

**Chapter 411 - 407: Four Extremes Continent**

"This just keeps getting more and more interesting!" Wei Wuyin had always been an adventurer at heart, wanting to delve into the vastness and curiosities that the world had to offer. If it wasn't for his Bloodline of Sin, if it wasn't for all the Calamities, if it wasn't for the rush to the Realm of Sages, he would have settled down with a beautiful harem, a thriving business, and traveled the world after leaving his descendants behind, likely only taking himself and his wives that wished to follow.

It was a dream of his, to be free and unrestrained after establishing his name throughout the world, never wanting for wealth and leaving behind a successful lineage that'll flourish for a long time, hopefully forever.

So being introduced into a new civilization where the dynamic was different, where the mysteries were abundant, thrilled him. This was why he allowed himself to be captured, to suffer some abuse along the way, because he wanted to be exposed and experience a life other than that within his comfort.

It had led him to an underground civilization of elven cultivators that had an artificial star above. There was new food, strange architecture, and more. That being said, he did have a limit to what he'd allow or endure.

"My name's Wei Wuyin, it is a pleasure to meet you." He looked back to the elven woman, introducing himself with a smile and a courteous bow.

Taken aback, the elven woman wasn't certain how to react. As if seeking if this was really happening, she glanced at the dumbstruck soldier beside Wei Wuyin, noticing he too was shocked by Wei Wuyin's actions.

"Send the Ganshu into his cell; he will not be treated differently." The elven woman ordered, deciding to no longer entertain Wei Wuyin. She spoke in the elves' unique language so Wei Wuyin wasn't certain what she said. But when the captor snapped back and started to instinctively act out orders, grabbing Wei Wuyin's arm with force, Wei Wuyin realized what she said.

"Before I go, can I ask you what or who you're trying to sell me to? And for what purpose?" Wei Wuyin asked as the soldier tried to drag him away, extremely startled that he didn't move an inch despite his wrenching force.

The elven woman was already walking away, not noticing the scene of the soldiers bewilderment and shock. "You'll know when you get there!" Was all she said as she left, about to leave behind a pleasing image of her fleeting backside.

"Wait! What's your name?" Wei Wuyin asked, the soldier redoubled his efforts but to no avail, starting to question his own strength.

"Lieutenant Ai, Ai Juling." She soon vanished into a building, causing Wei Wuyin's eyes to brighten. Finally, the soldier seemed to regain his strength as he pushed Wei Wuyin into the cage along with the other captives.

When Wei Wuyin was placed into the crowd of human captives, he found himself receiving curious and disdainful glances as if ridiculing him for not recognizing his fate. He looked at the building that Ai Juling vanished into, ignoring the soldier as he left after detaching the chain that linked to the shackles at his neck.

After a few dozen seconds, Wei Wuyin's eyes brightened to an even greater degree. "I've decided. Ai Juling, I want you." As if determining this certainty, he looked at the bewildered and shocked expressions of the humans before him.

One of them whispered loudly, "Wishful dreams! The fool..."

Wei Wuyin was clearly supposed to hear that, but he simply chuckled with heart and ease. It was incredibly strange to see a bronze-skinned elf, and he wanted her. Just like Da Shan and Nyla Shur, he was intrigued at first sight. The only time he's failed to pursue a woman in his life was when they've died abruptly.

His chuckle caused a few of the human captives to frown. "Do you not know what situation you're in?! You're really a fool!" A middle-aged bald man with a mole on the right side of his face shouted in anger. He was a little short and stout, but he had a sturdy pair of brown eyes.

"I actually don't," Wei Wuyin turned to the bald man and said, finding a spot to sit down.

"...Don't? Don't what?" The bald man was confused, not expecting Wei Wuyin to answer that way.

"You don't know what situation you're in?" An elderly man with a tall, muscular figure spoke. He had the strongest physical body of these human captives, perhaps even the highest cultivation base.

"I don't. Mind telling me?" Wei Wuyin honestly replied, looking at his spatial ring. He wondered why they didn't take this, but he realized that everyone else also had spatial rings on their fingers, but it was different from his. He grew curious as this was the first time he had seen spatial rings, not storage rings, being among cultivators.

Spatial rings carried their own independent spaces while storage rings acted as miniature void gates that led to two-way shifting of inanimate objects and some herbs and plants. The latter needed a location pre-placed and pre-determined to act as a storage container while the former didn't need this, making it impossible to access unless one takes possession of the spatial rings themselves.

It was quite peculiar to see them on cultivators, as he only saw them on Blessed like Yuan Longshi and likely the Commander, the three-layered ring he used for quite some time.

"You really don't know?" The elderly man asked again, as if his hearing was failing. This caused Wei Wuyin to laugh, but he didn't repeat himself again.

This caused the elderly man to look at Wei Wuyin strangely. He said, "You ventured so deeply into The Desolate Lands without knowing the risks? Did someone kidnap you and leave you here?"

"I can see that happening," the man who whispered loudly said with a hint of frustration. He had the most ridiculing expression on his face.

"The Desolate Lands?" Wei Wuyin's eyes glowed with interest. It was a suitable name considering the environment was infused with Desolate Intent, creating strong desolate power from the limited ambient

essence and mana. Just breathing in the air would infuse the qualities of desolation into one's lungs, shriveling them up and having them decay eventually.

This was probably why the soldiers above were fully covered from head to toe.

Seeing Wei Wuyin's interest, the elderly man took that as an agreement to his words. Wei Wuyin must've been brought here by his enemies, left to die but was carried off and brought here. He didn't know if this youth was fortunate or unfortunate. Furthermore, he seemed extremely ignorant and sheltered. From his extremely handsome face and earlier nonsense, he felt that Wei Wuyin was quite pitiful now.

"The Desolate Lands is a territory of disaster but also fortune. During the Season of Regression, Seekers, such as myself and the others here, venture into the dangerous lands seeking these fortunes. Unfortunately, the Grey Sands Elves are quite vicious, using this opportunity to hunt us humans while we hunt for treasure." His words caused the expressions of every captive to change, flickering with frustration, hate, and sadness.

They were treasure seekers that had been captured hunting in foreign territory by the natives. That was the gist.

In a way, they were lucky to not be executed on the spot. This was simply thievery, no? He couldn't imagine the elves didn't want these treasures either.

"Grey Sands Elves?" He asked curiously.

The elderly man explained, "There are four Elven Tribes that exist on the Four Extremes Continent: the Grey Sands Elves, the Black Mountain Elves, Verdant Forest Elves, and Navy River Elves. They have their own territories, situating themselves in the four extreme lands to avoid conflict. At least, making it very difficult to initiate a conflict.

"The Grey Sand Elves are the generalized tribe name of the elves that live beneath The Desolate Lands in their underground cities. They have individual clans and families, and each city is run by the Nine Great Elven Clans. For example, that Lieutenant Ai Juling you spoke to is a member of the Ai Clan, a Clan that's one of the Nine Great Elven Clans.

Wei Wuyin digested this swiftly, asking, "Are there only nine cities?"

But the elderly man shook his head, "There are a lot more than nine cities, but I don't know the exact number."

The bald man interjected, "There's at least a hundred, each housing at least a million of these elves."

The elderly man added, "But there are Nine Capitals, housing the main branches of each Great Clan. These cities are said to be massive, and only Grey Sands Elves are allowed in. Even other elves are executed on sight there, not to mention humans."

Wei Wuyin was deeply invested into this, feeling awed by the sheer enormity of it all. This continent was as large as a planet, so it must have a few billion lifeforms at least. How impressive of a world realm!

"How vast is The Desolate Lands?"

The bald man jumped out and excitedly said, "The Desolate Lands are extremely vast! It's 156,000 miles!" His excitement was rather childish, the gleam in his eyes revealing his pure fascination with The Desolate Lands.

Wei Wuyin nodded. "The Desolate Lands is one of four? So the other lands must be equal in size? That means the continent spans for 624,000 miles?"

The elderly man shook his head, "Close. Its exactly 810,000 miles. You have to include the larger central area that houses the majority of advanced lifeforms, us humans."

This caused Wei Wuyin to feel extremely intrigued. That grey ghost truly didn't lie when he said it was over half the size of a large-sized planet in the starfield. The Myriad Monarch Main Planet was larger than this, but not by much, but the largest planet in the starfield was roughly double that in terms of diameter.

Wei Wuyin asked for more clarification, but used his deductive reason to gather most of his information. For example, the Season of Regression was a period of weakness of essence and mana, which reduced the relative strength of the desolate power. During this lull period, Seekers sought to excavate resources and earthly treasures from these hazardous lands for profit.

These four lands were so dangerous but most of humanity lived in the central lands, with only a few select sects and clans settling their base of operation or establishing cities in these lands. The central lands was a holy land of cultivation, having abundant essence and resources, but during the Season of Regression, it entered a state of withering that makes it extremely unsuitable to cultivate.

There was little mana, thin essence, very little ambient energies, and resources were extremely difficult to obtain from it. Therefore, human cultivators made it a sport to traverse the dangerous lands of the continent to obtain powerful and rare resources that were unattainable at any other time.

This continued until they finally led to the uneventful fate of humans captured by the natives.

"What awaits us is to be sold. If we're lucky, we'll be used as energy converters until our cultivation are entirely exhausted and useless, but if we're not...they'll forcefully alter our cultivation base and force us to...concoct alchemical products." Those words caused everyone to become sullen and depressed.

But Wei Wuyin's expression was distinctly different, his silver eyes brightly shining. "Concoct products? Tell me more."

#### **Chapter 412 - 408: The Fate That Awaits Us**

The elderly man was startled by Wei Wuyin's interest in concocting products, a strong expression of aversion and despair flashed across his aged face. Then, when he recalled the likelihood of Wei Wuyin's sheltered background and pitiful fate, he regained himself and sighed with the heaviness of an entire ocean.

"This is not a fate that you want to experience. We can only hope that these elves will be sending us to their conversion camps. At least this means we might have a more peaceful, more relaxed life until the end." The defeatism within him was readily apparent from his tone.

Wei Wuyin furrowed his brows as he swept his gaze over the sullen expressions of everyone present. He calmly said, "Can't you just kill yourself?" While he wasn't a proponent of suicide or giving up, but if the fate one was left to live was too hellish and inescapable, then this was a viable option to take an early path to the grave.

His words caused a few of the captive men to jump, their eyes flitted with an ambiguously dangerous light for a moment. Then, as if a realization struck them, their expressions became dark and their heads hung low.

The contemptuous man, who found Wei Wuyin foolishly naive, sneered without restraint. "And how will we go about doing that, Young Lord? Huh? How?!" He mocked. Without waiting for Wei Wuyin to explain, he grabbed the collar that shackled his neck, energetically displaying the restraints on his arms and legs as if to demand a solution, to hear Wei Wuyin's brilliant idea of how.

"Stop," the elderly man abruptly said. "These collars restrain our strength, suppress our forces and energies. We can't commit suicide without a sufficient external opportunity, anything less will just subject us to unnecessary pain."

Wei Wuyin glanced at the shackles, then he realized the truth in his words. It seems he was being naive, chuckling to himself. Each one of these cultivators had reinforced bodies by various energies, making them extremely durable and strong. If their forces and powers were restrained, they wouldn't be able to harm themselves with their bare hands.

While their physical strength was suppressed, the tempering their bodies underwent hadn't just vanished. In most ways, they were currently like mortals. It would be like trying to harm a fortified astral steel wall with their bare hands, it just wasn't possible.

