

Chapter 301 - 298: G.S.T, End Of Light

The second trial had, far from anyone's expectations, met an unforeseen conclusion for many. The Trial of Light that tested the capabilities, preparations, and foresight of the young and vibrant elite participants was met with an overwhelming force: Wei Wuyin. He had explosively arrived and, albeit indirectly, caused the swift elimination of over sixty percent of contestants.

The hopes, dreams, and beliefs of the various forces living within the Tri-Vision Starfield had been met with a dark wall of incredible despair and unexpected misfortune. Unfortunately, these frightening surges of negative emotions could only be built-up and released in silent whispers and self-contained curses as the resounding reputation behind the one responsible only swelled as a result, making it impossible to retaliate.

The Prince of Everlore.

In the homes and abodes of many, those who weren't nearly as invested or had anything riding on this competition just thought, in some form or another: "What did you expect? He's the Prince of Everlore, tch!"

The circulation of this spontaneous thought was not widely spread by conversation through various channels but birthed from the events in people's mind of their own will, because it was 'only natural'.

This was heavily influenced by the unprecedented magnificence of the King of Everlore. A figure renowned as a benevolent sage so great, so exceptional, that he defined three eras since his birth. If a 'little' trial like this wasn't dealt with utter ease by his potential successor, this would be laughable, no? Unbelievable, right? So of course it was natural; an event to be expected.

On Junia, a particular light pillar fluctuated like a mirage before abruptly shattering into bits of dazzling light. From these scattered fragments of light, a figure emerged.

"The formation trials are too difficult," the voice begrudgingly muttered. The figure looked at the scattered pieces of light that formed a relatively gorgeous array. Despite their beautiful appearance, these fragments that fluttered all around him felt reminiscent of human mockery. With clear discontent between his brows, he frowned.

Wei Wuyin felt as if he wanted to cry but had no tears. This particular trial was one that tested one's knowledge of Astral Formations, and it contained a puzzle that required one to solve by finding out the intrinsic properties of the formation. But, he had horrendously failed.

After entering the trial, he tried to solve this puzzle only to be lost like a child trying to solve world hunger. He had no idea where to even start or how to begin. If it wasn't for the trial ending, he might've been stuck in this trial, unable to leave without forceful means, forever. So his expression, no matter how good-looking he was, had turned a little ugly at this moment.

If anyone knew that he, the revered Prince of Everlore, had struggled on this particular pillar so fiercely, would he become a joke?

In truth, this couldn't be attributed to him being useless, but his time spent on this subject. While he was proficient in astral formations, arrays, and inscriptions to a certain extent, it was merely limited to surface-level knowledge, at the Qi level, or related to alchemy. In regards to knowledge of slaughter, illusion, trapping, or any other type of formation at the Astral level, he was relatively weak. Embarrassingly so.

With that said, he had already overcome dozens of other trials that ranged from combat to spiritual means.

"Haaa..." He sighed, analyzing and reflecting upon his recent failure. Accepting that, despite being extremely talented with a good head on his shoulders, having almost endless resources, he did not have endless time. Once more life reminded him that there were things in this world that required in-depth studying, practice, and experimentation to become skilled in. Not everything will come as naturally as his mastery of Alchemy.

In the end, he could only shrug off this unfortunate but acceptable reality with a bitter smile. With his Celestial Eyes and extremely powerful spiritual sense, he could perceive through most formations or arrays, attacking their weaknesses and shattering all obstacles, so he didn't want to refocus his attention on them nor could he.

He glanced at his right arm, his silver eyes flickered with a mysterious and unfathomable light.

Just as he was lost in his thoughts, he felt a heavy vibration from the tablet for the Grand Spirit Trials. Retrieving it, he realized there was now a black and white map of Junia's planetary landscape and a specific location that had been brightly highlighted in red.

The location for the third and final trial of the Grand Spirit Trials: the Trial of Combat.

Wei Wuyin felt somewhat relieved that the end was coming. While the trials themselves couldn't be considered long in relation to cultivator's average lifespans, it still cut into his plans to concoct alchemical products and prepare himself for the inevitable future. A future he hoped to see come into fruition.

He swiftly determined his current location and shortest route to take. Beneath him, the ground trembled. Above him, a black shadow loomed. And approaching him, a white tiger the size of a small mountain approached.

It had eyes that were extremely fierce and sharp, but as it arrived, those eyes revealed happiness and excitement. Wei Wuyin softly smiled, jumping upon the White-Blaze Tiger's large head and giving it a soft rub. With a soft roar filled with elation, it seemed to become invigorated and dashed off.

Since he 'tamed' these creatures, they've grown incredibly fond of him and he wasn't any different. Despite their originally fierce natures, it didn't take long before their relationships grew close. He provided them with infusions of his various energies, and alchemical products that brought a notable increase to their bodily strength and bloodlines. Not to mention, even their intelligence had experienced massive improvements since.

They, kings of their respective worlds, immediately became docile and friendly like domesticated pets. It seemed that even beasts knew who to cling to for food. Furthermore, they were originally captured and

taken away from their homes for this particular event. If saddling with Wei Wuyin allowed them to become stronger, or better, give them a taste of freedom once more, they seemed more than happy to accommodate.

As for Wei Wuyin, his original intentions of making these three beasts his personal Sky Palace guardians had been adjusted. That being said, they had already been taken from their homes long ago, so they would likely return to an entirely new environment if arbitrarily freed. So, he decided to allow them to become guardians of the entire Myriad Monarch Planet.

This plan might be a little extravagant, but beasts were theoretically easier to nurture than cultivators. They only required resources, a good environment, and specified care. There was no need for them to learn spells or arts, severely reducing the time needed to improve themselves. Perhaps one day, they could even become like Anu or mightier. While he might not have the ability to allow these beasts to reach such a profound level like Anu in his prime, he could certainly grow their strength to the Grand Sage level with a little elbow grease and a lot of products.

Moreover, they could roam the planet and mark out their own territory, rebuild their homes and families, all while freely receiving the reverence and respect of numerous cultivators.

Caw!

A crow's cry resounded above. Wei Wuyin looked upwards to see the Three-Eyed Tenebrous Crow soar in the air whilst doing various maneuvers, causing him to faintly smile. As he did, he couldn't help but recall a distinctive figure that was the exact opposite of the dark, dusky shape above. A white, proud, and enchanting figure that graced the sky as freely as the wind itself.

With the end of the Trial of Light, numerous figures that had properly made it to the next trial started to slowly emerge from their pillars of light or secluded and hidden cultivation locations. They were prepared for this final battle that will determine the ultimate winner of the Grand Spirit Trials.

In one of these secluded and hidden areas, a female figure slowly stood from her originally sitting position with a tablet in her hand. Her countenance was exceptional with a gorgeous shade of violet, while her figure was exceptionally well-endowed from top to bottom, and her height of nearly eight feet established her presence to most cultivators. A beauty of extraordinary flavor.

She swept her set of golden irises over the tablet and a flicker of dark, fierce emotion emerged from within. Her hands that were imbued with exceptional strength couldn't help but clench a little, nearly breaking the tablet. In the end, she relaxed her grip, saving her from the fate of being unwittingly eliminated.

"The time has finally come," she faintly whispered before leaving this hidden location, trekking towards the location specified on the tablet.

On a planet far, far away from Junia within the Tri-Vision Central Territory, and location of the San Clan's Imperial Palace, the ruler of this entire starfield, an indistinct figure cloaked by misty veil was watching a watery screen that revealed the Grand Spirit Trials events.

Their eyes were not to the screen, but looking upwards at the ceiling of the palace. A soft voice resounded that contained an inmate imperious domineer, "World Genesis Star Tribulation?"

Chapter 302 - 299: G.S.T, Gather

With the initiation of the third trial, the numerous elites that remained gathered their will and seethed with battle intent and confidence. They had made it past the Trial of Beasts and the Trial of Light in outstanding fashion, paving their way forward using their deep intellect and profound cultivation bases. While those eliminated could only depressingly wallow in their failure, accepting their fates with lonesome hearts.

As for the watchers, those spectators of this grand competition, they could only carry wry smiles and bitter expressions as they were fed prerecorded images and details regarding the participants and competition thus far. To those ignorant of the immense elimination rate, they were soon made devastatingly aware of a singular presence: Wei Wuyin.

With a reputation that already gave many pause, a filling sensation of reverence and expectation, he had revealed his extraordinary personal prowess and his subordinates' fantastical abilities. To many, the competition had been decided. Regardless of who, the Myriad Monarch Sect was bound to claim first place.

Now, the competition was less about who would win but how each remaining contestant would place in this final trial. In fact, even the betting had been amended by many stations, realizing the futility of the circumstances, they created new bets regarding how far each remaining individual would go before being eliminated. This was relatively well received by the many spectators. Especially the Myriad Monarch Sect's private betting arenas, they even allowed 50% of the previous bet to be withdrawn and added to another bet.

This was clearly a move made in jubilation by the sect elders and was met by a lot of respect and excitement. After all, many felt somewhat scammed after the ratios were released. Those in Wei Wuyin's entourage were widely unknown in regards to their abilities, and Wei Wuyin himself had a horrendous ratio of roughly a thousand to one odds for victory in spirit stones.

With this move, many felt that the Myriad Monarch Sect had some tact. This was much appreciated. But in truth, just the remaining earnings from the bets were sufficient to allow the Myriad Monarch Sect to thrive greatly for a century.

Unlike the Trial of Beast or the Trial of Light, the Trial of Combat was focused in a single location and was held in a similar manner as standard tournaments. It was a flat grassy plain that spanned several kilometers, with a white square stone platform that had a clear division of lines as if it was composed of a myriad of smaller squares. At each corner of the square platform were one diamond-shaped crystal object that stood at twenty meters, totaling four in all.

These diamonds shimmered with gorgeous rainbow light and seemed to emit an exceptionally mysterious aura. If one tried to peer into its depths, they might be beguiled by its rainbow shimmer and become lost for who knows how long. From time to time, they would flicker with crystalline lights that

seemed to manifest images in the air. These images ranged from individuals fighting to miraculous formations with exceptional detail.

For several kilometers, there was nothing but flat space, so each arrival was clearly revealed. But during this period, there were no chaotic fights. Instead, cultivators would arrive and analyze the platform before finding a location to settle themselves nearby. Many even cultivated, trying to better their mental and physical states.

Of course, any beasts that had been tamed were released. The tablet they wielded contained a set of rules including how this competition would proceed.

Firstly, the area prohibited beasts from entering unless they were registered at the beginning of the competition, a rule for beast masters. Secondly, until the official start of the competition, all conflict and battles were prohibited. Any attempt to do so was met with automatic disqualification of the offending party. Lastly, all points earned during the first two trials can be kept, allowed to be traded for resources or during this competition.

The last rule revealed that this tournament would definitely not be an ordinary competition, and perhaps the final victor might not be the strongest.

When Wei Wuyin first read the rules of the tournament, he frowned in surprise. He hadn't expected the rules to be so complex yet so simple. It was rather unexpected.

The format for the tournament was a free challenge. Any participant can enter the arena at will. When they do, they can receive free challenges from any participant of the same cultivation. This meant those at the Sky Ruler Phase can challenge those at the Sky Ruler Phase without restriction, and they'll fight until a victor is decided, either by surrender, death, or being spared by their opponent after unconsciousness.

Either way, the loser would lose a portion of their Spirit Points depending on the situation, which is given to the winner. When one loses all their Spirit Points, their tablet will shatter and they'll be ejected from the tournament, officially being eliminated.

As for those with higher cultivations that wish to challenge those with lower cultivations, they need to pay a specific amount of points depending on the level difference. If the challenged individual can match the number, the challenge is cancelled, and both parties lose points.

When Wei Wuyin first read this portion of the format, he felt it was incredibly sinister yet frighteningly intelligent. Those who were weaker had it easier in earning points, so they can directly avoid challenges. Furthermore, the one with higher cultivation had to risk this. If they used their points in an ill-manner, lacking foresight, they could be eliminated or lose their qualifications to win the championship.

