

### **Chapter 821: Stellar Nest, Unyielding & Smart**

An outburst of torrential power exploded following Lady Clearwind's voice. The protective barrier securing the safety of Wei Wuyin and the others shook violently, rippling without end. This caused the trio of Ascended to experience changes in expression. They looked at the barrier with quivering hearts, giving Wei Wuyin a look to soothe their growing concerns. When they observed his serene close-eyed face, their hearts settled.

Bai Lin stared at the barrier with golden eyes, Wei Wuyin touched the nape of her neck and connected her Sea of Consciousness with his Alchemic Eden Force, gaining a grasp of the events that were happening above. Unlike the rest, Bai Lin was able to view the ongoing clash with startling clarity.

Wen Mingna didn't even bother. She held a hand-seal, her breathing steadied as she seemed to be performing a divination of the heavens. There was no glow, but her aura was growing increasingly profound that it startled the Ascended beings as they gave her a baffled look.

'A Heavenly Seer?' They were quite familiar with the occupation. The Golden Gate Pavilion might be the foremost power of Seers and Oracles, but almost every force developed their own Seers and Oracles to grasp situations beyond their reach and obtain forewarning of threats. While they weren't too reliable, and their cultivation was relatively difficult to upkeep, they were still heavily wanted cultivators.

Up above, Wu Yu floated imperiously in the Dark Void, his Mystic Aura unfurled as tens of thousands of Mystic Runes swirled around him in a ten meter distance. The sheer density of it was quite startling. Furthermore, his body emitted an aura of Origin Essence, a sign of creation and growth. The benefits of the Heart of Origin were already leaking through. At the moment, his physical energies were on an entirely different level than before.

Lady Clearwind had confronted Wu Yu. She stood at the bow of her Voidship, her Mystic Aura flared, and tens of thousands of Mystic Runes clashed towards Wu Yu in waves, clearly trying to suppress him. But the handsome Wu Yu was like a great rock in the middle of a raging river, embedded into the earth and unmovable. His jagged edge split the river forcefully. She wondered who this good-looking intruder was.

Wu Yu calmly inspected the Mystic Runes besieging him, a manifestation of mystic power of an Earthly Saint. His eyes revealed a sign of surprise. He had believed the standard of Earthly Saints in the Grand Cyclic Stellar Region was somewhat low, especially as an 8th Runic Ascendant himself.

The Ever-Knight's rumor of being nurtured by the King of Everlore might be false, but their backing of the greatest Alchemist Association wasn't fake. They still had the backing of an Alchemic Saint—the Evergod Pill Alchemic Saint, their foundation couldn't be horrendous.

He had just taken a single Mystic-Earth grade product and realized how incredible they were, so having a relatively steady supply should've put them leagues ahead of non-supported Earthly Saints. This belief was overturned as Lady Clearwind revealed herself as a 4th Runic Ascendant!

While it didn't say much about her foundation in terms of physical, mental, spiritual, and essence energies, she certainly had greater talent. This allowed him to refresh his understanding that Alchemy might be boundless, but talent still mattered. He was the best example of this.

Lady Clearwind's valiant expression became dignified as she felt Wu Yu's resistance. She looked at his rapidly moving Mystic Runes, counting them with some difficulty, and her heart began to shake intensely. Wu Yu's mystic runes were engulfed by a strange aura that made it difficult to perceive, but she eventually waded through the smoke and counted upwards to six, maybe even seven.

Wu Yu felt an urge to dominate. Eventually, he held back. Wei Wuyin's orders weren't to fight, but to obtain the information about everything from the source—the United Source True Queen.

He unhesitatingly announced himself: "Grand Knight of Neo-Dawn, Wu Yu." The air of imperial superiority exuded naturally from his entire being, and it caused Lady Clearwind's expression to immediately change. It wasn't just her. Her subordinates on the Voidship all gawked in shock.

The name Wu Yu had circulated widely amongst the top-tier forces of the world in the last two months, as infectious as Wei Wuyin's had. In fact, it was even greater. Wu Yu had half-killed one Ever-Knight and escaped the Everlore Association's pursuit.

Lady Clearwind inspected the ripple first with her spiritual sense, and then looked back at her starfield. Her eyes glinted with frustration. They were currently outside the influence of the United Source Starfield, so her starfield-wide, multi-planetary array would be entirely useless. All the time, energy, and wealth invested into it, and when it mattered, it was out-of-reach. How vexing!

She didn't believe she would be able to defeat Wu Yu with ease despite his recently ascended, non-consolidated state. While she was confident in her strength amongst Earthly Saints, considering herself amongst the upper-tier of Earthly Saints in the Grand Cyclic Stellar Region, she wasn't foolish enough to fight this fight without being certain of a desired outcome. Even if she succeeded, she'll have offended that mysterious Wei Wuyin, and that wasn't worth it.

When that thought emerged, she directed her gaze towards her shattered barrier, replaced by Wu Yu's. Her expression minutely shifted. Was Wei Wuyin there? She tried to peer into the barrier, but was reflected by a coating of Imperial Heaven Aura. Her brows twitched slightly.

Her calm demeanor regained itself, giving Wu Yu a steady gaze. She was fearless. Her attitude reassured her subordinates. They stared at Wu Yu with pride, all stemming from their Earthly Saint.

Wu Yu was amused.

"What do you want, Grand Knight Wu?" Similar to how some called her Lady Clearwind, the official title and title of address was often dissimilar. She floated upwards and her Mystic Aura gathered towards her, condensing in much the same way as Wu Yu.

Wu Yu didn't waste time, "What is that?" He pointed towards the ripples of space that the ships surrounded.

"..." Lady Clearwind was momentarily silent, replying: "It's a distorted point of space, an opening to a Realm World. It was discovered by my United Source Clear Palace. Don't tell me that Mortal Sovereign Wei is interested in this small Realm World?"

She wasn't trying to act cute, but her words provoked a slight smile from Wu Yu. "I was sent here to investigate. Make this easier for both of us; tell me what's inside and why it's valuable. I'll leave the decision if my Young Lord decides if it's interesting or not."

Lady Clearwind looked to the barrier, "I can give him the explanation in person, if he wants."

Wu Yu chortled, "Threats?" He lifted a single eyebrow as his Mystic Aura reached its peak, causing the Voidships to quake as if in a grand storm. They all activated their various formations to steady themselves to no avail.

Wu Yu found it hilarious that this United Source True Queen believed she could reveal Wei Wuyin's location and believed it was enough to grasp some initiative. How bold!

"If I made a threat, you'd know." Lady Clearwind unleashed her own aura, not retreating a single inch as she faced Wu Yu's domineering display. She wasn't stupid to back down at this moment. A passive position was the hardest to break free from.

Their Mystic Aura tussled and wrestled against each other, and her position was showing signs of weakness. Her eyes glinted as she felt that Wu Yu wasn't like how a newly ascended Earthly Saint should be; his mystic power felt consolidated entirely at the level of an Earthly Saint. This startled her deeply. It was an extremely arduous task to refine one's mental, physical, and spiritual energies to the Earthly Saint level. It took her ninety years to do so!

She was struggling to resist this clash, feeling as if she could be overwhelmed if she lost focus for a split second. She held in her emotions, keeping her eyes firm and unyielding before all suppression. Wu Yu saw her strong attitude and his eyes widened slightly, seeing her action had triggered nostalgic memories.

There was a time when a young woman hadn't yielded to him. She challenged him at every corner, strong-willed to the limits. While she wasn't a beauty by general standards, that attitude of hers, that unyieldingness in the face of his Imperial Heaven Aura, was enough to make her extremely beautiful to him.

After a few seconds, a spiritual voice exploded from the barrier. "Wu Yu, stand down."

Those four words caused Wu Yu to instantly recede his aura that was on the verge of overwhelming Lady Clearwind. While her outward appearance seemed unsettled, her heart was pounding and protruding veins from exertion could be seen on her clenched fist.

Wu Yu hadn't even attacked, just a clash of auras, and she felt that she had unquestionably lost. A feeling of being dominated, something that hadn't developed in such a long, long time had spurred in her heart. She couldn't help but give Wu Yu a heavy stare.

'Why is he willing to be a subordinate?' Her thoughts were wild, interrupted by Wei Wuyin exiting the barrier with Wen Mingna and Bai Lin. Wen Mingna's Worldly Domain was erected, allowing Wei Wuyin to appear in his non-draconic transformation form while in the Dark Void.

When Lady Clearwind saw the closed-eyed, unearthly handsome visage of Wei Wuyin, her thoughts halted instantly. She hadn't seen a handsome man like this in such a long time! Even Wu Yu paled by a notch or two, causing her mind to stir as she realized that Wei Wuyin's reputation might not be exaggerated.

When she realized that she couldn't inspect Wei Wuyin's cultivation level, and that he wore Mystic-Earth grade clothes, she was once again surprised. Despite that, he was certainly a mortal, and this caused her to give Wu Yu another glance. Did a mortal truly nurture an Earthly Saint?!

"United Source True Queen, do you mind telling me now?" Wei Wuyin calmly smiled. Bai Lin was fully revealed, her appearance matching the description of a phoenix, and it caused Lady Clearwind to pause. The gazes of everyone also followed, their hearts throbbing intensely.

"Th-that's..." Her unsettled state crumbled slightly, revealing a flaw from her shock and surprise. The events of the Fire Phoenix were public. Moreover, many details were recorded by some brave souls. When the Tang Clan cleared out Blueglow of living beings, only Bai Lin remained and as an avian creature, she was honed on and recorded with startling clarity.

Kree!

Bai Lin unleashed a clarion cry that shook the Dark Void.

Lady Clearwind's mind was abnormally quick as an Ascended being, and she instantly began to make several connections. The unknown Earthly Saint, Wu Yu's ascension, his escape, the clash with the Everlore Association, Bai Lin's existence, and Wei Wuyin's resounding reputation.

'He has two Earthly Saints! And a beast that rivals Demi-Mortal Lords?! As a mortal? What...no, no. This might not be all there is. Oh my heavens...' Her eyes jolted back to Wu Yu, and when she thought about that dragon-head figure garbed in armor, she instantly realized there was a genuine reason why Wu Yu would follow Wei Wuyin.

"Who are y-" She was about to ask this question by impulse, wanting to know everything about Wei Wuyin, but that faint smile of his caused her words to be caught in her throat. In a split second her attitude changed and she gave off a faint, greeting smile.

She lowered her Mystic Aura. "It's a pleasure to finally meet you, Mortal Sovereign Wei."

Wu Yu realized this woman was as intelligent and adaptable as she was unyielding and fearless. An inkling of an urge surged in his heart, staring at her uniquely alluring countenance.

Wei Wuyin returned her greeting politely, his impression of her elevating, and confirming that Bai Lin's existence elevated his identity once again. While the Legion Commander was out-of-commission at the moment, his feats and existence couldn't be ignored.

As for the entire world learning of this, that's what he wanted most of all. Especially so for a certain group of cultivators.

Lady Clearwind looked at the spatial ripples that constituted the entrance of the Stellar Nest. She decided in her heart a choice: she will use this to gain the favor of this character.

The masked figure? The roughly loose Mythical Oaths?

Irrelevant.

Lady Clearwind: "Mortal Sovereign Wei, this is..."

### **Chapter 822: Stellar Nest, No Small Fortune**

Through spiritual transmission, Lady Clearwind's explanation was concise and detailed; she held back very little as she began to relay her knowledge to Wei Wuyin. Since the mythical oaths sworn earlier didn't include restricting her from telling others about this situation, as even the masked figure likely never accounted for Lady Clearwind to explain of her own volition, she freely did so.

Wei Wuyin, Wu Yu, and Wen Mingna quietly listened, their interest growing with every passing second. From Lady Clearwind's story, she was contacted by an unidentified party, a single cultivator, who informed her of a Stellar Nest's spatial anomaly. A Stellar Nest was a unique realm that could be considered both a Secret Realm and a World Realm with strange fluctuations of space and various restrictions that made it difficult for even Ascended beings to detect, enter, or predict.

This cultivator revealed that they had a way to detect a Stellar Nest, even breach a small opening in fixed space to connect to it. This was different than using the typical entrance, but was a man-made backdoor of sorts. The cultivator informed her that an Earthly Saint with their own Internal World was needed to create this man-made backdoor.

After all, an Internal World bore remarkable similarities to a Stellar Nest, bearing qualities of both a Secret Realm and a World Realm. She was skeptical at first but was later convinced after seeing all the compelling evidence, and further tempted by the allure of the Zenith Stellar Source.

When the Zenith Stellar Source was mentioned, Wen Mingna's breathing became a little unstable, catching Wei Wuyin's notice. Wen Mingna discreetly informed Wei Wuyin that the Zenith Stellar Source and its so-called Stellar Nest was unable to be scryed by Heavenly Seers. No one knows what it is or why it exists, but there were numerous colonies throughout the Grand Cyclic Stellar Region. Despite this, no one has ever been able to attain one.

Still, roughly six thousand years ago, Stellar Rain concoction methods began to rapidly surge to popularity as the King of Everlore had refined a unique product called the Ever-Starlight Pellet. It was a ninth-grade pellet that held enough power to severely injure, if not outright kill, Mystic Star Phase cultivators. Furthermore, it could be used to replicate the speed of Stellar Rain, which was stupendously fast, and allowed one to escape even the most dangerous crisis. Most importantly, spatial restrictions, even World Prisons of Ascended beings and Earthly Saints were unable to halt this attempt.

