

Chapter 201 - 199: Leaving

In the Myriad Monarch Planet, there were Void Gates stationed all over, but besides the private residences of those with sufficient abilities to accumulate the materials to fashion one near their residence, only one publicly used Void Gate was available. This Void Gate was located in the Extreme Imperial Mountains, and it was overseen by a Mortal Captain-rank Elder by the name of Li Ling.

She belonged to the Li Clan, and this clan belonged to a former Heavenly King of the Extreme Origin Mountain turned Prime Imperial Sage. With his clout, he stationed a member of his family within to operate and oversee its functions.

Wei Wuyin had just paid Li Ling a visit, clarifying a few details about his departure and its need for discretion. While there was typically a public record made for all who used it, this didn't suit his own interests and safety. As such, he could only arrange for him to depart in the most stealthy fashion.

The reason why he didn't use the personal of others Void Gates were similarly for limiting those who knew of his departure. Furthermore, he didn't truly seek complete and utter discretion. Instead, he wanted to send out some bait....bait that he could personally craft.

However, during his visit, he made a shocking discovery about a certain someone. Her name was Wen Mingna, and she was originally from the Myriad Yore Continent, and according to Su Mei's hastily compiled report on her, she was very low-key. She was supposedly facially disfigured by a horrific accident and suffered issues with her personality and such due to the event. This caused her introverted attitude and lack of communication with others.

Of course, this was her own tailored-made lies crafted to protect her while allowing her peace of mind to operate as she pleased. When Wei Wuyin learned this, he couldn't help but smile with a hint of praise. Her foresight was exceptional, as if she saw her future if she hadn't taken this path.

However, who would've thought that hidden within her was a faint presence he had only felt once before. This presence made him feel uncomfortable and gave off a faint feeling of holiness.

Fate!

It was fate energies that could commune with the heavens and view heavenly trends!

He hadn't noticed this due to his Celestial Eyes, but his Bloodline of Sin. It gave him an unnatural sensitivity towards heavenly influence or powers. Ming Shufeng was similarly someone who had this holy light within her, and she was a Seer!

However, Wen Mingna's light felt somewhat different from Ming Shufeng. Regardless of this difference, the talent to cultivate Fate Qi was even rarer than having talent towards Alchemical Energies. Unlike Alchemical Energies, one needs a hint of talent or potential to even create it.

Therefore, he needed to plan this out thoroughly to give him the greatest benefits possible. Possessing a Seer, Oracle, or Fortune Teller by his side is like being able to glimpse into Heavenly Will as he desired. Without any hesitation, he offered her a chance to cultivate in his Sky Palace.

She was hesitant at first. Obviously she was concerned about his intentions, and considering the lengths she went to to ensure her independence as a cultivator, he had to solemnly swear a Spirit Oath on Ori that he wouldn't do anything untoward or forceful to her unless asked. Only when that oath was sworn did she relax, and her brown eyes lit up with exceptional brilliance. With her excited agreement, he took her to his Sky Palace.

'Nurturing my own Seer will give me benefits beyond just glimpsing into Heavenly Will, but allow me to decipher the clues of the Calamities of Hell.' His ambition wasn't to simply survive the Second Calamity and strive for the Realm of Sages, but he wanted to overcome all eighteen calamities and regain his freedom as an individual.

After bringing her to his Sky Palace and introducing her to the cultivation rooms, he rode on Bo Kay's pegasus. The Gale End Leaf Demon Elder was still close with Wei Wuyin. They kept their faintly brotherly relationship and even grew closer in these recent years. They were currently flying to the Extreme Imperial Mountain.

Woosh!

Bo Kay had a slight frown, "Are you sure you want to leave the Myriad Monarch Sect?" There was evidently a dense amount of concern within his tone and eyes. He was the one assigned to deliver Wei Wuyin a message to be officially examined as an King Alchemist by the Alchemist Association. He had brushed it off easily before, but this slight and the subsequent slights he gave the Alchemist Association wasn't minor.

If they learn of his departure, who knew what they would do? Their influence, after all, reaches far and wide beyond the standard imagination.

Wei Wuyin knew of this possibility and smiled it off. How could he not know of the potential influence of the Alchemist Association? In a mere four years, he had dominated the Myriad Monarch Sect and thoroughly caused all sorts of corruption in his favor to occur. He would be foolish to think he was an exception. After all, he was just one man. How could he compare to an entire organization of unified alchemists?

Furthermore, his reputation was lesser now that this Princess of Everlore was revealed. Perhaps if he revealed Eden, his Alchemic Eden Astral Soul, the world would realize his terrifying prowess and potential. However, he had no intentions to do so. At least, for now.

When he finally reached a point where he could be fearless within the starfield, and dominating heaven and earth, only then will he consider that matter. Even now, he concealed his ascension into the Astral Core Realm. The fact he had two Natal Souls was widely known, and his ascension to the Astral Core Realm was bound to create endless tumultuous waves. After all, it was both a sign of his combat potential, cultivation potential, and with Alchemic Force, his alchemic potential.

If he was a top-tier Alchemic King before, then now...it's likely he was an Emperor Alchemist. An Emperor Alchemist before the age of forty-one will cause natural disasters and be a prelude to the change of the fundamental landscape of power.

"It's fine. I have matters I have to handle personally. And, I'm well protected." Wei Wuyin comforted Bo Kay. He wasn't willing to resign himself to become a caged cultivator. While he could spend all his time

balled up within his sky palace and cultivating, this wasn't his style. He liked being proactive and seeking his own fortunes, enacting his own plans for the future, and providing himself with a level of adaptability. Furthermore, he didn't have a hundred percent certainty for a long life.

Soon, they arrived at the Extreme Imperial Mountain's first level, and location of the Void Gate. When he arrived, the Void Gate was empty and barricades were set. Those who would usually use the Void Gate to leave had to wait as it was stated to be in maintenance.

With a token, a spiritual light enveloped the pegasus and them, allowing them to easily seep into the spiritual barricades that blocked spiritual and physical senses. When they entered, there were only four figures: Xiao Bai, Su Mei, Li Ling, and Zuhei!

Zuhei!

Unlike before where he was emaciated, withered, and rotted from the inside and outside, he was exceptionally clean now. His long silver hair was gorgeous and each strand flickering with traces of silver luminance. It was cut and styled into a rope braided ponytail that dangled and barely missed the ground. At the sides of his face were two lockets of sharp silver hair that had sanguine highlights at their edges. They looked like silver fangs.

Most notably was his face. Not only was his hair gorgeous, but his facial features were exceptionally beautiful for a man. It was like looking at a silver full moon. It attracted everyone's attention regardless of gender. His flawlessly pale skin and sharp scarlet eyes were demonically alluring, and coupled with those thin lips that had a faint sign of sharp teeth made him somewhat feral.

His physique was slender and toned with each iota of muscle being well-defined and contained reserved yet prevalent strength. Besides his sharp canine teeth, which seemed as if it could rend metal and bite air, he could easily be mistaken as a human.

He wore loose grey pants, barefooted with sharp toenails that were perfectly trimmed and had a jade-smoothness, and his upper body wore merely a robe without anything beneath, revealing his hairless chest to everyone present. His hands were currently hidden behind long robe sleeves, and he seemed to stand around with a lazy air as if completely disinterested in everything in the world.

However, when Wei Wuyin arrived, his scarlet eyes flashed and a hint of respect flashed that couldn't be concealed.

This was Wei Wuyin's first selection for Ascendants, excluding Su Mei, and he had an ill-past that had to be scrubbed and handled before he could officially be inducted. This was an expensive venture, especially since he had to rebuild Zuhei's cultivation base entirely.

They landed.

"Lord Wei," Su Mei greeted respectfully.

"Master," Zuhei called out.

Bo Kay stilled. Master? He knew of Zuhei's reputation, and the immense slaughter he caused that inevitably led to the sect sentencing him to life imprisonment. They were unwilling to allow him to just die, but suffer for his long lifespan. While he had long since heard from his connections that Zuhei's

sentence was commuted thanks to Wei Wuyin's interference and contributions, he didn't think Zuhei would consider Wei Wuyin his master.

One must know Zuhei was a Silver Wolf, and his ancestral lineage was said to originate from Fenrir, a mythological existence on par with phoenixes and dragons. They were all innately proud and would never lower their head, often causing chaos and were perfect warriors.

Wei Wuyin nodded, completely expecting Zuhei's term of address. Since the beginning, he had considered Wei Wuyin his savior and thus his master for life. His words were: "As my master, I will be your claws, your fangs, and your second life."

He commended his loyal spirit, and he wouldn't reject such passion. In fact, this only solidified his desire to nurture him. As a Second Stage Astral Core Realm cultivator with Battle and Slaughter Intent, his potential was exceptional.

It was truly unfortunate that he couldn't restart his cultivation fully and allow him to enjoy the full baptism of the Mortal Star Formation Tribulation, but since he had already birthed Battle and Slaughter without a Battle or Slaughter Natal Soul, this only meant his natural talent towards these two might compare to his own with Saber.

Given that, he was bound to have immense achievements in the future with sufficient resources. The only issue was his Mortal State, and only ninth-grade pills can post-create Zenith Mortal State Astral Souls. Therefore, he needed to become a Mortal Sovereign Alchemist before he could truly rectify his issues.

He didn't bother speaking to Li Lang, Su Mei, or Zuhei. Instead, he brought out a Void Disk and threw it towards the Void Gate. When it activated and created a black void portal, his eyes focused as he said: "Let's go."

The Bloodforge Continent awaits.

Chapter 202 - 200: Bloodforge Continent

The Bloodforge Continent was one of the most contested continental flat earths within the Myriad Monarch Astral Territory, and just as its name suggests, it placed an emphasis on the Dao of Forging. Its size was comparable to the Myriad Yore Continent, yet the majority of its resources were ores and minerals from mines. These ores and minerals weren't just used in the Dao of Forging, but even alchemists relied on extracting their material essence and energies to concoct various products.

This made it a very profitable continent and highly contested amongst the twelve continents, infested with conflict and territorial disputes. The Bloodforge Continent had no true ownership, and eighty percent of its territory were split and dominated by Sky Nobles via proxy forces. Due to its split territories and heavy conflicts, the Myriad Monarch Sect allowed the continent to elect its own King to create a neutral zone for its native citizens. This King would have the Power of Authority of a Sky Noble disciple. This would allow him to rule his specific territory to protect and defend against the various disciple sent forces.

Moreover, the Myriad Monarch Sect disallowed any cultivators above the Second Stage of the Astral Core Realm from arriving and participating in conflict, preventing elite elders and Sky Nobles from

descending and causing immense destruction and chaos. This regulation was set on almost all the continents. Because the level of strength that could be mustered by those experts could result in a complete and total continental collapse.

This leading King was an elected native of the continent. The term 'elected' native generally meant the strongest native cultivator born from the Bloodforge Continent. As strength was the foundation for authority.