This was because those with higher cultivation bases would have to challenge those of lower cultivations, it was inevitable; otherwise, they would certainly lose.

As for lower cultivators challenging higher cultivators, it was slightly different. Not only could the lower phase cultivator freely challenge those above their cultivation by name, a direct challenge, it can also not be refused by the challenged. If the higher cultivator loses, all their points are transferred to the lower cultivator and they are decisively eliminated.

While this might at first seem like a huge advantage to lower phase cultivators, this wasn't the case. Because those of a higher cultivation had an advantage that could not be overcome: their cultivation base. These rules were clearly implemented to balance out the playing field, giving those of weaker cultivation an avenue of victory while also massively rewarding those of outstanding talent and combat prowess.

The victor was decided by three ways:

1. Going unchallenged for one hour.
2. Winning ten battles in a row.
3. Reaching 10,000 Spirit Points.

Because of the passive position those who wished to be challenged had to take, it made the entire situation incredibly interesting, especially in Wei Wuyin's eyes.

If Wei Wuyin knew that the moment these rules were made clear to the spectators, how many groans of agony resounded, how many looks of despair, and bitter smiles were made due to him, he might find it hard to not smile. As a cultivator at the Sky Ruler Phase, he had a strength that rivaled, maybe even exceeded, the Fourth Stage of the Astral Core Realm. It was quite disheartening to those spectators.

Furthermore, in terms of points, he was in the top five! MOREOVER, the two experts that had the highest chance of toppling him were his own subordinates!! Their cultivation bases were even higher than his own. In the betting arenas, the Sky Ruler win-rates and number of possible victories were depressingly low.

When Wei Wuyin arrived at the location, he was gracefully flying through the sky in a relaxed manner. His expression was calm as he seemed preoccupied with his thoughts.

Wei Wuyin's spiritual sense was in constant contact with Wu Yu, "Wu Yu, will Long Chen reveal his identity?" Wei Wuyin had his suspicions regarding this, but it was entirely possible to occur after the trials. After suffering such a massive loss, losing his greatest support, he still had his identity.

Although it wouldn't be troublesome to Wei Wuyin if it was revealed, he felt a little disdain in his heart if it did happen. Because he found it somewhat funny, he couldn't help but ask.

"..." Wu Yu was silent for a moment. From the short period of silence, Wei Wuyin knew that Wu Yu likely instructed Long Chen in some way. In fact, the main reason he asked was because he didn't believe that this carefully chosen lineage candidate of Wu Yu's was going to just be abandoned by the side of the road.

While Tuo Bihan had informed him that the way of the Grand Monarch was one that tested one's potential and innate aptitude through struggles and challenges, which was why none of the Grand Imperial Sages actively sought to solidify Long Chen's position, only protecting him from the shadows, he also said that if Long Chen revealed himself that they would be obligated to be more active in his nurturing.

From what he could gather, Wu Yu wanted to keep his identity a secret, a way to temper Long Chen on the path of adversity. But with him now shifting to his side, this might no longer apply.

Wu Yu asked a question instead of answering, "If he doesn't have the full support of the Myriad Monarch Sect, do you think he could reach his fullest potential, to become a Grand Monarch, without me?"

Wei Wuyin didn't frown or feel displeased by this question. This question wasn't about reaching his fullest potential but whether he could contest against him. "You know what my intentions are, right?" Wei Wuyin responded too with a question.

"I do," Wu Yu answered.

A moment of silence was born before Wei Wuyin inevitably sighed.

"I have no intention of robbing Long Chen of his chance to fulfill his destiny, and while you might be able to contest that destiny, I'll not actively move to hinder either of you." Wu Yu's words were filled with a imperious conviction befitting an existence that once birthed a star.

Wei Wuyin didn't respond. Instead, he arrived at the platform and landed near. His eyes were immediately attracted by the rainbow-colored crystals. Their beauty was quite breathtaking, and his silver eyes reflected the rainbow shimmers.

Just as he was about to investigate their origins, his heart trembled. He turned his head and his eyes widened slightly at a newly arriving figure.

Chapter 303 - 300: G.S.T, Da Shan

"Is that...?" Wei Wuyin's heart sped up slightly. Coming from the east was a tall womanly figure with a buxom and voluptuous physique, accompanied by light-violet skin and long violet hair. Each strand of her hair was like velvety silk. Wei Wuyin couldn't be more familiar with this woman, having touched and squeezed almost every inch of her exquisite skin.

"Da Shan?" She was a hybrid demon of the Myriad Monarch Sect that was born from a Violet Mountain Demon that had gained a soul, then gained human form and the ability to reproduce. To which it used fully with a human that possessed a unique titan bloodline.

After recognizing this figure, he couldn't help but feel startled. When they arrived via the teleportation formation, he hadn't seen her. Also, a few months ago, she had informed him that she didn't have any intention of participating in the Grand Spirit Trials.

'Wait. She only said that before the Grand Spirit Trials was established; she didn't wish to participate in the Monarch Spirit Trials.' His memory was swiftly reminded of the timeline of their interaction. Considering her fierce competitive spirit, it was entirely possible she had decided to test her mettle against the other elites of the starfield.

Thinking this, he smiled lightly with a touch of warmth.

She seemed to have not noticed him, so he was about to approach her, but his steps were halted. He realized that her aura was somewhat off. He frowned slightly, turning towards a direction with a sharp movement. His frown became deeper. In the end, he didn't approach.

Just as he decided this, he felt a gaze on him, causing him to turn his head once more towards Da Shan to notice her golden irises staring at him. Her gorgeous countenance was flushed with shock. But this

was momentary as she wore a dark expression and turned away, finding a relatively isolated corner and quietly closing her eyes in meditation.

Wei Wuyin wasn't put off by this, but couldn't help but sigh softly. Just as this sigh left his lips, a dark light sped into existence from afar. In mere moments, it arrived at his side.

Su Mei's stable posture and quiet gaze was fixed on his figure, already standing slightly behind Wei Wuyin like a subordinate. She was clearly expressing her stance in regards to this event. She wasn't here to participate for a challenge, merely here for Wei Wuyin. Not for his protection, but to enact his will. That being said, a faint blazing spirit was hidden within those black depths of her pupils.

"Lord Wei," she announced herself.

Wei Wuyin acknowledged her with a nod.

Zuhei had already arrived, but his stance was different. He sat quietly in a similar manner as Da Shan and others, meditating to maximize his mental state. While Su Mei didn't wish to actively participate, as someone who comprehended Battle and Slaughter Intent, how could Zuhei's state of mind be the same? He clearly intended to fight to his fullest, even if it was against Wei Wuyin.

In truth, Wei Wuyin admired this part of Zuhei. It was why he decided to make him his claws, his fangs, and his soldier. A good general understood how to use his subordinates, but a great subordinate fashioned his own subordinates. He wasn't one that enjoyed indulging in continuous battle unless necessary, and Zuhei could handle all his insignificant issues.

Even Ying, his shadow, had his specific purpose. So did Su Mei. Each had their own purpose, personality, and goal in life.

"Wei Wuyin!" A soft, warm, and serene voice sounded. Wei Wuyin turned and noticed Qing Qiumu walking towards him with a smile and bright eyes. Pure elation was clearly reflected in those emerald eyes of hers, including her cultivation base that had clearly been elevated by a phase. The ambient mana surrounding her stirred slightly, a sigh of a Sky Ruler.

As she walked forward, Wei Wuyin's Celestial Eyes noticed the mana within the short grass and nearby trees seemed to be gathering around her in subservience and reverence. It was nearly the same as his own Zenith Origin State's mama reaction, but it was far, far too little, being limited to only mana that had been affected by the greenery and wood energies.

He waved with a bright smile.

"Thank y-" The moment she got close enough, her first words were about to be thanks, but she halted herself midway. She recalled their recent interaction, her smile growing even more brilliant.

The saying of her mother rang true: "In a true relationship, the most unnatural thing to say is 'thank you'." It seems her words were true.

Therefore, she changed her words and stated proudly, "I've ascended to the Second Phase!"

Wei Wuyin pouted slightly, looking her up and down with a hand to his chin. This caused Qing Qiumu to freeze, wondering if his products that helped her strengthen her foundation had side-effects she was unaware of. That expression of his was quite worrying.

In the end, Wei Wuyin released an exaggerated and dejected sigh. This sigh seemed to contain untold woes. Even Su Mei frowned, unable to ascertain why he would do such a thing. Her pure, deep eyes traced Qing Qiumu.

Witnessing this, Qing Qiumu felt as if something was wrong and was about to ask when Wei Wuyin said with a slight stomp: "At this rate, everyone I know is going to surpass me in cultivation." As Wei Wuyin lamented on this, he couldn't help but release another sigh. Regardless if it was Su Mei, Da Shan, or the various Blessed he had met, excluding Long Chen, they were all quicker than him in cultivation progression. Even Qing Qiumu was at his level, all while being younger than him.

This caused Qing Qiumu to start. Realizing what he meant, her unease turned into a warm and gleeful laugh that could soothe the hearts of many. But that laugh was like a needle to his heart. Others might not be able to tell, but she was gloating at her success.

"Okay, okay. Little Miss Genius, congratulations." His words were said with a slight defeated tone but anyone could tell he truly meant it, revealing a smile of genius happiness. This pleased Qing Qiumu as she puffed out her ample chest and said, "If you need tips on your cultivation, don't hesitate to ask!"

Wei Wuyin bitterly smiled. "We're still at the same cultivation level, you know."

"Ack...right..." Qing Qiumu softly said in embarrassment. While she was younger than Wei Wuyin, technically being ahead of him in terms of speed, it wasn't a perfect representation of their strengths. After all, Wei Wuyin could defeat three Gold Starred Beasts into submission. This was a feat she, who was a wood cultivator, couldn't do even if she tried her hardest.

At this moment, another figure arrived. His eyes were somewhat murky, and his expression was indifferent and emanated a calm. But this was disturbed as he set foot in the area of the tournament, scouring the field, and noticing Wei Wuyin and Qing Qiumu joking and chatting with extreme familiarity. A ravenous fire burned fiercely within his heart and he clenched his fists.

Feeling a hostile gaze, Wei Wuyin turned to see this figure. It was Long Chen. His cultivation base had risen as well, entering the Sky Ruler Phase. Furthermore, the ambient mana around him was exceptionally orderly and calm, resonating with his every breath and movement. His eyes narrowed slightly as he noticed these features were very similar to his Zenith Origin State mana control.

'This has to be a unique trait of the Imperial Heaven Qi Method. According to the records, it gives the Astral Soul an extreme degree of control, like a true Monarch, in terms of energies and mana.'

Wei Wuyin recalled the information he had read about it. He knew that the Imperial Heaven Qi Method was extremely special, in a way that was extremely overbearing and mysterious. After all, it could not be cultivated unless someone who cultivated it to a certain level passed it on.

This meant that the requirements for it were likely very strict and harsh, perhaps even requiring a unique treasure or item that predecessors had to refine.

Regardless of its limits of entry, it was definitely a method that was extraordinary beyond belief and worth cultivating. This was why he intended to have someone within the Ascendants cultivate this method.

As he was lost in thought, Qing Qiumu turned and noticed Long Chen. She froze for a moment, the thoughts in her mind were unknown but her eyes flickered with brilliance. Sighing softly in her heart, she said: "I'm going to check on Long Chen." While she said this, her tone contained something odd about it.

Even Wei Wuyin and Su Mei noticed this. Wei Wuyin realized why and smiled, "Alright. We'll talk later."

Turning her head back to him, she smiled a smile so gorgeously brilliant that Wei Wuyin felt his heart race for a moment, and she flew off towards Long Chen.

Su Mei waited for her to be out of earshot before saying, "Shall I kill him?"

Wei Wuyin didn't respond immediately. He turned away from Long Chen and focused on a man in the corner garbed in white robes. A flash of light flitted through his silver eyes before he shook his head, "That is Da Shan's battle. Not ours to interfere in."

Su Mei nodded.