The popularity was fully warranted as forces began to collect Stellar Rain with a severe passion, causing the Void Hunter occupation to breathe a whole new life. While the occupation later found its footing from other miraculous treasures of the unexplored Dark Void, Stellar Rain helped it grow to its current level where there were organizations with Earthly Saints at the helm.

Unfortunately, Stellar Rain was absurdly difficult to claim and the mortality rate in the venture to gather them was depressingly high. There was once a Demi-Mortal Lord who attempted to capture Stellar Rain in a heavy swarm but was met with over ten million of these lifeforms, causing them to be punctured to death.

This brought to prospective the dangers and slowly decreased the attempts. Yet the Ever-Starlight Pellet was extremely desired, so only the experienced with all sorts of prepared tools sought to capture them for a hefty profit.

As for Zenith Stellar Source, that was merely the name given by cultivators to describe the bring that births Stellar Rain. No one knew what it looked like or what it actually was, just that there wasn't just one in the Grand Cyclic Stellar Region. In fact, there were speculated to be hundreds of Stellar Nests out there, and even a Grand Stellar Nest that housed the first of their kind—their progenitor.

Some architects that studied these beings theorized that every Stellar Nest was connected to each other, like an ant colony, and that these Zenith Stellar Source were just workers that refined the gathered solar essence and energies to feed it to their true queen.

Of course, no one knew the truth due to the elusive nature of these nests and indiscernible characteristics of the Stellar Rain. When caught, these Stellar Rain imploded, leaving a unique form of essence that is used in the Ever-Starlight Pellets and other similar products including refined by Star Cores to elevate their intrinsic qualities.

Wen Mingna was extremely well-read, reading published journals from architects and scholars regarding Stellar Rain while she cultivated at the Golden Gate Pavilion. Her erudite nature was why she was so outstanding, alongside her patience and resolve, she was a force to be reckoned with.

"A Stellar Nest?" Wei Wuyin rubbed his chin in contemplation. This was slightly unexpected.

"Indeed, Mortal Sovereign Wei. However, the Stellar Nest's spatial qualities are unstable. It reacts very negatively to mystic-graded tools, including energies, essence, and power." Lady Clearwind informed, slightly revealing her own dissatisfaction at this frustrating feature. This prevented any and all Ascended beings from breaching using this backdoor or their entrances.

"..." Wu Yu looked towards the Stellar Nest's backdoor, which was just a nondescript set of continuously pulsating spatial ripples in a limited area. He turned to Wei Wuyin and sent a message, to which Wei Wuyin nodded. Lady Clearwind noticed this interaction and realized what Wu Yu wanted to do.

She cautiously warned, "The one who said he could retrieve the Zenith Stellar Source and copious amounts of Stellar Rain is still inside, and a thousand of my men."

Wu Yu gave her glance and then a confident grin. Without saying anything, he flew towards the ripples and stopped short by a single meter. Raising his hand, his Mystic Runes of eight different sets began to revolve, gathering at his palm, and then he plunged his hand into the ripples. Suddenly, the ripples froze completely. His arm vanished without warning, and then he moved it up and down slightly before pulling it out. The ripples resumed movement.

Lady Clearwind was absolutely stupefied seeing this. When that hand was plunged in with mystic power enveloping it, she expected it to show signs of collapse, but nothing happened. She had tried something similar before, but it caused chaotic ripples to pulse through the Dark Void just coming near it. She hastily retreated in fear of destroying this backdoor.

Wu Yu returned to Wei Wuyin and began to exchange a series of spiritually transmitted messages regarding his findings.

"So even you can't?" Wei Wuyin realized that Wu Yu was also restricted. While he had means, and possessed a unique Internal World, he could only prevent it from collapsing and keep it stable, not enter himself. The backdoor was chaotic, so cultivators couldn't enter regardless due to its instability, hence the continuous ripples. The masked figure solved this issue, allowing him to enter.

Wei Wuyin wasn't quite keen on the idea of entering a nest of beings that could kill a Demi-Mortal Lord. That sounded foolish beyond belief. He had never been that reckless with his life without some confidence, but he would be lying to himself if he wasn't similarly tempted by the allure of an unlimited source of Stellar Rain. However, that masked figure was a mortal, and they entered with confidence that they could claim Stellar Rain and the Zenith Stellar Source.

There had to be a reason for this, no?

"What do you think?" Wei Wuyin asked Wen Mingna.

Wen Mingna answered with a frown: "I've tried to perform several divinations regarding the nest, but it's sealed from fate. The details of Stellar Rain and all the things surrounding it have always been restricted from Seers and Oracles alike. " She couldn't explain why, but that's been the case. If not, those Stellar Nests would've long since been discovered and plundered mercilessly by the greedy and ambitious.

"But," Wen Mingna continued, "there's two possibilities that could be assumed based on the evidence and information we know of."

Wei Wuyin was all ears. He found it interesting that Wen Mingna set herself on two assumptions, because he too had thought two possibilities were likely.

"The first possibility is that the Stellar Nest isn't as dangerous as we expect. If unproven but reasonable theories of various records and scholars are to be considered, then Stellar Rain gains their power from solar energies. These energies are sent to the Zenith Stellar Source like food, so none of those Stellar Rain lifeforms contain powers exceeding Mortal Limits." Wen Mingna asserted, giving herself time to think and articulate her thoughts.

Lady Clearwind and Wu Yu inwardly nodded. These were their initial thoughts too. Since the masked figure was a mortal, then the danger posed by Stellar Rain had to be reduced considerably. To explain it away by saying their energies were drained after delivering it to the Zenith Stellar Source made logical sense.

Wei Wuyin agreed that this was a possibility.

"The second possibility is that the masked figure the United Source True Queen mentioned has a method to severely weaken the Stellar Rain and Zenith Stellar Source or they're severely weakened by the Stellar Nest's own limitations and restrictions." The idea that their home sealed their strength to prevent them from destroying it could be a flaw of their own design, preventing things beyond Mortal Limits from entering.

"It could be two-fold," Wei Wuyin said.

"It could," Wen Mingna agreed. If both were the case, then it made sense why the masked figure had confidently entered, even negotiating with an Earthly Saint.

However, Wei Wuyin was a little disappointed. Wen Mingna wasn't wrong, but both possibilities could be combined under the category: "Weakened by circumstances."

Wen Mingna's thoughts finally caught up, and her eyes lit in brilliance. "There's another possibility: If the masked figure is an Ascended cultivator in disguise, likely an Earthly Saint with ways to hide his intrinsic mystic qualities. If so, then he has the means to protect himself."

Wei Wuyin faintly smiled, 'looking' towards the spatial ripples. Since these ripples caused a commotion, it was possible the masked figure sought to gain the local leader's support and not be hindered by every tom, dick, and harry with greed in their eyes. Asking for reinforcements and all the rest was a mere guise to trick the United Source True Queen into complacency, allowing her to believe she was in control.

Lady Clearwind understood Wen Mingna's assumption, and she gave an instinctive harrumph, "I'm no idiot; I've made them swear a mythical oath that their cultivation base was below the Ascended level. And they have to use the backdoor here to exit or else they'd fail another oath as well."

Wu Yu gave Lady Clearwind a surprised look, realizing she wasn't foolish enough to be blinded by greed and overconfidence of her own power even when associating with mortals. He felt a little bit of admiration for her.

Wei Wuyin deftly nodded. "Good," he said.

"Good?" Lady Clearwind furrowed her brows. She didn't need confirmation of her intelligence, every breath she took, every move she made, and all her achievements thus far was enough. Despite Wei Wuyin's mysterious status, it still felt weird to hear that type of compliment from a mere mortal.

Wei Wuyin didn't bother with Lady Clearwind's misunderstanding, having already made a decision in his heart.

"I know you told me all this in the hopes of getting me to not interfere, likely willing to concede some benefits as well, but I apologize: I don't like obtaining a small share of any fortune." Wei Wuyin told his truest feelings that were deeply developed as an Exploitative Blessed and Inheritor of Sin.

Lady Clearwind was stunned. She indeed told Wei Wuyin all this in the hopes of him staving off any attempt or interfering. She was willing to give him a taste to gain his favor if the masked figure succeeded. In fact, she was about to launch into a wave of talks to discuss this exact matter, but Wei Wuyin had shut that down before she even spouted a single word.

She gave Wu Yu a look and her expression became unfathomably dark. This was what she feared.

As if given a cue, Wu Yu's Mystic Aura erupted and pressed against Lady Clearwind. She had to unleash her own to prevent being suppressed, but her flustered complexion revealed that Wu Yu wasn't holding back this time. Moreover, she had to consciously protect her subordinates. Despite Wei Wuyin being in close proximity, that a single breath of hers could eviscerate him, there was nothing she could do with Wu Yu by his side.

"WHAT!" She violently shouted, but then gradually calmed down, "do you want? I can give you fifty-, no, twenty percent of the profits of all sales, and give you a set amount of Stellar Rain every year for five hundred years. What do you think? Why fight when we can be allies?"

Wei Wuyin shook his head, "United Source True Queen, you misunderstand. I'm not trying to fight you. I don't intend to receive or take a share of the benefits from you—I intend to obtain my own." When he said this, Lady Clearwind was taken aback so fiercely that her Mystic Aura became turbulent, causing her to be pushed back a few feet.

"Stabilize the backdoor. I'm going in," Wei Wuyin began to undress. Since mystic-graded materials were restricted, he had to return to his normal attire. He was extremely swift, donning his black-colored, form-fitting, martial arts robes once more, giving him a strong and dashing appearance.

Wen Mingna and Bai Lin seemed to have expected this as the former gave Wei Wuyin a concerned look and the latter was smiling excitedly.

Wu Yu and Wei Wuyin didn't pay any attention to Lady Clearwind's further reactions. Wu Yu brought Wei Wuyin to the ripples and pushed his hand through them once more, causing the ripples to stop. He looked at Wei Wuyin intensely, sending spiritually: "You sure? What if the masked figure is an Ascended being that tricked this woman?" If structured properly, all oaths could contain hidden loopholes.

Wei Wuyin grinned, "I have experience dealing with restricted Ascended beings." After saying this, he flew into the ripples and vanished.

### **Chapter 823: Stellar Rain, The Realm Within**

"..." Lady Clearwind was stunned into a speechless daze by Wei Wuyin. The rumored Grand Mortal Sovereign Alchemist of mysterious origin exhibited a characteristic that she hadn't expected—recklessness. To enter the Stellar Nest immediately upon hearing about it, how could this not be reckless? Recklessness fueled by greed.

She didn't know what to say, giving Wu Yu a long, astonished stare. Wu Yu felt her gaze, the judgmental nature of it and all. However, he wasn't concerned. Wei Wuyin wasn't an ordinary mortal by any measuring standard, and he had means and tools that baffled Ascended beings such as himself. From his Void Portals, Mystic-graded items, to his unbelievable cultivation foundation, they were all things a mortal shouldn't be expected to have.

Furthermore, and most importantly, Wei Wuyin's intelligence, foresight, and cunning was otherworldly. He experienced his rise from nothing to the leading figure in the Everlore Starfield, sufficient to cause an entire civilization to willingly accept him becoming their defining ruler for the next era.

If you asked if he was worried about Wei Wuyin's safety, he wouldn't hesitate to answer with: No.

Bai Lin and Wen Mingna remained quiet, observing the ripples with their own emotions. The former was a little displeased that this Stellar Nest couldn't house beings on her level, making her frustrated that she couldn't join Wei Wuyin. If it wasn't for Wei Wuyin explaining the situation, she might've forced her way in.

Wen Mingna, on the other hand, was outwardly calm as she gazed at the ripples without a tinge of concern, only the slightest frown on her facial expression. The Stellar Nest was a space sealed off from

fate, preventing Seers and Oracles from divining any details about it. Unable to glean anything, she could only watch closely in anticipation. She didn't know why but her heart was beating slightly faster than before.

Seeing their reactions, Lady Clearwind was further baffled by it all. She would never allow her talented Mortal Sovereign Alchemist explore a foreign, unknown location without extensive protection, even if she was their Alchemical Knight.

Wu Yu kept his hand embedded into the backdoor, maintaining its stability for Wei Wuyin's eventual return. A sudden burst of an urge emerged in his heart. He turned his head to find Lady Clearwind and asked with a smile, "How about a chat while we wait?"

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Wei Wuyin had experienced all sorts of spatial transportations, from entering World Realms to Chaos Realms, yet when he felt his body enter the Stellar Nest's backdoor, he felt a distinct prickling sensation that caused his flowing blood to roil in turmoil.

As a cultivator with the bloodline of a True Void Dragon and Draconic Void Astral Soul, the aspects of space were intrinsically linked to his physical and spiritual existence. In a way, he embodied space and time. Despite this, he felt abnormally uncomfortable.

Kratos was still in slumber after the Paradoxical Correction had taken place, so he was unable to listen to its vague explanation. Without it, he was unable to figure out why his body reacted so strangely. Fortunately, he still had access to Kratos' powers and his Draconic Void Force. With a full circulation of this power, the discomfort vanished instantly.

"What is this?" Wei Wuyin fully entered the Stellar Nest, yet he discovered himself to be blind. While his eyes were closed due to the Celestial Eyes' spiritual overflow, his spiritual senses were overwhelmed by intense light. It was effectively the same as a perpetual flashbang.

He hastily inhaled, finding that the Stellar Nest had a heated atmosphere that contained the necessary gases to sustain life. The air particulates, however, were abnormally hot. It felt as if every breath was breathing within a superheated sauna.

Fortunately, his fleshy body was refined by magma and fire energies to their limits. If it wasn't for that, he might be boiling alive at this very moment. "This is a Stellar Nest? Is it due to the flooding of Solar Essence?"