The current seated elected leader was Xue Duan, or otherwise known as the Bloodforge King. He regulated various matters and stabilized the continent's survival amidst the tense, bloody, and constant battles between the Myriad Monarch Sect's factions and proxy forces. With a strength at the Second Stage of the Astral Core Realm, the literal peak allowed on the continent, he could further establish rules without being questioned. Even the forces and disciples were hesitant to offend him.

Because of his uniquely bestowed Power of Authority, he was essentially a Sky Noble within his territory, capable of influencing the Myriad Monarch Sect's disciples that arrive. However, there were limitations to his power. The Bloodforge King was unable to interfere in conflicts that did not encroach on his assigned territory. In truth, he had no power outside of his cultivation base on contested or claimed territories by Sky Noble Faction members. In fact, past elected Kings have been killed due to overextending their hand.

This assigned territory only covered about twenty percent of the continent, and was deemed the safest area for citizens and other individuals who sought out peace. It was named the Xue Country.

In the Bloodforge Continent, Xue Country.

The Xue Country was riddled with cities, towns, and minor villages that housed all sorts of cultivators and miners seeking to make a living, advance their cultivation, and live a nice, long life. Between these areas were paved roads that were surrounded by wild trees, grassy plains, and mountains.

In a grassy plains near one of the many roads leading to civilization, there was a wreckage that was composed of broken pieces of carriages and dead horses. The smell of blood and moans of pain and vengeful hatred echoed alongside slicing and clashing sounds.

Clang! Clang! Boom!

Fierce and vigorous qi raged as two groups of individuals fought. The first group was a ragtag band of cultivators without a set uniform, but they sported a unique insignia. This insignia was a black mountain with a bloody halo above. Each of these cultivators expressions were chilly, vile, and excited as they launched qi arts and brandished weapons of war and death towards their opponents.

The other group was more unified and dressed as armored knights. They wielded swords or spears and their facial expressions were concealed by their helmets. These cultivators were clearly outnumbered and lacked in terms of cultivators, being nearly three to one.

It was a total slaughter as the ragtag group killed without mercy, ganging up and obliterating their targets without any casualties. Even when the knights tried to detonate themselves, they were caught in

their moment of careless abandon for their lives and received an arrow straight through their helmets and skulls.

The puncturing sound was particularly gruesome.

Before long, the winning side was made clear.

"Finally! These bastards are dead. Whew," a pink-skinned, short beastman with the snout of a pig and a heavy belly said while wiping the sweat off his thick brow. In his hand was a double-sided axe that was drenched in the fresh blood of nearly a dozen warriors.

Crunch!

A giant of a man, standing at about seven feet, crushed the head of an deceased corpse into mush with his feet. He grounded it in, and revealed a smirk. "Truly contemptible. Could've all went home to fuck their wives if they simply threw down their honor." His dark brown skin and bald head made his bulging muscles and height establish an imposingly brutish aura. He had no weapon in his hands, but upon his knuckles were bits of bone, blood, and flesh—not his.

"Ptooeey!" A middle-aged human male with his sword sheathed walked amongst his men, which numbered more than fifty, and looked at the sole carriage amongst the area that was untouched despite all the ruckus of battle and death. As he passed, those men revealed eyes of respect and a hint of fear.

His eyes were like pure obsidian, where iris and pupil could barely be told apart, and his pointed nose, sharp eyes, and indifferent smile gave him an unfathomable feeling. He walked to the carriage and knocked, causing whoever or whatever within to jump. The faint whimpers and startled breaths of those inside was prevalent.

"Come on out now, I don't bite." His voice was dark and deep, so his words came off very threatening and sinister. With a shrug, he turned to his men who proceeded to smile and chuckle as if they were enjoying a show.

"If you don't come out, I'll get mad. You don't want me to get mad, do you?" A brief silence after and the carriage door clicked. The man smiled as he reached in and opened the door. When he did, a swift shadow plunged into his embrace.

The man was taken by surprise for a moment, but he didn't seem to be caught unprepared. His hands were swift as he moved to capture the shadow, his movement speed was impressive! In a split second, the shadow was captured and turned around.

Clink!

The sound of metal hitting solid ground resounded as a dagger left the shadow's hands and fell.

"Boss Bai! She's a feisty one!" The pig-like beastman chuckled as he hefted his axe. Those words elicited a round of laughter.

The so-called Boss Bai held a woman in his hand, restrained in his embrace with one arm and his other hand clung onto her neck. She struggled, but to no avail as his qi easily infiltrated her body and suppressed her strength. She was looked young, about her later teenage years of a mortal woman, with a fair complexion and rich blonde medium-length hair.

Her soft, milky skin and luminous blue eyes were particularly eye-catching. While her body lacked that vixen-like curvature and breasted figure, that which she did have was still alluring to the opposite sex.

With her neck held, she tried to cry out and struggle, but only choked groans and pained grunts were heard. Her struggle fueled the watching crowd's vigor as many looked her up and down. With her luxurious robes with various sets of jewelry, she appeared to be rather wealthy, or originated from a wealthy family.

Boss Bai sneered as he held her down, his eyes roaming at her animated breasts and delicate skin. A hint of lust emerged in his eyes. He started to move his hand from her neck down her chest, feeling the plump flesh of her twin mounds before sliding further down her belly until...

"There's still one more inside!" A sharp eyed fellow amongst them called out as he saw a figure peek outside from within the carriage. This caused the others to look, curious and excited.

"Come on o-" Boss Bai was in the midst of shouting out an order towards the carriage when an abrupt popping sound erupted nearby, eliciting a concerted start and shift of everyone's attention. Not too far away, a few blurry figures seemed to be appearing from nothing, and one of these figures were nearly eighty meters high.

Boss Bai's, an experienced fellow, eyes widened as he said, "Void Portal?" Unless one was at the Fourth Stage of the Astral Core Realm, sensing a Void Portal produced by a Void Gate was nigh impossible. The spatial energies within were imperceptible to most eyes, which is why it seemed as if those who traveled through it emerged from thin air.

In a split second, four figures arrived!

Chapter 203 - 201: Untested Strength

"Fuck! I always hated this," a sharp voice resounded with a deep, rumbling growl. Zuhei was the first to speak amongst the four, and his words were immediately filled with dissatisfaction. Since he could remember, traveling via Void Gates had always caused his head to hurt, his body feeling like it wanted to regurgitate his lunch, and sweat would accumulate without cause. According to the medical sages of the starfield, this was called Spatial Sickness.

"Grrgh!" His gorgeous appearance was completely shattered as he gagged abruptly, leaning forward and blew chunks. Bits of meat, paste, and milk left his stomach and hugged the grassy ground.

"Ew." Wei Wuyin, Su Mei, and Xiao Bai simultaneously stepped away from him, their eyes were filled with a hint of repulsion. A natural human or beast response.

Seeing Wei Wuyin, his master, step away in disgust made him feel somewhat horrible, but what could he do?

Wei Wuyin truly did not expect Zuhei to vomit out chunks without warning, and while he knew of spatial sickness, he didn't expect Zuhei to have it. According to his studies, spatial sickness was caused by a rejection of spatial energies infused stealthily within your body. It hinted at a particularly low affinity towards spatial energies, so the Fourth Stage of the Astral Core Realm was a greater difficulty for these individuals.

Luckily, there was an elixir for that!

Unfortunately, he hadn't concocted it due to its highly specific nature. While he was fond of concocting all sorts of pills, elixirs, pellets, and paste simply to test out the process and efficiency at which he could do so, there were more than one hundred thousand recipes for sixth-grade pills alone, and over half a million for all four products. And this was merely sixth-grade products!

Regardless of how fast he could concoct, it just wasn't practical to do in three to four years, even if he spent every waking moment doing so.

"I'll concoct a Spatial Regulation Elixir for you later," while it was a peak-tier, seventh-grade elixir, it wouldn't be hard to concoct for him, especially with his newly formed Alchemic Force.

Zuhei stilled for a moment. Spatial Regulation Elixir? That's the elixir that can enhance one's compatibility with spatial energies, right? His heart was still somewhat shocked for a moment, but when he thought of Wei Wuyin's status and abilities, even restoring his crippled self, he calmed down and said with the deepest and earnest feelings, "Thank you, Master."

Wei Wuyin gave him a slight nod. Even if a Spatial Regulation Elixir cost nearly ten astral stones on the market, which was equivalent to one hundred million essence stones, it was truly irrelevant to him. The materials to make it merely cost about ten thousand essence stones, and he could finish such an elixir in merely ten or so minutes before. Now? It might take him a single minute or a few seconds.

The ragtag group of cultivators were originally stunned into silence by the new arrivals, but hearing about the Spatial Regulation Elixir, their eyes were suffused with blaring shock! While they were merely Qi Condensation cultivators, they weren't idiots and had long since taken it upon themselves to learn about rare things like top-grade alchemical products.

Boss Bai's eyes narrowed as he swept his gaze onto the newcomers, especially the black and white striped pegasus behind them that looked at them with a curious and haughty gaze. His pupils shrunk immediately.

Pegasus?

Only the elites of the elites were capable of owning a pegasus! Moreover, even the youngest pegasus had combat strength rivaling the Astral Core Realm! He heavily gulped. He was merely an Eighth Phase expert with twenty-two Qi Essences, how could he hope to challenge this?

Wei Wuyin didn't pay any attention to their reactions. He sent a gaze towards Xiao Bai. Xiao Bai then gave off a low neigh and brandished its wings, causing fierce gusts to blow all these cultivators away, and the carriage lifted up and fell, shattering to pieces with a crumbling crash. With a flap, a kick off, it caused the earth to quake and he shot into the sky before transforming into a black lightning bolt that pierced swiftly into the Sky Layer of the Bloodforge Continent.

Star-grade beasts could not only pierce into Sky Layers of celestial bodies, but they could survive in the dark void. This innate ability to survive in a hazardous environment like the dark void was why they were termed 'star'-grade beasts. Like the stars in the sky, they could swim freely in the darkness!

It was truly impressive.

Su Mei stepped forward, swept her gaze on the gawking and moaning men below and her eyes focused on Boss Bai, who held that delicate girl still within his grip.

Wei Wuyin calmly said, "You two can go locate her first." Zuhei lifted his head and took a deep breath, circulating his astral force to help stabilize his bodily reactions. With a curt nod, he turned into a flickering shadow and vanished. When given an order by one's respected master, the only thing one must do is act in accordance to it.

Su Mei similarly left. However, unlike Zuhei whose cultivation was at the Second Stage of the Astral Core Realm, she was merely at the Eighth Stage of the Qi Condensation Realm, the Infused Spirituality Phase, and couldn't flash away via flight. She found the direction to the nearest city and kicked off, jumping and flashing into the distance.

