhui and Mei Lianhua did not dare to head in the direction of Martial Hall Palace. Hence, they could only escape in the direction of the Hundred Beast Mountain Range.

"You go as well!" Xiang Shaoyun urgently warned Lu Xiaoqing.

"No! I won't leave you! When we left, we said that we would take care of one another!" Lu Xiaoqing stubbornly insisted.

Feeling Lu Xiaoqing's resolute desire to protect him, Xiang Shaoyun was deeply moved. However, her doing so was actually preventing him from making his own escape.

"Heh heh, what touching loyalty! Why don't you accompany us then?" The leader of the masked men sneered, stretching a hand towards Lu Xiaoqing's delicate face.

"If you dare to touch a hair on her, Martial Hall Palace's eleventh elder will not let you off!" Xiang Shaoyun shouted, blocking the masked man from Lu Xiaoqing.

"The eleventh elder?!" Sure enough, upon hearing Xiang Shaoyun's words, the masked men were visibly conflicted.

"If my guess isn't wrong, you should be from the Wu Clan. If the one you're looking for is me, there's no need to drag her in as well. Both her and I are important disciples of Martial Hall Palace. Don't think that the palace won't investigate your Wu Clan if something happens!"

Upon hearing Xiang Shaoyun's words, the masked men's leader's eyes visibly drew back. Xiang Shaoyun had indeed seen through their disguise.

"You, quickly get lost! Don't stay here and drag me down!" Xiang Shaoyun scolded Lu Xiaoqing.

Being a delicate person by nature, Lu Xiaoqing's pretty eyes teared up as she stammered in utter disbelief, "Y-you ungrateful bastard!"

"Hmph. Do you think that you are worthy of being with someone as sophisticated as I am? Even if you're willing to go through thick and thin with me, I won't even take a second glance at you. I only like girls with sexy bodies such as Mei Lianhua!" Xiang Shaoyun coldly laughed.

Before Xiang Shaoyun had even finished speaking, Lu Xiaoqing's eyes were already flowing with tears of pure sadness.

"I-I HATE YOU!" Lu Xiaoqing cried bitterly. Covering her tear-streaked face, she ran as fast as she could away from the encirclement.

"I'm sorry, but I hope you understand," Xiang Shaoyun muttered to himself as he watched the fast disappearing figure grow smaller and smaller.

"Brat, there's no need to play any more games. Be a good boy and come with us." The leader of the masked men had seen through Xiang Shaoyun's actions.

"You are all here for revenge for Wu Mingliang, right? However, have you thought this through properly? I'm the junior brother of the nineteenth elder Zi Changhe. If you dare do anything to me, my senior brother will not just sit by the side and watch idly. Furthermore, Martial Hall Palace is very well aware that I possess a five-star physique. I'd advise you not to do anything overly stupid," Xiang Shaoyun menacingly said.

"Okay brat, it's no use talking more. Even if the palace master of Martial Hall Palace was here himself today, I would still bring you away with me," the leader of the masked men coldly said before instructing his men to bind Xiang Shaoyun.

Taking a deep breath, Xiang Shaoyun suddenly began frantically waving in a certain direction. He yelled at the top of lungs, "Senior Brother Zi! I'm over here!"

Upon hearing Zi Changhe's name, the masked men were badly startled and looked in the direction in which Xiang Shaoyun was waving.

"Go to hell!" Xiang Shaoyun yelled as he rushed towards the leader, one fist aimed straight for his head.

Pa!

Before his fist could land on the leader's body, he found his fist being grasped solidly by a hand—the leader had come to his senses.

"These petty tricks might work on someone else, but they're of no use on me!" The leader arrogantly sneered.

"Is that so? How about now?" Xiang Shaoyun said in a low voice before his free hand shot out at the leader.

Star Destroying Finger!

A pure ray of undiluted finger light shot out from Xiang Shaoyun's index finger. This one move contained all the astral energy he could muster, heading straight for the leader's lower abdomen.

Not ever expecting that Xiang Shaoyun could deploy astral energy to attack externally as a Basic Realm cultivator, the leader did not even bother defending and was struck as a result.

Pow!

“AH!”

Although the leader of the masked men was an Astral Realm expert, he was not very powerful, only being at the second stage. After being hit by Xiang Shaoyun’s attack, blood started flowing from his abdomen, forcing him to kneel from the resulting pain.

At that moment, the rest of the masked men were scared stiff. They could not begin to fathom how their leader had been injured, and they assumed that Zi Changhe himself had come to deal with the matter.

Run!

Seizing this golden opportunity, Xiang Shaoyun began running with all his might.

The masked men surrounded their leader and frantically asked, “Captain, are you okay?”

“Quick, quick! Chase that brat!” the leader managed to splutter, grasping his wound.

“We’re off!” the other masked men said in unison before they all ran towards Xiang Shaoyun.

“I-idiots! One of you stay and take care of me!” The leader was incensed to the point he vomited blood.