Wei Wuyin didn't outright explore while blinded, but decided to feel through the situation first, hopefully adjusting to the abundance of light. Solar Essences were unique in that it often contained several energies such as yang, fire, and light. While the ratio of these energies defined solar essence types, they were all included into the fundamental building blocks of a Solar Star.

"I can't sense any fluctuations of activity," Wei Wuyin curiously discovered as he floated stood in place. According to Lady Clearwind, there should be a thousand Starlords and the masked figure here to hunt down Stellar Rain and the Zenith Stellar Source. He expected at least some hectic fluctuations, spiritual or otherwise.

Suddenly, his mind stirred as he dragged his feet slowly. There was solid material beneath him! He bent down to touch the surface, discovering that it was extremely cold and smooth, like tempered glass purposefully chilled.

"What is this?" The chilled glass-like ground was inconsistent with the superheated environment. The surface didn't contain any earthen energies, so it wasn't earth. Shockingly, there was no ice energies either. Whatever was generating this chill wasn't aligned with elemental natures.

Rising up, he felt his spiritual sense slowly begin to adjust to the intense light. He began to receive some details from the environment from his senses. What he saw startled him.

Bits of fragmented metal and cloth floated all around him in every direction. Some were as close as a few inches away from his face, others were as far as a mile away.

These were pieces of armor and clothing in the surroundings. They were all of peak astral-graded quality, and he felt their lack of any energy emissions. It was as if they were drained entirely of their innate nature, without the slightest evidence that there was formations imbued within.

He didn't move recklessly, keeping his area of movement restricted. While he felt confident in his self-preservation abilities, he wasn't foolish enough to act without forethought.

The most eerie thing was that these materials were decayed, as if they were here for tens of thousands of years. Yet that wasn't the case. His senses were keen towards temporal fluctuations and he could give approximations on objects age. These pieces of cloth and armaments had been refined less than several hundred years ago. While the base material existed for long periods of time, some newer and some older, the newly refined state that intermixed them all were relatively new.

There was no way these things could've undergone natural decay of tens of thousands of years.

He couldn't determine if these pieces of armor belonged to the thousand Starlords sent here by the United Source True Queen or belonged here from another party. He also couldn't determine if this backdoor sent him to the same location as the others or if it was in perpetual motion.

When he thought about the possibility of the latter, his mind was enlightened. The prickly sensation he felt was linked with his knowledge of space. "The backdoor must be stationary outside but in perpetual motion inside. But why the fragmented materials? Why the decay?" Unable to determine the cause, he stayed put until his spiritual sense thoroughly adjusted to the over abundance of light that blinded him.

Without any obstruction, he could now sense the entire environment for tens of thousands of miles with ease. Firstly, he discovered bits of fragmented armor and ripped pieces of clothing scattered throughout the entire world in haphazard quantities. Some areas were filled with pieces while others were more sparse, yet they were all consistent in one detail: they were all decayed for what seemed like tens of thousands of years.

"..." The abnormality of it all instilled further vigilance in his heart. He discovered that he might not be very reliable in determining these objects age, because as he inspected these objects closer, their temporal aura was stagnant. This meant they were in a temporal stasis, an unchanging state. They could very well be tens of thousands of years old.

But that was wildly inconsistent with their current states. If they were in stasis, decay shouldn't occur.

He had never felt so wanting for Kratos' vague nonsense at this moment. If only to confirm the safety of the environment. Without hesitation, he circulated his draconic energies to empower his flesh and body, taking a single step forward.

Thump!

A hollowed sound echoed as he stepped on the chilled glass-like ground. His heart quivered as he looked downwards and tried to inspect it. Unfortunately, his spiritual sense was like a flood meeting a dam, unable to breach it at all.

"Maybe we should've fixed our eyes before coming here," Ori worriedly commented, its excitement seemingly vanishing without warning. It was a Spirit of Cultivation, so it experienced what Wei Wuyin experienced, saw what Wei Wuyin saw, and it used spiritual sense to inspect the world. If Wei Wuyin couldn't breach it, neither could any of his Astral Souls.

Wei Wuyin wryly smiled, "Maybe." He wasn't in a habit of feeling regret at his decisions. It was best to adapt and handle. But the tense and abnormality of this Stellar Nest did instill some highly vigilant emotions in his heart. He hadn't even explored most of it yet there was a sensation of lingering danger all around.

"Huuuuuuu!" Wei Wuyin deeply inhaled, visualizing all the fearful uncertainty, hectic thoughts, and unneeded emotions build within his lungs as dark, icky motes of light from throughout his body.

"Haaaaaaa!" With a heavy exhale, all those things left his body and into the world, abolished by natural law. A calming technique learned from his older brother. It never failed before and it hadn't now.

"Let's go," Wei Wuyin began to walk forward. Each step made a hollowed sound. When he thought about flying, he decided against it. He had this sensation that the sky was abnormal. He stayed grounded with each step, feeling the chill from the ground coursing through his body.

"Why do I have a feeling that this chill and solar essence are in conflict with each other? And where is this light and heat coming from?" Wei Wuyin had already walked an entire mile, yet he discovered nothing but more fragmented armor and clothes drained of all their energies at the borders of his spiritual sense. Furthermore, there was no direction in which the light or heat originated. There was no Solar Star that was typical amongst World Realms.

That being said, it was strange since most Secret Realms lacked Solar Stars unless they needed to sustain life. However, he hadn't sensed a single aura of life thus far despite it having all the requirements. He hadn't even sensed a wall of any type or atmospheric layer above.

Where the hell was he?

It had light and heat without origin, breathable air without an atmosphere, and filled with astral-graded materials that floated as if they weren't subjected to gravity. Worst of all, the gravity here was abnormally intense. It pulled one heavily towards the chilled glass-like ground. Something was acting as the Gravitational Central Mass below.

"There's no curvature either, but also no aura of a molten core." This place wasn't a spherical planet or continental flat earth. It wasn't an understatement to say this was a mixture between a World Realm and Secret Realm.

"There's something ahead," Ori warned.

Wei Wuyin's senses rushed towards the area ahead, reaching over three hundred miles ahead. His expression changed. The fluctuation of activity! He felt the varied aura of power, in the hundreds! They were all within Mortal Limits. Was this the Starlords sent by the United Source True Queen? Finally!

But his excitement at this discovery changed swiftly as he sensed these auras approaching him at a stupefying speeds. Furthermore, the clarity of their numbers changed from several hundreds to thousands, then tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, and finally tens of millions!!!

They were clusted together, their auras very similar. Like ants, they traversed the air in an united march. Together, they eclipsed the sky for several miles high and tens of miles wide and covered it in starlight brilliance.

"Stellar Rain!"

Suddenly, he sensed an indistinct aura concealed by a strange cloak at the forefront of this swarm. They held a small-sized spherical Solar Star the size of a basketball in their hands. It was exceedingly beautiful, emitting a thousand different colors of light in a gorgeous visual for the eyes.

They were running on foot, sprinting with all their might! Heading directly towards Wei Wuyin!

#### **Chapter 824: Stellar Rain, Ruined**

THUM! THUM! THUM!

Dull, heavy thumps resounded for thousands of miles with every dashing stomp made by the cloaked figure. Under the pursuit of this swarm of tens of millions of Stellar Rain, the figure kept sprinting forward.

The first thought that came to Wei Wuyin's mind was relief that he hadn't taken flight. If this figure was being pursued yet refused to fly through the usage of ambient mana or innately refined energies, then this likely meant there was a greater danger to doing so. After all, cultivators generally moved faster through flight than running with their legs.

Wei Wuyin didn't panic at the sight of millions of Stellar Rain. He didn't feel any danger from their approach, a stark contrast to the lingering danger he felt every second from the environment. Seeing how they were like glittering rays of starlight in the distance, they didn't seem to take on the commonly known appearance of Stellar Rain, a ray of crystalline light.

He discreetly sent his spiritual sense to investigate, and while he met some resistance as the swarm roiled in response to coming in contact with his spiritual strength, he discovered that their energy levels were depressingly lower than he expected. Each individual lifeform barely qualified as having the aura of an Astral Core Realm cultivator at the first stage, and even then, it felt limited and restrained.

'They must've sent their collected solar energies to the Zenith Stellar Source already, if what the world's known knowledge of these beings are true.' Wei Wuyin then inspected the cloaked figure, noticing their unique mask, and a concealment ward that caused his spiritual sense to be obstructed from identifying anything else, be it cultivation, gender, appearance, race, or age.

It was quite thorough.

Wei Wuyin noticed that within the masked figure's hands was a miniaturized star of multiple colors, gorgeous and alluring as a celestial pearl of myth. Was this the Zenith Stellar Source?

Suddenly, the masked figure seemingly noticed Wei Wuyin. The figure seemed taken aback by his appearance, and then with a slight movement of its upper torso, reminiscent of a heavy, disappointed sigh, the figure twisted their body mid-step. Their cloak expanded, spun around their body like a cyclone of cloth, and enveloped them entirely before shrinking into nothing. Without warning, before Wei Wuyin's spiritual sense, the masked figure disappeared!

"What?" Wei Wuyin was startled by this vanishing act, using his spiritual sense to permeate the surroundings. The Stellar Rain grew agitated when they came into contact with his Spiritual Strength. Frowning, he ignored this as he gushed throughout the surroundings for hundreds of miles to discover nothing. There weren't even clues of where they went.

The Stellar Rain also seemed confused by the masked figure's disappearance. They twisted and raged in the distance, creating a beautiful scenery of starlight, and then they scattered into hundreds of clustered swarms. They seemed to be scouring the area for the masked figure.

"Strange," Eden commented.

Wei Wuyin nodded, slowly walking towards the Stellar Rain. That masked figure disappearing had stroked his curiosity, but there were some doubtful points to his disappearance.

Firstly, if the figure used some spatial shifting tool, then he would've certainly sensed it with his bloodline. Secondly, if the figure could have escaped so easily, they would've already left the Stellar Rain behind. Why the unnecessary chase? Lastly, the swarm of Stellar Rain didn't scatter further than a few dozen miles in every direction.

"Environmental Integration?" Eden speculated. Wei Wuyin nodded in agreement, continuing his brisk walk towards the hectic swarms of Stellar Rain. Every step he took brought him tens of meters forward. A formless pressure began to develop.

Wei Wuyin was adept in using the environment to conceal his existence. He had used it multiple times to hide from his enemies or to perform sneaky actions, such as to run from a vengeful Demi-Mortal Lord and hide from an arrogant Legion Commander. He recognized the signs after a little bit of contemplation.

"It's not elemental," Ori added excitedly. Its excitement didn't stem from its inclusion of input, but from Wei Wuyin's gathering of its astral force. Clearly, he was about to make a move!

Suddenly, a chilly air emanated from Wei Wuyin's mouth. Despite the superheated environment, a gush of white icy mist was expelled with every exhale. The white icy mist began to generate from his fingertips, his torso, hair, and ears. Despite his closed eyes, the sides of them were generating long wisps of icy mist that slithered like snakes.

His activity began to stir the Stellar Rain as they seemed to shift their focus towards him and only him. Their bodies of light began to flash sporadically. The hectic flashing of their starlight was likely a form of communication between swarms, and as if they received some order, they began to gather to face the oncoming threat.

A single gigantic swarm reformed, composed of tens of millions of lifeforms. For several miles, there was nothing but glittering starlight in sight. Wei Wuyin was tiny, almost insignificant in comparison to their gathered size. A single man versus tens of millions of strange lifeforms. However, while one side took a step forward, the other recoiled back.

'They can sense my strength.' From how they reacted to his spiritual strength to his current state, these Stellar Rain lifeforms were clearly intelligent enough to pinpoint a threat. That being said, his spiritual strength was quite abnormal, and so were his various forces. Yet they remained, clearly unwilling to retreat without finding what they wanted.

Wei Wuyin soon became a humanoid figure gushing out icy white mist from every orifice and pore in his body. Using the Absolute Zero Ice Intent, the apex-level Intent of the Ice Attribute, Wei Wuyin brought forth his elemental origin force, transforming it into the purest form of ice origin force.

"Freeze," Wei Wuyin softly spoke like a demon of frost, his voice chilly both figuratively and literally. The air from his lungs gushed out alongside copious amounts of ice origin force that summoned forth a raging storm of icy mist. In milliseconds, the storm reached tens of miles in every direction. If one was looking at it from afar, they would find its shape was that of an icy-blue dragon's head.

With its maw wide open, it rushed to bite at Stellar Rain's swarm with deadly ferocity.

Giiiiizzz!

A strange sound unlike anything Wei Wuyin had ever heard before was released from the Stellar Rain. Their battle-ready state deflated instantly. They scattered in haste.

Unfortunately, they were too slow.

The bite of the dragon's head was too fast, too large, and encapsulated them all in one go. They were overwhelmed by ice origin force, subjected to the Absolute Zero Ice Intent's unique instant-freezing capabilities. Not only were they frozen, their glittering starlight emissions were seemingly frozen with it!

"Huuuuu!" Wei Wuyin deeply inhaled, recalling every bit of icy mist into his mouth. It returned to his body, clearing the field of its presence entirely. The superheated environment took shape once again, but the view that remained was far different than before.

Tens of millions of icy-blue gems scattered across the ground, as small as marbles each. They clattered to the ground with a uniquely harmonic sound that was extremely satisfying. The superheated environment did nothing to melt these icy-blue gems.