Wei Wuyin turned to Su Mei's disappearing figure. While she was merely at the Eighth Stage, he felt a strange force within her that even his Celestial Eyes could barely see. However, he had the feeling that even when he was at the Infused Spirituality Phase, he was not her current match. This somewhat intrigued him deeply, considering she only had ninety-eight Qi Essences and one Natal Soul, this was quite shocking!

Regardless of his faint feeling, he didn't investigate or interrogate her. Su Mei's cultivation was going smoothly; soon, she'll reach the Zenith Mortal State and overcome her Astral Tribulation. Her talent was truly exceptional, especially to refine ninety-eight Qi Essences while constantly training her arts and spells after three years.

It was quite something.

The band of cultivators rose up, but vigilance and fear filled their gazes. Towards this newcomer who spoke about concocting seventh-grade elixirs, had a pegasus, and two subordinates whose cultivation bases they couldn't sense, they used the utmost caution. None of them dared to speak arrogantly or even breathe loudly.

Wei Wuyin turned his eyes, and with a faint smile, he said: "I'm looking for someone. Do you guys mind helping me out?" His attitude was friendly as he waltzed over with a calm, stable gait.

"W-who?" The dark brown-skinned giant was the first to rise and speak, and his tone was rather shaky. His fear leaked without his consent. If anyone saw such a monster stutter and quiver in his speech, they might feel as if they were dreaming.

"I'm looking for a blind man. According to what I know, he usually hangs around this area." Wei Wuyin had two targets for this trip, and this was his first one; his future shadow. It was why he opened a Void Portal to these specific coordinates. Unfortunately, his spiritual sense alone might not be able to notice this person.

Boss Bai and the others looked at each other in confusion, seeking if the others had an idea as to who he was speaking to.

Ruffle!

From the crushed wreckage of the recently shattered carriage, a young girl, that looked no more than ten or eleven years old, lifted her body out with her qi exerted to its utmost limits. After freeing herself,

her eyes were bloodshot and her head, which was injured, had streams of blood leaking from it, and shouted with her nascent and cute voice: "I know where he is!"

Her voice lacked fear or a stutter, being incomparably clear.

Boss Bai and the others turned their gazes. Who was this girl?

That lapse of confusion caused the older woman to free her mouth and she shouted at the young girl: "Run!" Her tone was filled with pain and emotion. She clearly didn't want her to be subjected to what she likely will suffer. Thinking of that hand that tried to invade her everything, she kept shouting again and again until Boss Bai clasped her mouth with his large hand.

However, the young girl didn't run. Perhaps she knew she couldn't, or maybe she simply didn't want to, but she wouldn't leave. Her blue eyes and blonde hair that was similar to the young woman easily allowed one to see their relationship; they were sisters.

The pig-like beastman lifted his eyes up, and perhaps it was a subconscious action or simply because he liked little girls, he pounced at the young girl in an attempt to grab and restrain her, as he had done countless times before.

Psuush!

This startled the young girl as she shrieked slightly before her face was splashed with blood, drenching her entire body in crimson. Before then, a spurting sound resounded and directly before her fearful gaze, the pig-like man exploded. His bones, organs, flesh, and brain matter liquefied and melded with his blood. They were no longer separate existences.

"..."

"..."

"..."

Simultaneously, the sound of craning necks echoed as they all looked towards the smiling Wei Wuyin who was casually walking over, his right index finger stretched out a little and it glimmered with faint light of draconic force flashing on the tip. The faint roars of a true dragon could be heard if one focused incomparably hard.

Each step caused their hearts to throb in response, and even the young girl that seemed to have turned into a bloody person, stilled with wide eyes. Wei Wuyin arrived before her and squatted to her level, ignoring the wreckage, and asked: "Can you tell me where?"

"..." The dozens of men were all silent. They didn't even dare to take a breath, not even the young woman in Boss Bai's hands. She didn't even struggle, fear engulfed her heart to the extreme. She had never seen someone explode into pure blood before, their corpse and bones were nowhere to be found. That was utterly horrifying!

Wei Wuyin realized the little girl might've been traumatized. In truth, he just wanted to push the beastman away, breaking a few bones. He hadn't expected him to explode like that. This was his first usage of his Draconic Void-type Astral Force. It held domineeringly tyrannical physical power without being used to invigorate, activate, or sustain his bloodline powers or Dragonification.

Just its raw power was exceptionally frightening. He had restrained himself to just 1% of his power and concentrated it to merely meet the beastman. Who would've thought this would be its outcome?

"If you tell me, I'll owe you a favor." Wei Wuyin made his voice calm and friendly as he said.

The young girl seemed to have been snapped out of her daze as her thoughts seemed to rapidly circulate. She looked at these dozens of men, the corpses of those who protected her, and the vast destruction within the plains brought about by them. The middle-aged man who held her sister hostage, and she knew what she had to do.

Each of these men felt an icy-chill in their spines as they realized their lives were no longer their own. Before this expert, what could they do?

Boss Bai was smarter than the others, and he was just about to threaten the young girl with the woman in his hands, but before he could, just as he took out his dagger and tried to place it to her neck, his head slid off his neck.

Thud.

Gush!

A geyser of blood rose from his neck and his body collapsed without any power.

Wei Wuyin's finger flashed with a saber intent.

"What do you say, hm?"

The young girl's eyes lit up as if she just gained a wish from a deity and her eyes flashed a malevolent glow. This was revenge, hatred, and more brought about by power, even if it was external.

The next set of events were graphic and swift, and not a single scream was heard.

A few minutes later, the young woman was bathing the little girl in water qi, cleaning the blood from her clothing and hair. As for the little girl, she had an incomparably content toothy smile on her face. After going through such immense fear and then experiencing safety left her feeling a heavenly sensation of utter bliss.

Who says revenge felt empty? It felt fucking great!

As for Wei Wuyin, he was quietly looking towards the sky while they made themselves decent. His Celestial Eyes viewed Xiao Bai linger above the Sky Layer lazily cultivating. He had sent Xiao Bai above to ensure that he wasn't too much of a beacon signaling out his location and existence on the continent. While he still needed a mount, and a fierce fighter, he wanted to execute his plans in a low-key manner.

For now.

'Astral Force...I have several types: Elemental Force, Saber Force, Draconic Force, Void Force, Spiritual Force, Eden Force, and Alchemic Force. I can fuse a few to increase their strength.' Spiritual Force was Astral Force with immense spiritual energies infused within, changing the balanced ratio from twenty-five physical, twenty-five spiritual, twenty-five essence, and twenty-five mental energies to seventy-five

spiritual and twenty-five essence. It was the driving force for Astral Core Realm-level Spiritual Spells and Formations. As he slowly rummaged through his current powers, he truly felt his strength settle.

As a possessor of four Astral Souls, all of which were at the Zenith Mortal State, he was frightening. *'Could I face Third Stage Cultivators? Maybe even Fourth...'* He really wasn't sure his upper limits currently, and his foundations haven't been fully enhanced.

With seventh, eighth, and ninth-grade products, he could expand his Astral Core's size, refined Astral Force quality, and reserves. This could be even further enhanced by increasing the intensity, quality, and quantity of his mental, physical, and spiritual energies—the building blocks of Astral Force.

'I'll need to test out my current limits later. While eighth-grade pellets were exceptional, everything had its weaknesses and only my own strength is the most reliable and flexible in true combat.' Just as he thought of this, he heard the soft steps behind him.

The young girl had washed away the pig's liquids off her and calmly bowed, and even the young woman followed. When she did, Wei Wuyin couldn't help but appreciate her beauty. She was quite a decent woman.

"Thank you, Senior." The two girls uttered simultaneously.

"...Senior?" Wei Wuyin quietly muttered in shock. His eyes twitched somewhat. When one's cultivation base rises at a young age, their rate of aging slows, and the more talented and nurtured one is, the worse this becomes. This young girl's cultivation already reached the Fifth Stage of the Qi Condensation Realm, and she was over forty years old. As for her older sister, she was in her seventies at the Seventh Stage.

While this was impressive for their age, it wasn't exceptional. Except perhaps the young girl, likely breaking through the Fifth Stage a decade or two ago.

Wei Wuyin had ascended into the Qi Condensation Realm nearing twenty, and his progression was quite slow in comparison, only breaking through to the Second Stage of the Qi Condensation Realm at twenty-three. At the moment, he looked to be in his early twenties.

His eyelids somewhat twitched at this form of address. It felt inappropriate.

"It's nothing," he hurriedly waved away and revealed a friendly smile. "Now, can you tell me where that blind old man is?" His eyes glowed faintly.

The young girl nodded, her expression diligent and focused as she explained with hand gestures. "He's usually in a thatched hut near the lake, over there."

Wei Wuyin looked towards that direction, and his eyelids twitched again. That lake was literally two miles away. Just from here, he could sense a faint heartbeat and feel a life aura. Shaking his head slightly, he gave his thanks and was about to leave.

"Senior, wait a minute!"

Chapter 204 - 202: The Sisters & The Thatched Hut

"Hm?" While Wei Wuyin didn't particularly find the term of address likable, he still responded due to their respectful tone. With a slight shift of his body, he turned to see the two sisters. The eldest sister walked forward with an anxious gaze and bowed abruptly.

"Senior, may I ask if you're an Alchemist?" As she spoke, there was a faint hint of hesitation, hope, and despair in her voice. They seemed to be linked to a certain memory.

"I am," Wei Wuyin responded flatly. Technically, he was an 'unofficial' alchemist because of his unwillingness to seek the approval of the Alchemist Association. However, that was laughable. The Dao of Alchemy did not need the verification of a third-party entity. It was a Dao for a reason. At most it'll benefit his reputation, but did he need that?

The eldest sister gulped slightly, her eyes brightened as her fists clenched. "Senior, my name's An Biru. This is my youngest sister, An Feijing. We belong to the An Clan of Blood Titan City within the Xue Country, and I hope to request your assistance!"

Wei Wuyin quietly considered for a moment, giving her a better look. After a while, he asked: "For?" An alchemist could be needed for many things, so that was already vague. Certain alchemists specialize in products relating to healing, curing poisons, herbal growth, cultivation, glamor, cooking, etc. There were too many reasons why someone might need an alchemist.

Fortunately, he didn't really have a specialty, so he didn't find this too much of an issue. While his cooking skills might not be on par with elites, following a recipe to its exact with his Celestial Eyes was easy.

An Biru explained, "My clan was challenged to an All-Alchemic Clash, and we need an Alchemist to participate for us. I know this is a lot to ask, but we can pay you to satisfaction!" She could only pray and hope that Wei Wuyin would accept. While he hadn't said anything, he casually revealed his ability to concoct seventh-grade elixir!

Furthermore, he rode upon a pegasus! With these factors, he had to be an elite King Alchemist!

"..."

An All-Alchemic Clash...

This was a very rare, very elitist-type challenge held amongst alchemists. In fact, it was so rare and elite that only top-tier alchemists of any tier would participate.