That man felt as if a shadowy gloom had been casted over his body, lifting his gaze to search about as his instincts flared and soon calmed down. An overwhelming sensation of imminent crisis flashed within the depths of heart.

Wei Wuyin ignored that man's reaction. Su Mei's words weren't towards Long Chen, clearly knowing Wei Wuyin's own opinion towards Long Chen, but directed at that man in pristine white robes.

At this time, the final character of note in Wei Wuyin's book arrived. Zuhei's eyes opened, and she directed it at this figure for a moment before going silent.

He carried a spear with him. A nine-colored dot was placed elegantly between his brow, and he emitted an aura of extreme confidence. It was the Blessed of the Elemental Heaven Pavilion!

The battle to determine the victor was about to begin!

Chapter 304 - 301: G.S.T, Going First

All the spectators viewing the Grand Spirit Trials, be it the old foxes or hot-blooded youths, felt their blood flow start to accelerate and their hearts to wildly pound. This was the moment that many were waiting for with bated breaths. For some, it was to see the extent of Wei Wuyin's abilities. For others, it was to spectate some truly tantalizing battles that were rarely witnessed within the world.

Due to the severely limited number of Astral Core Realm cultivators in relation to other cultivators, this degree of battle was something that was typically only witnessed in times of war. And during those times, who had the luxury to record? The luxury to patiently observe while their little lives were at risk?

But now all that was recorded was a small fee, and they had clear access to the utmost youthful elites of a generation with profound cultivation bases ready to intensely clash with vigor and blazing fervor. It was a moment that would go down in history! Regardless of the results.

Within the numerous abodes directly above Junia, those elders, sect leaders, association masters, and teachers of these elites felt somewhat different, except a unique few. While most outside were thriving

incessantly with expectations, these true experts understood one crucial fact: Wei Wuyin's cultivation base.

They had reviewed the clip of him dealing with three Gold Starred Beast with exceptional ease, revealing his Astral Core that was a full centimeter in diameter, and his brief clash with Zuhei. This footage dispersed their tension, feeling as if the end result had already been determined. Most were just resting, waiting for the inevitable end. The suspense simply wasn't there in their hearts.

Qin Rui stood alongside Yao Zhen and Ji Changkong. Behind them were their disciples and descendants, including Shudao and Yao Wei. Their expressions were slightly unsightly at the moment. They had both been eliminated by Zuhei and Su Mei's rampage. Despite being filled with regret and an ill-mood, they could only sigh in helplessness. If it was anyone else, perhaps they could find an avenue to get revenge or one-up their opponent in the future, but it was Zuhei and Su Mei—Wei Wuyin's subordinates.

Regardless if it was in terms of resources, backing, or potential, they were likely matched or totally outclassed. How could they hope to rival these experts with the full backing of an Emperor Alchemist? Furthermore, he was exceptionally and frighteningly young.

Even if they wanted to act out, they could only sit down due to Wei Wuyin's own personal strength and status. It probably wouldn't be a stretch to say that if they wanted to make a move, Ji Changkong and Yao Zhen would properly settle them before anything came about.

They hadn't even consoled them when they were eliminated, only giving them some perfunctory words before discussing other things as if their elimination was irrelevant. In the beginning, they didn't understand this attitude until they saw Wei Wuyin's fights.

They had the same cultivation base as Wei Wuyin.

Yet...

They completely understood.

An Emperor Alchemist, a peak-tier demonic genius with heaven-defying foundation, and less than fifty years of age. They, who were above a century and even nearing two, were completely and entirely defeated. If the gap between two people were too big, envy was very difficult to be birthed in one's heart, only reverence and respect. And the gap between them was too big.

"It's starting!" The all-too-familiar elder that had kept Wei Wuyin's existence in mind since the beginning, with a near fanatical expression on his face, exclaimed with unfettered excitement. His words were loud enough to cause the hearts of everyone present, elder, disciple, or sage to throb. Unlike some who were dejected, they were filled with pride and excitement. This emotional response was only brought further beyond the norm when they recalled the wager by the first-tier forces.

The tablets of all the participants started to vibrate. The map on its surface started to shift and change, becoming rows of text. Wei Wuyin withdrew his tablet and inspected it.

Myriad Monarch Participant.

Sky Ruler Cultivation.

Spirit Points: 3205.

-

of Continuous Victories: 0.

Below this familiar text was the complete set of rules, including the special circumstances of stronger cultivators facing weaker cultivators. Firstly, when two cultivators of equivalent cultivation were to fight, the loser would lose 50 Spirit Points. If they reach zero, their tablet will break and they'll be transported out—Dead or Alive.

It also stated that if a Sky Ruler cultivator wished to challenge a World Sea cultivator, one must pay 100 or all of their remaining Spirit Points. If the World Sea cultivator can pay the same amount, they can avoid the battle, cancelling the match. Of course, this can be done numerous times.

The only issue was the difficulty for higher phase cultivators in earning points in the Trial of Beasts and Trial Light, meaning most might only have a 100 or less. So if they were matched, they would be eliminated right then and there. So it was best to fight against those of equal cultivation, earning enough points.

But what was tricky was two of the win conditions. To win ten matches consistently was unrealistic, especially considering a fight against equal cultivation was bound to be difficult, and to go unchallenged for an hour. This was definitely not a sprint, but a marathon if one used a little of their intellect. In fact, it might be impossible to win.

If carefully thought about, lower ranked cultivators can challenge higher ranked cultivators freely, so they could challenge and surrender, stalling enough for other cultivators to regain their energies after a fierce fight.

When Wei Wuyin noticed this, he turned towards the battle platform and frowned. While it might seem like a loophole, anyone who thinks that is likely an idiot. The first person to try would likely suffer somehow. As he read the rules, there was nothing that jumped out at the punishment for such thinking, but knowing the Myriad Monarch Sect's modus operandi, it definitely wouldn't be so easy.

As for his points, he knew that the majority of it(1,500) was gained from his suppression of his three Gold Starred Beasts. The other was from their elimination spree during the Trial of Light and from the pillar of light trials. For him to have gained so much meant he had a shocking advantage.

It was this rule that caused those above to wallow in despair and helplessness. If a weaker cultivator eliminates a stronger cultivator in a challenge, they receive the entirety of their points. Not a 100. The goal of reaching 10,000 might be completed within a few fights.

In fact, if he were to take Zuhei and Su Mei's points altogether, they would add up to above 10,000. It was quite an unprecedented and unpredictable circumstance. It nearly felt rigged.

Of course he wouldn't do such a thing, especially since this was a venue where Su Mei and Zuhei could hone their cultivation and combat instincts through fighting strong, talented, and vibrant elites. Due to the severely limited five million Astral Core Realm cultivators in a starfield of tens of trillions, one can only imagine the deficit of challengers.

Excluding war, having a hot-blooded fight with everything on the line was only possible here. After all, even death was possible.

As for those at the Soul Idol Phase? It wouldn't be a stretch to say there were less than a hundred thousand in the starfield, including those beyond their cultivation level.

BOOSH!

Abruptly, four pillars of crystalline light shot from the diamonds at the edge of the platform. It shot into the sky in a radiant glow of a myriad colors, officially starting the Trial of Combat. The eyes of everyone in meditation had fully opened, their bodies, minds, and spirits were brimming with intensity.

A voice sounded like a divinity from the sky, "Let the Trial of Combat officially commence! Step forward, and face the challenges of your peers! Good luck, rulers of our future!" The deep and astonishingly powerful voice rumbled the blood of everyone present, their bodies feeling restless as their spirits were fiercely roused.

Zuhei's scarlet eyes flared with an exceptionally sharp and piercing light, radiating intense battle intent! He clearly felt the Battle Aura that originated from Battle Intent permeate with the voice as an origin. It roused the burning flames and egos of each and everyone of them.

Wei Wuyin revealed a slight smile, his mind drifting back to the Scarlet Solaris Sect. When he turned towards Su Mei, she had a faint smile suffusing a feeling of immersing oneself in nostalgia. Even the platform was engulfed in a faint battle aura, stimulating their senses and allowing their bodies to reach a state slightly beyond their peak.

The Myriad Monarch Sect was truly hoping to instigate battles of a ferocious scale, allowing these youths to clash with their everything.

Now was the time. The first person to step forward would be the first to face the challenges of those present, from perhaps weaker, equivalent, or even stronger phased cultivators. To be the first to step forth required an immense amount of courage, as the level of exhaustion would definitely wear one down even if they won.

Furthermore, they would be at a disadvantage, unable to choose their opponents. But only the courage to face the unknown, to face all comers and obstacles was befitting of the victor of the Grand Spirit Trials. After all, it was a trial that tested one's spirit!!

Zuhei's body was ready to rush forward, but he didn't act hastily. This was only because of Wei Wuyin's words, otherwise he would've jumped out onto the stage before even the voice of the announcer finished uttering its first word.

For a few seconds, besides the roiling sounds of potent blood and rousing auras, no one said anything. Until...

"I'll go first..." When this voice sounded, everyone turned and they were absolutely shocked. The voice was warm, natural, and felt lovely to listen to, but within it was a will that was harder than oak. A gorgeous woman with a pair of emerald eyes and silky emerald hair, her ample breasts, slim waist, and stable posture left one in admiration. However, what truly left one in awe was her face, like a perfect

picture of an immortal fairy from legends. She was a world-toppling beauty that could instigate war within the starfield, if used correctly.

But this woman walked forward at this moment and revealed unprecedented bravery and astounding courage. Her wood energies culminated into a solid and sturdy aura that encapsulated around her figure. When she stood at the center of the stage, she swept her emerald eyes to the hundreds of elites that remained.

Her eyes shone brightly with a light of clear provocation, as if saying to all: "Come at me."

Her war-like spirit invoked both admiration and feelings of adoration within the hearts of men, quite a few already deciding that this woman was perfect for them as a Dao Companion. Just a vigorous spirit.

When she stepped onto the platform, her information was revealed by the four lights, painting the sky for all to see.

Qing Qiumu.

Myriad Monarch Participant.

Sky Ruler Cultivation.

Spirit Points: 207.

-

of Continuous Victories: 0.

Chapter 305 - 302: G.S.T, Princess Of The Forest

"..."

A silence pervaded the world as numerous individuals looked about, at each other, at the words above the sky, or the gorgeous woman that stood confidently on stage radiating an exceptional aura. There weren't many who knew of Qing Qiumu, mostly limited to the Myriad Monarch Sect due to the incident of her near-death by public execution. Despite that, everyone with eyes and any awareness could determine with ease she was anything but ordinary.

Thus, a silence was born.

Who would take up the act of challenging this beauty?

Qing Qiumu was actually not as calm and leveled as she seemed to others. Her heart was racing like a thousand horses on the tracks, and a sort of palpitating excitement mixed with dreadful fear was suffusing every fiber of her being. This wasn't a normal event nor a normal spar against allies, but a fight against talented elites—even death was possible.

When she swept her emerald eyes across the crowd, she saw Long Chen's pensive expression filled with worry and uncertainty. From the light that flitted through his eyes, he felt that she could be harmed or even worse. There wasn't a hint of confidence. In fact, his aura was turbulent and readied for action. If she found herself in trouble, she had the belief he would disregard all rules to save her.

For some reason, this made her a little discouraged. But she didn't know exactly why. It made her feel somewhat uncertain. Was she rash?

Should she have waited?

Was she not strong enough?

Perhaps this wasn't her stage...

Doubts ceaselessly formed in her heart.

When those same eyes met a familiar figure, she was welcomed by a smile of excitement and praise. An expression filled with the intent to cheer. Wei Wuyin stood there with a proud smile and mouthed the words: "You got this." A belief in her radiated with an unprecedented clarity from his silver eyes.

Her heart warmed to an uncontrollable, nearly inconceivable degree. The doubts that boggled her heart were instantly swept away as she stood firm once more. The light in her eyes grew stronger than before.

Her renewed sense of vigor was accompanied by a hearty and heavy laughter. A male youth garbed in white robes strode forward with heavy and powerful steps. He was of average height, but his body was exceptionally fit with muscles hugging his robes to a maximum. He had a bald head, dark eyes, and an aura of boundless earth.