Wei Wuyin's spiritual sense swept the immediate world, frowning slightly as he walked towards the cluster of frozen Stellar Rain. He made a pulling motion and one of the icy-blue gems shot towards his hand. The gem was clear, and within it, the glittery starlight and the Stellar Rain's unique form.

He felt amazed by its true form. It was an eel with clear crystalline skin, see through organs, and six wings. Two of these wings were on both sides of its head, two at the midsection of its body, and other two were not directly connected to its body, but had a tether of starlight. Those last set of wings weren't crystalline like the other two, but pure black.

Clearly, those sets of wings served entirely different functions than the other two. He was curious about what these things were, but he also noticed the complete lack of soul aura. They were truly not capable of cultivating. But shockingly, they didn't have a Sea of Consciousness either, yet they had mental energy fluctuations.

This meant they weren't exactly sentient lifeforms either. "Avatars?" Was his first guess, causing his interest to elevate to another level.

CRACK! CRACK! SHATTER!

Without warning, sounds of ice cracking and breaking occurred, drawing Wei Wuyin's senses to the large icy-blue gem a mile away. It violently exploded to reveal a masked figure that was staring in Wei Wuyin's direction.

The masked figure looked around for a moment, and then turned to Wei Wuyin.

Wei Wuyin matched his 'gaze', and despite neither of their eyes being able to be seen, you could tell their eyes aligned with each other.

"You came from the outside?" The masked figure asked via spiritual transmission, casually inspecting the multicolored mini-Solar Star in his hand. After seemingly determining that it was unharmed, the masked figure returned his focus to Wei Wuyin.

Wei Wuyin, on the other hand, was deeply intrigued how his ice entrapment was broken so quickly. The speculations that this figure was a suppressed Ascended being using the United Source True Queen to hide his activities or as a ploy might have some weight.

Wei Wuyin didn't bother lying, directly nodding in admittance.

The masked figure was silent for a moment, then asked in a strange tone: "Did you come from the entrance near the United Source Starfield?"

Wei Wuyin realized the masked figure's words carried hope. This took him by surprise, but he nodded again.

The masked figure deeply inhaled through the nasal passages of his mask, and then exhaled heavily through his mouth. Saying only one word along with all sorts of emotions: "Shit."

"..." Wei Wuyin.

"She ruined everything."

Suddenly!

GIIIIIIIZZZZZZZZZZZZ!

That strange sound once again resounded, but this time, it was like thunder within a closed echo chamber. It could cause one's ears to bleed!

Wei Wuyin instantly spread out his spiritual sense, and his expression drastically changed as he reached tens of thousands of miles away, discovering tremendous activity.

"How unfortunate," the masked figure said as they looked left and right. "The horde..."

The horde? Wei Wuyin then sensed it, tens of millions, no, tens of billions, no...TENS OF TRILLIONS!

Every direction, for miles, all coming towards their location with frightening speeds! As far as his spiritual sense went, the Stellar Rain extended further!

### **Chapter 825:Stellar Nest, Likeminded**

"Well..." Wei Wuyin sensed the oncoming Stellar Rain, at least those at the forefront. The sheer quantity of Stellar Rain was so outrageous that his spiritual sense had trouble grasping each of them, allowing him to only roughly count their numbers.

Tens of trillions!

If anyone else was in Wei Wuyin's situation, Ascended being or mortal, they would likely soil themselves in fear. However, Wei Wuyin was completely calm, and his focus honed onto the masked figure.

"They're after you?" Wei Wuyin finally spoke to the masked figure, sending a spiritual transmission.

The masked figure seemed similarly calm despite the ongoing situation. The danger of the Stellar Rain hadn't provoked any hasty moves. From their standing stance to the tension in their fingers, there wasn't a single indication of concern.

"Me?" There was a hint of amusement in the masked figure's spiritual tone. The masked figure used their unoccupied hand to gesture towards the icy marbles with an open palm. "I'm not the one who attacked them."

Wei Wuyin nodded in acceptance. He had assaulted them without understanding their abilities, habits, or numbers. This could be construed as an act of recklessness in the eyes of others. But to him? This was following along with his goals perfectly. He walked a little amidst the frozen bodies of these Stellar Rain lifeforms, waving his hand about as they began to float upwards. "So that strange sound of theirs was a call for help," he surmised.

"You aren't wrong," The masked figure calmly replied.

GIIIIIIIZZZZZZZZZZZZ!!!

GIIIIIIIZZZZZZZZZZZZ!!!

GIIIIIIIZZZZZZZZZZZZ!!!

From all directions, their unified cry resounded and shook the ground with a feral intensity. The bloodlust and killing intent within their faint mental fluctuations was abundantly clear to all who heard it, and for Wei Wuyin who cultivated the Mind Dao, these emotions were extremely noticeable.

They hadn't attacked yet, all directions were being deliberately sealed by their numbers. They stacked themselves together, clustered and formed walls with their bodies, and their cries were signs of calling forth further reinforcements.

Wei Wuyin didn't delay after grasping the situation. The floating icy marbles that contained the unique bodies of the Stellar Rain lifeforms began to gather towards him. With another wave of his hand,

interacting with the mystic-graded spatial ring of Cai Liuyang, a byproduct of a genuine Internal World refined, those marbles distorted and started to vanish with remarkable swiftness.

In a matter of mere moments, tens of millions of frozen lifeforms vanished. The bodies of these Stellar Rain could be used for his own purposes, and that glittering starlight might be the quintessential solar essence that could be refined to strengthen Star Cores or as a material for Concoction Methods.

"Oh?" The masked figure seemed to have been preoccupied with something, but their attention was immediately brought back to Wei Wuyin after he kept the Stellar Rain. "You have a Microcosm Ring?"

"Microcosm Ring?" Wei Wuyin's mind stirred. This was the official name for a mystic-graded spatial ring; however, Jing Jiu's memories suggested that the name was archaic. The only reason Jing Jiu had learned of it was because he found his own ring in an ancient tomb of an expert from over three hundred thousand years ago. In the Azure-Prime Galactic Region, due to advancements and progression of technology, after it was forged using genuinely forged Internal Worlds, they were later called Nth World Rings and presently referred to as Saint Rings.

When they were originally designed, their strength and quality was defined by the number of Internal Worlds properly merged and refined prior to the spatial ring's forging process. Because of this, the 'nth' was substituted with the number of Internal Worlds, such as the 3rd World Ring. This was later thrown away after a series of methods to post-expand a World Ring's space, strengthen its stability, create it without tremendous sacrifice, and redesign its structure to resemble sustainable worlds was created by elite cultivators and alchemists.

It was then termed just Saint Rings, from how only those who have both Awakened Mystic Intent and an Internal World, Earthly Saints or Alchemic Saints, were capable of producing or enhancing these rings that was far more effective than the previous iterations.

To hear those words spoken in the Grand Cyclic Stellar Region, Wei Wuyin's curiosity was ignited.

GIIIIIIZZZZZZZZZZZZ!!!

The sound in the distance hadn't stopped. It only grew louder, containing heavier violence with each passing second. They seemed ready to pounce, only accumulating sufficient numbers. At this point, the horizon of this world was blocked off from view, and Wei Wuyin and the masked figure were thoroughly surrounded. These Stellar Rain lifeforms stayed at a consistent distance of eighty miles. It was menacing.

"Who are you?" The masked figure asked, clearly shaken that Wei Wuyin was in possession of a spatial ring of that quality. "Why would she allow you through?" It seemed the masked figure was now curious, no longer attributing the issue of the United Source True Queen's failure to uphold their original deal as distrust.

Wei Wuyin didn't answer. He inspected his spatial ring and examined the Stellar Rain sealed by ice origin force. Despite being a ring designed with an Internal World, there were certain limitations to allowing lifeforms to exist within. While there were rings that allowed such things, Cai Liuyang and Jing Jiu's rings weren't designed with that in mind. While they could keep life within if sealed in a jade box or unique arts, if unsealed, the world would naturally reject it.

He slowly dissolved an ice marble and discovered that the lifeform that was the Stellar Rain wasn't rejected despite squirming around actively. This verified a theory of his. These Stellar Rain lifeforms weren't true lifeforms, but artificially created avatar-like existences.

But why?

"You said she ruined everything before. What did you mean?" Wei Wuyin turned his attention back to the masked figure, sealing the stellar rain again after sending a wisp of his ice origin force within.

"..." The masked figure remained silent as the environment kept piling up with strange sounds, and soon, the faint batting of wings began to be heard. The Stellar Rains had accumulated such a vast number that their winged flight that was typically soft was not converging into a sound loud enough to hear.

Even if the two wanted to speak using their voice, it would be drowned out by the hectic sounds.

The masked figure shook their head, pointing towards the area behind Wei Wuyin. That was the direction where Wei Wuyin came from, now engulfed by the background of innumerable glitters of starlight.

"You entered. The backdoor of the Stellar Nest might be stable outside, but here, it moves after entry or exit. I had used a method to determine its location. Unfortunately..." The masked figure no longer explained. The rest was abundantly clear.

Wei Wuyin felt enlightened. No wonder he felt incredibly strange when he arrived, the backdoor began to move the moment he entered. He would be as if he had just jumped off a flying vehicle immediately after it went from still to top speed without warning. The residual spatial wake it generated caused him to be shaken. Perhaps if one didn't have a strong physical body, they'd be ripped to shreds immediately.

If this was true, then the United Source True Queen truly failed at her job allowing him to enter. The escape plan was ruined by his desire to enter and her failure to prevent it.

"You wanted an Earthly Saint to act as a guard dog for you to secure a safe return? How courageous," Wei Wuyin commented with genuine praise. It seemed his original theory that the United Source True Queen was being used was mostly true. But if so, then the United Source True Queen certainly didn't know about this, otherwise she wouldn't have held back in telling him.

As he thought about it, he came to a realization. He 'looked' behind where the exit should've been. "Determined? Not affixed?"

"..." The masked figure didn't respond.

"A thousand and one," Wei Wuyin said, returning his 'look' to the masked figure. "You determined the location?" It soon became clear. The Stellar Nest wasn't subject to divination, a commonly known fact, but everything had set principles, even spatial entrances and gateway doors.

If the backdoor moved, then there had to be a logic to this movement. Distance, direction, timing, and more, all of which likely can form a reliable pattern. The masked figure running directly towards him suggested he had known the rough location of the backdoor.

"Did you use a thousand guinea pigs to calculate the location of where the backdoor would be? Is it the reset principle, to move it to where it originally was? Or was it to manipulate it to be right where you wanted? Where are those Starlords?" Wei Wuyin couldn't help but ask.

GIIIIIIZZZZZZZZZZZZ!!!

"Somewhere," the masked figure responded.

"Ruthless," Wei Wuyin stated. If the backdoor was the only entry and exit for cultivators, then those Starlords will have to either be incredibly lucky to find the next location or die here of old age or from the Stellar Rain. To not only use an Earthly Saint as a line of defense to secure your exit, but to sacrifice a thousand Starlords to ensure that it'll be in a convenient location! That sounded like something he might conceive.

But he couldn't understand something, "You're under oath to return. How will you explain yourself?"

"..." The masked figure lifted the miniaturized solar star slightly. This seemed to be an unintentional movement, a sign of confidence.

Wei Wuyin looked at the miniaturized Solar Star of endless colors in the masked figure's hand, then the Stellar Rain, and then recalled the Zenith Stellar Source. He didn't know the details of the oath, but chances were the oaths weren't airtight enough. Perhaps a stipulation was deviously included.

What would he have done?

GIIIIIIZZZZZZZZZZZZ!!!

'I'd swear if I obtained Stellar Rain or the Zenith Stellar Source, that I'll come back through that entrance. But only if that wasn't my goal. If the backdoor can be moved outside, it's possible it can be manipulated to jump elsewhere. It's almost impossible to find a Stellar Nest backdoor, even as an Earthly Saint.' Wei Wuyin thoughtfully concluded, putting himself in the masked figure's shoes to generate a reliable, deceptive loophole.

Greed blinded all; time was likely not on the United Source True Queen's side when the oaths were considered. She saw what she wanted to see: a payday or bust with calculated sacrifice and risk.

He felt that he understood 80% of what happened, including that Stellar Rain or the so-called Zenith Stellar Source wasn't the goal here. Perhaps like bees in a hive, there was honey here that was far more valuable than the queen.

"I guess she's lucky I'm here," Wei Wuyin chuckled. Who knew how much thought and planning went into this.

The masked figure looked at Wei Wuyin throughout it all, but then they gave off an androgynous laugh. They said in praise, "She's smarter than I originally thought; sending a restrained Ascended being here to secure her interests. It was my fault for underestimating her intelligence and means, I won't lower my guard against an Earthly Saint again."

"..." Wei Wuyin was inwardly surprised by their statement.

"But if you think a restrained Ascended being is enough to stop me, you're underestimating me." The masked figure began to slowly walk towards Wei Wuyin. T

GIIIIIIZZZZZZZZZZZZ!!!

BOOOOOOOSH!!!

From the masked figure's body, a torrential explosion of spiritual strength erupted that flooded the entire world in mere milliseconds. It was a heavy deluge of spiritual aura that engulfed the world.

Glllllizzzz...

The strange sound emitted from the Stellar Rain lifeforms gradually ceased. Their bloodlust and killing intent was replaced with fear, a similar, if not greater fear than when Wei Wuyin unleashed his own spiritual strength against those Stellar Rain from earlier.

Wei Wuyin's eyebrows lifted in abject shock. That spiritual aura...

That was entirely within Mortal Limits, tainted by the Mortal Dao!

Furthermore, it felt stronger than his!

Who in the hell was this masked figure?!