They wouldn't be able to rip out their throats or bury their fingers into their eyes, stirring up their brains. These were particularly violent ways to kill oneself, but with their current lack of weapons or tools, this was all that was available to them. Furthermore, if there was a healer on standby, they might actually be saved by the elves.

"I guess you're right," Wei Wuyin admitted. This probably had to be one of the core struggles of cultivators, especially after they've been restrained. In normal cases, this was a blessing. Those weakened due to battle or other reasons won't have others who were far, far weaker take advantage. But in the case they were restrained and suppressed, they were trapped in their own situation with no way out.

Even self-detonation of one's Natal or Astral Soul wasn't possible.

Wei Wuyin was a user of this principle in capturing and securing prisoners back in his Scarlet Solaris Sect days, but he had assumed that others would have a solution. In truth, he did. When he was a member of the Scarlet Solaris Sect, he devoted a portion of his time to concocting pellets of poison. These pellets were hidden in his subordinates' mouths, their teeth or stitched into the soft portion of their inner mouth.

It was all for the eventual possibility of torture. He made sure to inform them that if they were in a position of weakness, they would be killed after torture anyways. It was best to avoid that fate

altogether. He had even concocted a few vicious poisons that would spread toxins into the air, poisoning nearby captors.

But these people obviously weren't prepared for that possibility. He had simply spoken in a way as if it should be common place for a profession prone to capture to have ways to commit suicide against a stronger enemy in the face of an abhorrent fate.

The elderly man was a little satisfied with Wei Wuyin for not flipping out in the face of such mocking actions. He explained, "You might not know about Converter Camps, so let me explain. These are areas where cultivators, like us, are fed impure essence stones and volatile materials that are typically harmful to our cultivation bases and bodies. They have us convert these into pure energies and have us pour them into artificial stones. They can then use them for formations or their own cultivation."

"It's like turning us into filters," the bald man added with a shiver.

Wei Wuyin was stunned. What a vicious method. That's one way to cultivate without bringing harm to yourself, have others refine the materials for you. They received all the pure energies beneficial for cultivation while the impurities of essence stones and materials were kept within the refiner's bodies.

Considering the problematic issue of abundant resources but unusable materials that the starfield has, this might've been an eventual possibility without advanced Alchemic Culture that had developed thanks to the King of Everlore and the Alchemic Association's Founder. There would be wars waged and sacrifices of the less talented, connected, and powerful to serve the cultivations for those who were.

But it seems the elves were outnumbered by humans, likely even outclassed in cultivation, so they hid and took what came.

"What about forcefully altering cultivation bases to concoct products? What did you mean by that?" Wei Wuyin asked, curious as to why this was even more 'hellish' in the minds of everyone present.

The man who mocked him earlier exclaimed with a contemptuous laugh, "You know nothing, huh?! Do you not even know this?"

Wei Wuyin looked at this man with a sidelong glance. Then, with a bright smile, he responded: "I've tolerated you long enough. Speak out of turn again with that tone, you won't have to wait for whatever awaits you." His unearthly handsome face, brilliant smile, and radiant silver eyes could cause numerous hearts to throb with swooning emotions, but all the mocking man felt was an icy-chill bolt through his spine.

"..." The captives went silent, looking at Wei Wuyin. They were lost in his charm, feeling as if they had just forgotten about his appearance. They were so wrapped up in their own despair and hopelessness that they hadn't realized that Wei Wuyin was extremely handsome, and this was soon amplified by his unfathomable calm.

The bald man frowned, growing suspicious. It wasn't just him, but the elderly man felt shocked by Wei Wuyin. He recalled their conversation, and his eyes brightened.

He was about to shout, but he held his tongue and whispered, "Do you have a way out of here? Seniors that are arriving?" The calm and imposing demeanor of Wei Wuyin could be because of naiveté, but it also could be because of absolute confidence in one's freedom. This brought him hope.

Wei Wuyin turned away from the annoying captive, looking at the elderly man. "Can you answer my question?"

This only served to brighten the ray of hope in the elderly man's heart, and he soon grew excited. With a few breaths, sweeping his gazes at the nearby guards, he said: "They would dissolve our cultivation bases with a unique method, then forcefully have us cultivate an Alchemic Soul. We would then be forced to concoct products until our untimely demise."

"An Alchemic Astral Soul?" Wei Wuyin was shocked. They were all cultivators at the Astral Core Realm. He had many means to dissolve a person's cultivation base, having it restart anew via products. But after one enters the Astral Core Realm, their cultivation bases become irreversible in its foundation.

For example, if his Divine Saber Astral Soul, King, was dissolved, when he tried to rebuild his Astral Soul, it would still be a Divine Saber Astral Soul. This was because an Astral Soul can only undergo one Astral Tribulation in their lifetime. The only way to prevent that outcome would be to completely throw away every last bit of his cultivation, cultivate something similar to the Haven Heart Qi Method, and form a new Spirit.

But if he did that, he would suffer severely in lifespan, bodily conditions, and innate energy regulation. It was a risky possibility that one would undergo Cultivation Deviation during the procedure without proper oversight.

The elderly man nodded, "Yes."

"...!" Wei Wuyin's heart leapt in explosive shock. How?!

His mind was calculating a few principles of cultivation. This shouldn't be possible. An Alchemic Astral Soul has to undergo an Astral Tribulation, right? The dissolved bits of one's cultivation base should only be able to rebuild into the foundation of their cultivation, right?

It was these principles that allowed him to easily bring Zuhei back from crippling, twice.

Wei Wuyin's strong reaction prompted the bald man to add, "While it's an Alchemic Astral Soul, it's not a true Alchemic Astral Soul. Furthermore, you won't be concocting products, but their alchemists will be using your enhanced alchemical energies you produce. It's rumored to be hellishly painful, dreadful to the point where one wishes for death for every second of their lives."

Wei Wuyin's eyebrows lifted, "Not a true Alchemic Astral Soul? Enhanced alchemical energies?" His mind flared with intensive thoughts as he found a possible way to do this, causing his heart to immediately relax. He chuckled to himself, *'It seems having your conventional thoughts overturn can really disturb the mind. I need to keep an open mind to all possibilities; to expect the unlikely and improbable.'*

As an Inheritor of Sin who bore witness to Temporal Reincarnation, visited Hell, saw the Yellow Springs, and was aware of the Heavenly Daos existence, he should be more resilient to the vastness of the world.

"I see. That's rather interesting. To use others as a proxy, but there's still one question: Who are we to be sold to?" Wei Wuyin asked with uncertainty tainting his voice. The Grey Sands Elves could simply use them for those two things, why trade? It seemed like they're losing long term advantages for short term benefits.

The bald man dejectedly lowered his head. The other captives seemed to reveal indignant expressions, and that's when Wei Wuyin recalled Ai Juling's words about treatment and being sent back to where he'd come from.

"No way!" Wei Wuyin was shocked at the thought, but the elderly man only confirmed his assumption.

"To the forces that exist in The Desolate Lands; to the other humans here, to our own kind."

#### **Chapter 413 - 409: Strength Is Core**

"..."

The elderly man began to explain in detail, causing Wei Wuyin's heart to grow a little cold. The Seekers that scour the treasures of the four extreme lands on the Four Extremes Continent were almost all from the Central Region—The Holy Land of Elements.

Outside of these human forces in the central region, there were cities and forces that lived above or within the dangerous lands housed by humans and prevented the elven race from laying an independent claim to them. Those Seekers often visit these cities to restock their supplies or rest, so they are often filled with experts.

It was these forces that traded with the elves for captured Seekers, and while everyone was aware of this, there wasn't much that could be done. The cities were a necessity for Seekers, and humans thrived in them. The environment was horrible for cultivation and development, so using Energy Converters and Alchemic Proxies was an absolute need to promote their strength.

Furthermore, as long as they were Energy Converters, they had a chance at life after their cultivation base was exhausted, their bodies reached a breakpoint, and they would be free to live in these cities. It was far better than dying a horrific death without a future.

In the end, this was the brutality of the world. Wei Wuyin didn't bother with the question as to why the forces don't enslave elves for their purposes. He already knew the answer; avoidable conflict. The Holy Land of Elements, the Central Region of the Continent, was blessed and filled with resources outside of the Season of Regression while the outside environment was extremely harsh, far more disastrous than it was now.

Fighting a war against the elves for this was impractical and unsustainable. Likely an agreement had long since hashed out between them, allowing stable trades to be initiated and mutual benefits to be had. And during the Season of Regression, everyone was focused on claiming usually unattainable resources. So the distraction was unwanted.

Wei Wuyin wasn't unfamiliar with this principle, nor was he a saint that sought to free others and establish a fair and safe environment. The world of cultivation was inherently unfair. This was further supported by the existence of Blessed and the Heavenly Daos intentional influence to those who sinned, going against its arbitrary rules.

Slaves exist because of the weak.

The weak exist because others are strong.



These captives were weaker than their captors, they were weaker than their sellers, so they were forced to live the way others felt they should. This was why many refused to delve into the path of the Alchemic Soul, it took away the ability to fight for one's fate oneself, needing to rely on others.

"Do you have a way out? To escape?" The bald man asked after all the explanations. The hope in his eyes were vividly animated as he stared fervently at Wei Wuyin. The other captives also started to move about, ruffling in their corners and seeking out the focus of the bald man's gaze.

The elderly man admonished, "If he had a way to escape, he would've long since done it! Clearly, if there's any way to escape, it'll be from outside help." He fended off the approaching captives who were starting to become quite riled with emotions, revealing his abundant level of physical strength.

But this killed a portion of their hope. What level of power must one be to invade an underground city? A supreme expert of the highest order must act, and if that happens, they'll likely only act swiftly to save a single person before leaving. After all, these underground cities weren't for show.

Their hopes started to dissipate like smoke on a windy day.

Wei Wuyin wryly smiled at this, ignoring these individuals, turning away and looking at the building Ai Juling entered. He furrowed his brows slightly as he observed the nearby guards who, despite their covering, he could see their expressions of ridicule and disdain. Clearly, they had heard all of this and were entirely unbothered by their movements or hope. In fact, he could hear faint laughter from inside the building as Ai Juling entertained a few military guests.

They were talking about him, and how hilarious they found it that his attitude was so arrogant and foolish. It seems he wasn't the first to act this way, and they even recalled various matters that happened before. There was even a time that an expert had tried to save a captive, only to be captured instead.

Wei Wuyin was just quietly watching, listening, and waiting as he observed the ceiling of the underground city. At the center of the dome, at its apex, there existed a sphere of light that replicated the characteristics of a solar star. It even released a unique light that dissipated the power of desolate in the breathable air.

This sphere of light soon dimmed, signifying the passing of time. The other captives had started to wait, their hope remaining strong that they might be able to escape and return to their wives and families. Wei Wuyin noted that there were only males here, realizing the females were held elsewhere. Considering the cruelty of the world, these female captives might have a harsher fate awaiting them.

*'If I just brazenly escape, killing would be unavoidable. That was my original intention, but if I started to randomly slaughter my way out, then Ai Juling would definitely see me as a mortal enemy. If I stealthily leave, then that leaves an opportunity, but...'* He thought, wanting to avoid the paths that would ruin his chances of courting Ai Juling.

From the beginning, these shackles were child's play. He had four Astral Souls, just their refinement of his fleshy body made him possess mountain-toppling strength. This didn't even factor his Draconic Void Soul or countless refinement of concocted products, causing his physical energies to reach unprecedented levels. He could crush these steel shackles like brittle glass.