A member of the crowd, a vagrant elite with an exceptional master, couldn't help but shout loudly: "Jiang Yuwei!"

Those two words caused the eyes of everyone to gather on the bald, muscular youth named Jiang Yuwei who simply grinned showing off his white smile. To be recognized by other elites meant he was exceptional, and he clearly knew it. The fact that he made it this far indicated his ability.

Even though Wei Wuyin had Zuhei and Su Mei sweep up the onlooking audience before, that didn't mean all the elites were there. In truth, the truly elite of elites didn't care about the Trial of Light as much. As long as they earned enough points to advance to the next stage, they could use the ability they were confident in to claim absolute victory.

The youth with the nine-colored dot and spear, Lin Ming, was of this breed. And Jiang Yuwei was another.

Similarly as Lin Ming, he was a genius of the Elemental Heaven Pavilion. There wasn't a single individual here who hadn't done their research into the top-tier elites that might or would be participating in this competition, and Jiang Yuwei was on everyone's list. Despite being at the Second Stage of the Astral Core Realm, he was younger than most and extremely gifted.

He was born with Innate Meridians of the Grand Earth and Grand Earth Physique. A prodigal and natural-born earth cultivator. In some ways, he was similar to Qing Qiumu.

"I've heard about you," Jiang Yuwei's heavy and hearty voice resounded as he took every step, "Princess of the Forest, is what my master calls you." His words caused numerous individuals with a decent information network to gasp slightly, turning their eyes towards Qing Qiumu. No one really knew who she was, but the name 'Princess of the Forest' was a name they fully recognized.

According to the various channels, the Princess of the Forest was a bonafide wood cultivator, innately gifted with a trifecta of traits that made the most suitable wood cultivator in the last ten thousand years. She had a relationship with Qin Rui, the Extreme Creation Grand Imperial Sage, and that only made her more frightening.

There had to be less than a thousand people who had a deep relationship with a Grand Imperial Sage-level figure, and even fewer who could be trained and well-regarded by them.

Of course, due to various reasons, much of that information was incorrect. For example, she wasn't personally trained by Qin Rui, but her own Ancestor. While her Ancestor was an expert, she was severely lacking in comparison to Qin Rui by not a little.

Qing Qiumi frowned slightly, causing her to emanate a beauty that caused Jiang Yuwei to halt his heavy steps just as he was about to set foot on the platform. His heart raced for a moment, and the thought raced through his mind: "How could a frown be so dazzling? So wonderful? So perfect?"

He wasn't the only one to think this. As she became the focal point, it was as if a veil had been removed from her and her beauty became even more highlighted. The men's eyes released fiery gazes filled with passion and desire, and the women were in awe and a hint of envy and jealousy.

Wei Wuyin scoffed in his heart. The hearts of man are fickle. In a world of cultivation, the classification of beauty felt like it was four parts talent, four parts appearance, and two parts backing. Considering Qing Qiumu's perceived status, exceptional looks, and extreme talent, she had instantly become the most dazzling figure present.

Qing Qiumu similarly felt disdain. The aura of battle had started to seep into her body, into her heart and mind.

"Are you scared to face me?" Her confident and provocative grin inflamed the body and other areas of the male figures, while even Jiang Yuwei was lost for a moment. As a cultivator, how could he not realize that his stopped steps seemed to show hesitation. His eyes narrowed, and he heartedly laughed.

BOOM!

He heavily stomped his paused foot onto the platform. The ground fiercely shook in response, causing many to feel a faint vibration beneath their feet. Qing Qiumu's eyes brightened considerably. That was an incredible display of weight and power.

Long Chen's eyes leaked a clear concern. Jiang Yuwei wasn't some amateur that Qing Qiumu could practice with, but a legitimate genius with a Grand Imperial Sage-level figure as his master. He possessed vast resources and exceptional instructions from a young age, and grew into a staggeringly impressive figure that commanded immense respect.

He wasn't cardboard waiting to be flattened, but a cultivator that could shatter continents with a stomp of his foot. Not a single individual here was lacking in strength or potential, merely a little experience.

Wei Wuyin, on the other hand, was filled with expectations. He had nurtured Qing Qiumu for a few months during this trial. The products she used weren't insignificant. They were eighth-grade and top-tier seventh-grade products. While she was ignorant of their true grades, she had consumed and refined

them at exceptional speeds. She even used that momentum to gain enlightenment and reach the Sky Ruler Phase.

Her talent was truly and frighteningly high.

Even if he wanted to match her, without the unique traits of his Astral Souls, he would be many times worse than her. He was innately talented as well, likely one in ten million. Her? She could be considered one in a trillion. Of course, this excluded his innate gift for arts and alchemy, merely factoring in their body's natural gifts and ability to absorb energies.

That being said, Jiang Yuwei also wasn't that far off. He had dual innate gifts: The Innate Meridians of Grand Earth & The Grand Earth Physique. This meant his talent was definitely just a bit shy of matching Qing Qiumu's.

It was little wonder why he became the disciple of a Grand Imperial Sage. In fact, if it wasn't for Qin Rui's own disposition and ways of doing things, Qing Qiumu should have certainly been accepted as her disciple by now.

When Jiang Yuwei stepped onto the stage, the crystalline light fluctuated and revealed his information alongside Qing Qiumu.

Jiang Yuwei.

Elemental Heaven Participant.

Sky Ruler Cultivation.

Spirit Points: 324.

-

of Continuous Victories: 0.

He had over a hundred more spirit points than Qing Qiumu. Of course, this wasn't indicative of his superiority, merely his luck and methods.

"I, Jiang Yuwei, challenge!" When Jiang Yuwei saw his information, he smirked and shouted. The moment he did, the light underwent a swift change and they linked up and with speed beyond reaction, they formed four walls and a canopy above. The walls and canopy were shimmering light crystals and from the inside one couldn't see the outside. But outside, the entire inside was clearly visible.

Jiang Yuwei turned his gaze towards Qing Qiumu and carelessly smiled, "Do you think I'm scared of you?"

"You will be," Qing Qiumu's eyes revealed a sharp light within her eyes. Her words were extremely clear and swift. Jiang Yuwei was taken aback. Wei Wuyin felt like clapping for her in glee, wanting to praise her how badass that was.

Furthermore, that moment of surprise at Qing Qiumu's comeback was instantly seized upon by her.

[Myriad Meadow Art: Swift Birth of a Flower]

Her entire body erupted in a burst of bright, emerald-colored wood force and shot off towards Jiang Yuwei. She was shockingly swift, arriving in close combat range of Jiang Yuwei in nearly a blink of an eye. It was as if she had always been in front of him, as if she was a seed that had grown ceaselessly in a flower and it was that location that always housed her spirit.

Jiang Yuwei was appalled and further shocked by such a strange and exquisite movement art. His spiritual sense felt confused, causing his expression to become slightly ugly as he realized his muddled senses, both spiritual and physical, were being attacked by a single move.

Qing Qiumu capitalized on this moment even further. She lifted thrusting both her arms forward, sending two palms into Jiang Yuwei's chest. Her fingers flickered with emerald-light.

「*Myriad Meadows Art: Seed of Serenity*」

A sensation of dread emerged in Jiang Yuwei's heart. While confused, he was still exceptionally powerful and fierce. And he reacted in the most direct way possible! With a low shout that caused the earth to rumble in chaos, he exploded with his powerful Grand Earth Force.

BOOOM!

RUMBLE!!

The eruption of earthen force was like a volcano spewing out a flow of semi-solid lava. It was terrifying to say the least.

Qing Qiumu, however, didn't stop her action. Her eyes were clear, not a single hesitation in her face. Her delicate and soft body entered the cataclysmic wave of earthen force with a ferocious and ruthless step.

BOOSH!!!

Jiang Yuwei and Qing Qiumu were blown away. In a loud crash of flesh and bone, Jiang Yuwei smashed heavily into the crystal barrier. As for Qing Qiumu, she was sent back like a fluttering shadow, but beneath her was an endless field of greenery that seemed to have been miraculously birthed. When she landed, her figure was revealed.

She stood upright and firm, her eyes exceptionally bright. A bit of green blood leaked from the corner of her lips, and a single nostril of her delicate nose was dripping green blood as well. She looked hurt, but her expression was unfathomably calm.

Everyone was confused for a moment.

"AHHHHHHHHHHH!"

Then, a blood-curdling shriek of absolute horror erupted!

Chapter 306 - 303: G.S.T, Decisive Heart

"..."

The terrifying shriek was accompanied by cold silence as the eyes of nearly everyone present widened slightly in shock. At the edge of the platform, clinging to a crystal wall, Jiang Yuwei's figure was barely

upright. He had one hand clenched around his chest, specifically his heart area, and one hand gripping the wall. There were lines of blood on the wall that originated from his fingers. It was an unsettling sight.

Haggard breathing filled with traces of pain filled the air soon after, with grunts of disbelief and confusion mixed within. Jiang Yuwei's large brown eyes were nearly bulging out of his eye socket as he looked at Qing Qiumu with a fierce glare. From the outside, besides his breathing being heavy and his fingers scratching the wall with blood, he seemed perfectly fine.

In fact, he seemed as if he wasn't injured in the slightest. Surrounding his body was a thick and substantial astral ward that seemed to possess the intensity and vastness of earth, seemingly impregnable. The crowd's confusion hadn't lessened.

What happened?

Wei Wuyin's silver eyes were shining with a resplendent and exceptional light.

"She's ruthless enough, decisive enough." Su Mei commented with a faint and rare smile. Even Zuhei had a wide grin on his face, looking at Qing Qiumu with incredible interest and a hint of respect.

In the cultivation world, battles between experts were rarely long and drawn out. Oftentimes they ended after one gained an advantage, pressed it, and claimed victory. This had to do with a variety of factors, but mostly was peak battle state and energy reserves. The usage of arts and spells were extremely consuming. The energies required for anything outside of essential cultivation phase advantages were heavily taxing on one's reserves.

In fact, many cultivators could only unleash two or three arts with their full strength. Afterwards, their four essential energies would have to be consumed to recover their reserves and cultivation strength. These four energies were physical, mental, spiritual, and essence. But essence energies normally could only be absorbed efficiently through cultivation, requiring serenity and time. These were things the battlefield and its warriors were deprived of the most.

As for spiritual energies, they were the combination of physical, mental, and essence to begin with. This process layered an extra complicated step in the recovery process. To restore Metaphysical Qi or Astral Force one must use their innate physical and mental energies while simultaneously intermixing and absorbing essence from the world to create spiritual energies. Then, use another portion of mental, physical, and essence energies with a balance of spiritual energies to create Qi or Astral Force.

Even if they urged their energies to replenish their strength, they would suffer extreme physical exhaustion, mental exhaustion, and their Natal or Astral Souls would be heavily drained as a result. It could even lead to damage in one's innate foundation.

Therefore, most battles were completed in an extremely limited time window. No one wished to die because they either didn't use their full strength or they ran out of power.

Of course not every individual was subjected to this limitation, and there were methods to work around this. The most notable, yet extremely rare solution was permanence. By allowing your Astral Force to exist permanently in the world, self-sustaining itself off the world's power, they could attack and defend without worry about exhaustion via recycling. Unless every fraction of their astral force were obliterated by their opponent, they would find it extremely easy to win through attrition, always in their peak state.

Another solution was similarly rare: possess a stronger innate foundation and reserves of energies. This was where Qing Qiumu and Jiang Yuwei's innate talents became extremely important, and why their talents were well-regarded. The Innate Meridians of Grand Earth can contain Grand Earth Essence, which can be used to rapidly replenish their essence energies. As for his Grand Earth Physique, this was merely a way of saying he could replenish his physical energies through essence energies, specifically Grand Earth Essence.

With that, he merely had to exhaust his mental energies to replenish his strength, severely reducing his fatigue and recovery time. There was another solution, and that was expanding the size of one's Astral Core. This was the method that happened either with alchemical products or cultivation base reinforcement.