### **Chapter 826: Stellar Nest, Asking Three Times**

WOOSH! WOOSH! WOOSH!

A torrent of spiritual aura clashed against the world like cascading, crushing waves upon an earthen shore. A storm of spiritual aura was produced, and the Stellar Rain knew of its ferocity. They, like before, retreated in the face of such overbearing power. The onslaught they felt ceased their cries for reinforcements and all their acts of aggression.

They grew docile and silent. The horizon was filled with them, tens of trillions was a soft estimate, and their numbers felt infinite. This was truly their nest! They had such high numbers that gods, ghosts, and devils might feel their scalp tingle in fear at the sight.

Yet two beings with distinctively clear mortal auras stood at the eye of their gathered storm, unphased and interacting as if they were as insignificant as pebbles by the side of the road. Two dressed in black, one open, one hidden, yet they both stood upright, stable, and firm.

Wei Wuyin's reaction was that of surprise. The outpour of spiritual aura slammed against his body, similarly causing his martial robes to flutter as if besieged by a great storm, yet his face, his skin, seemed unaffected by the strong force. He hadn't even taken a single step backwards. A benefit of his overbearingly physical body refined by the Battlefield, the Bloodline of a True Void Dragon, and his own efforts.

There was no mortal being in the Grand Cyclic Stellar Region that could contend against Wei Wuyin for the title of possessing the sturdiest, strongest, and most resilient physical body.

Be that as it may, as the possessor of four Spirits of Cultivation, his spiritual aspects were unfathomably impressive for his stage, each of them further enhanced by his physical, mental, and essence energies

that have been pushed to the utmost limits. There was no disunity in their combination of spiritual power, jointed and bolstered with exceptional synergy.

Although he had suffered a heavy hit in his overall cultivation base from sacrificing a portion for Wen Mingna's recovery, it was still shocking to discover that there was a mortal being with a stronger Spiritual Aura than himself. It caused him to halt, his heart jolting with surprise.

His reaction didn't escape the masked figure's notice, "Do you wish to surrender, Mister Ascended?" Clearly, the masked figure was still under the assumption that Wei Wuyin was a suppressed Ascended being that had bypassed the limits of the backdoor and Stellar Nest, entering through the means of an Earthly Saint.

Wei Wuyin hadn't recalled the last time he was postured for intimidation, finding it amusing all the same. But after the initial shock wore off in the matter of milliseconds, he discovered that the spiritual aura unleashed by this figure was certainly stronger than his, but...

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOSSSSSHHHHHHHHHH!!!!

His four Astral Souls linked, their spiritual strength gathered within and erupted as a single unit, bringing forth the benefits of his thirteen Soul Rings times four, pushing his spiritual energy to the utmost limits. In milliseconds, thousands of miles of space was washed with a spiritual aura that pushed back even the air particulates, heat, and light of the entire world for the briefest of moments.

Those Stellar Rain lifeforms couldn't even react, and tens of millions of them were crushed out of existence. The rest, they were beaten back until the limits of spiritual aura's reach. For thousands of miles, no Stellar Rain lifeforms were present, and the dazzling scenery they generated collapsed in a haphazard manner.

"...!" The masked figure hastily condensed his spiritual aura into a cocoon, defending against the incoming wave. If the masked figure's aura could be considered a freshwater lake, then Wei Wuyin's was a vast salty ocean!

Whoever this cultivator was, he cultivated a method akin to the Imperial Heaven Qi Method, producing a unique Spiritual Aura like the Imperial Heaven Aura that allowed Wu Yu to dominate at his cultivation level, executing a variety of unique arts, spells, and restraining his opponent through various forces and transformations. While this masked figure's aura was stronger, in terms of quantity, Wei Wuyin was unmatched!

"Who are you?!" The masked figure asked again in their shock. Spiritual Aura was an expression of one's spiritual energy and qualities of one's spirit of cultivation, so for it to reach such high levels, a cultivator must have a monstrous amount of spiritual energy!

Wei Wuyin didn't answer their question, merely replying with: "Do you wish to surrender, masked schemer?"

"..." A moment of silence was born between the two, but their thoughts were likely vastly different.

'This person definitely cultivates something similar to the Imperial Heaven Aura, but I can't determine its exact qualities. They must be concealing it somehow. Still, their strength and energy reserves aren't at

my level. If I unleashed my Soul Idols...' Wei Wuyin couldn't discern any of their Spiritual Aura's intrinsic qualities. It was as thoroughly concealed as their figure, gender, race, and cultivation level.

The two hadn't made a move, merely stood and observed the other.

"So you're a Spiritualist," The masked figure seemed to have come to a conclusion, their tone of voice had dissipated their shock, revealing a stable serenity of realization and acceptance.

"..." Wei Wuyin found it funny how cultivators kept mistaking him for a Spiritualist. Furthermore, this seemed to be incorrect. If he was...

"Wait, that's not it? How could you have such spiritual powers without being a Spiritualist?" The masked figure spoke out, seemingly catching themselves from conflicting thoughts, but it also felt as if they were having a debate or conversation with someone else.

Wei Wuyin couldn't help but instinctively look for a ring of sorts that might contain the soul of an ancient expert like Wu Yu. He tried to sense any foreign mental fluctuations from any objects on their person, or any that might leak outside, but he discovered nothing. It might be easier if he had his Celestial Eyes.

Despite that, he knew the masked figure had come to correct his original conclusion. After all, a Spiritualist had substituted all their mental and physical energies for spiritual energy, becoming a spirit-like existence. They had no ice origin astral force, but ice origin spiritual force.

However, he had just unleashed an attack against the Stellar Rain using astral force, and the masked figure had been affected by it. While this misunderstanding could hold up in a location like the Battlefield where his astral force was suppressed, unable to be used, it wasn't an assumption that could hold up in the outside world.

"Who are you...?" The masked figure asked a third time, this time their voice was low and dangerous. It seemed this discovery began to overturn his thoughts that the United Source True Queen had sent Wei Wuyin here as insurance despite all of his previous, vague confirmations and statements.

"You think asking three times will summon the answer fairy? Because it won't. I assure you, I've tried. Many times." Wei Wuyin gave a faint grin, reeling in his spiritual aura swiftly, causing the affected air, light, and heat to resume to normal. A true battle between experts is rarely ever decided by Spiritual Aura unless the difference was utterly massive or a cultivator was like the masked figure or Wu Yu, cultivating unique Auric Methods.

The masked figure similarly reeled theirs in, dissipating the protective cocoon. "You're right; the answer isn't going to fall into my lap. I should just find out myself," the voice seemed to also be smiling despite its androgynous tone. A wisp of amusement dangled in the air.

These two beings faced each other without a care in the world. The dangerous environment they were in, the Stellar Rain that were regrouping, emitting a lower, almost screeching cry that was filled with bloodlust. They clearly did not like their fellow lifeforms being destroyed, yet their hostility towards Wei Wuyin and the masked figure was disproportionate. The latter was an enemy they seemed to be unable to exist with, while the former was an object of their justified vengeance.

The two received different levels of killing intent, but the masked figure had Wei Wuyin beat by miles in a race of only a single mile. That multicolored miniaturized solar star must be the cause for such extreme hatred. If these things were like bees, then this masked figure must have not shown restraint in claiming their honey, and took far, far too much to rile them up to this degree.

"I agree; can't imagine you'll simply tell me what you have in your hand, so I might as well take it and find out for myself." Wei Wuyin no longer decided to prolong this. All his attempts to gather information about this cultivator using his spiritual sense had come up empty. He hated acting without complete information or some information, but he was left with no choice here.

If it wasn't for his caution regarding the stability of the Stellar Nest, he would have acted long ago. But he had tested this with his Spiritual Aura. There was no adverse reaction to his level of power towards the spatial stability of the world. He felt as if the masked figure was testing it too early.

Neither of them wanted to cause the Stellar Nest to collapse. While they likely had different reasons for it, their thoughts were certainly the same. And with this confirmation, they no longer had any reservations about conflict.

'Since I'm here, this entire Stellar Nest is mine.' Wei Wuyin had firmly set his heart and sights on the Stellar Nest. If it was anyone else, they would be unable to re-enter this nest after leaving, but not Wei Wuyin. All he had to do was leave a beacon of sorts, and he would be able to come here to farm Stellar Rain as freely as he wished via a Void Portal.

This entire Stellar Nest and their lifeforms was his. He had no intention of losing it like how he lost the War Devil Realm.

"This?" The masked figure lifted the miniaturized solar star in his hand, appraising it with a slight spin. It shone with gorgeously glamorous light that could attain any mortal being's heart. "This is an Astralis Ultimate Star," the masked figure shockingly revealed its name with no hesitation. Furthermore, he continued: "It can be used to cultivate an Astral Idol. An Ultimate Astral Idol, in fact."

"...!" Wei Wuyin's mind felt as if thunder had erupted within his Sea of Consciousness, not at the name, but its use! He had only heard of Astral Idols from Guan Yu, and it was the representation of reaching the true limits of the Star Core Phase. There were different levels of it, and those with greater foundations needed greater effort to generate one.

Like a meteorite of apocalyptic levels crashing against a small planet, Wei Wuyin's mind was overwhelmed by this Astralis Ultimate Star. It wasn't just due to its effects, but a wave of profound insight, of adroit thinking, of creative designing, and it all accumulated into a single moment that could be described in a single word:

Eureka!

He knew what his next product would be.

"I'm going to have to take that off your hands," Wei Wuyin apologetically said, but there wasn't a wisp of genuine apology within it. He was already walking towards the masked figure, slowly shortening the mile long distance.

"This little thing?" The masked figure twirled it within their palm, and said in amusement, "Come get it then, mysterious stranger."

Without warning, the masked figure explosively shot backward, traversing at an explosive speed that would baffle even Starlords. They became a shadow of a shadow!

WOOSH!

BOOOM!!!

A heavy, devastating, thunderous thud echoed through the world that sent the wind currents running amok in disorder and chaos. The masked figure's retreat halted from the surging force in his escape path. When the masked figure looked ahead, they witnessed something that sent their heart into a rippling state of pounding shock.

Wei Wuyin stood before them, no more than a few meters away, standing upon the chilly yet smooth surface with a serene expression. "It wasn't a request."

Suddenly, the masked figure's empty hand became a clenched fist. With speed that caused Wei Wuyin's eyes to widen, unable to react, that fist impacted his torso with unerring accuracy. A surge of tremendous power erupted!

Boom!

An explosive burst of air produced a sonic boom, and Wei Wuyin was sent flying at speeds that even low-level Ascended beings might find difficult to follow.

"Didn't think it was," the masked figure replied, "but it isn't for sale, and we're not close enough for me to give it."

### **Chapter 827: Stellar Nest, Clash of Abnormal Mortals**

Dazed.

Astonished.

Amazed.

This was Wei Wuyin's initial reaction as the fist impacted his chest, sending a rippling, destructive force into his body, distorting his skin and flesh with forceful waves. A single fist had sent him flying backward at mind-boggling speeds, his limbs flailed with instability as his heavy body and the environment brought him down. Skidding without resistance, Wei Wuyin scraped against the glass-like surface, leaping and hopping until a heavy, fleshy thud resounded.

There was no dust lifted, but the air was rapid like a storm.

Wei Wuyin was laying flat on his stomach, his face on the chilly ground marred by scuff marks from the skidding. While his eyes still remained closed, his thoughts were extremely active, and his facial expression was quite lively, reflecting a state of shock and disbelief.

When was the last time he suffered a direct strike?

When was the last time he was floored by an enemy?

Those questions weren't very hard to answer. He suffered heavily while fighting against ten thousand Ascended beings, and while suppressed, their strength, abilities, and means were varied and coordinated. He suffered then, but this wasn't like that.

Wei Wuyin lifted himself upwards, bringing his 'gaze' to see the masked figure who stayed where they were, not continuing with a follow-up assault. Despite being deeply concealed visually and from all extraordinary senses, Wei Wuyin could feel similar emotions emanating from the masked figure's stance.

Amazed.

Astonished.

Dazed.

Wei Wuyin slowly rose to his feet, feeling a unique spiritual aura course through his body, attempting to assimilate with his meridians, his spirits, and affect his Sea of Consciousness. It was pervasive, like a relentless parasitic being. This sensation he felt must be how Wu Yu's enemies felt when the Imperial Heaven Aura was integrated within them.

Furthermore, it wasn't just this unique aura, but there was a heavy, dense intent that kept impacting his flesh incessantly. He felt a rolling pain in his chest as if that punch was being compounded over and over again.

'Fist Intent.' Wei Wuyin had never faced Awakened Fist Intent before, merely read records of its abilities in documentation left behind by Myriad Yore Continent's experts and scholars. It was an Ethereal Intent, much like sword, battle, or slaughter intent. It embodied a forceful power, aggressive and firm.

However, those two factors were the least surprising and not enough to cause Wei Wuyin to feel the level of shock he had. He touched his chest, pressing against it with his palm, and a wisp of Elemental Origin Intent was generated, flowing throughout his body as it attacked the lingering Fist Intent. The Fist Intent couldn't launch a counter offensive or establish a strong, defense, being eradicated instantly.

If the strength of Intent was compared, an Elemental Origin Intent intermixed with nine Apex-level Intents versus an Awakened Fist Intent, there was no need to guess the final victor. Wei Wuyin merged his Spiritual Aura with his Elemental Origin Intent, sending it into his body, effectively locking down and eliminating the remnants of that strange, pervasive spiritual aura within him.

This was solved with ease, and Wei Wuyin would no longer give either an opportunity to invade his physical body again.