Unfortunately for him, his men had all run far out of earshot.

“Damn it! They’re quick alright!” Xiang Shaoyun cursed to himself upon hearing the group of people right on his heels. He had combat power about equal to, if not more than, an ordinary ninth-stage Basic Realm practitioner; his speed was virtually unrivalled in the Basic Realm. Unfortunately for him, this was insufficient to deal with his pursuers.

Among them were three first-stage Astral Realm cultivators. These people were naturally faster than he was.

Overlord’s Nine Nether Steps!

No longer hesitating, Xiang Shaoyun unleashed the move which took him three days to painfully learn. His innate stars began to glow, and strands of power began flowing to his feet, substantially increasing his foot speed. Most importantly, this movement

technique of his was rather magical. Every step he took seemed to have a sort of divine blessing, making his feet light to the point he became a free sparrow.

The masked men who had almost caught up to Xiang Shaoyun now found the gap between the two groups beginning to widen.

“Stop running and stay still! Otherwise, don’t expect to get off easily!” one of the masked men threatened him.

Another proceeded to draw a bow and arrow, nocking an arrow in preparation to shoot. At this moment, a ghostlike figure suddenly came out of nowhere. Appearing right before the person holding the bow, a single palm went flying for the masked man’s head.

Pow!

The masked man, completely unable to resist, had his head split apart like a watermelon being crushed. Without taking a breath to stop, the figure moved among the other people before they even had the chance to react, instantly killing them. Ordinary people could not even see the movements of this mysterious figure.

The masked men did not even have the chance to cry out before dying, truly perishing without even knowing why! Xiang Shaoyun did not know anything about what was going on behind him. He continuously ran and sprinted as fast as he could, cursing, “Wu Mingliang! Wu Clan! You will pay for this!”

Pushing his physical body to its utmost limits, the Overlord’s Nine Nether Steps showed its extraordinary prowess, making Xiang Shaoyun seem even faster than most initial Astral Realm cultivators! Without even realizing it, he had run far away without knowing that his troubles had already been taken care of.

Chapter 30: Reaching Hundred Beast Mountain Range!

The leader of the masked men, who had been hurt by Xiang Shaoyun, was still in his original location as he treated his wounds.

“Damn this brat! He can actually use his energy to form external attacks! Is he really a Basic Realm cultivator? Even many first-stage Astral Realm cultivators can’t do that!” the leader cursed to himself.

Luckily for the leader, Xiang Shaoyun’s externally condensed energy was not that strong. With the leader’s cultivation at second-stage Astral Realm, as long as he had sufficient time, he would be able to force Xiang Shaoyun’s energy out of his body. However, before he even had the chance to begin expelling the energy inside his body, a separate wave of vicious energy flew at him from elsewhere.

Bam!

Almost at once, the vicious energy caused the masked man's body to explode, rendering him dead beyond dead.

"Hmph! These pieces of trash dare hurt young master?! Being able to die only once is truly a blessing for them!" A person walked out from the shadows. This person was dressed extremely sloppily, to the point where one could mistake him for a beggar. Furthermore, one of his arms was missing. He was a crippled old man.

Who would've thought that the Wu Family's experts were so easily dispatched by this old crippled man? The old man looked at the direction in which Xiang Shaoyun had run. As he stared, a doting expression began forming on his face, and he lightly sighed, "It seems that young master has been working hard. He has significantly improved in just half a month! Furthermore, he is stronger as a person! Experiencing this great disaster may just have been a blessing in disguise for him."

After he finished his soliloquy, his body began to fade as he once again turned invisible to the naked eye. About an hour later, a group of horsemen rushed out of Wu Town. These men were the true experts of the Wu Clan, each of them having reached the Astral Realm. The leader of this group was even a seventh-stage Astral Realm cultivator. Very quickly, this group of horsemen found the leader's body.

"Dead! He's actually dead! Could it be that he has the protection of an expert from Martial Hall Palace?" The seventh-stage Astral Realm expert's face became a lot more solemn as he speculated his findings. He then rushed further, finding more and more bodies strewn along the road.

"The situation is dire. It seems I must go back and report to the head!" The Astral Realm expert actually felt goosebumps on his arm. Not wanting to dally any longer, he quickly ordered his men to retrieve all the bodies before making haste back to Wu Town.

Out in the wild, Xiang Shaoyun did not know how long he had been running. His entire body was battered, his legs utterly destroyed. Finally yielding, he fell flat onto a patch of grass.

"I-I can't run anymore. No—no more energy." Xiang Shaoyun gasped, turning to lie on his back. Before he had even begun his great escape, he had used all the strength he could muster in his Star Destroying Finger, depleting him of quite a bit of energy. Furthermore, he had been sprinting with his might for quite a while now. It was no surprise that he was utterly exhausted by this point.