Qing Qiumu understood these principles. Her advantage of usually outlasting her opponent might not be effective against Jiang Yuwei, who had similar talents, nor would she be stupid enough to try it in this type of battle format. Therefore, she resorted to a surprise attack to ensure a swift and decisive victory. Even in the face of injuries.

She used her sleeve to wipe the blood from nose, smearing it a little. It gave her an astonishing image of a valiant and war-like fairy standing gorgeously on the battlefield.

"Y-YOU!!" Jiang Yuwei wanted to move, but he couldn't. His breathing became heavier and his chest tightened.

Qing Qiumu didn't attack again. She merely stared at Jiang Yuwei, keeping her Astral Force consumption at the lowest. Instead, she used her index finger to point at Jiang Yuwei. At the tip of her gorgeous hand was a well-trimmed pair of nails that sparked with emerald wisps of light.

"Argh!" Jiang Yuwei howled in agony. He was nearly brought to his knees. He tried to circulate his astral force within his body to rid himself of the pain, but he found it extremely useless. He didn't know what art she applied to his body, but it was extremely pervasive and unyielding.

"Wh-what did you do to me?!" He wanted to erupt with his immense power, crushing Qing Qiumu beneath his fists, but he found himself incapable of even moving effectively at the moment. He felt crippled.

"..." Qing Qiumu didn't answer. It was an idiot's move to brag about their art or its functions. Luckily, for those who were more aware of the situation, they didn't need her to answer.

For example, Wei Wuyin.

"Seed of Serenity. How vicious, haha." Wei Wuyin clicked his tongue. As someone who cultivated in the nine elements, with the Life Meadow Wood Essence as the source of his wood-attributed strength, how could he not know of this art? The Seed of Serenity was a Meadow-type Wood Art that was like an infectious parasite. It takes the body's lifeforce as fuel, and when planted, it can seep into one's heart and endlessly grow.

It'll continue to grow until it converts all the lifeforce within the body into wood force. In the end, the body's flesh and blood would become fertilizer and water for the seed, and the entire body would slowly and surely be turned into a forest. It was very vicious, almost evil.

Furthermore, when it grew to full maturity, the user of this art could absorb the generated wood essence to replenish their strength. It was extremely, extremely vicious.

If you had no prior knowledge of the art or understanding of lifeforce extraction methods, you would be helpless against it. No matter how talented you are, if you didn't know what you were up against and how to fight it, you were simply a helpless chicken with its neck stretched out at the ready for the blade.

Jiang Yuwei was the perfect example of this.

While the cultivators here were talented, they weren't all-knowing or all-capable. They were still young.

Of course, every art had its flaws. The Seed of Serenity was too slow. While it might be extremely painful, might weaken your opponent, it simply took too long to achieve its goal. Furthermore, you had to come into direct contact with the enemy's body to implant the seed. This made it exceptionally disadvantageous to all users.

Su Mei couldn't help but say a few words of praise, "To implant the seed into him, she had to strike before his astral ward was fully conjured. Otherwise, breaking through his Grand Earth Astral Ward and other defenses would be impossible for a Wood Cultivator like her unless she possessed absolute strength. If she hesitated for even a split second, or was unable to understand her own weakness, she would've surely been at a disadvantage.

"Moreover, she capitalized on a brief moment of carelessness from Jiang Yuwei perfectly, throwing him off-guard before striking at the earliest moment. She has potential."

Wei Wuyin nodded in agreement. Wood cultivators didn't have the strongest offensive or defensive abilities amongst the nine elements, but Earth cultivators were renowned for their defensive strength. Amongst the nine elements, it was in the top three. Its malleable nature also strengthened its versatile defensive powers.

If Qing Qiumu hadn't struck when she did, a fierce battle would've likely started and that was a toss-up on a myriad of other factors. After all, they had the same cultivation level. A decisive heart was hard to forge, but once forged, an indomitable warrior could be born. Qing Qiumu clearly revealed her decisive heart today.

Now that Jiang Yuwei was in a passive position, defending against all tactics with his ward conjured, Qing Qiumu wouldn't be able to deal damage to him with an explosive attack. Hence why she waited. An Astral Ward, unless possessing permanence, consumed one's astral force. Since Jiang Yuwei was circulating his ward with his full strength to defend against any further attack, he was wasting even more of his astral force than usual.

Before long, five minutes passed. Jiang Yuwei's complexion became much worse, heavy sweat dripping from his forehead, armpit, and back. He tried to use every means to cease the pain emanating from his body to no avail. He didn't know where the issue was nor did he know how to solve it. Unfortunately, he was unable to listen to Su Mei's words while isolated within the battle platform.

Jiang Yuwei eyed Qing Qiumu who seemed to be patiently waiting, knowing that she intended to exhaust him. He felt great humiliation from this, and more than once did he want to ferociously pounce. But whenever he tried to divert astral force for an assault, Qing Qiumu's emerald wisps circulating

around her finger sped up and the pain worsened to nearly unbearable levels. She was clearly controlling whatever was in his body.

His rage boiled his blood in an unfathomably blazing heat.

"I..." His words were spat with an extreme hate and fierce grievance, "I surrender!" When those humiliating words were uttered, the platform's walls dissipated and a faint white light gently brought him away. When the light entered his body, as if it knew his particular ailment, it seeped into his heart and dispersed the Seed of Serenity.

The Myriad Monarch Sect would obviously be dutiful in ensuring the safety of the participants, including their own disciples, with the utmost fairness before the world if one surrendered. The white light had healing properties and was managed by an expert at the Prime Imperial Sage-level, possessing the strength of a Fifth Stage Astral Core Realm cultivation.

To rid Jiang Yuwei's body of a Sky Ruler's Seed of Serenity was child's play.

Qing Qiumu breathed out a sigh of relief, revealing a dazzling smile of victory. Lowering her finger, she looked at the sky and noticed that Jiang Yuwei's information had been removed and only hers remained.

Qing Qiumu.

Myriad Monarch Participant.

Sky Ruler Cultivation.

Spirit Points: 307.

-

of Continuous Victories: 1.

She had gained 100 points and a victory. But the trial or battles wasn't over yet. Her eyes hadn't lost their original shine as she waited for her next challenge with a steady heart.

She knew the next fight wouldn't be as easy, so she was ready to unleash her everything.

A figure flickered from the outside onto the arena. When the person was revealed and in complete focus, it was revealed to be a young woman—a human. She was dressed in similar attire to Jiang Yuwei. Her information was revealed:

Li Xiao.

Elemental Heaven Participant.

Sky Ruler Cultivation.

Spirit Points: 83.

-

of Continuous Victories: 0.

Another Elemental Heaven Pavilion disciple! Interestingly enough, her aura was very similar to Qing Qiumu!

Chapter 307 - 304: G.S.T, Nine Meadows Astral Swords

When Li Xiao took the stage she took everyone's attention as well. A charming, exquisite young woman that seemed roughly in her twenties. A woman in the prime of her beauty and youth. She wore light make-up, almond-shaped eyes, lips that were a striking red, and dainty nose. Her skin was clear and milky, giving a smooth sense like jade. While she wasn't voluptuous or buxom, she had a slim and lithe body that carried a sense of unique delicateness about it.

In contrast to Qing Qiumu, she was severely lacking. It was like comparing a mortal to an immortal fairy, but amongst mortals she was still exceptional among her gender. Therefore, when she arrived on stage, everyone couldn't help but give her a moment of their attention. But that moment was incredibly fleeting.

Li Xiao's eyes revealed calm, but they carried a subtle piercing light as she stared at Qing Qiumu.

"You defeated Junior Brother Yuwei using such underhanded means. How pathetic." The first words out of her mouth were cold, almost mocking. This caused many to realize that her desire for entering the stage was for revenge or face.

"..." Qing Qiumu looked at Li Xiao with a calm expression, not reacting in the slightest to her provocation. Instead, she waited.

Li Xiao frowned. "Do you truly think you're amazing? That a sneak attack shows that you're powerful?" She asked coldly. When Qing Qiumu seemingly ignored her, the calm facade she was revealing showed faint signs of cracking. It seemed her negative emotions were seeping through relatively quickly.

Wei Wuyin sighed in her heart, thinking: *'Jealousy is unbecoming. That truly is the case.'*

"..." Qing Qiumu kept silent.

Li Xiao clenched her fists, her aura surging. "In my opin-"

"Shut the hell out!" Zuhei barked, his scarlet eyes viciously glaring at Li Xiao. His words were filled with immense power and his intent to slaughter, effusing the area with a bloody and potent smell.

Li Xiao literally jumped in shock, her aura that was building deflated like a popped balloon. She turned towards Zuhei, wanting to speak out some words, but was met with an insidious pair of eyes that radiated murder and impatience.

"Challenge or fuck off," Zuhei said with a growl. He didn't have time to deal with her petulant attempts at mocking or to ruin the image of another. He didn't care if she intended to save face for Jiang Yuwei. He didn't care if her jealousy was fueling her desire to monologue. He didn't care about her.

Just fight!

If you don't want to fight, then just simply scam the fuck away!

Zuhei's words caused the crowd to laugh slightly, some smiling, others frowning, but their thoughts were truly synced. This was a marathon. We didn't come to see a show, but to race to the finish!

If her words carried some use, such as Qing Qiumu's attempt to rattle and grasp an opportunity to sneak attack her opponent, then Zuhei would've remained silent. But what was this? Just fight!

Wei Wuyin couldn't help but shake his head. He didn't understand why people loved to use these moments to chatter away. He didn't know what it was about battles and talking, but people loved to do both—before and during.

He recalled his encounter with a Mortal Godlord on the Myriad Yore Continent. After witnessing his sister's death, he didn't arrive with explosive rage or a direct assault, but with words. Even Wei Wuyin was a little startled by this.

Your sister was just killed. You're clutching her decapitated head and facing her murderer, but your first decision is to use words? It was quite ridiculous.

You can be calm, but did you have to chatter?

He remembered telling Qing Qiumu about his thoughts on this, and seeing her remain silent was praiseworthy.

Li Xiao wanted to say something, but Zuhei's eyes had stopped her from doing so out of an innate fear. She felt that if she said anything, Zuhei wouldn't hesitate to kill her after this event was over. In fact, his eyes seemed to beg her to speak. She slightly gulped, and scoffed softly before facing Qing Qiumu.

Looking at that valiant beauty that seemed to have fallen from a war-ridden heaven, she clenched her teeth a little.

"I, Li Xiao, challenge!"

When those words were finally uttered, the crystal-like walls once more erected and isolated the participants.

Qing Qiumu waved her arms, flicking her sleeve as nine objects were conjured in an elegant flourish. Her graceful movements seemed to have become one with nature. The nine objects were nine nine-inch long swords that seemed to be made of various types of wood and grass. They each emanated vast and gentle wood energies, and each individual sword seemed to embody various intents.

"Nine Meadows Astral Swords?" Su Mei muttered. She turned towards Wei Wuyin, frowning slightly. Weapons at the Astral-level were so exceptionally rare and expensive that of the five million Astral Core Realm cultivators that exist on the starfield, barely 1% had them. In fact, successfully refining them required decades or even centuries of refinement.

The vast majority simply conjure their own weapons. This was even true for Qi Condensation Realm cultivators as high-level weapons were extremely difficult to obtain. Despite reaching the Mortal God-level, Wei Wuyin had still used the saber that he obtained from an old forger all those years ago. It wasn't because of sentimental value, but because a good weapon was extremely difficult to come by.

Whether it be alchemical products, armaments, or formations, none of these things didn't require immense time and extreme effort to perform. Wei Wuyin was merely an exception, not the standard, to

alchemy. But the rest of the world still went by the common saying amongst all: "Cultivation is difficult." This included cultivating everything and all things, including one's arts, skills, or cultivation base.

Wei Wuyin smiled with a hint of glee as he saw the nine swords. As for Li Xiao, she was appalled. Her lips twitched as she felt the immense aura from the nine swords, not believing they were legitimately astral weapons. Furthermore, these astral weapons were not low-grade, each brimming with Intent and seemingly inscribed with profound formations.