He hadn't tested the absolute limits of his physical strength, but crushing an ordinary Soul Idol cultivator would be extremely easy, barely a breath of effort. This wasn't even considering the empowering physical-based astral force—Draconic Force—or his Martial Arts.

*'Maybe I could fully reveal my existence as an Alchemist, be of service to the Grey Sands Elves or the Ai Clan directly, but that might not be very impressive in this culture or help breach the limit of racial difference and perception.'* Something that might work with ease in his starfield might produce a different effect. From what he gathered, alchemists had a negative connotation within the minds of everyone.

They were mostly slaves or producers of products for the strong and connected, weak and fragile. With the Alchemic Proxy method of theirs, they could replicate similar successes to the Princess of Everlore, which explains why the society of cultivation had remained so abnormally strong despite the absence of the King of Everlore.

He didn't know if this was by design of the Divine King Han Xei or an inevitable outcome as long as an era-defining respectable figure like the King of Everlore or force like the Alchemist Association doesn't exist.

After all, the King of Everlore gave birth to Mystic Ascendants and held deep relationships with them. Who would dare belittle alchemists of the Alchemic Dao? Even in later generations, there was still respect that lingered from his presence.

It gave alchemists such a high-level status they had, the freedom to grow and remain unabused.

Wei Wuyin was flooded with too many considerations due to his desire to court Ai Juling. It was restricting himself, causing him to sigh. Even revealing his outstanding strength or talent would only make him be seen as a threat. Who knew how the seniors in charge of the city would react. A single itchy nerve and these elders might launch a full-blown assault to kill him.

But there was another issue: if he left the city after being sold off, returning in a stealthy fashion might have various meanings to Ai Juling.

He ruffled his head slightly, filled with frustration. But then he heard something.

"Just take her away, away, away!" Those words originated from the normally childish Ori. It directly suggested he kidnap her, causing him to wryly smile at its aggressive thoughts.

Kratos added, "Strength is the foundation of all relationships! If you have enough power, what obstacles are there?! What walls could hold you?! THE VOID IS OURS!" It, without fail, started to spout some unnecessary nonsense at the end, but its intent was there.

Eden chimed in, "Be it lack thereof or abundance, strength is core."

King, "Tch!" From his tone, it seemed he was trying to say: "Too much thinking."

They all said their piece, causing Wei Wuyin to feel stunned by their words. His disbelieving expression slowly became neutral, then pondering. His rumination lasted for several minutes until his silver eyes flashed with a radiant glow.

They were right; he was thinking about this all wrong. He should be direct, his intentions clear, especially with the cultural differences. He didn't have the time, luxury, or setting to patiently wait or get to know Ai Juling in a deep and thorough manner with gentle tactics. She regarded him as a to-be-sold slave, as a naive human, and his reputation can't serve as an icebreaker.

He wasn't in the same situation as Da Shan, Nyla Shur, nor the other women he'd courted in the past. An unfamiliar world, unfamiliar customs, and limited time.

He had to adapt.

"Alright!" Wei Wuyin said, rising from his seated position. His actions alerted the captives as they were startled, their hope igniting like a forest blaze, threatening to burn all their blood.

"Yes! Yes! Yes! Hehe, ELFNAP!" Ori excitedly shouted. Wei Wuyin could hear its cheerful laughter.

"Tch." King's words were short, but his intent was there. It said: "I would've done this in the first second. Why wait in a cage?"

While Kratos and Eden remained silent, their spirits were thoroughly roused. They started to circulate their unique energies, easily bypassing the shackles restrictions. Their energies seeped into and deactivated them, causing them to slowly fall from Wei Wuyin's limbs as they unlocked. Their actions were enough to reveal their desire.

Clink! Clang!

With the shackles gone, Wei Wuyin lifted his eyes to the spherical light above. "There's a powerful expert watching. This should be..."

"Fun! Fun! Fun! GOOOO!" Ori excitement was palpable to a zenith degree!

Wei Wuyin chuckled, his aura slowly causing the air surrounding him to freeze as he started to prime his body.

The elderly man was startled by events, confusingly saying: "What are yo-"

BOOSH!

The cage that encased him shattered into innumerable fragments, turning to dust!

#### **Chapter 414 - 410: A Little Rusty**

The stiff air began to stir from Wei Wuyin's rising aura. The bits and pieces of the cage swirled around him forming a glinting twister. The rising aura continued its ascent, causing the ground to rumble and the immediate surroundings to quake.

Those captives nearby were enshrouded by this aura, feeling their breaths caught in their throats as they disbelievingly watched Wei Wuyin's tall backside, revealing his powerful broad shoulders and exquisite musculature from his flapping clothes.

The elderly man gawked, his heart racing a thousand beats a second. What was happening?! This youth, this seemingly naive young man, had suddenly released a spiritual aura so terrifying that he felt his own

Astral Soul vibrate with fear. Fortunately, this spiritual aura wasn't aggressive towards him, feeling safe and protected instead.

The guards nearby started, immediately readying their astral force as they erected wards. They had pensive expressions on their faces as they acted instinctively, pointing their withdrawn weapons towards Wei Wuyin. A guard shouted in questioning with a fierce, aggressive tone: "Halt! Any further actions will prompt us to use lethal force!"

The guard threatened, but it was in the elven language, causing Wei Wuyin to have absolutely no idea what was said, but it wouldn't have mattered regardless. He inspected his hands, feeling the immense power swelling within him.

"It's been a while since I've fought. I hope I'm not too rusty," he laughingly commented with a grin. Since entering the Astral Core Realm, the number of fights he'd been a part of had been severely lacking. With his extraordinary status in the starfield, he was widely unchallenged and there was never a legitimate reason to unleash his might. The Grand Spirit Trials was the only opportunity, and the contestants were unwilling to offend him besides his own subordinate.

How laughable.

Recalling his bloody, violent days in the Scarlet Solaris Sect where he fought off forces from enemies, competitors, and false allies alike, he felt invigorated to the utmost.

"Surrender!" The courageous guard demanded with a fierce shout, but upon being ignored for a second later, he grasped his spear-like weapon in his hand and pounced. The spear thrust was frighteningly powerful, wading through Wei Wuyin's spiritual aura with a slicing-air sound.

"Soul Idol?" Wei Wuyin realized this guard was a Soul Idol Phase expert, unleashing a spiritual aura that countered his own. While Wei Wuyin hadn't unleashed a percentage of his spiritual might within this aura, it was still impressive for a Soul Idol Phase expert to attack unhindered.

The spear soon reached a few inches from his chest, threatening to puncture him thoroughly.

"Ah!" The elderly man exclaimed in panic, his mind circulating swiftly as he tried to act. Unfortunately, when he tried to circulate his cultivation base, he found himself restricted by the shackles. He violently cursed, watching as the spear that was about to touch Wei Wuyin's clothes.

This was an instinctive reaction from him, drawing upon his innate instincts to protect a younger generation member of his race from enemies, and while valiant, it was fully unnecessary.

Bang!

Wei Wuyin's hand was like lightning, intercepting the tip of the spear with incredible accuracy with his index finger, the very edge of it. The spear relentlessly stabbed at his finger, causing the air to explode. But after touching his fingertip, the spear was unable to venture a single iota of distance more.

The guard released a grunt of confusion for a moment before he felt a surge of power enter his spear, a flash of panic in his eyes. He tried to let go and retreat, but the power moved far too quickly and entered his body.

"Gah!" The spear shattered into thousands of fragments, and the guard spewed out torrents of blood from his mouth, staining his clothes and ground in its crimson brilliance.

Thud!

He fell to his knees, his eyes widened in disbelief and horror. With his hands at his side, unable to move, he used his full strength to lift his drooping head to see Wei Wuyin looking down at him with those radiant silver eyes. When he saw the light of indifference, he felt a wave of torrential fear erupt from his heart and cascade his mind endlessly.

He soon lost consciousness, flopping to the ground in a sickening thud of solid ground meeting heavy flesh. His pale face and bloody mouth was evidence of his absolute defeat. The other guard paled at this unexpected sight, immediately withdrawing a red tube-like item and throwing it into the sky.

It erupted into a burning blaze that was similar to phosphorus being ignited in the air, creating a red flame that brightly lit the surroundings. It was a clear call for help.

Wei Wuyin calmly looked onwards, not halting the signal for help. In fact, he ignored this and turned to the captives who had gaped mouths and widened eyes. "You're going to have to wait a while. I'll be back," Wei Wuyin said as he waved his hand towards them. Abruptly, a ward of white energy formed around the human captives.

While he wasn't a saint, helping those simply because they needed it, the elderly man and bald man had informed him about this world realm, and the rest was just fortunate to be present at the time.

Turning to the building that Ai Juling was within, observing their swift movements as they were about to exit to investigate, he faintly smiled. Wei Wuyin had only allowed himself to be captured out of curiosity and experience. He wanted to know the 'why' and whether the approaching cultivators were enemies or linked to the trial somehow.

When he was brought into this underground city, he felt his decision was correct. He wanted to see what this city was about, feel its civilization, and find any clues to the trial. He hadn't expected to meet other human captives and receive an overview of the entire continent from them, nor did he expect to meet Ai Juling who provoked his interest.

But he now knew a little bit about the layout of the world, and he had his own assumptions. For example, from the revelation of four extreme lands and four guardians of the trial, he knew that there was likely a trial in each of those extremely dangerous lands.

This was a clue to the trial. As long as he could find this guardian, claim that token, he could begin collecting the rest. He knew three belonged to Lin Ming, and there were two other internal competitors on the continent. He didn't know where they were, but considering this was a trial, as long as he obtained a token, how to collect the rest should be made clear.

Considering the sheer size of the continent, the deadly environment, there was no way those tokens didn't contain a locator function of sorts or else the trial could last decades or centuries. That was highly inefficient.

If he found Lin Ming, that would be for the best.

Several powerful auras finally erupted nearby, not just from the building that housed Ai Juling and her companions, but several locations nearby. This was a stronghold, so there were numerous experts. The clamor was huge, and numerous voices were heard approaching with rapid speeds.

Wei Wuyin directed his Celestial Eyes downwards, a faint frown formed between his brows. Then, he relaxed. He brought his leg up, and then, STOMP!

He fiercely crashed it into the ground!

BOOM!!

The entire city's foundation quaked intensely, several spider web-like cracks with the thickness of adult tree trunks formed beneath him, causing the earth to lift slightly. Wei Wuyin released a faint sound of surprise, "This earth is as powerful as one would expect. Incredible!"

As he said this, his stomping leg glowed with seven-colored light that flashed into the newly established cracks and crevices of the ground. It disappeared after a split second, whereby Wei Wuyin heard an explosive shout from a man.

"Who are you?!" The man was an elf, his skin a little dark yet still within the realm of white. He was middle-aged and had long grey hair despite his youthful skin. Dressed in an ash-colored uniform, he approached with explosive steps from a distance.

Wei Wuyin realized it was taking a little too long for experts to arrive, almost forgetting that mana was extremely restricted during this Season of Regression; they couldn't fly. Using astral force for flight was possible, but moving at rapid speeds consumed an absurd amount of astral force.

They seemed ready for a fight, making conservation decisions already.

Wei Wuyin didn't wait or answer, looking at the building as Ai Juling and her companions had now left, arriving at the scene as their spiritual sense investigated the situation.

A middle-aged elven woman standing beside Ai Juling, who seemed somewhat similar to her in appearance, exclaimed. "Soul Idol Phase?" The tone of her voice was marked with confusion, uncertainty, and a little relief.