The rules were that the challenged party and challenger would select two categories of Alchemy: Pill, Paste, Pellet, or Elixir. After all four had been chosen, the challenger and challenged would then offer a recipe for their respective choices. The two would compete with said recipes until three points were reached on either side. The person who succeeds in creating the product in the lowest number of tries emerges victorious in that round and wins a point. If both sides create it with the same number of tries, they would then determine victor by quality.

If a tie is reached at the end of four rounds, then a random recipe would be chosen at a grade higher, and the first to create it of a low-quality or higher is the victor. If the two are Emperor Alchemists below the Astral Core Realm (highly unlikely), it would be considered a draw.

It was a grueling, time-consuming battle that tested your ability with two recipes you're familiar with and two recipes your opponent is familiar with. The only path to victory is by defeating your opponent with their own choices. It was a type of battle that destroyed your opponent thoroughly in terms of face while establishing yourself as superior. Usually, there would be an immense wager in place for these types of challenges.

However, only those who were confident in concocting four different types of alchemical products would accept this challenge. Most alchemists specialized in a single type of product and property of said products, such as pills that allowed cultivators to absorb essence, elemental essence, energies in a shorter period. For example, the Astral Dipper Fountain Pill or Essence Pill. This was due to their similarities when concocting, so it was easier to advance in the next grade.

Wei Wuyin's initial desire was to reject. He wasn't a saint; he had no intention to be a white knight to the rescue to win heart points with the fair maidens. He wasn't so idiotic to make decisions based on his lower-half. Moreover, it was merely a chance and not a certainty.

However, he started to consider it. He hadn't been a part of an All-Alchemic Clash before. It would be interesting to participate in one, at least once. Due to his reluctance to be officiated, it's unlikely that he'll be challenged by others.

In the end, he nodded. "Sure, but I have matters to attend to first." With a wave of his hand, a transmission crystal flew out of his three-layered ring and into An Biru's hand. "Send me a message when it's about to start."

After saying that, he no longer lingered and walked towards the thatched hut. Since all those bandits were killed by Wei Wuyin, he didn't bother sending them home. They should be able to do so themselves, if not, then it was simply their fate today to meet their demise.

After several minutes, he finally arrived next to the rushing lake and saw the thatched hut a hundred or so kilometers from it. It seemed simple and small, barely enough to settle a single person. However, it was four walls and a roof. There were times where he had even less than that, so he didn't judge.

Sometimes, simple living was better than the grandiose lifestyle. For example, his sky palace was incredibly large, nearly the size of a small town, and it contained numerous rooms and a large backyard. It was simply too luxurious to appropriately live in alone.

When he arrived before the door of the hut, a faint elderly voice resounded. It said, with a hint of a quiver, "So you're here for me." It felt feeble and weak, as if it was nearing the ultimate end of life.

Wei Wuyin calmly smiled, undisturbed by the foresight filled words of this voice. Instead, he responded with: "You're expecting me?"

Creak!

The door was slowly opened, and from its edge, a black cane that was slender and dull emerged. It supported the withered hand of an elderly man, who slowly revealed his figure and appearance before Wei Wuyin.

This human man was thin, wrinkled, and seemed fragile like a sandcastle. Upon that old hunched and frail body was a loose white robe that was exceptionally clean, whiter than white. His casually tied grey hair that established a perfect bun and his flowing hair to the sides allowed his face, which had folds upon folds of skin, to be undisguised. However, despite his wizened face and slit-like eyes that seemed so narrow that they seemed closed, one could tell he was an exceptional looker in his youth.

Whether it was merely an instinctive thought or an assumption, this would emerge in one's mind.

"You're here to kill me, no?" The old man's eyes and heartbeats remained consistent as he spoke this. In fact, a hint of a smile could be seen at the corner of his lips. It was as if he wanted this to be true.

Wei Wuyin's silver eyes narrowed for a moment. Then, he shook his head with a calm grin. "Why would I want to kill my shadow?"

"..."

Chapter 205 - 203: Ascendant - Ying

The cultivation world was cruel. This simple five lettered sentence was the echoing sentiment of many who sought riches, power, pleasure, and strength. It placed heavy emphasis on the importance of too many random factors, and at times, it seemed as if heaven and earth were actively acting against you.

All it took was one wrong step, one wrong word, or one wrong thought and it could lead to a cascading waterfall of despair and agony. It was terrifying; it was cruel. Furthermore, cultivation in itself was difficult. There was innate talent, but that could only usher you so far. One also needed a quality environment, absolute protection, intelligent instructors, and rich resources to truly establish themselves. They needed a legacy to follow, to avoid tripping into the abyss of mediocrity.

How many were capable of being born with these things, while simultaneously receiving the tempering required to forge a sufficient heart of cultivation to challenge any obstacle?

Sometimes, you're given everything, yet in the end, it might not be enough.

There was once a boy, let's call this boy Ying, and he felt that he had everything. He was born to a loving family, to a legacy, to a high-end environment, to a sufficient backing, and never needed anything more than time.

Unfortunately...

It all collapsed like a house of cards. His family was taken away from him, his legacy shattered, his environment incinerated, protection obliterated, and left with no time to react. And, it was his fault. A single word could define the reason: "Arrogance."

A young boy that had everything looked down upon those who had nothing in this cruel, difficult, and fragile cultivation world. It was merely a few words, a juvenile insult that seemed to matter very little now, but it crumbled his entire world.

He was left crippled and alone, unable to continue cultivation, unable to seek revenge, and this was his punishment. There were countless times that he prayed to the suns, moon, earth, mountains, lakes, stars, and all sorts of indistinctive yet grand things that might contain deities. He hoped they would hear his plea, seek justice on his behalf.

Life wasn't so simple. It never was.

When his life was about to amount to nothing due to a few words, he was taken by an Evil Cultivator. That cultivator sought to strip him of his remaining life force and use him as a cultivation resource, and he could only accept this in terrifying horror. He had no right in this world to fight or struggle for his life, and his guilt consumed his heart. Perhaps he deserved this. Because of him, his family was now buried.

Ying resigned himself to his seemingly inevitable fate!

However, fate had not resigned itself to him!

In an unexpected twist, the Evil Cultivator's method abruptly backfired, and his cultivation, essence, innate yin, innate yang, and all his innate energies were transferred to Ying! How? Even he didn't know, yet it did. Whether it was truly due to the hands of an unknown god or simply an accident, he didn't know and he sure as hell did not care. He lapped this fortune up like a thirsty dog and survived!

Not only was his cultivation base restored, his mental, physical, and spiritual energies damaged by his crippling was completely healed, allowing him to regain competence. With renewed vigor, his eyes were unyielding and blazing. He wanted revenge!

With his own two hands, he would get it!

However...

The world was unfathomably cruel.

A completely different incident, a completely different time. His personality became dark, silent, and somewhat vile as a result of his past. He ignored the words of a single individual and that led to his subsequent capture by hired experts who tortured and crippled him once again. Ying was distraught. He did nothing wrong!

He literally did nothing yet met such a fate once more!

How could the cultivation world be so fickle! With sufficient strength, wealth, and status, one could trample on anyone and everything! His heart of cultivation was truly tested, and he could only allow himself to be thrown away like trash.

Typically, crippled cultivators lived a life far worse than death. They suffered numerous issues to their ability to think, form memories, control their physical body, and their organs were prone to failure. Their deaths could be abrupt or exceptionally slow, while their physical abilities would be below even mortal children. It was the ultimate punishment that every cultivator dreaded.

Spirit Oaths were so fundamentally respected because of this frightening consequence. It was like losing everything in this world.

Thrown out and forgotten, he could only crawl away with eyes filled with bleak agony and seething hatred. This hatred wasn't merely directed towards others that had wrong him, but himself. His mind was immersed in dark, gloomy, and provoking suicidal thoughts. Wouldn't he be better off dead? There would be no more suffering, no more pain, and he could simply vanish from the face of this world, right?

But, he was a coward. He couldn't drown himself, slit his wrists, or jump in front of a large moving carriage to embrace death.

He wanted nothing more than to slink away into the darkness forever, to be unnoticed and unseen, so he could hide away from everyone and everything in this cruel world.

At that moment, a moment of profound misery, he was enlightened. Enlightened to the unfathomable truths hidden within the depths of this world, one that resonated with his soul!

Shadow Intent!

An exceptional rare Ethereal Intent. However, despite awakening to this intent that allowed his existence to meld with the shadows of this world, to become an existence that could only be ignored, be it his words or his presence, he was still useless. Without his cultivation, his Intent was useless.

Until he remembered the Evil Cultivator. He was crippled once before but he had regained his cultivation and recovered fully after an Evil Method cultivation error. If it could happen once, it could happen again. With all his strength, he returned to a location that he had once avoided with his everything: the Evil Cultivator's lair.

He found a cultivation manual, and it was the same cultivation manual the Evil Cultivator used against him. Its purpose was to siphon the innate energies of an individual to cultivate. It was rather basic for Evil Methods, as it merely stole innate energies and lifeforce to supplement oneself, and this was the basis of all, if not most, Evil Methods.

He clutched at this evil ray of hope. He clutched it with his all. He explored and planned. He needed living targets, but cultivators could easily kill him with a single move, even the weakest. In fact, a five-year old child could slap a weapon out of his hand and break his skull. His decreasing physical state and mental ability caused his bones, muscles, and mind to become unfathomably weak.

With a decreased reaction time, he could never kill or capture anyone that could react to him. So, he was forced to do what any individual with a hint of morals and principles would despise doing; he targeted the weak and defenseless: infants.

Yes.

He did the unthinkable, the most vilest action imaginable, the cruelest and despicable act possible: He killed infants. Their nascent energies were easy to consume, while minor, they were easy to use the cultivation method on and there was little chance of a backlash. He needed living targets, and it was his own choice. He quietly hid, found key moments, and snatched the infants away. After crying river-like tears while ending their brand new lives, he soon regained his cultivation.

The pain tore at his heart, and thoughts of killing himself became rampant. Was his sole purpose, his sole desire for living, to kill those that had done nothing to him? Why was he pushed to this point?! Why him?!?!

He had everything in his youth, and wanted for nothing. He couldn't sleep, and tears would fall without end for days at a time, but for each drop that fell...he pictured those who pushed him to the brink. They left him with nothing, took his everything for an insult and a slight.

IT WAS THEIR FAULT!

IT WAS THIS WORLD'S FAULT!!

He set a goal for himself. With this in mind, he shut off his emotions and deeply focused as he cultivated, used his Shadow Intent to grow and develop, becoming an assassin that killed for money. His Evil Methods improved, and he could take the innate energies of the recently deceased, allowing his cultivation to grow leaps and bounds. He attained various assassination arts, trained in them, and killed.

He was mercilessly terrifying as he came without warning and claimed lives without end. Decades soon passed, and his desire for revenge was never reduced, his mind focused on that goal.

Until, he finally found them. Those who slighted him.