Even Long Chen was startled by those nine swords. He couldn't help inspect each sword, feeling as if they were all individual yet combined in a set. His eyes glowed as he seemingly discovered something.

Qing Qiumu briefly glanced at Wei Wuyin before turning her attention to Li Xiao. These nine swords were originally independent swords, each had an owner that was spread across the Myriad Monarch Astral Territory. They had undergone hundreds of years of refinement by Astral Core Realm cultivators, imbued with Intent. In fact, some were ancestral items that had been in families or clans for thousands of years.

Inexplicably, Wei Wuyin had obtained them all and had them reforged into a set by the top forger of the sect. While they were weakened individually as a result, they became linked and extremely easy to utilize. They were extremely effective weapons with their own unique set of abilities.

They were perfect for her. It was definitely made for her. She hadn't been willing to use them unless absolutely necessary, but she had suffered injuries from before and her bodily state wasn't at its peak. So she intended to use her advantage to her fullest.

Shiiiiing!

The nine swords all released faint sword cries as if they were being unsheathed. Their varied auras were perfectly linked as one, seemingly forming a world within the sound.

Li Xiao's heart throbbed. She immediately erected her astral ward and lifted off the platform, taking flight. She flipped her palm and green-colored staff with golden lines emerged. It was similarly a wood-attributed astral weapon, but its aura was severely lacking when compared to those nine swords. Furthermore, it lacked Intent.

This was clearly a weapon she had refined herself, and was still in the process of refining through a continuous infusion process. This type of weapon could be considered an 'astral weapon' but it wasn't really. It lacked an inscribed formation within, and it lacked Intent. These two aspects created true astral weapons. Those were rare.

As for this staff? Everyone could see it was forged normally with astral-level materials and then refined personally.

Qing Qiumu saw Li Xiao's battle readied state and her heart exploded with battle intent. Her emerald eyes that were extremely beautiful became sharp and penetrating, and her aura erupted as she infused her will into the swords.

When this happened, Su Mei's eyes widened slightly. "She's dead!" Those words were exclaimed softly. Others who heard were shocked, unsure of what she was talking about.

The nine swords transformed into swiftly gliding lights that exploded forth with extreme speed towards Li Xiao. They were so fast that the ambient mana was being sliced in two, creating ripples within the world that was visible to everyone beyond the World Sea Phase.

Li Xiao's heart fiercely raced at the incoming light. She reinforced her astral word and brandished her staff, intending to unleash an Astral Art to deflect them.

Unfortunately...

The speed of the swords were truly too fast, their piercing strength simply unfathomable. When combined with Qing Qiumu's powerful wood force, they were at their strongest. In moments, they closed the distance before she could even fully wave her staff. The swords appeared directly before her.

Li Xiao could only widen her eyes in shock as the world seemed to slow down in her perception. Everything was extremely slow, and she saw vividly how her astral ward was penetrated with extreme ease, like a hot knife through butter.

'So sharp!'

Was her first and last thought.

Nine swords sliced into her delicate body. One in particular was aimed at her throat, slicing into her flesh with ease and making its way through her spine. The rest penetrated her flesh and her body was carried away like a ragdoll, smashing against the crystal wall in a flash.

"..."

For several seconds, the world became silent. Li Xiao's body was seemingly nailed to the wall via eight swords. It was only when her neck had a glaring line of blood red and unnaturally slid slightly that people reacted, their eyes widened in shock. Then, it fell.

Thud!

It smashed against the platform amidst the silence in a sickening thud of stone meeting flesh and bone.

Su Mei looked at Wei Wuyin.

Wei Wuyin was a little surprised too.

"She did not hold back," Wei Wuyin clicked his tongue. To think that Qing Qiumu would actually start the battle by unleashing the strongest formations on the swords, converting wood force's usually delicate and soft nature into a sharp, piercing force similar to sword force.

It increased the lethality by an extreme degree. Furthermore, the swords were linked and strengthened each other; hence, it was designed as a set.

A bright white light wrapped around Li Xiao's corpse as everyone stared on, and then it vanished—including the head.

Qing Qiumu.

Myriad Monarch Participant.

Sky Ruler Cultivation.

Spirit Points: 390.

-

of Continuous Victories: 2.

Chapter 308 - 305: G.S.T, Interfere

Qing Qiumu's eyes were like full moons as she revealed her indescribable shock. She hadn't expected that...

She hadn't intended to...

She...

Her eyes turned to Wei Wuyin almost subconsciously, shock still painted on her face. She knew the swords were powerful, but this? Wasn't this too much?

Wei Wuyin softly sighed in his heart. He could understand her shock. This current world wasn't like the era that the King of Everlore lived in, or the next one that he directly enabled to exist, and the declining momentum was still occurring. Cultivators lacked solid foundations built by well-cultured resources, but alchemy, forgers, and formations were static in their strength. As long as they were made, their effects would forever remain the same.

A seventh-grade product will always be seventh-grade. A high-level astral armament will always have the strength of a high-grade astral armament. But a Sky Ruler of King Everlore's era that was nurtured by massive amounts of products was certainly not the same as one today.

This was a depressing fact that the current world was well aware of, and it was clearly revealed by the severe lack of upper-phase Astral Core Realm experts, with merely two existing at the Seventh Stage of the Astral Core Realm—Realm World Phase. During the King of Everlore era, even the three servants that sat by his side had reached the Star Core Phase, the legendary Ninth Stage of the Astral Core Realm. As for the true geniuses of that era such as Grand Monarch Wu Yu, Divine King Han Xei, or the Demonic Abyss Mountain Lord, they reached beyond the Astral Core Realm.

So when she was using such exceptional equipment backed by her astonishing foundation and innate talent, it created an insurmountable gap between today's geniuses of the same cultivation. Furthermore, she had unknowingly refined a few eighth-grade products that enhanced the qualities of her strength. This caused a huge discrepancy between her perceived strength and her actual strength.

In the end, Qing Qiumu had to regain her calm by forcefully taking several breaths. She could feel the numerous gazes on her body at the moment. Many were astounded by her ability to one-shot Li Xiao. Except for a few, including Zuhei and Su Mei. Especially Su Mei.

She had been the one to organize the obtaining of nine separate astral swords from all over the Myriad Monarch Astral Territory, bought them, traded for, or was gifted for support from Wei Wuyin. She had even found five top-tier forgers to work together, an act that required enormous amounts of money and organizing, to swiftly get them to reforge the individual astral swords into a single set of nine. That

wasn't all. She also had to hire twenty formation masters to further reinforce and produce a perfect unified set, which took nearly a year of collaborative effort. So, she knew of its terrifying strength.

She didn't think Wei Wuyin had put in all those resources and deals simply to give it to Qing Qiumi, hence her initial shock. While she had expected that he may have intended it for her, but not on the basis of a gift without any cost. After all, she could feel Qing Qiumu's Primal Yin aura was fully intact. Ultimately, she truly started to believe that Wei Wuyin had no untoward thoughts towards Qing Qiumu, truly viewing her as a close friend.

For a brief moment, her eyes flitted with a faint indescribable emotion. An emotion that seemed to stem from happiness, but not quite.

"..."

For a few minutes, no one said anything nor challenged Qing Qiumu. The expressions on some of their faces were quite ugly as they inspected the nine swords swirling around her exquisite body. This was especially those at the Sky Ruler Phase. Li Xiao might not have been the strongest Sky Ruler, but she was relatively considered near the top. Furthermore, very few actually saw the trajectory of those swords when sent forth.

They didn't have confidence in defending against those swords or at least reacting in time to dodge, so their expressions were extremely unsightly to behold.

Should they step forth and challenge?

Court death?

Like Li Xiao?!

Her sudden death was still way too fresh in their minds.

Wei Wuyin faintly smiled. The structure of this tournament was designed for a few ways of victory. The general and likely way to claim victory is through exhaustion of other Spirit Points while gathering one's own, using their wins and losses to their advantage. This would ensure that the competition could take months, until someone reached 10,000 Spirit Points.

The least likely way was to win via consecutive victories. This meant having to fight ten times in a row and declining none of your matches. This was extremely unlikely for lower-phase cultivators. After all, they had to face cultivators with higher ranks without causing a draw through their spirit points.

But the swiftest and most efficient manner of claiming victory was by having a high cultivation, typically at the Soul Idol Phase, and killing their way until no one dared to challenge them. The fact that Qing Qiumu was already achieving this was truly a wonder to behold.

Of course, it was impossible for her to win through this method with her cultivation level and current strength. Still, it was impressive.

Just as Wei Wuyin had thought this, a man rose from his sitting position, his aura seemingly pure and delicate. He had a feminine charm about him. He could be called an exceptional beauty, even as a male, but he was clearly male. He was garbed in white and seemed to have not a speck of dust on it.

He walked forward with a faint and kind smile. "You're extremely talented and possess exceptional strength. Truly befitting the title of Princess of the Forest." The voice of the white-robed man was soft yet firm, giving one the sense of being heroic and inviolable. He lacked a distinct domineering disposition of nobility or royalty, but he still had a charm that seemed borderline aggressive without seeming aggressive.

Su Mei's eyes drooped slightly. Within those pure and dark eyes of hers was a hint of undisguised disgust.

Wei Wuyin turned to see Da Shan. She seemed calm, but her golden eyes were fixated on the platform, as if not trying to give this man a single glance lest she revealed an horrific and dark intent. But he could see her hands tighten to the point they became pale.

'Seems like this was going to happen sooner than later.' While Wei Wuyin thought this, Zuhei's scarlet gaze brightened to an inconceivable level as if he was waiting for this moment his entire life. He glanced at Wei Wuyin and his emotions cooled. Then, he glanced at Lin Ming. This Elemental Heaven Pavilion disciple that even seemed to pay attention to. His heart of slaughter and battle thumped with explosive anticipation uncontrollably.

"I might be a little shameless, but so I'll apologize if this offends." The white-robed man said with a grace and elegance that seemed to originate from nobility, but he still lacked a certain aura, a certain disposition. It felt extremely off-putting to those with keen senses.

He stepped on the stage after the crystal walls had vanished.

Yun Hanxi.

Free Participant.

Soul Idol Cultivation.

Spirit Points: 132.

-

of Continuous Victories: 0.

When his information emerged, the crowd was somewhat startled. A Soul Idol Cultivator had taken action so soon? But then again, considering the distinct fear everyone else revealed, it was bound to happen. He was even a Free Cultivator, otherwise known as a cultivator that did not belong to any sect or force. Furthermore, his Spirit Points were lower than Qing Qiumu. She could use her Spirit Points to force a draw, being able to effectively withdraw from the stage. It seemed like too much of a disadvantage for her.

In truth, Qing Qiumu's eyes were steady and her expression was quite calm. Her lack of panic was instead seen as excitement at the prospect of facing a cultivator beyond her cultivation. When she was younger, journeying the Myriad Yore Continent alongside Long Chen, she had fought and won against cultivators with one or even two levels beyond her. This was mostly because of her foundation being more robust and her talents being quite high in comparison to others.

But since she entered the Astral Core Realm, she had felt the chasm-like gap between each phase. Even with an incredible foundation in the Qi Condensation Realm, the benefits it gave her later was nearly unnoticeable. This was further highlighted because the true geniuses of the Myriad Monarch Planet were fed far higher level resources and had greater instruction and opportunities than her.

She simply was incapable of defeating others beyond her cultivation level. She wasn't like Long Chen or Wei Wuyin, and this had always left a tiny hole of inadequacy within her heart. Now, she had the opportunity to test it.

Wei Wuyin slightly furrowed his brows. Even Su Mei did as well. She turned towards Wei Wuyin, looking for instructions. If Qing Qiumu faced Yun Hanxi in battle, it would not be an exciting fight. Su Mei knew that Yun Hanxi possessed absolute advantage in cultivation, but the Nine Meadow Astral Swords were not low-level astral weapons.