Ai Juling immediately saw Wei Wuyin, shocked at his freed state. Her senses wildly inspected the surroundings to find the expert who freed him, yet found no other auras nearby. But then she saw Wei Wuyin's figure blur suddenly, causing her to react as a surge of crisis emerged in her heart. She erected her protective astral ward and tried to withdraw her weapon, but Wei Wuyin was already in front of her in the blink of an eye.

"Ah!" The middle-aged woman yelped, immediately unleashing her cultivation in full! The immediate space started to ripple ceaselessly and torrential outflow of light erupted! She directly launched a palm at Wei Wuyin, attempting to force his retreat.

She was at the Light Reflection Phase! A cultivator at the Fifth Stage of the Astral Core Realm!

Wei Wuyin's pupils constricted a little, briefly shocked before he used his arm to retaliate in defense.

Bang!

An explosive sound erupted as Ai Juling was sent back, smashing into the entrance of the building while the other companions spewed blood and were blown far away. Even Wei Wuyin was somewhat shocked by this woman's cultivation base, finding it extremely high and refined.

His arm felt somewhat numb as light energies and spatial energies tried to invade and decimate its insides. With a slight clench of his fist, his astral force crushed the foreign power.

The woman's expression changed, immediately pulling back her palm and launching another with even more power. She didn't believe a Soul Idol Phase junior could resist her strength, attacking with her refined astral force.

Wei Wuyin found that the space surrounding him was congealing at an extremely rapid speed, causing his eyes to constrict slightly. "Spatial Prison!" He instantly realized this was going to be a tad bit more difficult than he originally assumed.

Ba-Dum! Ba-Dum! Ba-Dum!

His heart was thunderously pounding with explosive excitement.

#### **Chapter 415 - 411: Elnapped**

Feeling the effects of worldly restriction, he felt intrigued. The cultivation advantages of a Spatial Resonance cultivator could be summed into two abilities: Spatial Prison & Spatial Mark. Those at the Spatial Resonance Phase had the innate ability to absorb, unleash, and refine spatial energies. These spatial energies can integrate with the ambient space alongside their spiritual strength to establish a Spatial Prison, restricting one's movements, circulation of astral force, suppressing the Astral Soul, and interfering with spiritual sense.

While a Spatial Mark can mark a target with their spiritual sense and then infuse their astral force with spatial energies, allowing one's astral force to trail the mark. This allowed almost impossible to dodge attacks.

The stronger one's Spatial Resonance, the stronger these two abilities, and typically, only those at or above this cultivation phase could resist. If not, they would be restrained and followed by relentless attacks.

Wei Wuyin was currently feeling this power for the first time. His eyes lit with a silver brilliance, tapping into his Void Force and releasing it into the surroundings. Instantly, the spatial cage was like a rock turned into water as it was softened and dissipated away.

An exclamation of utter shock resounded from afar. Clearly, it wasn't the middle-aged elven woman that had unleashed her spatial cage, but the approaching male elf.

Wei Wuyin didn't retreat, deciding to meet palm with clenched fist, his draconic force unleashing itself into his hand.

"ROAR!" A faint dragon's roar echoed in the surroundings, twisting the world and producing violent winds as the two appendages met in direct conflict. A booming sound instantly erupted, and a cry of pain was heard as a figure was blasted back into a nearby building, causing its immediate collapse.

Wei Wuyin didn't halt his movements, sharply turning to the middle-aged elven man who wielded a thin sword now, slicing down towards him. A waterfall-like wave of astral force crashed down on him. The world rumbled, but Wei Wuyin was unaffected.

He observed the inherent light energies within, feeling its immense speed arrive at him in the blink of an eye. The refinement of light energies accelerated the circulation and travel speed of astral force, making it nearly impossible to defend. In a normal situation, just the spatial cage and this enhanced speed would leave Soul Idol Phase cultivators helpless and defeated.

This was the absolute advantage of cultivation, and why each phase was an absolute chasm of power difference. But Wei Wuyin's astral force wasn't slower. In fact, it seemed to be slightly faster as he conjured an astral ward that met the waterfall of astral force.

Bang!

He was actually sent back, crashing into a building with an explosive sound.

The elf man finally arrived on scene, turning towards the collapsed building that the middle-aged woman smashed into. He sent a spiritual transmission to the building, "Are you okay?!" His youthful skin and wizened eyes revealed concern, not expecting his wife to be pushed back.

"I'm fine!" The woman shouted, shooting out of the building and arriving near the middle-aged man, shock still apparent within her solemn gaze. "Who is that?!" She asked her husband, but her husband had no answer. Instead, he turned to the building that Wei Wuyin crashed into.

"Let's find out," the middle-aged man's eyes brightened as his astral force started to gather. He was about to unleash a powerful art!

"Wait!" The woman shouted, causing the man's flow of astral force to become sluggish. He turned to his wife in shock, only to see the horror in her face. His heart sunk.

"Ju'er is inside!" She screamed, causing the man's head to snap back to the building. His eyes became needlepoints as he shot off, explosively dashing towards the building.

"Too late." A voice resounded from the building as a shadow explosively exited from the ceiling of the building, revealing a black-clothed male with a female between his left armpit, held like a bag of sand. The female elf was Ai Juling!

Her eyes closed and her aura was thoroughly subdued. She was captured!

As for the shadow, the man who held her? It was Wei Wuyin!

After realizing that two Light Reflection Phase experts had appeared, he quickly realized that unless he went all-out, it would be troublesome to defeat these two. So he captured Ai Juling, and his heart finally relaxed.

With her in his grasp, he no longer needed to hold back for fear of harming her by the shockwaves. After all, her cultivation base was only at the Soul Idol Phase, and she was nearby. A battle of this level might cause her death, and he didn't want her to be like Jian Daiyu, the swordswoman in the Myriad Yore Continent who was eviscerated before he got the chance to court her.



"Ganshu, unhand her!" The middle-aged man demanded, his eyes burning with blazing fury, and his aura was fully erupted at this moment. But this anger was clearly unable to be released.

Wei Wuyin's eyes flared as he noted the middle-aged woman's similar appearance and the middle-aged man's closeness and reaction. "Parents?" He wryly smiled. The thought of beating on Ai Juling's parents made him feel extremely apprehensive. How would that go over?

Wei Wuyin sighed to himself, but then lifted his gaze towards the spherical light. His silver eyes released faint spiritual light. "You two aren't my match. Stand down, I don't want to harm you." Wei Wuyin declared, ignoring the two as his eyes narrowed.

His bold words caused the two to be severely taken aback, their minds feeling as if they were dreaming. A Soul Idol Phase cultivator just said they, two Light Reflection Phase elite experts, weren't his match? If anyone else heard this, they would probably die from laughing, come back alive, and die again just from how ridiculous it was.

But they had just exchanged a few moves with him, with the middle-aged woman's arm actually breaking from their earlier conflict, and the middle-aged man's attack being brushed off and defended with ease. This caused their rational minds to try to find reasons.

Hidden cultivation base?

Unique treasure?

An expert in the background acting against them?

Whatever the case, the two were in 'their' territory and he had 'their' daughter, there was no way they would listen to his words. If it wasn't for him holding Ai Juling like this, holding her captive, they would've long since attacked.

Wei Wuyin felt a powerful expert watching, observing the entire city like a Continental Guardian. This expert had been watching from the beginning, its spiritual sense spread throughout the entire city. He could tell that this expert was extremely powerful from the spiritual strength it held, likely reaching beyond the Light Reflection Phase.

He just didn't know if it was a Gravity Emission Phase expert, someone at the Sixth Stage, or a Realmlord. If it was the latter, he intended to escape. If he fought against such an expert, forget about protecting Au Juling, the entire city and all its inhabitants might be destroyed by a casual attack.

That will certainly go over very well courting Ai Juling. "Sorry, I had to defend myself and your friends, family, and parents were unintended casualties. That aside, shall we give it a go?" The very thought made his sea of consciousness cringe uncomfortably.

The two parents of Ai Juling were discussing with each other using hidden spiritual transmissions.

"Why hasn't the formation been activated yet?" The mother asked, referring to the restrictive formation laid down by generations. There were two, one in the stronghold and one in the city. Neither of which were being activated at the earliest. The reason the two unleashed pure astral force-based attacks was

their desire to prevent mass unintended casualties, so the formations should activate to handle this cleanly.

The father kept his rage-filled expression, but his heart was filled with worry. "I've tried to activate the stronghold formation, but there's no response. I can't even get into contact with the city-wide formation..."

"What? Why?!" The mother asked, but the father was uncertain. He kept trying to activate the formation but to no avail. Left distressed, he didn't know what to do.

Wei Wuyin felt relieved that the two showed concern for their daughter, but he was curious why the expert hadn't acted yet. As for the formations, he had used his Celestial Eyes to find it earlier, and used Eden's spiritual force infused with the aspects of alchemy to locate and refine the central node of the formation.

He couldn't take absolute control of it in a short period of time, but it was deactivated.

"Fine, I'll leave then." Realizing the expert had no intention to act, he shot off, grabbing the human captives and shooting off into the distance in flight. He wasn't using his Zenith Origin State to free the ambient mana, but his elemental wind astral force to fly. For others it might be consuming, but he had four Astral Souls, and they all contained Astral Force that could drown this entire city several times over.

With the human captives in tow, he was departing swiftly.

The parents were instantly spurred into action, and they were about to instinctively follow when they unnaturally halted their movements, twisted expressions on their faces as they looked at each other.

Wei Wuyin noted this, revealing a faint smirk. "Fine then, let's see what you can do outside." He sped up, shooting into the tunnel entrance he had entered from, and with a thought, he channeled elemental earth force infused with Desolate Intent and pierced into the ceiling above.

It didn't take him long before he burst out of the ground, once more seeing the bright sky and open view. He had arrived back to the surface! But he didn't stop, he formed a handseal, and the human captives were sent off like a comet into the distance, alongside Ai Juling.

He looked at the hole he created, his eyes calm and relaxed.

A voice, alluring and graceful, emerged from below. "You're quite arrogant for a Ganshu, aren't you?"

But Wei Wuyin merely smiled as he retorted, "Aren't you the same? To follow me after knowing I'm waiting and unafraid, having the same reservations as you. Aren't you arrogant for thinking I won't kill you?"

The voice went silent for a short moment, and then replied with a charm that was innate. "You can try."

Wei Wuyin grinned.

The ground beneath his feet started to crack apart!

#### **Chapter 416 - 412: Why Are You So Weak?**

Zoosh! Zoosh! Zoosh!

The earth below his feet elevated, becoming a mound of earth before sharp, grey-colored conical spikes erupted from it. They were extremely swift and sharp, with the thickness of a large oak tree.

Wei Wuyin's silver eyes focused, retreating with small steps that took him several meters away with each. The spikes ascended into the sky like a heaven piercing lance, several coming extremely close to touching his clothes. He was like a shifting ghost as he lightly dodged each spike.

Wherever he stopped for a mere moment, a spike would shoot out from the grey-colored earth with lethal killing intent threatening to puncture him dead. Wei Wuyin twisted and turned his body with powerfully fierce movements. The spikes were forming faster and faster with each passing second, even attempting to predict his movements.

With his Celestial Eyes, he could see the infusion of earthen force by an entity hiding beneath, swimming through the earth whilst following him like a shadow. It was manipulating the surrounding refined earth with a powerful spiritual intent, shaping and moving it with incredible precision and skill.