One had a marked gravestone without a body inside and the other was killed in a battle between clans. They were dead.

At that moment, he didn't know what to feel. He had performed all these killings, these evil acts, merely for the sake of revenge, yet this cruel world didn't give it to him. Instead, it claimed their lives before he could even see them again. They eradicated his family, took away his hope! Yet now...they were no longer of this world.

Lost.

That was what he felt.

His dagger that was stained with thousands of lives was useless. On one dark night, he gripped his dagger and brought it to his heart. All it required was one simple thrusting motion, and his entire life would be brought to an end. It would all end.

The faces of those smiling, crying, and curious infants flashed in his mind. The faces of those he killed that reflected confusion, unwillingness, despair, hatred, and want. The want for more life! They flashed within his mind.

What was this all for? What was this all for?!

Every life taken to further his agenda, meaningless. Absolutely fucking meaningless. Despite all this, when it came to plunge himself into the cold embrace of death, to seek absolution from his sinful acts, the dagger that painfully poked at his skin...dropped.

In the end, he couldn't do it.

Was he a coward? Yes! Did he want to live? No! He wanted nothing more than to end it all, but he couldn't end it himself. Should he find someone to send him to his death? Could he? And so he tried, and at the moment the sword neared his neck, his body instinctively took action, slicing into the throat of his would-be killer with his dagger.

A head fell; it wasn't his.

Ying was lost. His will to live was too strong, but his desire for death was equally strong! He wanted to leave this world, but he couldn't do so on his own. How unfortunate. But his sin was like blood that could not be washed off, and the deaths by his hands were too numerous to count.

So, he could only do what he could: try to find redemption.

The months turned to years which turned into decades as he devoted his life traveling the world, seeking to save a life if he could. However, his means were flawed, because...to save a life, another one or several had to die.

Lost.

He lived his life in this limbo state, trying to help strangers while seeking absolution of his acts, but only piling more.

Before he knew it, he had lived for hundreds of years, yet his life of good deeds had not washed off a single iota of sin from his hands. But one day, someone will come. That person would be able to give him what he sought the most.

Ying thought he had finally met this man at the end of his life. Little did he know, this man didn't want his life; he wanted him.

Chapter 206 - 204: My Evil, My Shadow

Ying's wrinkled body trembled briefly, his slit-like eyes that seemed to contain the essence of his age dimmed considerably. An unfathomably deep sigh left his trembling and fragile lungs. "You should go then," Ying said. He turned his body and sought to re-enter his hut in peace.

In a few moments, he left.

Wei Wuyin didn't stop him. Instead, he turned his head to view the serene lake nearby. It was crystal clear, lacking a hint of purity. With a relaxed stride until he was directly at its side, looking down as he could see the very depths of the lake. He squatted down and sat beside the lakeside. His silver eyes observed the fishes that swam freely within the lake.

For several hours, he simply sat there. He hadn't said a single word or bothered the old man before. In fact, if one were to casually walk by, they might not even notice his existence.

Creak!

Soon, the thatched hut's make-shift door squeaked after opening. An old man garbed in a fisherman's outfit, carrying a rod and a fold-out chair, walked out with a somber aura. He walked for a moment while carrying two buckets before pausing, his eyes noticing Wei Wuyin's quiet figure. A slight frown emerged between his brows before he walked forward and set up his fishing spot just a few meters away from Wei Wuyin.

Seemingly unbothered, Wei Wuyin just calmly kept staring at the fishes and faint ripples in the water. Just as Wei Wuyin ignored Ying, Ying ignored Wei Wuyin as he sat and sent his fishing line into the lake in a well-practiced manner.

From then on, Ying fished. In such a clear water lake, it was quite easy for cultivators to observe the movements, patterns, and current locations of the fish, but Ying remained silent and kept his eyes closed. He hadn't used any bait, simply a hook. For hours, he received no response.

After six hours, he retrieved his line and packed up before returning to his thatched hut. At the same time the next day, he would once again return to the lake and fish in the same manner. Despite his apparent skill, he seemed to have no intent to strive for a successful capture. In fact, he merely napped during and was rather neglectful.

For three full days, always at the same time, Ying performed the same task. As for Wei Wuyin, besides looking around, staring at the sun, or watching the fishes, he never once said a single word and merely sat there. His existence was at the bare minimum, affecting absolutely nothing.

On the fourth day, Ying brought his chair over and sat, his eyes glancing at Wei Wuyin briefly. Since this young man had arrived, he had only spoken two sentences. This stroked the old man's curiosity, and it was set further ablazed by his odd actions. What was he trying to achieve? Did he really think he would accept him as a shadow? Whatever that meant.

"Young man, you're wasting your time being here. You should spend your time cultivating or enjoying your life rather than being here." Ying's tone tried to contain a sense of an advising elder. He didn't directly ask Wei Wuyin what he wanted, because he wasn't sure he wanted the answer.

Wei Wuyin's silver eyes shifted slightly, moving directly towards the fishes that swam freely. He said, "Do you think fish know that their world is forever limited? That they are in a cage, unable to escape?"

"..." Ying frowned, unsure of what Wei Wuyin was trying to get at. Was he trying to observe these fishes to obtain some form of enlightenment or something? He took a moment, his eyes observing the fishes that seemed to be swimming as they wished. "What is their cage?" This question was one of his first thoughts, and he didn't know why he asked.

"The water, the lake, the continent, their bodies, their breadth of mind, their own intelligence, none of this...all of this?" Wei Wuyin quietly responded.

Ying shook his head after a momentary thought, "Do you think you know that your world is forever limited? That you are in a cage, unable to escape?" He repeated Wei Wuyin's question, but threw it back at him, implying his own limits.

Wei Wuyin grinned slightly, "You're perfect."

"Perfect?" Ying was immediately confused. This young man was confusing in both his words and actions.

Wei Wuyin sat up and stretched his arms and legs a bit, revealing his excellent physique from the robes that tugged briefly against his muscles. "I want you to join me; I want you to become my shadow."

Ying was a man who had lived a life for others, killing for others, and he had grown tired of that life and merely wished to wash away his sins slowly until his inevitable and closely approaching death date. He obtained Shadow Intent, a very rare Ethereal Intent that allowed him to establish his name and reputation after decades of work. From this, he felt that Wei Wuyin was just another person who wanted to use him for their own goals.

As for this 'become my shadow' business, it was ridiculous.

"Why do you do it?" Wei Wuyin abruptly asked.

Ying wasn't someone who generally liked having company, and he felt this interaction was pointless, but Wei Wuyin kept driving his interest forward. He blurted out, "Do what?"

"Why do you try to save others?" Wei Wuyin moved his fingers and a pebble was created within his palms. With a casual toss, he sent it skipping over the lake four times before it sunk.

"..." Ying stilled. His eyes narrowed as he focused on Wei Wuyin. "Why does it concern you?" His tone grew a little darker. His past was filled with shameful and vile events, and he despised his own memories. If he could, he would scrub it all, but to have a random stranger question his actions brought up unpleasing flashes.

"I'll be direct: You're seeking redemption. I'm offering you a chance at it." Wei Wuyin decided to not beat around the bush. He had long since learned a little about Ying, and while his past wasn't very clear, his reputation as a renowned assassin was exceptional. His cultivation base wasn't impressive, merely at the Seventh Stage of the Qi Condensation Realm, the Sublime Qi Phase, yet he had killed an Astral Core Realm cultivator before. While it was merely a First Stage Astral Core Realm cultivator, the feat was impressive nevertheless.

Very few assassins could achieve such a result. It would be like an ant killing a bull, but he accomplished it!

"...I don't want it." Ying said, a wisp of coldness within.

"You're right. You don't want it; you need it."

Ying stilled. Those words reached his heart and caused it to inadvertently race. He went silent for a long while, his thoughts a mystery, but his hands were clenched tightly into fists.

"In our starfield, the general consensus of evil is mostly agreed upon. Do you know what evil is?" Wei Wuyin calmly gazed at Ying, his silver eyes shone with a mysterious light that reflected Ying's silhouette. Within his pupils, Ying's figure was drawn and contained.

Ying lifted his head and met Wei Wuyin's eyes. He felt a surging pressure descend upon his mind, soul, and thoughts. In a brilliant flash, he felt that his entire world had changed into a blank slate of white. A brief glance around and he felt as if everything about him, his past, was swept away.

Subconsciously, he looked to his palms and came to a startling realization! His hands which were wrinkled and carried a trace of death had returned to its youthful smoothness, color, and brimmed with plump vigor. He touched his face, immediately feeling its smoothness with his hands.

"What did you do to me?" He asked in utter disbelief. Did he somehow return to the past? Where was this? An illusion? Was this the afterlife?

Wei Wuyin asked again, "Do you know what evil is?"

Ying froze. After a deep breath, he responded: "Me."

He had been responsible for the death of his entire family...

Just as this thought emerged in his thoughts, the white surroundings swirled into a lively set of colors and shapes. They solidified and he found himself existing within a memory. It was the memory of that moment, the moment that caused it all.

His younger self was surrounded by bodyguards and stooges, and his arrogance was high. He felt as if he was invincible and ruled the world, and whatever he wanted, he could have! A young man and his female companion arrived, and this woman was an exceptional beauty.

He sought to pursue her, but was gated by her kindness. They tried to avoid him, which harmed his ego and forced him to make one mistake after another until that young man descended and tried to kill him. His bodyguard and stooges intervened, but they were slaughtered. He survived, ran away, and pleaded to his family for revenge.

How dare that woman reject him! How dare that young man lift a hand against him!

They, enraged at his near-death experience, hunted the young man responsible. In two years, a series of unfortunate events later, and that young man had the power to slaughter everyone. He had to beg for his life. The moment that he had kneeled and begged for mercy after seeing his grandfather horrifically die, who was his pillar of safety and support, was relived by him at this moment.

He saw the moment his snot and tears flowed ceaselessly as he begged on his knees to be let off, apologizing with his everything. His lowest point in life was here.

The young man gave him a choice: to cripple himself or die.

In a moment of hope, he did so. He was nearly turned into an invalid, but he retained his life.

The memories flashed as he smiled and thanked the young man for his 'benevolent' leniency. However, the damage was done. His family's fortune and high-level protection was over as they were soon ransacked and raided by their enemies, resulting in the inevitable eradication of his family. Those who slaughter his family to the last even spared him in the end, allowing him to live on with mocking laughter and jeering smiles.

The scene grew fuzzy as he soon returned to a world filled with white emptiness, with only Wei Wuyin's tall and handsome figure remaining before him.

At the moment, Ying's face was wet with tears. He didn't have an expression of crying, but his tears flowed endlessly.

"Do you know what evil is?"

Those words echoed once more, and he bit his lips.

He had killed infants...

The scene changed to the moment he met his first infant, one which was abandoned at an orphanage. They weren't very protected and those who operated it was negligent and incompetent, so with a brief plan, he infiltrated and found a lovely two-month old boy.