After lying down for merely an instant, Xiang Shaoyun instantly sat up straight, observing to see if anybody was still on his tail. Only after making sure that he was in the clear did he assume a meditative pose. He was meditating in order to recover his strength as well as consolidate his gains.

As old energy was used up, new energy would be born. This was a process of discarding the old and welcoming the new. Although the Heaven Conquering Overlord Manual was not complete, it was more than sufficient for the early parts of cultivation, and it was even better than many complete cultivation methods.

As Xiang Shaoyun slowly recovered the lost energy within his body, his meridian flow increased significantly. Furthermore, the astral energy condensed within his body grew thicker, and his 365 acupoints sparkled brightly.

As of right now, Xiang Shaoyun had directly reached the peak of seventh-stage Basic Realm. This was the greatest gain he had received from that life-or-death chase.

“Good thing I managed to learn the Star Destroying Finger last night. Otherwise, I’d be dead meat by now!” Xiang Shaoyun shuddered at the thought. Not daring to stay any longer, he immediately changed direction and headed for the Hundred Beast Mountain Range.

Right now, Xiang Shaoyun had slowed down his walking pace by a significant amount. It was not that he did not wish to walk faster; rather, in the wilderness, there would be quite a number of poisonous creatures present, as well as a few monstrous beasts here and there. If he was not cautious enough, he could end up dying in the wilderness.

Sss...

As expected, a monstrous snake shot out from within the grass, its speed absolutely astounding. Luckily for him, Xiang Shaoyun was already mentally prepared for such a situation. Grasping the Heavy Cleave Saber, he swept the saber out.

Sphhhht!

The small snake was instantly cleaved into two, dying on the spot. Not even bothering to take a second glance at the snake, Xiang Shaoyun pressed on. His attention to the surroundings heightened to the max. Not long after, the amount of poisonous creatures that had died to his blade numbered quite a few.

“My gift of visualization not only gives me mind-boggling comprehension ability, it also gives me extremely keen senses. Otherwise, I wouldn’t have been able to find that secret realm when I was younger. Or are the visualization and my keen senses two different divine talents altogether?” Xiang Shaoyun pondered to himself.

After walking a while more, he found an old medicine within the grass, and his eyes lit up. “This is the fragrance grass. Although it has no medical usage, it’s able to ward off poisonous creatures!”

Most people would be unaware of the use of this old medicine, but Xiang Shaoyun had immersed himself in several ancient texts since young. Hence, he had a deep

understanding when it came to the uses of various herbs and medicines. Even if it were an herb so obscure that nobody knew about it, he alone would know its properties.

Plucking the fragrance grass, Xiang Shaoyun split it into two and rubbed it all over his body. Very quickly, a mysterious scent began to arise from his body. Poisonous creatures hated this scent, and as long as there were no high-tier poisonous creatures, everything else would avoid this “putrid” smell.

“I’m much safer now!” Xiang Shaoyun heaved a huge sigh of relief. He then continued on his way. After another four hours, he hunted down a wild boar and roasted it in the wild.

“Demonic beasts contain a significant amount of vital qi within their bodies. Eating a large amount will significantly benefit my physical body!”

Right now, Xiang Shaoyun was still building up his physical body, and he needed to absorb a large amount of energy in order to do so. Very quickly, he wolfed down half of the boar and kept the rest, leaving it as a meal for the journey. After two days of wandering, he finally arrived at the Hundred Beast Mountain Range.

One could only see a continuous string of mountain peaks rising and falling like the body of a dragon, striking a very imposing image from afar. Old towering trees stood tall and compact as colorful flowers lined the grass. The sound of the howling of demonic beasts abounded as the spiritual energy of the world spread through all four directions, filling the air.

The “Hundred Beast” within the “Hundred Beast Mountain Range” naturally signified that there were numerous monstrous beasts present within the mountain range. Every beast was unique and had its own set of talents, and some among them were even top-tier demonic beasts. If anybody entered too deeply, they would die nine times out of ten.

“The Nine Gods Province has a lot of ancient mountain ranges, but one that is able to preserve itself to this extent are few and far. This mountain range has an ancient sort of scent to it. I can only hope that there are no ancient existences inside the mountain range!” Xiang Shaoyun talked to himself as he sized up the mountain range. Without any further hesitation, he stepped headfirst into the Hundred Beast Mountain Range.

If Xiang Shaoyun wanted to grow stronger, he needed to go through various trials and trainings to strengthen himself. This Hundred Beast Mountain Range was his next training ground. Whether or not he would be able to find the Earth Star Spring was secondary to him. Alas, as soon as he stepped into the vicinity of the Hundred Beast Mountain Range, he encountered a pack of small demonic beasts.

“F*ck me. Normally, isn’t it only one or two demonic beasts attacking me at once? How come I’ve stumbled upon a pack of wolf beasts? Have I accidentally entered a wolf’s den?” Upon seeing the ten or so wolves in front of him, Xiang Shaoyun turned around

and ran. All the training he had been preparing for was flung far into the back of his mind.