These spikes weren't products of Creation, but the actual refined grey-colored earth of the continent. "Earth Intent?" Wei Wuyin remarked with a twist of his lips, changing directions as the spikes kept attacking with relentless fervor. He, too, had Earth Intent; furthermore, he had Desolate Earth Intent.

He smiled faintly, his feet stopping and he immediately shot downwards towards the earth. He slammed his two legs into the ground with a vigorously crushing stomp. The surrounding earth rumbled as Wei Wuyin's eyes flashed with white light that resonated a vast and earthly feeling.

Elemental Origin Earth Intent!

He infused his own Intent within the ground, contending with the Intent manipulating the surrounding earth. The two Intents clashed as earthquakes of incredible intensity started to occur without end. But he had stopped the relentless attacks of protruding spikes.

But he hadn't stopped with this!

Elemental Origin Desolate Earth Intent!!

Wei Wuyin started to tap into the latent and potent desolate power within the refined earth, and immediately waved his arms in an elegant fashion as if painting a picture.

"Ah!" An exclamation of surprise resounded from below as the desolate power started to gather, concentrate, and flow into a specific area as it funneled through the earth. It was like a shark swimming aggressively through the ocean as it homed onto the entity below. The entity was immediately pre-occupied by the desolate power, fear clearly within the surprise of its exclamation.

Intent was all about manipulating pre-existing energies within the world to one's own purpose, while transitioning one's own energies to such a power. If Wei Wuyin wanted, his every attack could be infused with Desolate Earth-attributed astral force, and he could manipulate the surrounding earthen energies and desolate power.

But Elemental Origin Intent was a little special.

"Let's see who you are!" Wei Wuyin slowly said as he twisted his fingers, the white light within his eyes started to shift in power, turning from vast and earthly to weightless and free.

## Elemental Origin Wind Intent!

The earth energies seemed to be infected by a chemical reaction of exceptional means, starting to transform into wind energies at extremely swift speeds, shifting solid earth into windy air. A turbulent flow of wind erupted in a blink, causing a large swathe of earth, roughly a kilometer in length and hundreds of meters deep, to vanish without warning!

"WHAT?!" Startled by this change, the entity was no longer shielded by the refined earth. It was as if the body of water it was just swimming within had dried out in the literal blink of an eye.

A female figure was quickly revealed! She had off-white skin, with brown-colored eyes and hair. Her entire body, which was slim and petite, was covered in a heavy earthen aura. She seemed to be in her mid-twenties, her entire body wrapped in ash-grey clothes.

Wei Wuyin coughed lightly at this moment. He had used an enormous amount of spiritual energy to achieve this effect, trying to test his limits and miraculous abilities of the Elemental Origin Intent's transitional unity of the nine elements. To change earth to wind, wind to water, water to fire, and fire to earth was an innate characteristic of Elemental Origin Intent.

But it was an exhausting task to perform, even with his extremely high level of spiritual strength. Furthermore, it wasn't very necessary to do so, as there were less consuming methods and arts that could be utilized instead.

Wei Wuyin looked at the halted and confused figure as he smiled. He levitated within the air, the surrounding wind energies circulating around him like he was a god of wind. To add, the wind energies carried abundant desolate power, giving them a grey-colored glow.

The woman soon turned to Wei Wuyin, her eyes narrowed. "You can't be a Soul Idol Cultivator. Why are you hiding your cultivation?" She asked with a little indignantly, still unsure what had just happened, but she knew her Earth Intent was suppressed, and she could no longer freely control the surrounding refined earth as a weapon.

Her name was Ai Shanyuan, and she was extremely gifted amongst elves because she could manipulate her Earth Intent to this level. After all, the four basic Elemental Intents—Earth, Water, Wind, & Fire—must all be comprehended to the most elementary level during the Third Stage of the Qi Condensation Realm, Elemental Birth Phase, to cultivate elemental energies and even ascend to the next cultivation stage.

She had birthed Earth Intent and furthered it to an extremely advanced level, allowing her to skillfully manipulate the refined earth and its innate energies with ease. She was well-regarded amongst Grey Sands Elves, even considered as one of the most top talents amongst the tribe, and was held in exceptionally high regard amongst the Ai Clan.

But her efforts and strength was nullified and countered by a measly Soul Idol Phase cultivator? She didn't believe it. Furthermore, he had deactivated the city-wide formation somehow, still shocking her at the moment.

This mysterious existence and means was why she kept herself hidden away, unwilling to fall for a trap.

Wei Wuyin took a small breath, feeling his exhausted spiritual energy recover by the second. He smilingly asked in response, "Would you believe me if I said that I'm just that? A Soul Idol Cultivator?"

Ai Shanyuan furrowed her brows, her spiritual aura started to circulate. Those brown-eyes of hers reflected a vast power of earth within her, revealing her Earthly Astral Soul's foundation. She had forged a Heart of Earth Qi, transformed it into an Earthly Natal Soul and then ascended into the Astral Core Realm with an Earthly Astral Soul.

Her earth-attributed astral force would be numerous times stronger than cultivators of her level, and her manipulation and control of Earth Intent could be reasoned. She had used the Mortal Star Formation Tribulation to glimpse into an Advanced Form of Earth Intent.

Wei Wuyin's eyes constrict slightly from her rising aura. "Sixth Stage...Gravity Emission Phase!" He immediately recognized the innate energies leaking from her aura, but Gravity Emission Phase was slightly different. The cultivation benefits of those at this stage were unique, drawing upon their ability to convert their spiritual aura into a gravitational force.

He saw the ambient spatial energies and light energies distort and twist, clearly a sign of emitting gravity from his body.

Wei Wuyin also felt a pressure exert itself on him, causing him to feel drawn to Ai Shanyuan. It wasn't just his body but his spiritual aura was being pulled into hers, being crushed by the gravitational force beyond its might. At this level, spiritual attacks and various spells could be nullified with extreme ease, allowing cultivators to shatter Spatial Prisons, dissipate Spatial Marks, divert light energies refined astral force, and restrict movement arts.

Wei Wuyin bitterly smiled. The cultivation benefits of the Spatial Resonance Phase, Light Reflection Phase, and Gravity Emission Phases were extremely powerful, and facing them was extremely bothersome. No wonder each phase was considered a vast chasm of difference, especially those at the Sixth Stage. Those at that stage could nullify the benefits of the previous two phases with gravity.

Ai Shanyuan's eyebrows shot up, realizing that Wei Wuyin's spiritual aura lacked a resonance with the ambient space, the characteristics of riding ambient light energies, and lacked its own gravity emissions, causing her to feel utterly surprised.

"You're really a Soul Idol Cultivator?" Her heart started to race with unfathomable disbelief, tinged with bits of fear. This person fought two Light Reflection Phase experts and escaped, then could resist her? This...this...

Wei Wuyin didn't reply this time nor ask his own question. Instead, he pondered for a moment in silence. Then, without any warning, the desolate wind energies around him vibrated as he explosively shot towards Ai Shanyuan. The distance between them was very short for cultivators of their strength, arriving in front of her in the blink of a mortal's eye.

Ai Shanyuan's eyes constricted into needlepoints as she erupted with her fully unleashed aura, releasing an extreme level of twisting gravity, causing the surroundings to release a rumble as the weight of the air had increased considerably.

Wei Wuyin, however, wasn't bothered by this increased gravity. His physical strength was unfathomable, and his draconic force circulated throughout his body as a faint roar resounded, and he clenched his fist. With a direct action, his fist lanced towards Ai Shanyuan's head without a hint of mercy.

Realizing her gravitational force didn't hinder Wei Wuyin, she erected her own astral ward and thrust her own palm surrounded by brown-colored astral force towards Wei Wuyin's fist.

**BOOM!**

An explosion of air immediately erupted as the two separated for dozens of meters. Ai Shanyuan was extremely startled by Wei Wuyin's physical power, her hand was even a little numb.

But when she saw Wei Wuyin's hand, her eyes brightened. It was covered in blood, seemingly with crushed flesh and broken bones. Her attack wasn't holding back a single ounce of her power. With her refined light energies astral force, she could bring out a hundred percent of her strength in a moment's notice. The power of a refined astral force of a Gravity Emission Phase expert, someone at the same level as the former Grand Imperial Sages, could not be underestimated.

Wei Wuyin looked at his meaty and disfigured fist, his expression a little twisted. This twisted expression wasn't from pain, but utter disbelief. He was shocked that...

"Why are you so weak?!" Kratos's voice echoed out of his heart, seemingly indignant and offended by Wei Wuyin's injured state.

But Wei Wuyin's expression changed. "That's what I WANT to ask?!" He shouted to the little soul in his heart.

Kratos, "...Not my fault."

"..."

### **Chapter 417 - 413: Ori's Might**

Wei Wuyin didn't know whether to laugh or cry at Kratos' preemptive rebuke for its weakness. He didn't expect that Kratos' draconic force wasn't sufficient enough to clash with this elf's power. One must know, this little Draconic Void Astral Soul here consumed alchemical products like food and water, without end until it was extremely full.

The strength of its innate energies was terrifying to say the least, but it had fallen short against a physical clash with its draconic force. He was truly feeling indignant and shocked.

"..." Kratos wasn't one to complain, clearly unwilling to reply. Fortunately, Eden took the reins this time.

"Bloodline Source..." Was all Eden said, revealing the truth. This caused Wei Wuyin's expression to change slightly, recalling the incident that left his Bloodline Source exhausted. He couldn't execute any of his innate True Dragon abilities or transform into his Draconic Form. This severely limited his body's strength and durability, and it similarly restrained Kratos' Draconic Force.

Sighing lightly, he was about to manifest Kratos' Nine-Ringed Soul Idol, seeking to amplify its strength to the next level, but when he interacted with it, there was a faint sign of pleading rejection from it. He halted his action, realizing its unwillingness to reveal its Soul Idol Form in its weakened state.

Wei Wuyin imagined that Kratos' Soul Idol Manifestation was similarly weakened by its current state, unwilling to allow the others to see it as weaker. Unable to bring himself to force it, he consoled it with a few thoughts and turned to examine his fist.

His hand flashed with an emerald light infused with Life Meadow Wood Intent, instantly healing the crushed flesh and bones within his hand, exhausting quite a bit of astral force.

Ai Shanyuan saw this and was immediately shocked! Such potent and powerful wood force! While the words exchanged between Kratos, Eden, and Wei Wuyin took a while to describe, it happened in a single fleeting moment.

Wei Wuyin turned to face Ai Shanyuan, his eyes flashed with a sharp, omni-ending saber light. The desire to kill emerged within his heart, and he was about to summon Element, withdrawing his saber! And if his saber was unsheathed, it must claim a life or be used to protect one. His older brother's words lingered within his mind.

Ai Shanyuan's heart stopped, a feeling of palpable fear engulfed her mind as an alarm of deadly crisis blared within her mind without end. She immediately reinforced her astral ward, infusing a flow of thick earthen force within. As she did, she felt as if the world was slowly transforming into a lethal threat.

But the light within Wei Wuyin's eyes vanished as he heard the eager voice of Ori. He changed his mind, the piercing light emitting from his eyes receded entirely. He instead revealed a white light containing endless variation, and he tapped into his Astral Core within his dantian.

It was aglow with white light, its size fully visible to the world!

Ai Shanyuan's heart quivered, staring at Wei Wuyin with widened eyes and a wide-open mouth. Even her lips trembled, "HOW IS IT SO BIG?!" Her heart was shaking so intensely that the thought of retreat at such an existence emerged within her normally fierce mind.