He saw his dirty, smelly, and broken self grasp the body as if it was the most precious treasure. He absconded away with the baby in his arms.

Later that night, he executed the Evil Method obtained later that week and fed on its warm blood. The cries that were rampant and then abruptly ceased haunted his life even to this day.

In a flash, he returned to a world of whiteness. His body couldn't stop trembling as he lifted his youthful hands and saw them rapidly age, covered in blood that dripped without end. His lips trembled and his nose looked as if it had smelled something sour.

Wei Wuyin's figure was still present. "Do you know what evil is?"

"Ahhh!" Ying screamed. He bared his teeth and hands like claws as he snarled at Wei Wuyin. "I get it! I'm evil! I'M EVIL! I DESERVE PUNISHMENT!! I DESERVE A HORRIBLE DEATH!!! I...I..." He fell to his knees with a heavy thud, closing his eyes as he felt his memories overtake his mind. Everything he felt on those days was his evil.

The world flashed once more, changing into different shapes and colors causing Ying to shout like a frantic monkey. "Stop! I GET IT!"

But his words couldn't stop the scene from changing. On a rainy day, the squeals, cries, and grunts of a young woman were drowned out. She was drenched, a tall, bulky man pressed her down to the ground with a hot gaze.

"PI-PLEASE! Stop, stop, please stop!"

A head flew into the sky.

The blood no longer drowned out screams of terror and pleading, but the thud of a headless corpse. It fell atop the woman who pushed it off her, regaining her bodily freedom as she was confused, but after a moment, she ran away. She never looked back.

From the rain, a shadow flickered into existence and formed a desolate figure with cold eyes and a sanguine blade.

The world changed until it became white. The next sequence of events displayed all of Ying's actions, his numerous acts of interference as he sought redemption for his hands. It was numerous, spanning over two hundred or so years.

"Do you know what evil is?" Wei Wuyin's voice resounded one last time, causing Ying to still. He looked at those silver eyes of his and felt unsure, confusion in his eyes. In a blink, he returned back to his original self, the wrinkled and near death version of himself. The lake, fishes, suns, and sky returned.

"While others might be of a different opinion, my personal belief of Evil is rather simple: Evil acts without a purpose. Evil acts for the sake of one's own interest or enjoyment. Evil regrets nothing even in death.

"It is vile, emotionless, and selfish. It isn't wrong, but it certainly isn't right. It permeates the world we live in, inseminating itself into our hearts, but our hearts naturally reject it. Those who accept it, they are, to my belief, Evil.

"You, to me, are not Evil. You've acted with a purpose. You acted against your own conscience, self-interest, your own heart for the sake of this purpose. You regret everything." Wei Wuyin calmly said, his words spoken in a leveled cadence. They caused Ying to open his eyes, revealing a black unlike anything in this world, reflecting everything within.

"I offer you a chance at redemption. One where you can save lives, without taking them. A legacy that will result in countless changes to our world and ripple beyond what you could ever imagine, all in your name. It is yours, if you want it." Wei Wuyin stated.

In the mind of Ying, there was a storm within. He recalled Wei Wuyin's first sentence, and he felt as if he was the fish in the lake, limited and restricted in manners he hadn't even conceived of. He didn't know what this redemption was, or why he trusted anything this young man said, but he opened his eyes and saw a ray of hope. Not in death, but in redemption.

"What do you want?" Ying slowly asked.

Wei Wuyin smilingly said, "For you to be my 'Shadow'. For as long as you do so, so will your chance at redemption remain."

"...Deal."

Whether he was accepting the deal with a devil or an angel, he wasn't sure; nevertheless, he wanted, no, needed to try.

Chapter 207 - 205: Exhausted

Wei Wuyin had settled Ying, his shadow. At the moment, Ying was in the midst of cultivating within the thatched hut. Wei Wuyin had long since known of Ying's issue with old age, and as a Qi Condensation Realm cultivator, he was approaching the end of his natural lifespan. Fortunately, there were numerous products that can help bolster longevity, nourishing one's life energies and vitality.

He had prepared a seventh-grade pill called the Life Granting Pill. Its name was rather simplistic, and so was its effects. It was exceptionally straightforward. By consuming and refining the vital energies within it, one could gain up to ten years of additional life. Of course, the stronger one's cultivation base, the lesser the effectiveness of this pill and its vital energies. For Astral Core Realm experts, they'll be fortunate to be granted a single month of additional life.

However, for Qi Condensation cultivators, it was highly effective and capable of providing several additional years.

This wasn't the only product he received. He had devised an entire cultivation regimen to return Ying back to his former strength, while simultaneously allowing his cultivation base to improve by leaps and bounds. If he can reach the Astral Core Realm, his age would no longer be a factor that restricted his potential strength and ability. He'll have several hundred natural years added to his lifespan.

"Haaa..." He sighed with a heavy exhaustion revealed in his eyes. His head lifted to view the sky contained three suns. *'I miss you...'* His thoughts roamed as he recalled that proud crane that brightly lit up the night. She wasn't simply a mount to be ridden, or a sky partner to soar the skies with, but his friend who listened and accepted. In the cultivation world, this was a rare relationship to have. While idling, his innermost thoughts would be heard by her, and his emotions would be accepted as well.

When he used the Eye of Illusion on Ying, bringing him into an illusionscape, he had never thought about the immense burden peering into another's mind would cause him. It was different from emotionlessly sweeping through Jiao Ning's mind for selective memories and performing a surgical removal while melding any damage. This time, it was as if he was Ying. Every shiver and thought, emotion and want, he felt it all.

The feeling of drinking an infant's warm blood as its cries of pain and agony slowly ceased into an eternal slumber. A life snuffed out before it could even begin. The despair of losing everything and wanting to so desperately live. The feeling...the feeling of causing his entire family's death. Wei Wuyin's hands slowly clenched into fists, tightening until his knuckles became white as ash.

Perhaps that's what triggered him. For some reason, he felt that guilt and it perfectly matched his own. A resonance between two individuals of far apart generations likely formed some bond between the two. An invisible bond that could not be removed because their memories and emotions could not be removed.

He couldn't help but think: °If I was in his situation, forced to rely on any method to avenge my family...would I?°

And the answer was easy...yes.

Only those who knew how it felt to be the reason for their loved ones' lives to end horrifically, stripped away because of their decision, could possibly understand what they would be willing to do after. The answer to that question would never change.

Fortunately, he had talent, he had a chance, and grasped it entirely. He entered the Scarlet Solaris Sect as an Honorary Disciple, struggled his way to the top, and obtained his revenge with the support of allies, such as Bai Lin, Mei Mei, and the Jiang Brothers. He had a support system that others didn't have, that Ying didn't have.

All those responsible, their children, their brothers, their mothers and fathers...he killed them all to alleviate his seething hatred. In the end, it didn't bring them back. But, if he died and met his family in the afterlife, he would be able to beg for forgiveness with his heart strong and his mind clear. At least some form of justice and accounting was held towards those responsible.

"I can't use the Eye of Illusion to interject myself into someone else's mind anymore. It's going to slowly make me lose a sense of myself," the lingering effects of the Eye of Illusion was causing his memories, thoughts, emotions, and beliefs to undergo a slight upheaval and even transforming based on Ying's experiences.

The Eye of Illusion of the Celestial Eyes of Spiritual Divinity was an extraordinary ability. It originated from the unique formation etched within his sea of consciousness, and he can project his mental energies directly into those who visually perceived his eyes. They would descend into an illusory world of his making or theirs. However, using the latter required using his own mental projection to enter their sea of consciousness. This was an incredibly dangerous act. The sea of consciousness contained the memories, emotions, and will of an individual. It shaped one's personality.

It was like drowning himself in their everything. With that, he would dredge up those memories while simultaneously tainting himself with it. It was better to create projections based on his own thoughts. It

was one part removed, and merely needed him to send mental energies to influence their perceptions rather than directly affecting their sea of consciousness.

Furthermore, it consumed an immense amount of mental energy. Thanks to his cultivation base increase, he could now interface and activate the formation with his refined Astral Core level mental energies. While it also consumed spiritual energies, it wasn't nearly as much as raw mental energies.

"If the Eye of Illusion is this troublesome, what about the other two?" He tried to interface with the Eye of Immortality, but it seemed to already be silently activated, and it didn't consume any energy he could see or feel at the moment. However, it was passively active.

The Eye of Truth was still a complete mystery. He couldn't even activate it with all or any of his various energies of forces. It seemed to require something very specific. However, he felt that he could activate it in the Astral Core Realm, just not now. This feeling was very mysterious, like an invisible guide on his shoulder slowly informing him of it.

Shaking his head slightly, his eyes revealed a level of mental exhaustion. He needed to rest.

Just as he was about to do so, he received a transmission. It was from An Biru. It read:

"Senior, the clash will begin two days from now at noon in Blood Titan City. I hope you can make it."

After reading this, Wei Wuyin finally recalled his earlier agreement to help those two sisters and their clan in an All-Alchemic Clash. He had forgotten. This wasn't due to his memory being shoddy, but the level of mental exhaustion had caused him to forget most things. The Eye of Illusion was truly a disastrous consumption of his mental energies.

As someone who had Eden reinforce and enhance the quality and quantity of his mental energies as well as a secondary sea of consciousness, he was truly shocked to his core. At the moment, he felt nearly mortal. It was a novel feeling.

"I'll rest for now. Later, I'll have to concoct some products suitable for furthering my mental limits." After deciding this, he walked towards the lake and walked on its surface. With a flick of his finger, elemental force emerged and a smaller-sized replica of his Sky Palace was formed with the lake's surface as the foundation.

With his ability of permanence, after creating anything, it would last until destroyed or caused by time. With a light breath, he entered the palace and brought out his own bed from his storage ring.

Chapter 208 - 206: Blood Titan City

The Bloodforge Continent was a developed cultivation civilization that contained numerous complex and varied forces. This causes it to stay true to its name as blood was spilled daily, and the will of cultivators were forged endlessly. While this wasn't the reason for its name, it was nevertheless quite suitable.

But the most centralized and stable area of the Bloodforge Continent was the Hegemon-Approved Monarchy, the Xue Country. They controlled nearly twenty percent of its territory and were given immense authority and freedom. It was a location renowned for its less chaotic conflicts.

However, this did not exclude it from conflict. As is the nature of intelligent society, disparity and difference often created a hierarchy that allowed abuse, conflict, segregation of status, and struggles inherent within cultivation civilizations.

In this country, there were numerous cities, towns, and villages, with the three main cities being the Blood Titan City, Blood Rose City, and Blood Wave City. While the three cities had names that were rather simple, they held these names despite the numerous changes in monarchy. They were stable points with the most focused clans, powers, and experts. With their strength and foundation, they consistently rode through all changes of leadership.