The main contributing factor for his shock and disbelief was the fuel for these two forces. An astral force at the intensity of the Sixth Stage of the Astral Core Realm, the Gravity Emission Phase. It lacked the perfect mixture of Spiritual Strength, Spatial Energy, Light Energy, and Gravitational Force and had the absence of internally refined Worldly Pressure.

These were all indicators of the masked figure's cultivation base. This person's cultivation level...

It was the same as his own!

Moreover, while it lacked internally refined Worldly Pressure, Wei Wuyin felt a distinct, extremely familiar Worldly Pressure erupting from the strike. It belonged to a Domain Seed that was segregated from one's core cultivation base!

'The Neo-Dawn Eclipse Pill...' Whoever this person was, they were at the sixth stage of the Astral Core Realm, and they had either cultivated a method that could replicate the effects of the Neo-Dawn Eclipse Pill, generating an artificial Domain Seed, or they had taken one. How was this not shocking?

"You're at the Gravity Emission Phase?" The masked figure spoke in a dark, solemn tone. Similar to how Wei Wuyin sensed the masked figure's cultivation base, Wei Wuyin inadvertently leaked his power by instinctively defending against the fist strike. This was bound to happen, but it sent both of them into a stupor at the revelation.

"..."

The air grew stifled, tense, and heavy.

The Stellar Rain released low, thrumming cries. They acted as an audience for these two, not daring to attack. In fact, their glittering starlight seemed to dim, as if they were reflecting the stilling of their breathing. Their mental energies were being affected by the sheer presence of these two.

"..."

Without a sound, the two vanished from where they stood.

They reappeared together, their bodies close, and their stance firm, stable, and striking as they launched an assault against each other. Wei Wuyin had moved at the maximal speed that his body allowed without additional support, yet the masked figure rivaled it.

Unsurprised, Wei Wuyin threw an imposing right straight at the masked figure's face. The air around his fist burned in this superheated environment. The masked figure seemed capable of fully reacting as they sent an uppercut to intercept Wei Wuyin's straight, aiming at his arm, fully intending to break his radius and ulna in half.

The fist glowed with a forceful, heavy light that embodied the fist. If hit, an astral steel mountain would be dented, pierced even. Yet Wei Wuyin didn't retreat; his fist kept straight and true. The uppercut met his arm at its intended targets, but the snapping hadn't occurred as expected, and a soft sound of surprise left the masked figure's mouth as Wei Wuyin's fist met its mask.

BOOM!

An explosive eruption of air resounded. The masked figure's head reeled backward. The scene felt as if their head was going to be ripped off, but after a brief shake, they seemingly dispersed the force behind the fist and regained themselves. Wei Wuyin wasn't one to strike and wait, and he immediately followed up with a heavy left punch to the masked figure's right abdomen. The period of recovery led to an inability to react.

Bam! *The source of this content is [freewebnovel.com](http://freewebnovel.com)*

The masked figure's body bent, and a gushing of forcefully exhaled air sounded.

Yet it wasn't finished; Wei Wuyin's right arm had pulled back and was thrown out towards the face of the masked figure! This fist carried the momentum of both previous strikes, leading to a devastatingly powerful strike!

The fist connected mercilessly! The masked figure's body was explosively sent backward, twisting from the force, and skidded across the ground in a similar yet more hectic manner as Wei Wuyin.

Wei Wuyin's knees bent, and when he lifted them upwards, a deep, thunderous sound erupted. His body vanished as he moved at his fullest speed, incorporating his elemental lightning force! He became a streak of white lightning that arrived beside the masked figure's hectic skidding. With a forceful stomp and unerring accuracy, Wei Wuyin aimed at the masked figure's chest.

ROAR!

A draconic roar was unleashed in the air. Wei Wuyin's bloodline began to grow abnormally active. Kratos was rousing from its slumber! The Stellar Rain retreated a few miles in all directions. Their sensitivity towards spiritual auras and strength was extremely evident by now. They had a distinct weakness towards it.

BOOM!!

The stomp followed through perfectly, halting the rapid movement of the masked figure's body, pressing him against the glass-like ground that carried a distinctive chill. Wei Wuyin harshly pressed his foot down; his bloodline energies, physical energies, and lightning origin forces were all active. As he stood upright, foot pressed downwards, he was engulfed by streaks of white lightning. From the sides of his eyes, his fingertips, to his entire body, white light was flowing beautifully. He bore a strong resemblance to a lightning divinity!

It was nothing but four moves, yet he dominated decisively. This was the result of Wei Wuyin's cultivation, and he felt it course through him with all its might. He was about to spiritually seal this cultivator, intending to discover all their secrets through Eden's powers.

"Huh, you're strong." A voice, no longer androgynous but clearly from a male resounded.

Wei Wuyin focused his senses as he kept building up his spiritual force to launch a powerful sealing spiritual spell. He sensed that his strikes had damaged the masked figure's concealment mask. There were cracks on it, resembling fractured porcelain. It could no longer hide their voice or their vocal inflections.

"But strength isn't everything," the masked figure stated with a tone of absolute calmness, unbefitting of a defeated foe. Wei Wuyin's mind stirred as a sensation of danger swelled within his heart. He didn't hesitate to unleash his accumulated spiritual force, letting it flow downwards to seal this cultivator!

The masked figure moved his palm with the smoothness of flowing water, touching Wei Wuyin's achilles tendon with frightening speed. Out of Wei Wuyin's control, the pulse of spiritual force halted, built, yet kept surging. It was as if Wei Wuyin's leg was plugged!

Unable to react, his leg expanded several sizes with all his spiritual energy compounding in a single location, unable to find escape or release. His meridians and pathways were sealed! With a touch!

The masked figure then pressed lightly, and Wei Wuyin felt his spiritual flow get redirected. His leg kicked off in a different direction, the explosion of spiritual force had taken charge of his movements, and he was thrown off balance.

The masked figure performed a kip-up, instantly rising upright, and then with an open palm, smashed against his chest at the very center. Already thrown off balance, Wei Wuyin was unable to stop himself from being pushed back, unable to react due to trying to diffuse the ongoing growth of his leg and abrupt build-up of spiritual force. The timing was impeccable.

Wei Wuyin swiftly spun in mid-air, using this movement to disperse some momentum, regaining his bodily movement. But in the time it took for him to recover, the masked figure had already performed a total of ten extraordinarily fast hand-seals!

「Tenth World Origin Art: Nine Chains of Boundlessness」

The masked figure's cloak shook, and nine chains of nine different colors spewed out of his body. They were twisted curb chains, and each chain reflected one of the nine elements: fire, earth, water, wind, metal, lightning, wood, magma, and ice.

They twisted and snaked, approaching Wei Wuyin at lightning speeds despite their respective elements. Nevertheless, they were too slow to ensnare Wei Wuyin. He intended to dodge with ease, but his body shook slightly.

'A spiritual seal!' Wei Wuyin hastily recalled that open palm strike from earlier, realizing that his opponent had discreetly placed a spiritual seal on his body. If delayed for a brief moment, those chains were bound to shackle him, inflicting all sorts of additional restrictions. They were clearly not ordinary, and they bore characteristics of armaments. He would be a complete fool to think they were just constructed of only astral force!

The seal erupted in a timely attempt to hinder his internalized spiritual flow, slowing his reaction and response slightly. Fortunately, his spiritual strength was abnormally vast and terrifyingly strong! In less than a fraction of a blink of an eye, he shattered the spiritual seal through a crushing infusion, dodging the chains with an explosive step that took him tens of meters away.

The chains twisted and slammed against his original location as if seeking to adhere themselves to his body. Several dull noises resounded with each impactful thud of chain meeting glass-like ground. Wei Wuyin returned his focus to the masked figure and the floating Astralis Ultimate Star that remained tethered to him. The figure, however, was still performing several hand-seals in rapid succession!

He wasn't done!

## **Chapter 828: Stellar Nest, Scalpel Versus Hammer**

「Tenth World Origin Art: Seals of the Prime Elemental」

As a combatant, Wei Wuyin had never been a passive opponent, taught by his older brother to always seize the initiative, disrupt momentum, and utilize every available time to act. It was these defining reasons that Wei Wuyin had ingrained in his soul to never distract himself with dialogue in a battle unless for the sake of an advantage.

During this very brief exchange, he was startled by the speed, cunning, and usage of timing that the enemy exhibited. The masked figure had only acted when he established a momentary yet safe period for his actions to follow-through. From disrupting his spiritual force flow, pushing him away and delaying him with a spiritual seal, or using the chains to force him to dodge, gaining distance.

One action flowed to the next and the next and the next, seamless and impeccably performed. He had even been distracted for an extremely short period by the serenity of the opponent's voice, causing him to increase his guard and hasten his actions, leading to a prime opportunity for his spiritual force flow to be halted.

It was a brief exchange yet it was enough for Wei Wuyin to realize that this masked figure was extremely adept in battle, intelligent, and devious to the utmost. His thoughts, however, only served to establish a baseline of what he was dealing with.

The battle had only just begun.

And Wei Wuyin understood the opponent's game plan, to utilize a variety of means to seal his strength, wear him down with calculated jabs until a lethal strike could be dealt. A measured, intelligent, and thoughtful approach to this battle.

Because this was what he would use. At this point, they might proceed to engage in an exchange of techniques, arts, and spells, even compete at their skill. In truth, he wanted to explore this option. Every being, talented or not, had their own pride, and Wei Wuyin had his own, but Wei Wuyin was also different from most.

Because he knew for certain that he'll lose.

Beyond the shadow of a doubt.

Since meeting that Black Skeleton, having his entire life upended onto a new path that forced his survival, he strove to improve his raw foundations to better survive the Eighteen Calamities of Hell as a mere mortal. It was his best and only alternative, because cultivation was just far, far too difficult. Not even counting those reckless spirits of his that squeezed out every ounce of benefit despite the danger involved. This had helped him greatly during the Second Calamity, enough to 'claim' it.

Without rest, he's been focusing on the Dao of Alchemy and cultivating his foundation, but his time to do so had been extremely little, barely three decades. Furthermore, the last time he'd received personal instructions from an expert regarding cultivation was Wu Yu, whose cultivation method was incompatible with his spirits, and knowledge was just as low due to their starting points.

He had been slowly exploring into various legacies left behind by ancient experts that had a high compatibility with his own, but it wasn't enough to bestow upon him a high-level of skill. Aware of himself and his limitations, Wei Wuyin wasn't foolish enough to compare arts, spells, and methods against this type of opponent.

Considering how skilled this masked figure was, it'll be like using the minuscule knowledge of the Myriad Monarch Sect against the Grand Cyclic Stellar Region's, if that. This masked figure could belong to the Azure-Prime Galactic Zone or greater, his foundation and means was definitely beyond the conventional standards of the Grand Cyclic Stellar Region.

And his thoughts were right.

The elemental chains began to vibrate intensely, releasing an ear-bleeding sound to the world. Wei Wuyin's spiritual senses were strong, yet he had lost track of the chains instantly as his senses distorted. The vibration and the frequency released had impacted his spiritual sense, causing it to grow foggy for the briefest of moments.

This tactic of sensory distortion was executed well. Despite his immensely powerful spiritual sense, the spiritual vibration seemed to directly target the Spirit Units at their connective weakness, destabilizing them and forcing a reset. It was brief, and the stronger the sense, the less time needed to recover, but this window was capitalized perfectly.

The chains had vanished! They weren't tethered to the masked figure or slithering through the air seeking a victim to ensnare.

A normal cultivator might be sent into a panic, but Wei Wuyin's speed of thought was swift, detailed, and organized. The disappearance lacked any spatial fluctuation, so he immediately realized that the elemental chains had merged with the environment, a form of Environmental Integration.

Unfortunately, Wei Wuyin lacked his Celestial Eyes of Spiritual Divinity; he was unable to perceive things that exceeded the limits of his mortal-level spiritual sense.

'Elemental Origin Intent.' Wei Wuyin immediately deduced, spreading his spiritual sense towards the superheated environment, the air and gases, and rays of light. While Wei Wuyin lacked advanced arts, spells, and methods that appropriately used Elemental Origin Intent, he had reached the Elemental Heart Intent and birthed Shifting Elemental Soul Light.

His foundational knowledge could not be disputed.

'A different medium.' Wei Wuyin concluded that the chains had been broken down, integrated with the air and heat, likely attempting to surround him at this very moment, and waiting for the right moment to act. A cultivator might never link this to Elemental Origin Intent, likely believing it was hidden within fixed space. Their actions to defend would be wrong at the jump, leaving them exposed.

If this was a normal cultivator, their initial action would be to hunker down and establish several astral wards to defend against any external threat, using spatial-warding arts to defend against invisible strikes. However, this delay would inevitably buy the masked figure more time, allowing him to maintain the initiative. He'll slowly push his opponent into a corner, dissecting their tactics, controlling the pace of the battle, and then end them with calculated moves. Perhaps those chains would come into play at a crucial moment after being forgotten ten moves later, and end up being the deciding factor.

Strength wasn't everything, huh?

Unfortunately, this was said by the scalpel to the hammer.

'Let's see if that's true,' Wei Wuyin wasn't going to play according to his game. He didn't need to. He took a step forward, the crackling of white lightning ceased, returning to his body, and his spiritual aura began to change. It embodied the essence of endless transmutations and permutations!

Wei Wuyin released his Elemental Origin Intent! A wave of Elemental Origin Spiritual Aura flowed outwards like a monsoon, crashing against the world, and then tens of thousands of tiny flexible needles of white light shimmered into being. These were the seals hidden by the masked figure's Elemental Origin Intent!