It...

It...

IT WAS 10 CENTIMETERS!

Wei Wuyin hadn't revealed the size of his Astral Core since his battle at the Grand Spirit Trial. At that time, his Astral Cores' limit was one centimeter, and even that was double the size of a Gravity Emission Phase expert's average, and he was merely at the Sky Ruler Phase!

After the continuous refinement of countless top-grade alchemical products, he had refined the physical, mental, and essence energies within his body to their limits, and refined his Astral Core to its similar limits. It had explosively grown ten times as a result!

The size of an Astral Core was the reflection of quality and quantity of astral force, making every millimeter of growth extremely prominent, and could easily decide victory amongst two equally cultivated parties.

The only reason his astral force hadn't overwhelmed Ai Shanyuan was due to her higher cultivation level and refined state of her astral force. But when it came to quality, she still wasn't much higher than his own. This was why he was startled by Kratos' draconic force losing out against her earthen force by so much. However, if it came to quantity, he could drown an entire city several times over.

Capitalizing on Ai Shanyuan's shock, Wei Wuyin started to execute a series of swift handseals, his elemental origin force was soon unleashed in vast quantities! It started to pour out as a sea of white light, causing his body to vanish within the light.

Ai Shanyuan reacted swiftly, still an expert at the Gravity Emission level, and she retreated backwards. She hadn't re-entered the earth because Wei Wuyin could halt her movements if he contested her Earth Intent, so she soared backwards through the skies by invigorating her wind energies.

The desolate power bombarded her ward, but it was defended against with ease. Unless she traveled further up or the Season of Regression ended, this level of desolate power couldn't harm her. Unfortunately, what was pressing wasn't the ambient desolate power but the endless surge of elemental origin force that was spewing from Wei Wuyin.

*「Elemental Spiritual Art: World of Origin」*

Wei Wuyin unleashed the advanced version of his Elemental Spiritual Art: Nine Elemental World, a world-creating art that shaped the environment to his will, unleashing endless elemental origin force alongside his exceptionally powerful spiritual strength.

The speed at which it flooded the world encapsulated Ai Shanyuan despite her extremely fast retreat, causing her to yelp in horror. She further reinforced her astral ward, consuming a vast amount of her astral force.

But just as the elemental origin force engulfed her, it swiftly trembled and started to recede. Shocked, she wasn't certain what was going on, but she had a bad feeling. And this feeling was right.

The white light exploded abruptly, tainting the world in its glow, but revealed a sight so shocking that it seemed to originate from legends!

ROAR! ROAR!! ROAR!!!

Woosh! Woosh!! Woosh!!!

A draconic roar of numerous dragons resounded throughout the world without warning, revealing the vivid and lifelike forms of nine white dragons! They were thousands of meters in length, their white scales as lifelike as one's hand, and their five-clawed hands crushed the air, ground, and clouds!

They were solid and real creatures with eyes that reflected the spiritual images of the nine elements, seemingly containing an entire world within their imposing gazes. They slithered and soared, twisted and roared, trampled and burrowed through the entire world! The sight as their figures centered around the floating Wei Wuyin, who was engulfed by torrential grey-winds, was extremely magnificent!

He was like a god of the world, of dragons, and of the elements!

Ai Shanyuan's eyes widened in disbelief! "How did you set up a formation?! So much astral force!"



A pair of familiar yet faintly different words resounded from her lips, causing Wei Wuyin to smile. Back on the Myriad Yore Continent, when he unleashed this move against Long Chen, he heard something similar. This was a multi-linked Spiritual Astral Array formed by a vast, seemingly limitless, elemental origin force and directed by his extremely powerful spiritual strength. Each dragon was composed of a tenth of his elemental origin force, containing all of his greatest powers and profound might.

Wei Wuyin felt Ori's elated emotions filled with thunderous excitement, no longer wanting to hold back a single iota of its strength. It even wished to evoke its Soul Idol Form, bringing these dragons into another level of power, but Wei Wuyin halted it. The spiritual and mental energy consumption of a Soul Idol's Manifestation wasn't low, and if he coupled it with this Multi-Link Spiritual Astral Array, the Nine Dragons of Origin Array, it would be a little hard to control.

If Ori was merely a Nine-Ringed Soul Idol, it wouldn't be a problem, but it wasn't! If he unleashed its might without limit, he might be overdrafted. He wished to avoid that, for now. With that in mind, he lifted a palm to the sky.

ROAR!

A simultaneous concert of draconic roars was unleashed by all nine white dragons, their maws widened as their gazes fixated on Ai Shanyuan. The immediate area of a hundred miles rippled endlessly as the surrounding essence was faintly changing, tainting the world white.

Ai Shanyuan didn't run, however. Instead, she withdrew a staff with a floating brown orb connected to both ends via brown-colored lightning. She wielded this unique weapon with a clear familiarity as she looked at Wei Wuyin. "A Ganshu with your level of strength, and you're so young. If you survive and reach my level, you'll be able to end all elven tribes! You won't be leaving this place alive!" She understood that the balance of human and elven co-existence was on the basis of benefits and potential loss, but if Wei Wuyin became a Gravity Emission Phase expert, or worse, a Realm Lord, then the elven race could be destroyed at his whim.

She couldn't allow that to happen, so she couldn't run! With fearless resolve and abundant killing intent, she decided that one of them will die today. While doing so, she released a message to the city. After that, with her petite body, she roared and shot forward while protected by her ward.

Wei Wuyin hadn't heard those words in a long time. How many people, how many of his enemies, didn't wish for him to grow? How many wanted to kill him before he could reach their level? He had long since forgotten the number, but he still rose and he stood here today, alive and well.

With a wave his hand, the nine dragons, with their thousands of meters long bodies and hundred meter sizes, shot forth with imposing momentum. The ground that was so durable that Gravity Emission Phase experts would find it difficult to damage was torn asunder.

Ai Shanyuan roared, her hands twisting the staff as she unleashed various spells and arts at rapid speed, a characteristic of the Light Reflection Phase. She held nothing back as she struck.

Boom!

But her lively and steel-like expression became filled with horror after her first attack struck a dragon, its body merely faintly trembling as it tussled away her bombarding attack with ease. It hadn't even dispersed a portion of its elemental origin force.

She immediately twisted her staff, using the two orbs in exquisite fashion. They transformed into hundred meter boulders and flew about, crushing against the two nearest dragons that circulated around her. The two dragons were struck, and their bodies shifted for a moment, but their white scales seemed to have the flexibility of wood, the retention rate of water, and durability of metal! Her attacks were resisted with ease without a single sign of damage.

The horror on her face became greater! Before she could execute another spell, thinking that attacking these dragons were impossible and she should go after its caster, she spewed out a gushing splurge of blood from her mouth and nose.

Her eyes reddened as she saw two dragons opening their maws and snapping onto the boulders, destroying them instantly. Her staff dimmed and started to reveal spider web-like cracks over its surface.

She decided to find Wei Wuyin, to detonate herself in mutual destruction if need be. But Wei Wuyin was standing atop a dragon's head with his arms folded, being shielded by several dragons that twisted and stared at her in wait.

She had to face three to four dragons, but five to six were still waiting for her. It seemed these dragons were merely playing with her! A Gravity Emission Phase expert! She tried to unleash spatial prisons onto the dragons, turning into a comet as she shot off towards Wei Wuyin, but she suffered an instant backlash as they freed themselves.

A long tail swiped towards her with lightning speed, and her eyes widened as she sent a palm towards it. She repelled it, but it explosively pushed her back. She traveled further away from Wei Wuyin, her eyes suffused with disbelief and shock. But when she finally stopped her momentum, she felt an imposing shadow surrounding her.

Looking up, she saw the insides of a vivid dragon's mouth. She could see the sharpness of its teeth, the softness of its inner mouth, and its slithering tongue, wondering how a dragon could look so real.

Snap!

The elemental dragon's jaws closed!

Wei Wuyin faintly scoffed, "You wanted me to try, so I tried."

### **Chapter 418 - 414: Three Fellows**

Combat between experts was often swiftly concluded, decided by overwhelming power or decisive tactics. This was a well-known, indisputable principle of the cultivation world that many knew of. It led to fights that were explosive and chaotic, forcing most to be unable to hold back lest they suffer.

Wei Wuyin once more basked in the brilliance of combat, observing his animated dragons flow throughout the world domineeringly and imposingly. He clenched his fists, feeling a strong and potent sensation resurge within his heart that had been absent for a long time.

Since his arrival at the Myriad Monarch Sect, he'd been so focused on handling matters and concocting products that he had somewhat forgotten how killing intent felt, forgotten how it felt to end a life with his own power. The white elemental origin dragon that had chomped Ai Shanyuan whole crunched its teeth, grinding sounds resounded as her fleshy body was refined by elemental powers.

It seemed to smile as it did so, causing ordinary people to feel an icy chill run down their spines. There were also ordinary people who were watching these events.

Far away, observing behind a semi-transparent white ward, the human captives were watching the battle with awed expressions, their mouth agape and their eyes like full moons, widened to their limits.

"He...she's dead...?" The battle was far beyond their level, so witnessing such terrifying beings clash was a thunderously lively event in their hearts. Ai Shanyuan wasn't someone they were unaware of. They were Seekers of The Desolate Lands, so they all purchased the basic information of who's who amongst the Grey Sand Elves.

Ai Shanyuan was a talented genius who brought her Earth Intent to extremely high levels, allowing her to govern a city. One must know, there were only a few hundred cities amongst the Grey Sand Elven Tribe, divided by the Nine Grand Clans, and Ai Shanyuan controlled an entire city. Her talent, strength, and reputation was not little by any means.

To see her be eaten, devoured so mercilessly by that white dragon, and have it smile as it rejoiced in her seemingly delicious flesh and bones, made their scalps turn numb with horrified emotions.

And they were humans, so the reaction of a Grey Sands Elf would be even more intense, and it was!

Ai Juling was awake and spectating, her eyes stared at the nine dragons swarming through the clouds, sundering the ground casually, and twisting playfully amongst themselves. She gulped, but her heart sank and she closed her eyes. Her cultivation base was currently sealed by a spell, so she didn't even try to run away.

To add, she was shrouded by a white ward that shielded her from the shockwaves and aura of the fight.

ROAR!

The nine white dragons roared as the one who'd devoured Ai Shanyuan finished its meal. They twisted around it, seemingly excited by their victory. Wei Wuyin took a small breath for himself, and then he executed a handseal. The Multi-Link Spiritual Astral Array exhausted an enormous amount of mental and spiritual energies to maintain, so he began to unravel the array.

The white dragons roared once more before dissipating into white mist that surged towards Wei Wuyin. With his mouth open, his eyes flashed with seven-colored light as he rapidly re-assimilated the astral force used to maintain the bodies of the nine dragons. This was an advantage of permanence, the ability of self-sustaining in the external world, and that was the retrieval of one's powers.

Of course, these powers must be actively controlled and connected by his spiritual strength without any period of disconnect. If he did disconnect, the astral force would rapidly integrate with the surroundings, becoming real and true existences thriving on the world's ambient mana. If it wasn't for that, he could theoretically have a near-limitless amount of astral force externalized and then re-up whenever he was low on reserves.

When all the white mist entered his mouth after a minute or so, he deeply exhaled as he felt his astral force within his Astral Core recover to over eighty percent. He had consumed roughly twenty percent of his astral force from that move, a rather costly price considering his ten centimeter-sized Astral Core.