In the Blood Titan City, a flourishing city with a population of over two hundred million and spanned an area of two thousand kilometers. The hustle and bustle were heavy, as cultivators cultivated, alchemists concocted, designers studied, and architects designed. The chefs were working beside their stoves, moms carried their infants to the market while gossiping, and managers oversaw stores.

Within this city, there was a clan that had existed for nearly two thousand years, having established themselves on grand merits and great leaders with excellent foresight. They were the An Clan. However, within the An Clan's Main Headquarters, there was a gathering of their elites, experts, and leaders and the atmosphere was tense and heavy.

In a grand hall, An Biru and An Feijin were standing to the left of a seated man with exceptional regal looks. This handsome-looking man had grey-hairs at his sides, yet his skin lacked a single wrinkle and his eyes were brightly lit like the starry night. His aura was concealed, but every breath he took allowed all those to feel an unfathomable level of pressure from him.

He was An Ge, the seating Patriarch of the An Clan and Astral Core Realm cultivator. While his cultivation base was only at the First Stage, he was still amongst the five million experts amidst tens of trillions of cultivators. All those at his level were renowned experts with the ability to dominate a portion of a continent, and that's what he did.

With his An Clan behind him, he dominated a portion of the Blood Titan City, owning a quarter of it with three other clans. These clans were the Chen, Lu, and Zhao Clan. They, alongside the An Clan, were known as the Four Titan Clans.

At the moment, his expression was serene, but within his eyes were a hint of frustration. An Biru—the older sister of the two—had a hint of anxiety as she prespired slightly, fragrant sweat dotting her forehead. Her soft hands were clenched as her eyes were lowered. An Feijing was more curious, as she regarded the room with curiosity.

All these dirty uncles and naggy aunts were gathered and avidly exchanging all sorts of words. Some were frantic, seemingly ready to go the blows. The chatter was overwhelming, and the topic was simple: the All-Alchemic Clash.

The story of how this came about had to do with a simple challenge with one of the Chen Clan. A simple drinking party blew into a full-blown dick-measuring wager with fifty-percent of their territory on the line, and this was all a certain someone's fault. Yet, they argued with each other and not the person responsible.

A few weeks ago, the four clans had a gathering of experts, to show-off their talented youths and their potential. Normally, this would simply be a normal exchange and small-sized wagers would be levied between, but the Chen Clan's current Matriarch had taunted An Ge. In moments, for some inexplicable reason, it devolved into a massive exchange with their talents battle potential tested.

The An Clan horrifically lost. With that, lost the rights to three minor mines. This wasn't much, likely about five percent of their total yearly gains; it was a sustainable loss. However, the cunning Chen Clan used all sorts of verbal tricks and lured the An Clan into further wagers. With each loss, An Ge lost his cool more and more.

Until...

Now, they were now engaging in an All-Alchemic Clash with half of their total foundation on the line. While many wanted to curse An Ge out, his strength made it quite difficult to do. However, if it was Alchemist, they were confident in winning, so many didn't have any issue. Amongst the four clans, they had the best alchemists available.

However, without exception, their skilled alchemists disappeared like ghosts. One moment, they were there, the next, they were elsewhere. That elsewhere? The Chen Clan. They lured every skilled alchemist away in almost freakish fashion, as if this was planned for years.

They immediately realized they fell into an inescapable trap. Furthermore, An Ge swore a Spirit Oath, so he couldn't retreat from this challenge. So, they did the most sensible thing: they outsourced.

Unfortunately, every alchemist they attempted to hire had met one of two fates: They died violent deaths or outright refused. In fact, An Biru and An Feijing were recently assigned a stealthy recruitment mission. In exchange for their participation, win or lose, the alchemist would have two new wives in the form of An Biru and An Feijing, An Ge's great granddaughters. Of course, there was other compensation, especially for winning the clash, but the alchemist was very lecherous so this was the only way.

They were desperate.

But, while they planned, fate laughed. Or did it? Regardless of whether it was coincidental or instigated by a traitor in their midst, the An Sisters were ambushed and the alchemist was killed. If it wasn't for a visiting expert, the sisters would've been put to death.

If he had known this would happen, An Ge would've sent elite experts to escort them, but he wanted to be sneaky. His intelligence led to the inevitable downfall of his plans.

Now, the main hall was filled with all sorts of arguments as to how to handle the eventual fallout of losing fifty-percent of their territory. This would set their clan back considerably, and available cultivation resources would be halved and their wealth harmed considerably. In truth, the real issue was that An Ge's original bets had already lost them twenty-percent of their territory.

This could make anyone's eyelids twitch! Seventy-percent lost! Just like that. How did they get the one incompetent patriarch since their clan's inception? While they would never say this aloud, the eyes of everyone in the hall couldn't help but reflect this—even his great granddaughters.

"Silence!" An Ge bellowed in force, silencing the hall. He rose from his seat, emitting an oppressive aura that pressed upon everyone's hearts. While he might be an idiot to them, his strength wasn't lacking one bit.

"You all can keep bickering amongst each other, but I have no intention of losing this wager." His words caused eyes to subconsciously roll in disbelief. No intention? Your disease of an unreliable gambler had caused this situation. While your opponent checkmated you since the first move, you expect to fight against it?

An Ge's left eyebrow and eyelids twitched. With his powerful senses, how could he not notice their expressions of disbelief and frustration? He had a mind to deliver a slap or two, but he restrained himself. Only a brutish leader resorted to violence; he was an intelligent leader.

That's right, intelligent!

He coughed lightly and turned to An Biru. "We've enlisted an exceptional Alchemist! We'll win without a doubt." The confidence in his voice was incredible, nearly influencing everyone in the room that victory was assured. However, when they recalled all these events, their expressions turned dark.

At this moment, the door to the hall was pushed open by the wind. This wind carried with it a strand of spiritual force that transmitted messages to all those within the room. All of their expressions became gloomy and dusky, as if night had drowned their faces. An Ge in particular clenched his teeth.

It said:

"Blood Titan Square, two hours! Little Ge, thank you for the gift in advance."

This was obviously sent by the Chen Clan's Matriarch!

It was starting!

Chapter 209 - 207: Breathtaking Beauty

Blood Titan Square was a vast venue, open-field with a two-foot high platform that extended for fifty meters. The square itself was surrounded by various buildings that acted as areas for seating and viewing. The flat open square area itself spanned for two hundred acres, or nearly eight hundred thousand square meters. Normally, the square wouldn't be filled to capacity, with only a few battles or plays performed on the platform.

However, today, it was filled to the brim. The buildings that towered for hundreds of meters with various viewing areas and seating arrangements were also occupied to the maximum. There were even some who were standing on the shoulders of their spouses or parents. It was incredibly lively as concessions were even sold.

Various individuals garbed in uniform were making rounds, levitating through the air seeking customers. When someone wanted something, a shout and a toss later, a bag filled with all sorts of candies, beverages, and entertainment food. Each of these individuals had the clan insignia for the Chen Clan on their backs or shoulders.

They were profiting immensely from this event. In fact, over the course of several weeks, the Chen Clan has publicized this All-Alchemic Challenge to all three major and even numerous minor cities. It's

entirely possible that there were members of the Ruling Clan of the Xue Country to be in various VIP areas, being waited on until the start of this event.

At a certain area within the square, a luxurious tent was set up, and it was large enough to be regarded as a mansion. It stood proud with the insignia for the Chen Clan levitating above it, large enough to be seen by all those viewing from the buildings on ground. Countless gazes were drawn to it, and reverence and respect flashed without fail.

At this time, a figure walked into the square. With his silver eyes, tall, well-proportioned figure, and distinctively remarkable countenance, he was met with all sorts of stares and gaped mouths. *'This place is crowded.'* His thoughts were quite casual as he walked through the mass of bodies that were somewhat clustered.

Fortunately, there were clear roads of travel, so arriving at one allowed one to push further into the square. *'At least it's organized.'* Despite its crowded appearance, there was no issue with movement. He had it rather easy as long as he didn't try to plow through the various bodies.

He looked at the buildings that contained numerous life auras. *'All of this for an All-Alchemic Clash? This must be quite important.'* It was rare to see such a gathering without reason. Either those involved were important or the event itself had a high viewing factor with countless wanting to witness history.

After a while, his curiosity got the better of him as he asked an excited young man.

"What? You don't know?! No way! You really don't? I can't believe it!" The young man was quite wordy, but in the end, he explained what Wei Wuyin wanted to know. The Chen Clan and the An Clan had an exceptional wager in place against their top-tier alchemists. Normally, the An Clan would be a given win because they had the most skilled alchemists, but the Chen Clan had made everything topsy turvy as they snatched the alchemist away!

This made the event an undecided clash! Especially considering that the An Clan was betting fifty-percent of everything they owned in this challenge, and it was said their patriarch had sworn a Spirit Oath regarding this challenge. If they lose, they would truly lose everything without recourse except war!

Because if they went against that oath, they'll lose their only Astral Core Realm expert! If that happened, wouldn't they decline into the abyss! The stakes were real, so everyone wanted to witness this moment of history. It could be the possible downfall of a major clan!

Wei Wuyin was mildly amused. However, this was truly a minor event to him. After a few more questions, he learned that the former top-tier alchemist of Blood Titan City, which originally belonged to the An Clan, was representing the Chen Clan. This made everyone even more excited!

If they knew that Wei Wuyin, the widely-acclaimed Prince of Everlore, had casually decided to represent the An Clan, who knew what they would do? He shook his head slightly. He felt even less excited to participate when he learned the skill level of that so-called top-tier alchemist...

Lord Alchemist!

That's right!

The top-tier alchemist of the Blood Titan City wasn't even a King Alchemist. In hindsight, this made sense. After all, there were less than three hundred King Alchemists within the entire Myriad Monarch Astral Territory. With their value, they were likely cultivating in the Myriad Monarch Planet or the other two main planets, not a lowly continent like this, let alone in one of its main cities.

He sighed. For a moment, he thought whether there was any point in this, and his idle desire to participate in an All-Alchemic Clash vanished. If there was some hint of a challenge, he would love it. However, sixth-grade products?!

In the Myriad Yore Continent, he had learned a concoction method called the Earthly Nine Concoction Method. It was normally a strenuous and extremely exhausting method that allowed the rapid creation of alchemical products, allowing one to concoct nine portions in the time it took to make one.

The Nine into One Qi Control was one of the few things tested in the Myriad Nascent Dao Tower's Examination, but it was simplified considerably. The Earthly Nine Concoction Method grasped this type of control and matched it with Alchemic Qi. However, in the Myriad Monarch Sect, there was a Thirty-Three Heavenly Concoction Method. With it, a person splits their Alchemic Qi or Alchemic Force into thirty-three, allowing for thirty-three products in the time it took for one.

It was an extreme method.

Very few could ever hope to practice it, let alone obtain mastery, but Wei Wuyin had done so easily. His Celestial Eyes, mental energies, and physical energies allowed him to handle the extremely exhausting action. Furthermore, it normally took him a few minutes to concoct a single sixth-grade product, and that was prior to obtaining Alchemic Force.