They were all pointed at Wei Wuyin. The nearest one was roughly five feet away! And the furthest was roughly thirty meters away. His spiritual sense was flooded with needles!

"Elemental Origin Intent?!" The masked figure was deeply shocked by this reveal. Wei Wuyin didn't reply to such a pointless question, but he gave a grin. Not only did he possess Elemental Origin Intent, it was structured by nine Apex-level Intents. The masked figure had tried to conceal his Elemental Origin Intent and Elemental Origin Force, using a moment of sensory distortion, but facing someone who similarly birthed Elemental Origin Intent, this was bound to fail.

Wei Wuyin lifted his hands and then clenched them into fists. The needles began to vibrate once again, and the masked figure's body staggered slightly. With a soft pull of those fists, the needles gathered directly before Wei Wuyin's chest and formed nine long chains of white light.

Wei Wuyin's grin intensified; he kept the chains with a wave of his hand, storing it inside his Saint Ring. The masked figure's stance was already unsteady, but now, his spiritual aura became unstable. Those chains weren't byproducts of his astral force, but legitimate armaments at the pinnacle of the astral-grade!

"How?!" The masked figure was taken aback by how his chains were wrestled away from his control and then kept without issue. But shortly after he said those things, as if told the reason, he released a soft breath of resignation. "Heart of the World Intent? I guess that's the flaw of using Intent as the central power of an art."

Awakened Intent allowed one to infuse their will into their own energies, interacting with and commanding uncontrolled energies and essences of the ambient world, but Heart of the World, World of the Intent can instill one's will into ambient essences of any type, directly changing their properties or overwriting the will of others.

This was why Awakened Intent was of a lower level than Heart of the World Intent.

"Guess I can't hold back here," the masked figure stated plainly. He formed a hand-seal.

Wei Wuyin matched this, forming his own.

From both of their bodies, an expansion of power erupted! The masked figure unleashed his Worldly Domain! Wei Wuyin unleashed copious, tremendous, outrageous amounts of elemental origin force!

The masked figure had unfurled his Worldly Domain. It had the wisps of purity, resembling Tuo Bihan's translucent Worldly Domain, untainted by any attributed power. Clearly, it was structured from an external method, likely a Neo-Dawn Eclipse Pill or something similar. It reached 900 meters in diameter! A range of 450 meters in every direction was directly encapsulated in its power!

However, it did little as the masked figure's body was pushed backwards for nearly a dozen miles by the surge of elemental origin force released by Wei Wuyin! It flooded the entire scenery and the Stellar Rain lifeforms hastily retreated further back.

ROAR! ROAR! ROAR!

ROAR! ROAR! ROAR!

ROAR! ROAR! ROAR!

Nine draconic roars in concert reverberated throughout the world! The space of the Stellar Nest was incredibly stable, but when those nine dominating roars met the world, the world shook violently in response!

Wei Wuyin's figure was revealed as milky white mist began to scatter.

Nine long, slithering white forms danced around him. They were ten thousand meters long, their massive bodies made Wei Wuyin extremely tiny, yet he dominated the senses of all who dared to look. With his arms folded against his chest, he stood atop the white-scaled head of one of these beings. These dragons!

Their eyes were as spiritually active and aware as any sentient creature, reflecting the elemental brilliance of their respective domains. The nine elements could be seen, and their breaths contained multi-colored mist defining each and every one of them.

Their five-clawed limbs rent fixed space, and their bodies distorted light itself. They were overbearing, subjugating all the available mana with unquestionable authority.

And at their lead, a young man garbed in black observed the world with a cold expression. It was as if he was the emperor of all dragons, unmatched and unchained.

The nine dragons turned their attention simultaneously to the unstable masked figure, releasing a pulse of spiritual aura that crushed air, light, and energy.

ROAR!!!

Wei Wuyin was curious if a scalpel could handle these nine hammers.

### **Chapter 829: Stellar Nest, Sword & Shield**

A grand, imposing scene dominated the Stellar Nest. The unique realm itself had no feasible limits of its external space, seemingly extending limitlessly beyond the horizon; no clouds, sun, moon, or stars generated a sense of infinity. A boundless environment.

Yet the countless number of Stellar Rain lifeforms that formed several mile-high mountain-like backdrops served as a heavy contrast to the nine white dragons and their domineering existence. Their long, white-scaled bodies danced around Wei Wuyin, yet they remained grounded.

At times, their breaths were of searing heat and surging fire. At times, their breaths were of an insidious chill and glacial mist. At times, their breaths were thunderous booms and crackling lightning. They embodied the nine elements, painted white by the essence of elemental origin.

The nine dragons stayed on the glass-like ground, not flying and being nine sovereigns of the skies. Since the beginning of the fight, Wei Wuyin and the masked figure had kept their battle limited to a few meters above ground, not trying to leap high or send the other into the air.

Wei Wuyin wasn't sure of the exact reason, but he noted this peculiar habit of the masked figure and emulated it. He kept his feet settled onto the dragon's head, and the dragon's body slinked across the glass-like ground with its five-clawed limbs scraping across the surface. Despite the tremendous power of the elements fueling their existence, none of the dragons left so much as a millimeter-sized scratch.

The ground was unbelievably hard.

When the masked figure observed the nine dragons, fear could be felt from their change of stance, briefly reflecting an intent to retreat with haste. But this lasted a brief moment as they observed Wei Wuyin's stable footing and imposing stature amidst the dragons with lengths of ten thousand meters. Wei Wuyin was deeply observing every change of the masked figure, and sensing the relief emanating from the figure, his mind stirred greatly.

The white dragons that seemed capable of dominating existence weren't enough to bring him fear, but the possible act of flying above a certain limit seemingly had.

Wei Wuyin formed a hand-seal. The white dragons roared, shaking the world and causing the Stellar Rain lifeforms to ebb and flow in the distance like the tide of an ocean. They refused to retreat, but the sheer spiritual strength within ignited their flight response.

The nine dragons began to rapidly shrink in size, condensing their elemental origin force and spiritual force to the utmost. After a second had passed, the nine dragons had become ten meters in size. Their forms lost their imposingly grand size, gaining a greater spiritual and draconic aura that distorted fixed space within the Stellar Nest.

Wei Wuyin stepped his feet on the chilled ground, his eyebrows furrowed as he sent his spiritual sense to penetrate it again. Unfortunately, he was impeded by the surface itself and clashed against an impassable obstacle. He contemplated if unleashing all four Soul Idols would elevate his spiritual strength to a high enough level to do so.

"A Multi-Link Spiritual Astral Array? Such a high reserve of astral force. A dantian expansion method? Or an astral storage method?" The masked figure's heart seemingly settled, seeing the dragons shrink. It was as if he would refuse to continue this fight if the battle was against such tall creatures. However, he instantly deduced the nature of Wei Wuyin's nine dragons of elemental origin.

However, Wei Wuyin's furrowed brows deepened. The masked figure was unbothered by the rippling spiritual strength emanating from his nine dragons of elemental origin. This was likely his strongest offensive means outside of his saber, so he was taken aback by this unflustered response.

The nine dragons of elemental origin were the combination of elemental origin force, draconic force, eden force, and spiritual force. It consumed roughly thirty percent of his entire reserves of astral force, and that was an utterly outrageous quantity, to say the least.

Still, this masked figure was quite talkative. It was as if he was entirely unconcerned by Wei Wuyin's offensive. 'Is it because I lack killing intent?' The thought passed through his mind. Since this battle had begun, Wei Wuyin hadn't gone for any lethal moves, nor had he revealed the slightest wisp of killing intent. He fully intended to capture this individual.

This rang true for the masked figure as well.

The masked figure commented: "Well, it's a little too rough. The principle core of their powers is very compatible, but the balance of forces is strictly that—balanced, and their variety leads to further instability. A lack of focus, so to speak." The masked figure took on an instructional tone, but it had an oddity within.

'The vocal inflections are different...!' The span, tempo, depth, and articulatory precision transmitted through the spiritual transmission had changed without warning. It was as if an entirely different person had spoken those words, but the voice itself was consistent. It was baffling.

"Let me show you a proper Multi-Link Spiritual Astral Array." The masked figure shook their hands, clenching their fists and delivering two short fist pumps. Their hands began to glow with the brilliance of spiritual light.

At their right, a golden light shone resplendently.

At their left, a silver light shone resplendently.

There was a balance between the two, but the lights carried unique auras that segregated them. The lights became tens of thousands of the tiniest flaming wisps that circulating around his two limbs. With a thrusting punch at his right, the golden wisps gathered, materializing into a proper form. A sword was conjured. It was an extremely long golden-colored arming sword, extending to eight feet in length and four inches in width.

With a thrusting punch at his left, the silver wisps gathered, materializing into proper form. A large kite shield that had a height of eight feet, capable of covering the entirety of the masked figure's body formed.

The two hovered beside the masked figure, emitting various Intents. Some of them were strong, some were weak, but they perfectly merged and interacted, fueling their strengths and enhancing their spiritual potential.

Furthermore, within the masked figure's hands, two stones had appeared, clenched tightly. If one wasn't observing closely, they wouldn't notice the sparkle of light emanating from them.

An array typically required external power to fuel its function. It was a ridiculous concept for a cultivator to fuel a powerful array by themselves. The masked figure seemed to have limits to his reserves, having to rely on two external items to power these two.

Wei Wuyin's spiritual sense went awry. He was affected by a spiritual siege of Intents causing his spiritual sense to forcefully bend and distort when it approached the sword and shield, inducing a small grimace on his face.

'Golden Intent? Silver Intent? Sword? Shield? Battle? Yin...Yang Intents...this...!' Wei Wuyin might've suffered from inspecting them, but he still grasped the various auras with his spiritual sense. He felt roughly ten different Intents within each, all compiled in a disproportionate manner, yet forming a synergistic perfection. These Intents merged, creating a unique spiritual force. This spiritual force was defined by what was included!

In comparison, his nine dragons of elemental origin were like stuffed turkeys, uncooked and lacking preparation.

ROAR!

His nine dragons actions reflected Wei Wuyin's interest in the masked figure. They roared in challenge, unrelenting and arrogant. These nine dragons of elemental origin carried traces of Kratos, Ori, and Eden's personalities. Their pride was challenged, so they refused to allow such statements to go uncontested.

The nine dragons didn't need instructions. They swirled around Wei Wuyin for a single rotation before surging towards the masked figure with their imposing spiritual auras at lightning speeds. They stomped and clawed at the chilled surface, producing dull thumps with their power.

The masked figure fearlessly met their charge. With sword and shield hoisted beside him, he controlled them as if tethered to his being, using his shield to guard against the fastest of the nine dragons. This dragon spewed out a dastardly vicious breath of white flames, spewing out heat of an unbearable nature.

Everything melted before it. Yet when it came in contact with the shield, the Absolute Hot Origin Fire was met with an unsurpassable enemy. Shield Intent was a very unique, rarely conceived Ethereal Intent. It was defined by its defensive, nigh-impenetrable power.

The searing flames spewed out endlessly, yet as if by magic, the shield seemingly blocked it all. It couldn't go over, under, or over the sides of the shield no matter how much was poured out of its gullet.

*The source of this content is [freewebnovel.com]*

The nine origin dragons were independent and coordinated. While one occupied the shield, the other swirled towards the back in a twisting gale and opened its toothy mouth with enough to gobble the masked figure whole.

The masked figure barely moved, merely swept his left hand behind him. The shield miraculously vanished from the front, reappearing in the path of the vicious bite. With a push of his right hand, the shield smashed against the dragon's mouth. With a thunderous boom, the dragon was parried to the side with a low roar.

Shockingly, the breath of white flames continued yet was halted by an invisible wall. It was unable to break through the lingering power of the shield that remained. But his opponent was against nine, not two. The masked figure was reminded of this as three dragons came from above in a spiraling, united descent. They crackled with lightning as they threw their entire bodies toward the masked figure.

Pinned. That was his predicament—an assault from the front, back, and up high limited his choices. But the masked figure was unbothered, using his right hand. He lifted it triumphantly, as if declaring victory to the entire world! The golden sword took action, becoming a golden storm of sword light that shot upwards.

The sword storm impacted the bodies of the three dragons. Their roars were short-lived as they were eviscerated by the storm, becoming specks of white motes. With another pull of his right hand, the sword rematerialized, and he swung it towards the origin dragon that was spewing out waves of flames.

The sword was like a scythe of devastation. The elemental dragon couldn't even roar before the speed of the sword sliced into it, splitting it in half completely. It burst into specks of white light motes that filled the world.

With four dragons down, the five coordinated jointly. They attacked from five different angles, spewing out breaths of glacial mist, thunderous lightning, searing flames, slicing streams of water, and torrential storms of wind. Attacked from five directions, the masked figure smashed his left fist against the ground, entering a half-knelt stance.

A wave of silver light burst outwards, spreading like an omni-directional flood. It met the raging elemental breaths and blocked their power perfectly. The masked figure twisted his fist on the ground, and the flood turned in coordination. The elemental breaths spun, kept at bay by the silver light, and then with a heavy pull upwards, the breaths rebounded off of it.

The breaths were reflected against the elemental dragons, but alongside the dragon breaths were sharp, sinister sword light that prevented the dragons from reabsorbing their power! The sword light sliced into their bodies and caused them to explode into specks of white light motes.

In an extremely short period, all nine dragons were dealt with. The masked figure slowly stood; their cracked mask exuded a form of endless might and means.

Wei Wuyin watched it all, his eyes remained closed, and his expression was serene.