In fact, they were extremely fierce and powerful. They had a multi-formation that allowed them to convert wood force into a sword-like force that was exceptionally piercing and sharp. Furthermore, this was further empowered by Intent. Perhaps Zuhei or her could defend against this power, but Yun Hanxi didn't have that ability.

Either he found an opening and instantly killed Qing Qiumu or he was likely to meet a similar fate as Li Xiao. This created a dilemma.

Da Shan...

Wei Wuyin's frown deepened.

He thought for a moment.

Yun Hanxi saw Qing Qiumu's calm expression and smiled brightly. "Then, I'll exchange pointers with you. I, challe-"

"Wait!" A voice interrupted Yun Hanxi, causing him to stop. He turned to see Wei Wuyin who was approaching with a smile.

Nearby, Da Shan was startled alongside everyone else.

Yun Hanxi's expression stiffened, and behind his eyes a dark, gloomy aura flitted through for a brief moment. He quickly hid it, giving a gracious smile. "Prince Wei, is there something you need from me?"

Wei Wuyin calmly looked at Yun Hanxi. He chuckled lightly. Looking towards Qing Qiumu, "Mind getting off the stage for a moment? I need to talk to you." Those words set off a series of shocked expressions from the crowd, not expecting the legendary Prince of Everlore to interfere at this moment.

Long Chen's expression became dark. It was like night had fallen on his face. *'What right do you have to interfere? Do you believe you own this platform?'* His emotions seethed within his chest.

Qing Qiumu was startled for a moment. But she gave it little thought before turning to look at Han Yunxi once more and nodding in agreement. She didn't hesitate to leap off the platform, her consecutive victories were sent back to 0. Once someone stepped off the platform before their consecutive victories reached 10, their victory count would directly reset.

She arrived beside Wei Wuyin, giving him a slight smile. Wei Wuyin flashed an apologetic smile in response. But she didn't mind, merely saying: "I had no intention of winning anyhow." Considering Long Chen sought first place, having the same cultivation base, and knowing how much winning this competition meant to him, she didn't have the thought of winning since the beginning. She merely wanted to test her mettle against the other geniuses of this world.

Long Chen saw how close they were, and those emotions boiling within his chest ignited. His eyes became even gloomier, but he tried to hide it using a mask of calm, something he had used many times to conceal his thoughts.

Wei Wuyin nodded, "You'll have another chance." He brought her away, leaving Han Yunxi by himself.

Han Yunxi's expression was slightly unsightly as he watched them walk away, chatting as they did so. It was as if he was inconsequential. A deep-seated sense of inferiority emerged in his heart, and it blazed with envy and hate. This brief gap had him forget that after Qing Qiumu had stepped off, standing on the platform now made him the to-be-challenged party.

Wei Wuyin stopped. Then he turned to see Han Yunxi who swiftly realized this and hurriedly replaced his unsightly expression with a fawning smile.

Wei Wuyin briefly sized him up with his eyes before saying, "If you surrender your next fight, then you can consider yourself dead. You'll have a bounty of fifty thousand astral stones or equivalent value of products." After saying that, he brought Qing Qiumu to his previous location.

"...!" Yun Hanxi's scalp turned numb as he heard those words. *'Why?! What did I do to offend you?!*' He felt his world darken.

Even the crowd went into an uproar of confusion! Long Chen's emotions were disrupted by confusion. Everyone couldn't help but ask themselves: What did he do?

"I, challenge!" A voice, fiercely strong and incomparably determined, resounded! The crystal walls quickly formed!

Chapter 309 - 306: G.S.T, Mountainous Strength

"I, Da Shan, Challenge!"

Da Shan.

Myriad Monarch Participant.

Soul Idol Cultivation.

Spirit Points: 53.

-

of Continuous Victories: 0.

Those words resounded throughout the platform, entering the ears and hearts of everyone present. The owner of this voice stood upright, her golden eyes radiating unfathomable calm. This calm was like the still ocean before a seaquake. It was a prelude to events to come.

However, Han Yunxi was still reeling from Wei Wuyin's words. He had just been marked for some ungodly reason by the most prominent youthful figure in this generation, and likely this very era. It was entirely possible that this individual, this Prince of Everlore, would create an era of his own and defined generations of cultivators.

Like most, he had high-hopes in ingratiating himself within this unfathomable presence. He even had thoughts of becoming a servant at worst. If Wei Wuyin were to reach even a tenth of the King of Everlore's previous heights, he would still be able to usher him into a realm of cultivation that he couldn't reach in today's era.

So, while Da Shan had taken the stage and stolen the limelight with her extraordinary presence, his mind had nearly collapsed already. It was almost as if he had been given a death sentence, his will to live had diminished as he felt trapped.

As for killing Wei Wuyin? Struggling against his fate? Everyone here and those above would love for him to try. Even if he had a slight chance of survival, wouldn't he be killed by the Grand Imperial Sages after anyhow?

When Wei Wuyin saw the blank look of despair and hopelessness on Han Yunxi's expression, his eyes widened a little. It was as if Han Yunxi had accepted his life's end. This...

He looked at Da Shan. When he observed her expression that lacked any trace of disturbed by Han Yunxi's bleak mindset nor showed any displeasure at his words, he relaxed. In truth, he originally intended for Han Yunxi to simply not give up, not literally give up on life. But he had severely and catastrophically underestimated his own reputation and reverence in the hearts of other cultivators.

Those spectating, both in the surroundings and within the starfield, all exploded in quiet shock, pitying looks emerging on their faces as they saw Han Yunxi. Most of the cultivators present wished to avoid getting on his bad side, not offending him by any means. They wanted to fight and win in an above board manner, but not offend.

Prince of Everlore.

King of Everlore.

These names held significant meanings. They were the key to a higher status, a greater legacy, a longer lifespan, and a grander life. While these youths were all talents, geniuses of this era, they knew that their limitations weren't far-off from their masters, their sect or pavilion masters. In fact, the decline of the era was still in full swing, and they might never enter the Fifth Stage of the Astral Core Realm even if they had Grand Imperial Sage-level mentors.

If it wasn't for the neutral Alchemist Association having the Princess of Everlore, a figure rumored to be equal if not better than Wei Wuyin, perhaps this entire contest would be merely an attempt at bettering relations with the Myriad Monarch Sect. But, there was this neutral figure.

Of course, if they knew Wei Wuyin's level of alchemy had already touched the King of Everlore level, likely even exceeding him in terms of concoction time by a considerably mind-boggling degree, they might just ally themselves with him without hesitation.

That aside, the battle between Han Yunxi and Da Shan was starting.

The crystal walls were conjured from the diamond-shaped crystals. The two were now locked within the platform where one had to either kill the other, force a surrender, or knock the enemy unconscious and spare their lives.

Han Yunxi slowly regained himself. As a Soul Idol Cultivator, he felt the killing intent aimed at him, causing his senses to clear up. He saw Da Shan. This tall, violet-skinned woman with an ample figure, who wore tight-fitting battle armor alongside a pair of golden-colored gauntlet gloves. She also sported a pair of golden metallic greaves that touched the bottom of her kneecaps.

She looked like a valiant warrior of beauty often described in epic tales.

Da Shan did not take advantage of Han Yunxi's lapse. Instead, she waited, but her aura was clearly building up causing a violet tempest to form beneath her feet. Her demonic force was on display, eroding the platform slightly.

Han Yunxi's gentle and kind smile vanished, revealing a narrowed and frustrated gaze. His facade from earlier, one where he seemed to originate from nobility had been torn away. It was merely because he felt it was pointless.

"Just a filthy demon, tch." He commented with a sneer. Ignoring Da Shan, he turned and wanted to see Wei Wuyin with the intention of asking why, wanting to demand an explanation. Why did he have to die?

"Just an idiot," Da Shan similarly said with a sneer.

Yun Hanxi's movements immediately froze. He eerily turned his head to glance at Da Shan. His eyes slowly became bloodshot, seemingly losing all patience.

"He said if you surrender this match, you'll have a bounty. So as long as you claim victory, what worries do you have?" Da Shan said with contempt, knowing that Wei Wuyin was giving her this opportunity. Therefore, she decided to take full advantage of it.

"...!" Han Yunxi's eyes widened for a moment. Realization immediately dawned on him and his heart seemed to have found hope. It seemed that wanting to challenge that Princess of the Forest woman had touched a button, but he wasn't given a dead-end. This was a ray of hope that caused his tension to dissipate away like smoke.

Han Yunxi smiled wide. It was dazzling, and coupled with his handsome face, it was extremely attractive. But to Da Shan, it provoked nothing but disgust.

"I see. Thank you," Han Yunxi sincerely said. Then, he fiddled with the air with his fingers as if tweaking an instrument. "As a thanks, I'll ensure your pathetic demon life ends swiftly." His smile was filled with joy, and his astral force within his body started to build up, producing a stirring aura that caused the air to tremble.

Da Shan didn't respond. She merely clenched her glove-covered fists.

A battle between two Soul Idol Cultivators!

Su Mei quietly said, "Her cultivation base seems impressive, but..." She had voiced her doubts. While Yun Hanxi was a cultivator without an origin, he still had a master or backing to reach this point.

Furthermore, his innate talent wasn't little. To reach the Soul Idol Phase, entering the realm of five million experts amongst tens of trillions, at his age was indicative of his ability.

She was slightly worried about Da Shan. But when she saw Wei Wuyin's slight smile, she let her words trail off and went silent. She knew Da Shan was one of Wei Wuyin's lovers, and someone who received his support. Therefore, she decided to enjoy the show.

"Her fate is her own. Whether she lives or dies, it'll depend solely on her." Wei Wuyin responded, his eyes focused on Da Shan. He knew her backstory, and he knew of Han Yunxi. When he recalled his own life experiences, he knew that she needed to do this herself.

Su Mei nodded.

Han Yunxi's fingers twirled in the air, slowly forming dots of silver lights that gave off a metallic sheen. Before long, these numerous dots shaped into five-inch needles that swarmed around him like bees. There were hundreds of them. To be exact, three hundred and three needles. These weren't manifestations of astral force but actual astral weapons forged. They had similarities to Li Xiao's staff, being personally refined and nurtured while lacking inscribed formations.

Despite that, they seemed to be under Han Yunxi's complete control.

Da Shan clenched her fists, her body wreathed in violet-colored astral force. She pressed her foot on the ground, leaned forward, and BOOM! Her figure shot forth like an accelerating tank. In a fraction of a second, she broke the sound barrier causing a torrent of wind to explode.

She appeared before Han Yunxi, amidst his numerous needles. Her clenched fist lanced forward with mountainous momentum at his head. It seemed to carry immense strength as another exploding sound of air erupting resounded.

Han Yunxi was inwardly shocked by her speed. Her size and aura was heavy, so he hadn't expected such extraordinary speed. Usually cultivators relied on their astral force to move, but Da Shan's astral force lacked the normally noticeable qualities of swiftness. Instead, she had relied on her powerful physical body to generate such ridiculous speed.

While shocked, he was still a Soul Idol cultivator. His spiritual sense connected into each needle, and they converged before him, forming a cluster that formed a makeshift shield. Their movements were equally swift, forming directly before Da Shan's fist.

He simultaneously shot upwards, using his needles to cover his escape. His movements were equally fast, arriving in the sky in a flickering flash.

BOOM!

Da Shan's fist clashed with the needle shield and caused all the needles to scatter, but they were undamaged.

Han Yunxi twirled his fingers and the needles halted where they were and a hundred of them focused on Da Shan's figure. With a low grunt, the needles sped towards her like piercing arrows. The surrounding air released whistling sounds.

Da Shan remained calm as she lifted her head. With a slight bending of her knees, she used her strength to explode upwards with tremendous force. She became a speeding rocket, the resulting wind buffeted the needles into disorderly scattering once more.

°Such strength!° Han Yunxi was startled.

Da Shan appeared before him and didn't hesitate to smash her fist towards his chest. Her golden eyes radiated a calm yet frightening killing intent.

Han Yunxi's silver astral ward was conjured in a hasty defense. Despite being hasty, the conjuring of one's astral ward was the fastest means of a cultivator.