To put it into perspective, that was roughly the level of four ordinary Gravity Emission Phase of astral force reserves. This was an absurd amount of astral force, enough to shatter planets many times over.

"She wasn't that strong." Wei Wuyin remarked as he fully retrieved his powers, obtaining a spatial ring as spoils of war, and feeling that Ai Shanyuan's foundation was severely lacking. When her body was refined into nothing by his elemental origin powers, he felt her level of Soul Idol, Spatial Resonance, and Light Reflection. She had seven-rings, six-ripples, and yellow-colored Primary Light.

This was slightly stronger than Tuo Bihan's former strength. Moreover, her astral force lacked permanence, meaning her Astral Soul hadn't reached the Zenith Mortal State. She might've been at the 7th or 8th Mortal State, he wasn't exactly certain.

If he was at her cultivation level, a mere breath of his could've obliterated her existence. This was what he earnestly felt, feeling a little intrigued. The cultivation society of this world realm was extremely advanced in comparison to his starfield's fallen state, especially since these elves that hid themselves from humans weren't the strongest race present.

The humans here must be extremely strong by comparison, and this caused his eyes to narrow. The Divine King established this trial and its clear the cultivation level needed to effectively survive in this world as an external genius was higher than what his own, likely at the Light Reflection Phase.

Wei Wuyin chuckled to himself, thinking the Divine King had used the standards of the starfield's golden age to establish this trial by. It didn't matter, what comes will come. He'll handle all of it regardless.

With a twist of his body, he flew towards the spectators. When he arrived, he saw Ai Juling who seemed to be unconscious, laying down on the ground defenseless. Wei Wuyin felt this was interesting and ignored her feigning attempt, turning to the separate astral ward containing the human captives.

He didn't undo his protection. The environment still contained desolate power so he walked into the ward, then his fingers flicked with spiritual light that entered the bodies of everyone present. Their flesh glowed slightly as the shackles that had binded their flesh and cultivation bases were removed.

They were initially startled by this development, but their eyes were soon fixated on Wei Wuyin with awed expressions. The elderly man felt his cultivation freed, flexing his strength a little to reveal his cultivation at the Soul Idol Phase. From the faint spiritual aura emitted, he had a five-ringed Soul Idol.

He clasped his hands and deeply bowed, "Thank you for saving me, Senior." As the first to regain his composure, he took the lead in giving his thanks to Wei Wuyin. Regardless of how young Wei Wuyin seemed or what he thought of him before, Wei Wuyin was a bonafide expert. He had defeated a City Lord of the Grey Sands Elves, an existence that could spit on him and cause his death, so he revealed the utmost respect.

The others soon followed, giving their deepest thanks. Even the man who ridiculed and mocked him prior bowed, his bow the deepest and most energetic amongst the group. There wasn't much fear in his

heart because if Wei Wuyin wanted him dead, he'd be dead, not freed. As for apologizing? Would his apology matter to such an expert?

Wei Wuyin once more found it strange to be referred to as Senior by those hundreds of years older than him, even if it was a custom amongst cultivators. But being referred to as Junior by those who were weak by comparison would similarly feel wrong, so he wasn't certain how to respond to this feeling of his. After all, he was referred to as Prince Wei, Lord Wei, Heavenly King Wei, his majesty, Ascendant Emperor Wei, or simply Wei Wuyin in his starfield. His status and reputation was simply that great.

"The Grey Sands Elves of that city don't seem to be pursuing, so you're all free." When Wei Wuyin stated this, their heavy hearts felt relieved. They won't be sold off as Energy Converters or Alchemic Proxies! This was great news. As for the Grey Sands Elves hunting them down? Unlikely.

They'll be focused on Wei Wuyin, not them. They were just small fries in comparison. But this left everyone a little uncertain how to proceed. If they left now, they might be recaptured, but if they stayed and stronger forces arrived and eventually killed Wei Wuyin or he was pushed to the point of fleeing, then their deaths were clear.

Most of the Seekers decided to return to hunting, exploring the world on their own. They used all sorts of tools, clothes, and their own forces to resist the desolate power and departed in different directions. The only ones who stayed were three individuals: the bald man, the elderly man, and the man who mocked Wei Wuyin.

These three were named Huang Yu, Chu Leitao, and Li Wang respectively.

The elderly man, Chu Leitao, cautiously spoke at this moment: "Senior, may I ask where you intend to go?"

Wei Wuyin inspected this elderly man with a muscular body and felt that he was quite perceptive. He was also the one who answered his questions the most, so he liked him enough to give him some respect. "I don't know exactly. In truth, I'm not familiar with The Desolate Lands. What I do know is that I need to find a human city to gather my bearings."

The bald man's eyes brightly lit as he jumped with excitement. After receiving the glances of the others, his face turned a little red in a blush. Huang Yu truly had a child-like quality about him, and this caused Wei Wuyin to like him as well. After a moment of silence, the bald man avidly spoke what was on his mind.

"There's a city called the Grandquake City! It's nearby and I have a residence there within my clan! If...if you want, I can bring you there." Huang Yu stammered at the end, a little uncertain if Wei Wuyin would accept his invitation, but his excitement at the prospect leaked uncontrollably.

Wei Wuyin's face formed a slight smile, "Alright."

Chu Leitao was startled by the ease at which Wei Wuyin accepted such an invitation, but considering he wasn't familiar with The Desolate Lands or the ways of the world, he might be ignorant of the implications of being invited to a clan.

Li Wang was silent, merely watching the conversation. He decided he'd travel with them and return to Grandquake City. He was a member of the Central Region, so he didn't have a clan stationed here like Huang Yu, who was clearly a native of The Desolate Lands.

Wei Wuyin didn't mind his inclusion, wanting to ask a few more questions and clarifications regarding this new world. With a wave of his hand, he brought Ai Juling into his arms in a bridal carry, her head on his shoulder. Her delicate body trembled a little, but she remained 'asleep' so he didn't bother with her.

"Let's go."

### **Chapter 419 - 415: What He Needed**

Several days had passed since their escape from the clutches of the Grey Sands Elves. After determining where he was going, Wei Wuyin and the others walked by foot. He soon realized that no one flew in The Desolate Lands, and Seekers operated within a certain range from wherever they were sent via Void Gates.

According to Chu Leitao, each city in The Desolate Lands had a functioning Void Gate established within, but they only allowed departures and no entries. If one wanted to travel to that city or another, they had to portal to a location away or a specifically designated destination platform that would be protected by the forces of the nearest city.

These destination platforms were protected by formations and arrays and guarded by experts. They were extremely suitable to ensure safe arrivals and lack of conflict. If one used random coordinates in their portals, they might be captured by Grey Sand Elves immediately from bad luck.

But the price to use the coordinates of the destination platform was absurdly expensive. Not only did one have to pay a fee to use the Void Gates, they had to pay a fee to safely arrive with certainty at a destination platform, and then if they wanted to go back, this process was repeated.

Unlike the Grey Sands Elves Tribe, each city aboveground was ruled by the native human forces and clans in The Desolate Lands or by elite clans of the Central Region. There also weren't hundreds of cities established by these forces, merely twelve. But each city was absolutely massive.

Originally, there were many cities, but few could afford the cost of surviving after the Season of Regression nor had experts to defend against invasions by the vicious creatures of the four dangerous lands, so these clans would often band together.

When Wei Wuyin learned about these creatures, he quickly asked for clarification. According to Huang Yu, a native of The Desolate Lands, there were four types of devilish lifeforms that were born from the extremely powerful innate forces unique to these lands. For example, The Desolate Land had Desolation Devils.

These creatures had extraordinary powers and they were absolutely terrifying, besieging cities without end after the Season of Regression ended. There were always forces that wished to establish themselves within these four dangerous lands, but if they can't resist the ambient desolate power and desolation devils' assault, they would soon be eradicated.

This was why only twelve cities existed.

Grandquake City was one of these twelve cities and housed numerous native experts and Seekers within.

Wei Wuyin had heard the term 'Seeker' often, so he asked for more information about them. These so-called Seekers were treasure hunters that explored and excavated certain areas in The Desolate Lands in hopes of obtaining Desolate Pearls. These pearls were like astral stones of the starfield, but they were all earth-attributed.

Fortunately, there were numerous conversion and refinement methods to transform a Desolate Pearl into Astral Diamonds. These diamonds were the main currency and cultivation resources for experts, roughly having three times the amount of astral essence as the Astral Stones of his starfield.

Supposedly, the ambient mana and unique environment of the world realm allows the rapid absorption of astral essence in certain areas, forming these pearls. They contain Desolate Power, so they could even be used to fashion resilient clothing and tools that can resist or contain desolate power.

The tools the others used and clothes fashioned by the Grey Sands Elves were all woven using the Desolate Pearl's internal essence, which was exquisite in comparison to normal earth-attributed astral stones.

The name Seeker was coined because they were seeking out these locations actively. Most might not even find a single one, and when Chu Leitao informed him that despite the distance they traveled, they hadn't found any of these locations, it made Wei Wuyin realize their scarcity.

Furthermore, the closer they got to a city, the less chance they would find these areas. After all, they would've long since been found and excavated. That's why he and the others had ventured so 'deep' into The Desolate Lands territory.

When Huang Yu brought out a desolate pearl for Wei Wuyin to inspect, he looked at it for a moment before his eyes widened. A dangerously violent aura instantly released from his body that caused the three to be blown away, eating dirt as they did.

They were startled, quickly trying to brush off the grey dirt but soon found that the dirt lacked desolate power. This comforted them but Wei Wuyin still terrified them. Why did he erupt so suddenly?!

But it wasn't Wei Wuyin alone, Kratos was riled up and violently beating as a rage as explosive as a thunderstorm threatened to erupt. Wei Wuyin held onto Ai Juling tightly, her brows wincing from his tight grip of her thigh, but she still kept her eyes closed. He had to take several deep breaths to regulate his emotions, inspecting the desolate pearl that floated before him.

*'The internal essence within it is actually of draconic origin...no wonder its so malleable...'* He thought with a pulsating wave of sadness battering his heart. He could now feel the blood energy contained within the pearl, causing his heart to throb ferociously in response. Kratos was far too angry, unable to contain itself.

The blood energy was still fresh, meaning it was extracted from a living dragon less than a hundred years ago.

A 'living' dragon...

Wei Wuyin closed his eyes. He thought about the unique lifeforms, these desolate devils, and when he thought of the possibilities, his lips quivered. It shouldn't be...right?

He only managed to calm himself and Kratos down after several minutes, once more reinforcing his desire and resolve. He didn't apologize for his explosive reaction, his mood far too chaotic for that.

"Let's go!" He returned the pearl to Huang Yu and started to trek silently since then. None of them knew what to say or how to respond, but they could tell that Wei Wuyin didn't wish to talk, so they quietly led him along.

After several days of silent contemplation, Wei Wuyin had finally reined in his emotions completely and cleared up his thoughts, returning to his questions. Most pressingly, for example, how far was this city? They had been traveling for nearly a week by foot and only saw grey dirt and lone mountains.

When Huang Yu told him it was roughly three months by foot, his eyes widened in disbelief. Three months?! THREE MONTHS?! He wasn't one who was typically impatient about time, but three months was three freaking months! However, the three were helpless after seeing his response.

They were all hundreds of years old, so three months didn't feel that long to them. It was a brief cultivation session. Wei Wuyin, however, wasn't even fifty, and ten of those years felt like a blink of an eye, as he hadn't consciously lived within his body during that time.