With it, he could concoct thirty-three sixth-grade, peak-tier products in a few minutes, likely a few seconds now. This competition truly lost its meaning the moment he set foot into it.

"Well, Zuhei and Su Mei haven't found her yet, so I guess I'll just use this to pass the time." Wei Wuyin scratched his chin with disinterested eyes roaming about casually. Considering their target, it could take months to fi...

His eyes screeched to an abrupt halt.

Those eyes of his caught sight and latched heavily onto a figure within a particular building. It belonged to a human, and an exquisite one at that.

Her long, straight hair was like a cascading waterfall of night. It perfectly framed her tear-drop shaped face, revealing her thin s-shaped brows, those hazel eyes with flecks of navy blue, long lashes, and double-lobed full lips that seemed as soft and delicious as the sweetest cake. Those features paired with her rich caramel skin was absolutely perfect.

That willowy bodily frame of hers supported a large set of perky, curvy breasts that made one's hands feel inadequate. Her captivatingly alluring curves were exquisitely superb, tantalizing to the sights. Despite its devilishly-tempting sculpted form, she emanated a pristine and refined aura that made one appreciate, not immediately lust after. This was a true nation-toppling beauty! Even when he compared all the beauties before, only Qing Qiumu and Na Xinyi could compare.

His eyes brightened considerably.

Wei Wuyin's steps halted entirely.

He hadn't had his breath taken away before, but today, it certainly happened. However, he didn't act on impulse. Instead, he started to frown deeply as he focused on that specific area. With his Celestial Eyes, he could see other individuals besides this woman and they donned official, imperial clothing, and insignias. It was very reminiscent of princesses and princes of the Wu Country with slight differences.

After a short series of successive thoughts, his lips lifted into an exceptionally confident grin.

Just as he was immersed in his own thoughts, a large shadow eclipsed the bright sun as a flying beast floated above the square.

"Look! It's the An Clan!"

"It is! It's about to start!"

The crowd went into an uproar, excited to see and witness this event. Either it'll be completely one-sided or intense, but regardless of which, it would definitely be entertaining watching the two overlords of Blood Titan City duke it out!

Chapter 210 - 208: Who Are You?

The new arrivals instigated an outpour of cheers, exclamations, and heated discussion amongst the crowd. Wei Wuyin felt his body visibly shake from the sheer soundwaves produced by the crowd. It was quite infectious, stimulating his heart to feel tingling excitement. Was this how it felt to be a part of the greater crowd? This feeling was fairly novel, even slightly addictive.

"They're riding the Shadow-Bright Hawk! How incredible! I heard it was invincible beneath the Astral Core Realm amongst beasts; furthermore, it's very close to evolving and becoming a Star Beast!"

"I heard the An Clan had already lost twenty-percent of their territory! Now, they're fighting to reclaim what they lost, forced to wager fifty-percent more! If they lose this match, wouldn't they enter a period of decline?"

"I wonder if An Biru will arrive! As one of the top ten beauties of the Blood Titan City, I truly want to see if her looks make the cut!"

The conversations were diverse, speaking about all sorts of topics that livened the atmosphere. Wei Wuyin lifted his eyes and saw the dark-colored hawk with silver stripes on its wings. Its wingspan wasn't much, merely forty meters. However, upon its broad back was nearly a hundred people.

These were all the experts and upper-echelon of the An Clan's, and the fact that they arrived alongside the An Clan's patriarch had instigated an even greater uproar. This was clearly a desperate showing of strength, as if trying to warn the Chen Clan not to take things too far.

Shaking his head within his heart, Wei Wuyin decided to handle this matter and determine his next set of actions. With a swipe of his fingers across his face, a black mask appeared. It was featureless without lips, nose, or eyes. It was marked with a single character at its top that read: 'Ascendant'.

He hid away his identity for a bit, and it wasn't just for the sake of remaining incognito. It was because those knowledgeable would definitely recognize him if he arrived in person and exposed him. After all,

all it took is one person and one speculation. If that happened, how could he participate in this clash? In fact, the result would be constant fawning.

He was a Heavenly King and an Alchemic King, so how could that not happen within the society of a continent? It would happen even in the sect where experts gathered en masse. To avoid that, he had no issue concealing his identity.

With that, he slowly weaved through the crowd.

The Shadow-Bright Hawk landed on an opening, causing surging winds and piercing cry to sweep the surroundings. The An Clan patriarch stepped off first, allowing his body to gain the most attention. With a brief exertion of his aura, he awed the crowd.

A true Astral Core Realm cultivator!

The other members followed along and left the back of the hawk, trailing behind the powerful and confident steps of An Ge, their patriarch! They walked onto the stage, immediately becoming center stage of the event. Their auras quietly roiled about, releasing an innate prestige and sensation of high-born. While some couldn't help but feel a sense of oppression and reverence for the strong, others sneered in their hearts at this fraudulently confident showing.

Wasn't this just them arriving strong but having to leave weak? However, An Ge wasn't known as the worst patriarch in the entire history of the An Clan without warrant! This entire display was his attempt at grasping some momentum, and the others simply had to follow along.

An Ge swept his gaze towards the Chen Clan's tent before saying to An Biru, "Are you sure this alchemist will arrive?" Since he learned of their encounter with Wei Wuyin, including his monstrous strength and ownership of the pegasus, he felt that the expert was a Myriad Monarch Sect elder who arrived via Void Gate.

He decided to fake it until he made it. Be arrogant until the very end, and perhaps this type of personality inevitably led to the current predicament with the Chen Clan. It was a wonder how he could even assail the Astral Core Realm to many. While he wasn't fully incompetent, he lacked the bearing and intelligence of a leader. It seemed all his points were invested in talent and not enough in intelligence.

An Biru firmly nodded her pretty head, but her eyes revealed a wisp of anxiety that betrayed her confidence. While Wei Wuyin had said he would help, a verbal promise without a proper oath could renege on a whim. This caused her sleepless nights for the last two days. After all, they had no other option available to them besides sending out the remaining alchemist and praying to the God of Luck.

Woosh! The flap of the Chen Clan's tent was pushed open as several figures exited. Seeing these figures, An Ge glanced over, and his eyes flashed with a brief light of rage and hatred. There were two individuals that were the target of his animosity.

The first was the Chen Clan's Matriarch, Chen Xiaowei. She looked to be in her late twenties and was quite a beauty. She had short-styled black hair and a slim physique. While her endowments weren't exceptional, she had a gorgeous face that was particularly alluring. This was especially with her lips that seemed to be in a perpetual smirk. She exuded boundless confidence and pride that few women had.

The other was Yun Daotian. He had a set of snake-like golden eyes, sharp and particular, with a long nose and sharp chin. He was obviously a beastman, and from the faint greenish scales on his cheeks, he originated from serpents. He was once regarded as the best Alchemist of Blood Titan City.

He had a smugness within his uplifted lips with a hint of schadenfreude, and it caused An Ge to wish to slap this shameless, honorless fool to death with a single move. Unfortunately, with Chen Xiaowei standing beside him, his actions would be definitely nullified. However, it didn't stop him from sending glares of death his way.

Yun Daotian chuckled at this. The Chen Clan also had elites, but not nearly as many as the An Clan. Despite that, their momentum wasn't a single iota lacking in comparison as they walked towards the central platform and arrived.

Chen Xiaowei smiled, her eyes a little coy as she waltzed upwards towards An Ge. An Ge didn't back down, walking to meet her. The two Astral Core Realms got into close proximity and a few shouted in rampant excitement, wanting a clash of epic proportions to occur!

Unfortunately for some, they just talked.

"I didn't think you'd come. How unfortunate." Chen Xiaowei said.

"Hmph! Unfortunate? Seems like someone's scared." An Ge didn't show a hint of weakness.

But Chen Xiaowei merely shook her head. "You misunderstood me. It's unfortunate that you decided to come and show everyone how incompetent you are as a leader." After she said those words, she grinned. Then followed up before An Ge could speak with a spiritual transmission, "After all, this is all your fault; done all for the sake of a little taste of this peach of mine."

An Ge froze. His memories of the past that he had repressed had resurfaced, and his anger flared trying to contain his embarrassment. While those words were said via spiritual transmission, if word truly were to spread of this, wouldn't he be regarded as an idiot for life?

All because he wanted to spend a night with Chen Xiaowei, he bet a mine at first. It seemed harmless, right? It was merely a minor mine, and if he lost, so what? If we won? Would he not be rewarded with dual cultivating with a fellow Astral Core Realm expert and a beauty at that? They were exceptionally rare as is. But his innate desire and manly pride led to consecutive losses.

Boom!

His aura erupted! The astral force within him was stimulated as surged his pressure towards Chen Xiaowei. However, she similarly released her aura that wasn't the slightest bit weaker as they ferociously smashed against each other causing the wind to become chaos, the clouds to churn, and the ground to quake!

This was Astral Core Realm experts!

The entire crowd below stifled, as if they were caught up in an explosive shockwave, and their lungs could barely gasp for air. It was horrific, fear entering the eyes of everyone present!

Due to the scarcity of Astral Core Realm experts, very few knew of their innate power, and this was especially so for the majority of the crowd. They controlled astral force! A single strand could obliterate

an entire mountain! It wasn't an exaggeration, and this was the weakest strand at that. A true fight would devastate a fragile landmass like a continent.

"Enough!" A voice descended, causing the world to quake and the forceful pressure generated by their clash to be negated by a worldly pressure! This was a Sky Ruler Phase expert! With a mere utterance of a word, both of their auras were rendered nullified.

Chen Xiaowei and An Ge's expressions changed as they felt the oppressive worldly force circulate around them threateningly. They ceased their clash, bringing an end to a nearly catastrophic event.

Shockingly, this person wasn't even here.

Wei Wuyin lifted his eyes to the sky. This voice belonged to the guardian of the Bloodforge Continent. To prevent Astral Core Realm experts from needlessly slaughtering or causing immense destruction, they assigned a Third Stage Astral Core Realm expert to monitor to situation.

It was true that those at this level could cause irreparable or total destruction to the continent, but their Soul Idol meant their spiritual sense was powerful enough to observe the entire continent passively.

Of course, this guardian was already on his payroll.

He finally arrived near the stage and climbed up onto it via the stairs. When he arrived, countless gazes shifted to him as he stood out wearing a black mask with no face. Besides the 'Ascendant' character, there was no other indication of his identity.

Chen Xiaowei and An Ge glanced over and simultaneously asked, "Who are you?" They glanced at each other and then turned back to Wei Wuyin. They couldn't sense his cultivation level, but their instincts told them he was incredibly dangerous. Furthermore, that mask seemed to be created from solidified spiritual force that blocked all their perceptions.

Wei Wuyin didn't disguise his voice, "I'm here to participate in the All-Alchemic Clash. Shall we begin?"