BAM!

Her fist smashed into his astral ward, causing his figure to explode backwards and his astral ward to burst. But he was still protected, relatively unharmed as he was blown back a few dozen meters. With a wave of his hand, the three hundred and three needles all came to his call, surging towards him.

They interconnected into a silver river-like snake and slithered towards Da Shan's back.

Da Shan was shocked for a moment that her attack hadn't fully penetrated his astral ward. She realized his metal force had astonishing defensive potential. With a soft breath, she didn't look back and merely unleashed a fist towards the river-like snake. Her fist caused the surrounding air to collapse once more as a violet-colored demonic force met the river-like snake.

BOOM!

An explosively loud collision occurred, and the needles scattered once more.

Da Shan didn't hesitate to use the surrounding mana as footing to launch herself towards Han Yunxi. When she once more appeared before him, she launched another fist. And another. And another. Each one carried tremendous demonic force and explosive power.

Han Yunxi could barely handle her speed, and even her power was incredible. But he wasn't shaken, merely giving a smile as he reinforced his astral ward. With simply this defensive measure, he was continuously blown backwards yet remained unharmed.

While doing so, he quietly twirled his fingers and caused the needles to move about below and above them. They followed like quiet servants, clearly up to no good.

Da Shan kept up the pressure, crushing him with her speed and strength with every ounce of her strength. Despite her powerful offensive, she couldn't fully penetrate his astral ward. This caused her to be slightly frustrated, but he continued.

Han Yunxi couldn't help but reveal a smug expression after the twelfth attack from Da Shan showed little success, merely pushing him a little. He decided to end this.

With a series of waves from his hands, he moved his fingers about in an exaggerated manner, and his body erupted with an astonishing aura. His astral force flowed out endlessly.

「Myriad Needle Art: Hundred-Thousand End」

Shiing!

Those needles that quietly followed them started to release a metallic keening noise. In a split second, seemingly endless astral force radiated from them as they multiplied numerous times.

"...!" Da Shan's eyes constricted as she noticed her surroundings become filled with silver.

Seeing the hint of fear on Da Shan's face as they became surrounded by a hundred thousand needles, three hundred and three real while the rest were conjured from pure metal force, Han Yunxi felt extremely satisfied.

Da Shan looked around. The aura of each needle was astonishing, and they pressed against her demonic astral ward, preventing her from moving without using up a huge amount of astral force. But what Han Yunxi saw as fear wasn't fear. Instead, it was a hint of sadness and seething, ferocious rage.

"Is this what you used to kill my father?" Her calm voice was extremely incisive as she asked, her golden eyes fixating on Han Yunxi. From within her body, a power seemingly stirred.

Chapter 310 - 307: G.S.T, Revenge

Han Yunxi had already become drunk in his soon-to-be victory. His opponent couldn't penetrate through his metal-type astral ward, even his trap had been laid and activated. A sensation of triumph seized his heart, but that heart was shaken by surprise. This opponent of his hadn't paled from fear or struggled pathetically while in despair, but stared directly into his eyes and asked a soul penetrating question.

"Is this what you used to kill my father?"

Father?

What father? Who?

He momentarily paused as he observed this hybrid of a demon. She was roughly eight feet tall, with an ample figure, and valiant beauty about her. He hadn't immediately recalled any individual with looks similar to her. As a cultivator, as a cultivator that roamed freely within the world, he had met and killed plenty of people.

That being said, there were still too few Astral Core Realm cultivators to forget any that he sent off into the afterlife. Considering this girl could become an elite in the Astral Core Realm, furthermore possess such a talent and strength, her parents must be relatively well-connected or exceptionally strong.

He slowly twirled his fingers about as the hundred thousand needles danced around them like a silver sea.

Da Shan saw the distinct look of surprise and confusion on his face, and her heart started to become aflame with raging anger. Her golden eyes narrowed and the ferocity within became stronger than ever.

Her aura startled to fiercely seethe, causing a tempest of violet-colored astral force to erupt. The sea of needles was slowly pushed backwards, but merely by a little.

Han Yunxi frowned slightly, but then he relaxed. "Maybe? But what does it matter? Just die." He quickly came to the realization that it didn't matter if this young woman was here for him or for the competition. In fact, it didn't matter if he truly killed her father or mother or entire family. It truly didn't. He had already decided in his heart to kill her.

Da Shan didn't erupt in fury at his indifferent and disrespectful response. Instead, she calmed down to an inconceivable degree. Not speaking another word, she started to focus her strength.

The crowd outside were enthralled in this high-speed and explosive battle. Da Shan had revealed an extremely powerful physical body, striking with high speed and forceful power, while Han Yunxi responded calmly while defending with an exceptionally difficult-to-penetrate shell. Now they were encapsulated in a sea of silver, the contents of which were metal force conjured needles. They could no longer see the exact happenings of the battle, but they all knew a winner would be decided shortly.

Su Mei watched the sea of needles move about as if alive, circulating the two, and seemingly ready to attack in a mysterious and unpredictable fashion. "This art requires an enormous amount of astral force to unleash and even more to maintain," she commented with a little bit of disappointment.

Wei Wuyin calmly smiled, "Complete knowledge of your opponent leads to complete victory."

Su Mei nodded, "It's over."

Just as she said this, violet light rays erupted between the spaces of the needles. A thunderous explosion that could only be felt by the spiritual sense erupted within. If it wasn't for the crystal wall shielding everyone, many would've been easily shaken by this. The sea of needles paused for a moment before they seemed to move about in a swift and hurried manner.

The sea of needles transformed into dozens of rivers and surged inwards, collapsing the well established sphere, and revealing the insides to everyone. A young woman was calmly standing about in valiant battle armor, her golden eyes releasing an extremely bright radiance while behind her was a seven hundred meter violet mountain.

Furthermore, her nearly eight feet tall figure had explosive growth, standing at nearly eighty feet. She had grown a full ten times! But her gloves, greaves, and clothes all expanded with her. Her body was covered in gorgeous runic markings, giving her a mysterious beauty.

"Seven Rings?!" Someone cried as they spotted a violet mountain that stood immovable behind the giant woman's figure. It was a construct of the Astral Soul, an Idol of Projection, and it revealed its innate potential and hidden depths of power. It was the defining trump card and cultivation trait that every Soul Idol Phase cultivator possessed—their Soul Idol!

It was grand, majestic, and felt as if it could suppress all souls with its immense weight and extraordinary size. When truly unleashed, truly manifested, a cultivator's strength multiplied several-fold. Each ring signified its hidden depths of spiritual strength, aura, and potential. When one's spiritual strength is increased, one's spiritual essence is increased. When one's spiritual essence is increased, one's Astral and Spiritual Force is increased.

The sea of needles that were impacted by the violet rays of light started to rapidly collapse into specks of silver before vanishing. What was soon fully revealed as the nearly eighty-foot woman clutching the struggling and bloody Han Yunxi within one hand. The crunching of bones could be heard.

"...!" Han Yunxi wheezed as his lungs felt crushed, his body's bones already splintering into his flesh. The pain was unbearable, but his true pain came from within. Endless violet rays of spiritual light entered his sea of consciousness, attempting to penetrate his entirety and seize his everything. Alas, his spiritual strength was severely lacking.

He merely had a three-ringed Soul Idol, a reflection of his spiritual strength. In terms of comparing it with the elite geniuses of the starfield, he was relatively on the low side. The greatest geniuses of this era had been at the seven-ringed state, but that was merely limited to Purists who focused on their foundation, foregoing all other distractions.

When Da Shan released her seven-ringed Soul Idol, he had lost his senses by the immense spiritual pressure that was applied to him. He could barely react before being suppressed, and then Da Shan had explosively grown and grabbed at him. His previously impregnable astral ward had been crushed with a single hand's squeeze.

The moment he regained his senses, he immediately realized who she was. Even the flooding memories of this so-called father of hers had come to his mind. She was of the titan lineage. A very rare bloodline of humanoid beings that could enlarge their bodies by uniquely enhancing their physical energies. They were extremely renowned, but not for their strength, as it was mostly average, but the ability to refine them into a type of Blood Pill.

Blood Pills were an alchemical generalization for pills concocted using the innate essence and energies of an individual, be it cultivator or mortal. These Blood Pills were useful and used by Evil Cultivators to promote their strength. The Ji Clan in the Myriad Monarch Sect that had been eliminated at Wei Wuyin's words were caught using infants to refine these sorts of sordid and vicious pills.

While the world didn't reject Evil Methods and means such as this, if they were too extreme, they would be universally condemned. This was mostly because of the truth behind three little words: Cultivation is difficult.

The titan bloodline was very useful in strengthening the foundation of one's physical energies, amplifying one's power by a large margin. Therefore, Evil Cultivators would seek them out and slaughter them; then, they would refine their blood essence into Blood Pills and cultivate with them.

He remembered coming across a cluster of humans with titan bloodlines a century or so ago on a continent. They were all beneath the Astral Core Realm, so it was as if a pie had fallen onto his lap. Moreover, his master had told him that using Evil Methods to increase his strength was appropriate as long as he thoroughly cleaned up his mess. He didn't hesitate to slaughter the entire group, taking their corpses with excitement and happiness.

This...

While clutched in the grip of a titan, he felt an unfathomable amount of despair. How did she know? Who was she? No, no, she couldn't have known!

While it is true that it happened more than a century ago, and while it was true that he did a fine job cleaning up after him. But what he didn't count on was the Continental Guardian on the continent observing every act and atrocity as part of their job. While they won't ever interfere, they'll still remember.

With Wei Wuyin's connections and wealth, what type of information couldn't he obtain if it was out there?

Han Yunxi started to fiercely struggle as his astral force exploded, colliding within his body with powerful might. Alas, it was useless. His last bit of struggle, his last bit of remembrance, was met with an invasive force that penetrated into his sea of consciousness. His vision and senses were overwhelmed with violet light and his sense of self felt as if it was being slowly devoured.

He couldn't even surrender.

Da Shan's breath was a little ragged as she forcefully entered his sea of consciousness and extracted his memories. While the memories weren't clear and there wasn't an exact timeline, she saw images of her people being slaughtered. It was merely a brief glimpse, but it was enough.

Her heart trembled with agony and pain.

PSUUSH!

She violently clutched her large hand and Han Yunxi was crushed between her fingers. His head popped off while his torso turned to mush. When she opened her hand, the legs that still twitched fell to the ground in a fleshy thud.

She...she did it.

But...in the end, her father wouldn't return.

Her body started to shrink and her aura deflated. The violet mountain behind her had shook the crowd more than Han Yunxi's death ever could. A seven-ringed Soul Idol! This was a Soul Idol that indicated a genius of peak-tier! Quite a few individuals amongst the Myriad Monarch Sect didn't even know her name, but she revealed talent beyond even their Heavenly Kings! Even her strength was unfathomable!

Da Shan didn't bother looking at her spirit points, simply directly stepping off the platform when the crystal walls faded. Her bloody hands were trembling and her gaze was unfocused. She felt cold, lost, and unsure.

Before she could get too far, a hand grasped her own, giving her warmth. She trembled, looking up to see a pair of silver eyes and an unearthly handsome face that carried a smile. This smile didn't feel as if it was congratulating her. It seemed as if it carried the intent of understanding. It understood her.

Tears started to seep from her eyes and she clutched that hand tightly, finding solace within that firm existence. She collapsed into his embrace, and despite the two feet size difference, her head was firmly hugged in his chest. The feeling of someone holding her as she felt all these emotions was all she needed.

"..." When the crowd saw this, there was silence. They didn't know her story, her emotions, her rage, or her thoughts, but when they saw Wei Wuyin, they all respectfully remained silent. Because it clearly wasn't the right time to speak.

Qing Qiumu stood a little ways away, watching as Wei Wuyin embraced another woman. Her heart felt strange, but she couldn't quite pinpoint why. A layer of mist flowed over her eyes for a moment.

As Da Shan silently released her emotions, the world outside was going absolutely crazy!