But with the restriction on the ambient mana, sustained flight wasn't practical, and astral force-empowered flight wasn't recommended. Not only would they have to consume astral force to fly, they'd have to resist the desolate power in the air, and reveal their auras to nearby Grey Sands Elves. The thin ambient essence meant recovery was costly, often coming from astral diamonds.

Wei Wuyin soon realized that the reason he had been located and captured was due to his small usage of astral force on arrival. As for why they hadn't been assaulted again, it was likely the city and its soldiers were in lockdown due to Ai Shanyuan's death. They might even be actively avoiding Soul Idol cultivators or Seekers in an attempt to prevent them from dying needlessly due to misfortune. After all, any that met Wei Wuyin may as well be courting death with flowers, chocolate, and a smile.

Most Seekers used specialized clothing or tools that didn't require astral force, just spiritual strength to operate, so they avoided them.

He intended to use his astral force to shorten that time, swiftly grabbing the three and tightening his grip around Ai Juling. "You point, I fly." After saying that, he brought Huang Yu to the front and waited for him to direct.

The bald Huang Yu was startled. The consumption of astral force was not little, especially flying with passengers. Excluding Ai Juling, the other three were flying by extension of Wei Wuyin's power. They gasped at the mighty power that shrouded their bodies, feeling as if they were baby chicks held by a titan.

Huang Yu excitedly yelped. It felt good to have an expert with you! He pointed and shouted, "That way!"

Wei Wuyin laughed, his mood slightly improved by Huang Yu's infectious enthusiasm. Despite his bald appearance, he was quite a character. With a smile, he urged his astral force and they zipped away as a comet through the world.



While they were awed by the speed of flight, Ai Juling's eyes opened a sliver as she saw Wei Wuyin's handsome face. Her eyelashes fluttered as she closed her eyes once again.

But Wei Wuyin wasn't bothered by her actions, with his mood elevated a little, he could finally think clearly. These so-called Seekers, these areas that contained desolate pearls...

His Celestial Eyes shone with a mysterious light that seemed to pierce through the world's veil.

This was it...

This was what he needed! Something that was only here and nowhere else!

Draconic Blood Energy!!

When he realized this, his heart started to throb with a tinge of conflict. Kratos knew what he was thinking, also understanding the possibility! Since their Bloodline Source was exhausted after traversing the void with just their internal powers and body, they had been limited in terms of physical energy quality and access to their bloodline abilities, but the only solution was Anu.

Unfortunately, Wei Wuyin couldn't find the azure-scaled dragon anywhere. Its strength wasn't at a point where it could be found so easily, especially if it didn't want to be found.

But with the presence of this draconic blood energy on the continent, there was a chance...

#### **Chapter 420 - 416: Grandquake City**

After deciding to fly through the land, the speed at which Wei Wuyin and the others traversed the desolate lands was extremely swift, covering more ground in an hour than an entire week on foot. This lessened the time needed to travel to Grandquake City considerably.

At times, Wei Wuyin and the others would spot the silhouette of distance figures, both alone and in a group, as they trekked by foot. They were often shrouded by various lights emitted from strange tools that repelled the ambient desolate power. When they saw Wei Wuyin wildly use his astral force to fly through the skies, their expressions would always change.

Some would reveal mocking smiles while others were surprised at the aura of the astral force. The lack of refined spatial energies, light energies, and gravitational forces within it indicated that Wei Wuyin was at the Soul Idol Phase, the Third Stage of the Astral Core Realm. The audacity and insanity a Soul Idol Phase cultivator must possess to consume their astral force this wildly, how interesting!

Some even wanted to follow along, waiting for Wei Wuyin to consume his astral force before acting with malicious intentions, but they couldn't keep up with his speed on foot. With pouts of anger and curses, they could only hope that Wei Wuyin suffered along the way. This was a little about envy and their own anger.

As two hours passed, Wei Wuyin truly understood why no one flew using astral force. It simply wasn't as fast as mana flight nor as easy, and while one could temporarily exceed the speed of mana flight using movement arts and such, the consumption was extremely vast.

Furthermore, without the supplement of mana flight, even movement arts were weaker during this Season of Regression. If it wasn't for his powerful fleshy body, he couldn't have reached his level of

speed against Ai Shanyuan. In two hours, he had used roughly two percent of his astral force within his Divine Element Astral Core.

This might seem small, but 2% of astral force was equivalent to the exhaustion of a two millimeter-sized Astral Core, or a two-fifths of an ordinary Gravity Emission Phase expert's reserves. To add, he was carrying three people along, excluding Ai Juling who stayed within his arms.

When Chu Leitao noticed Wei Wuyin's continuous exertion of astral force, he even suggested they rest. He and the others had some refined astral diamonds for Wei Wuyin to use to recover his energies, but he only received a polite smile of decline as a response.

Wei Wuyin could last for weeks flying in this manner, so he didn't need to rest. And with his Desolate Intent, he could nullify the desolate power that came into contact with his astral force. They continued for twenty-two hours more, meeting numerous Seekers along the way. Just like the others, some tried to follow them but soon helplessly gave up after noticing that Wei Wuyin was traveling too fast for too long.

It wasn't long before they saw a wall in the distance.

Huang Yu cried with excitement, "Grandquake City!" He was startled by the speed at which they arrived. Usually it would take over three months to travel from where they were to here, but in a day, they had arrived at the city. He felt that traveling with an elite expert was truly the greatest thing in this world.

Wei Wuyin's eyes brightened as the horizon revealed the outline of the city. Grandquake City was very minimalistic from the outside, simply having extremely tall walls that were jet-black with faint cracks and signs of age on its surface. Despite that, the walls didn't seem brittle as they stood imposingly for roughly two hundred meters.

The cracks that littered the wall's surface were quite thick, being roughly the size of thick arms of a grown man. They traversed the walls in a seemingly random fashion, but Wei Wuyin could see faint desolate power travel through the cracks in a downwards flow.

It seems those cracks absorbed the surrounding desolate power and sent it into the ground, dispersing it away from the city. When Wei Wuyin saw the wall, he noticed the traffic of people had all but ceased. At times, there would be those who appeared from thin air after a brief fluctuation of space.

Wei Wuyin landed roughly a kilometer away from the wall. The other three landed, feeling that flying was better than being on their feet. Wei Wuyin ignored their bitter expressions, asking: "Where's the entrance?" He only saw a crack-littered wall, no gate or hole within the wall.

Huang Yu answered, "Grandquake City doesn't have an entrance. One has to pay a fee at a nearby Void Gate to gain entry."

"Or scale the wall," Li Wang added with a faint mocking tone. He had adopted a relatively silent manner since deciding to travel with Wei Wuyin. Of course, his mocking tone wasn't directed at Wei Wuyin or Huang Yu, but at the absurdity of the entrance process.

Wei Wuyin could sense that and looked at the tall wall, a faint light of nostalgia flashed through his gaze. He and Su Mei had once come across a wall with a majestic gate; they were chased by the citizens as

they stole their way through the world. When he was met with a wall and gate, he smashed it with matchless ferocity.

The sight of the citizens stomping in retreat, screaming and shouting in panic after their cursing and anger was quite humorous. He chuckled to himself, realizing that he missed those days a little. While mentally he was at his lowest, his Heart of Cultivation in shambles, he was unrestrained and free then, living life one day at a time.

Now, he represented the Myriad Monarch Sect and his organization, his reputation being relatively important. Such childish antics couldn't be enacted without harming that prestigious image. The thought caused him to pout his lips a little.

Chu Leitao explained, "The wall is the first line of defense of the Grandquake City; furthermore, it absorbs and disperses the desolate power into the ground, allowing the insides to be free of such dangerous forces. This means one can comfortably rest without expanding their energies, astral force, or spiritual strength for tools. It is a luxury."

Wei Wuyin slightly nodded, understanding the importance of a place of respite in this dangerous world.

"You still have to pay hourly to stay," Li Wang scoffed. He was someone who originated from the Central Regions, so he didn't hide his contempt or distaste for the Grandquake City's extortionist means.

Huang Yu wanted to say something, but Li Wang interrupted as he spoke to Wei Wuyin: "If you're unable to pay the fee, this wall will be your cage as escape is impossible. You'll be sold as an Energy Converter or taken as an Alchemic Proxy if you're too weak or without any backing. That's if you're a man, if you're a woman, I hope they enjoy being on their knees and back all day."

Wei Wuyin was startled for a moment while Huang Yu's expression became slightly unsightly. Li Wang didn't hold back by throwing the city's reputation in the garbage, quickly bringing out their dark practices.

"Can't that be exploited?" Wei Wuyin wasn't shocked by the implication, but he was shocked by the abusive manner this could be used for. For example, an arbiter of these rules could send innocent men and women to their enslavement with a whim. They would even have the backing of the city's forces on their side.

"..." The three went silent, especially Huang Yu who knew more about the truth.

The little elf in his embrace trembled slightly. Wei Wuyin glanced at this beautiful elf that remained 'asleep' for an entire week in his embrace. At some point, you'd think she would throw away her feigning act of sleeping, but nope. At times, she would legitimately sleep in his arms and used his shoulder and a portion of his chest as a comfortable pillow.

He didn't know how to respond to that, only finding her quite cute.

Chu Leitao finally broke the silence, "All foreign Seekers are well-prepared and understand who not to offend and who to avoid. And they are all at least in the Astral Core Realm, some even in groups, so there aren't many that are useless. Few stay in the city longer than necessary, only using it as a temporary rest area and transport station."

Wei Wuyin slowly nodded, but that still didn't eliminate the possibilities of corruption and abuse. As for turning members of their own race into slaves, they seemed to not really care. They were the ones who bought the captured Seekers from the Grey Sands Elves. The only reason they didn't openly act in snatching foreign Seekers was to prevent offending some righteous experts in the Central Regions with too much time on their hands.

Also, he learned from them that the slaves would only be bought and transferred over after the Season of Regression ended, not before. So the Central Region's focus shifted to their blessed land of cultivation, forgetting the four extreme lands and their native forces until it returned.

"Where's the Void Gate?" Wei Wuyin swept his gaze to the left and right, curious how this Void Gate looked.

Huang Yu breathed in deeply before regaining his youthful enthusiasm, "I'll bring you there!" He took lead as they traveled along the wall for quite a while until they located a three-meter tall silver prism that floated off the ground. There was an old man nearby, dressed in heavy armor. He held a grey spear in his hand, and was lazily leaning against the city wall.

Wei Wuyin saw the silver prism floating a few inches off the ground. They were lucky as there was someone who walked towards it, looked at the old man and gave him a diamond-like crystal that shined with a faint light. The old man pocketed it with practiced ease.

The person then touched the prism and was enshrouded by multicolored light for a moment before vanishing in a flash. Wei Wuyin's eyes widened with interest at the spatial fluctuations emanated by the prism. He had never seen something like that before.

Was this a Void Gate?

The others weren't as shocked. Li Wang looked at the old man, his lips twisted in a contemptuous smile exuding schadenfreude. When they walked forward near the prism, Huang Yu and Chu Leitao similarly looked at the old man, their spiritual senses entering their spatial rings, but they paused unnaturally.

They simultaneously looked at Wei Wuyin, unsure how they should proceed. This confused Wei Wuyin, "What's wrong?"

Just as his words sounded, the old man snorted. His eyes looked at the five of them with indifference, holding out his hand, but when he swept his gaze towards Ai Juling, his eyes brightened with strong emotion. "A Grey Sands Elf!"