"See?" The masked figure moved their right hand, and the giant sword was placed firmly on their shoulders. If there wasn't a mask there, Wei Wuyin knew they would be smiling brightly at this moment. The triumphant air was clear.

"A true Multi-Link Spiritual Astral Array isn't so fragile; For it, fuel doesn't equate to power. Its means are far more vast. Balance isn't the proper way of spiritual methods." The masked figure gave thoughtful advice, giving Wei Wuyin lessons like a teacher to a student.

Wei Wuyin 'looked' at the masked figure, and then he sighed. "You're not wrong, but you're also not right." For the first time since the battle had begun, Wei Wuyin had spoken!

"Oh? Do tell." The masked figure curiously asked, a wisp of amusement within their tone.

Wei Wuyin nodded. "Your methods are exceptional; you struck at the connective weakness of my spiritual force each time, breaking it apart with sword and shield force for a perfect unity of offense and defense, but you misunderstood the principle of my Astral Array, of my objective."

"Misunderstood?"

Wei Wuyin moved his head around slightly, taking a deep breath. With a soft exhale, he explained: "I'm not going for overwhelming power; I'm going for endlessness." Wei Wuyin clapped his hands together, eliciting a soft pow. The motes of white light that were scattered across the battlefield began to vibrate. Suddenly, they converged at a mind-boggling speed.

ROAR! ROAR! ROAR!

ROAR! ROAR! ROAR!

ROAR! ROAR! ROAR!

Nine ten-meter-sized dragons of elemental origin reformed, surrounding the masked figure with spiritual light gushing out of their eyes from all sides. They seemed unhurt, utterly unaffected by their destruction. In fact, they emitted a faintly stronger aura.

When the masked figure witnessed this, while concealed, their expression surely underwent a drastic change.

"Let's try this again," Wei Wuyin coldly stated.

The masked figure looked around, seeing the lively and ever-stronger dragons of elemental origin. He returned his gaze to Wei Wuyin, who stood imposingly behind them, his arms folded against his chest and his expression serene.

Struck by realization, the masked figure nodded. With sword and shield in hand, he pointed his two hands towards Wei Wuyin and then...

BOOSH!

The masked figure fled!

### **Chapter 830: Stellar Nest, What Lies Beneath; Split in Two**

Flee!

The masked figure turned away, unfurling his Worldly Domain to the maximal extent, and zipped out like lightning as they glided upon the ambient mana. It would be a lie to say Wei Wuyin wasn't taken off-guard by this action, but his reaction wasn't the slightest bit slow.

The nine dragons of elemental origin and himself gave chase, turning into streaks of white lightning encapsulated by chaotic wind currents. The intermixture of wind and lightning allowed the dragons to reach higher speeds with greater flexibility. They clawed ferociously across the chilled surface of the Stellar Nest, maintaining a grounded and low altitude as they shot in pursuit.

It wasn't a surprise that the masked figure would retreat, especially if he fully realized the gravity of Wei Wuyin's earlier words. In terms of overwhelming power, that category was reserved for his saber. His Elemental Origin Force revolved around its frightening utility and various properties. The most notable of which was the combination of Permanence and Elemental Heart Intent.

The masked figure had definitely destroyed each dragon individually. In fact, destroying the link that binds the Spirit Units, that which bestowed them great spiritual strength, should've nullified their permanence and shattered Wei Wuyin's control over them. However, Elemental Heart Intent and Mana Dominance served to eliminate such weakness.

The former allowed the absorption of ambient energies and essence, such as light energies, converting them into genuine Elemental Origin Energies. Those nine dragons of elemental origin grew stronger by fueling themselves with external energies, allowing them to fight in perpetuity unless completely destroyed by a greater power.

The latter allowed the absorption of ambient mana, rapidly refined to reconnect the severed bonds of Spirit Units. After all, Mana was the connective tissue of the world, its innate energy allowed the merging of yin, yang, creation, and worldly interaction. The masked figure hadn't just severed the bindings for Spirit Units, but destroyed the refined mana that gave the nine dragons form, shape, and power.

This was why they exploded into indistinct motes of white light. If it weren't for Wei Wuyin's two-fold abilities, the motes of light would slowly dissipate until the world assimilated them with time.

The masked figure's understanding of the situation was swiftly reached and came to realize the implication almost immediately. While they might not understand the exact principles as to why Wei Wuyin could do such things, they understood the end result. Those powerful elemental origin dragons were essentially immortal, and a battle of attrition against a tank of literal energy that was Wei Wuyin was the same as suicide.

While there were other options to take against such an opponent, and perhaps the masked figure had some counters, they instead chose the simplest solution: Flee!

Unfortunately for the masked figure, since Wei Wuyin dared to speak amidst combat, he had already fully seized the situation to claim his objectives. The Astralis Ultimate Star tethered to the masked figure had a faint coating of white gloss over its multicolored radiance. A rich elemental aura emanated from it.

The masked figure was undoubtedly fast, capable of clashing with Wei Wuyin and surprising him during several exchanges through spontaneous bursts of speed, but in terms of maximum speed at peak acceleration, the masked figure seemed unable to exceed the refined body and forces of Wei Wuyin.

They ran for roughly three miles, an extremely short distance for cultivators at their level, yet Wei Wuyin and his nine dragons hadn't just caught up; they surrounded the masked figure once more. Standing in his way, Wei Wuyin folded his arms across his chest and waited. The white gloss was like an encroaching parasite, enveloping more of the Ultimate Astralis Star with every passing millisecond. At this point, a quarter of it was covered.

The masked figure turned their head around, inspecting the growling dragons that revealed violently mocking expressions. They roared softly, shook the ambient mana with their aggressive movements, and breathed out gushes of raw elemental energies.

"Seems like running isn't the way to go," the masked figure's voice was calm, and their distinctive vocal qualities had regained normalcy. At least, their spiritual voice had returned to their original vocal inflections. Whether this was their authentic voice or not was uncertain. However, the calm didn't escape Wei Wuyin's notice.

Clearly, the masked figure wasn't bothered by being surrounded or trapped. But, Wei Wuyin understood their perspective. Neither of them was unleashing all of their abilities, conserving and observing the situation. Furthermore, the environment was marred with questionable details that seemed to contain lingering danger.

For example, the countless Stellar Rain lifeforms hadn't attacked since they began to encircle them in a murderous cage. That would've been great if it was out of fear, but the Stellar Rain lifeforms hadn't

attacked since they arrived. This didn't seem attributed to just fear. They emanated heavy killing intent, but they restrained themselves from acting.

Why?

What was this glass-like ground that emanated an iceless chill? Why did it restrain Spiritual Sense? What was the Stellar Nest? It had no solar star, no spatial limits, and light without origin. Could it really be a colony of insect-like lifeforms that served their queen, the Zenith Stellar Source? Why did the superheated environment feel incompatible with the chilled ground?

While these questions left Wei Wuyin with endless vigilance, the masked figure might already have the answer to them all. His confident and calm demeanor suggested his absolute belief in leaving without harm and even entertained an unnecessary battle. After all, why escape now if not before?

Besieged by so many areas that brought in heavy suspicion, Wei Wuyin's actions were strictly restrained. If not, he would've long since unleashed the fullest extent of his powers to seize this masked figure. But if genuinely threatening him endangered the Stellar Nest or Astralis Ultimate Star in his possession, then the losses wouldn't outweigh the gains. Especially if, in the end, he was left with nothing.

A single item that exceeded Mortal Limits might cause an unstoppable collapse. He had far too many of those in his Saint Ring; who's to say this mysterious figure of unknown origins didn't?

A calculated, measured step at every turn. First, claim the Astralis Ultimate Star. Second, ensure the Stellar Nest's safety. The entire nest, he already claimed it in his heart. To do both, he needed to be an enemy but not be a lethal, inevitable threat to lower the masked figure's guard. He played this part perfectly, clearly from the masked figure's calm tone.

When operating under numerous unknown variables, it is best to act within the ones you can control. The greatest being none other than yourself.

"I didn't want to do this," the masked figure stated, justifying himself: "but it's the only way without the exit."

Wei Wuyin furrowed his brows. Was the masked figure trying to locate the exit during their battle? Perhaps his own power was just as restrained. The masked figure didn't give Wei Wuyin time to think, bending their knees without warning and jumping upwards.

Wei Wuyin's mind fiercely reacted as he reached out. The white gloss had covered almost half the Ultimate Astralis Star. He didn't know what jumping beyond a certain point would provoke, but considering the masked figure's bodily reactions earlier, he knew it wasn't safe. He had no intention of following along with ignorance, forcefully deciding to preemptively take his treasure.

"What?!" The masked figure had already reached roughly ten meters in a split second, no longer tethered to the chill or the surface that emitted it.

GIIIIIIZZZZZZZZZZZ!!!!!!!

GIIIIIIZZZZZZZZZZZ!!!!!!!

Louder than ever before, the Stellar Rain seemed to react with their strange sound. The air, light, and heat distorted by the sound waves alone. The cacophony of hundreds of trillions of Stellar Rain lifeforms was too great, too monstrous.

If Wei Wuyin's eyes were opened, his pupils would have contracted at this moment for the entire world to see. A flash of memories and feelings amalgamated into a realization!

When he first arrived, he felt as if the light and the superheated environment was clashing with the ground. But the chill it emanated was too great, causing it to remain cold and untouched. At first, he found it strange, but just that. But now, he realized that, a single fact had gone entirely unnoticed! The Stellar Rain lifeforms had never touched the surface of the ground or neared it! They were all flying in the air.

This was an easily forgettable detail. After all, these were flying creatures. You'd expect them to fly, right?

Then you have to ask, why didn't they attack after gathering up tens of trillions of their own?

Why was the masked figure so calm?

It was said that Stellar Rain was absolutely fast. The energies within their bodies could create a unique pellet, the Ever-Starlight Pellet, that could escape from Ascended beings. Wei Wuyin might be fast and physically powerful, but outrunning an Ascended being, especially an Earthly Saint, wasn't within his means at the moment. Those Stellar Rain lifeforms should've been able to overwhelm them instantly!

But they hadn't.

They had only chased after the masked figure, who was moving relatively slower than usual.

There was only one reason: fear!

They were afraid of that chill. This was why being in contact with it forced them away.

Could the Stellar Rain be generating this superheated environment to combat this chill? If so, what was creating the chill? What was this glass-like ground?

What was beneath the surface?

His thoughts, albeit swift, were interrupted by the masked figure's actions. Noticing that Wei Wuyin had tainted half the Astralis Ultimate Star, the masked figure reached out and grabbed the star with his hand. Unfortunately, his other hand was performing a strange, half-seal, so he was preoccupied.

A burst of spiritual light erupted from his fingertips, and tried to fight off the white gloss's infectious spread.

Wei Wuyin was about to react when he felt the gushing wind of countless Stellar Rain Lifeforms, maybe hundreds of trillions at this moment, shooting towards their location. His entire body was impacted by the far-off surge of wind; even his nine dragons were pressed.

ROAR!

He and his dragons were sent into a whirlwind of sound and wind current. Wei Wuyin was aghast at the sheer power of their movement. It was so frightening fast; it was as if hundreds of trillions of Ascended beings were racing towards an objective. They held nothing back!

Be it his spiritual sense, his body, or his nine dragons, he could barely control them at all. With urgent haste, he clung to the chilled ground with his astral force and hunkered down with everything he could. His nine dragons instinctively surged towards him, swirling around and generating an nigh-impregnable white dome of steel origin force. It fended off the excessive wind surge, giving Wei Wuyin some breathing room.

While Wei Wuyin was restrained, the masked figure cursed. He clearly hadn't noticed Wei Wuyin tainting the Astralis Ultimate Star. It was unknown whether he cursed at his carelessness or Wei Wuyin's deviousness. Yet his problem remained.

Half of the Astralis Ultimate Star was resisting his control, trying to come back to the sealed Wei Wuyin and preventing him from bringing it upwards. There wasn't enough time to eradicate the tainted side with the Stellar Rain coming to rip him to shreds and reclaim their treasure.

"Split it!" A voice, an entirely different voice with another vocal tone and slightly feminine, came from the masked figure. It seemed unintentionally leaked, but considering the pressing matter, the shout was necessary.

"Shit," the masked figure's original voice leaked through audibly, not spiritually. If one could see their expression, it might be a little dark and sullen. With a wave of their hand, the golden sword manifested and sliced at the Astralis Ultimate Star, splitting it directly in the middle where the two lights, the white gloss, and multi-color brilliance, were at the heaviest of contentions.

The Ultimate Astralis Star was severed cleanly. With a violent pull, half was drawn to the masked figure as he brought out that textile shuttle from earlier. Its aura bordered both within Mortal Limits and beyond Mortal Limits. The Stellar Nest only reacted with a slight tremble, nothing more.

But then the figure crushed the shuttle into countless bits, generating endless, grey-colored wisps that surrounded the masked figure. Without warning, the masked figure vanished as if they never existed. The other half of the Astralis Ultimate Star similarly glowed with a grey-colored light but of purer fluctuations and disappeared.

The Stellar Rain lifeforms crashed against each other, violently attempting to reclaim their treasure and rip their invader in half. They rumbled for hours in wild fury and heavy frustration. The killing intent alone was lethal to the weak hearted.

Soon, they calmed down. They inspected the world around them for several more hours before scattering away, bringing peace back to the area.

After an extended period, a male figure dressed in black manifested from the ambient wind. On his shoulders were nine tiny dragons that aggressively played around. His spiritual senses were honed onto the area where the masked figure vanished.

"Void Energy..."