

PARAGON 891

Chapter 891: A Trial Period

"A proposition?" Wei Wuyin's interest was immediately caught by Tian Muyang's words. What could the Imperial Clan want? The Imperial Clan and its members were certainly amongst the wealthiest, resourceful, and most powerful entities within the Grand Cyclic Stellar Region. They had legacy, authority, and might.

Wei Wuyin kept an intrigued, sly smile on his face, amusement glimmered within his eyes, and he folded his arms as if saying: "I'm waiting." This calculated gesture of his allowed him to gain leeway in navigating any upcoming negotiation. If they saw him as being the decider, he could retreat or aggressively extort. Because to them, he had the cards, and he did.

But internally, Wei Wuyin was actually concerned. He knew that there was an imaginary image of his identity forming, unable to be verified, but able to be speculated and disproven. While he controlled strong personal forces, connections, and potential, it would be for naught if he was viewed as a threat that had no backing.

He didn't think that he was invincible. A slight mistake, and even Trueborn might act against him, or the Evergod of the Everlore Association. He knew that his existence and treasures would certainly threaten and tempt others.

For example, his world-defying tribulation can be dismissed by his overly exaggerated imaginary backing, a consequence of higher methods. It was possible because it exceeded their understanding, so anything exceptional revolving around him will be irrationally rationalized by their own ignorance and elevated belief in the unknown beyond their world.

It was a complicated thought process that could shatter with the slightest chink in his armor. An untimely probe, an unanswerable question, or inability to accomplish a feat. Soon after, conjectures would pour in, and disadvantageous lines of thinking would form.

This will certainly change when he reaches a strong enough individual power, such as becoming an Ascendant. For now, he had to act prudently to safeguard himself. The worst case scenario was being subjected to Mythical Oaths, bound by the culture of the Grand Cyclic Stellar Region.

Tian Muyang didn't seem too nervous either, smiling slightly as he sent his proposition through spiritual transmission. The expressions of the others changed witnessing this. Even Tian Lingyu was taken aback by Tian Muyang's approach of deliberately privatizing their conversation, excluding the others.

They all could sense the spiritual strength cruising towards Wei Wuyin, gentle and carrying those nail-biting and mind-trembling words. Some of their expressions darkened, a little anger within their eyes, but they could only look to Wei Wuyin hoping to catch a glimpse of their conversation's outcome.

Wei Wuyin frowned initially, then his eyes widened slightly with ripples of unconcealable shock through his silver eyes. He gave Tian Muyang a heavy look, and Tian Muyang replied with a bright, relaxed smile. The hearts of the watching Earthly Saints felt a little seized.

Wei Wuyin released a soft breath, closing his eyes while tightening the cross of his arms around his chest. His intentions of acting arrogant and domineering to upkeep a grand status vanished. Not because it had been seen through but because there was no need.

Tian Muyang had just given him a clear, straightforward, and simple proposition. It was so simple that Wei Wuyin felt there was no need to keep up any appearances. Why?

Tian Muyang's proposition was extremely succinct. He was a firm believer that Wei Wuyin was of a powerful faction, fully felled by Wei Wuyin's illusory paint brush, drawn by the image that Wei Wuyin plastered before him. He was so confident that he outright proposed himself! He was hooked beyond a shadow of a doubt!

From Tian Muyang's perspective, regardless of where Wei Wuyin came from, Earthly Saints must have value, especially those of talent. If he could become an Earthly Saint in an impoverished, lower-tiered stellar region, imagine if he was given genuine resources. Right?

This Tian Muyang had boldly offered 5,000 years of himself as an Alchemic Knight, willing to give life and limb for Wei Wuyin. In exchange, he wanted Wei Wuyin to free him from the Mythical Oaths that bound him.

The product that the King of Everlore theorized! One of the Seven World Wonders of Everlore, capable of dispelling oaths. It was a Mystic-World grade Elixir!

When Tian Muyang saw Wei Wuyin drop his arrogant act, seriously considering his offer, his eyes shone with clear excitement. It was the same exact excitement a gambler might have in the middle of a dice roll. And this was a gamble, one that might have tremendous pay-offs or horrendous consequences.

Normally, if one thought about Tian Muyang's offer, they might consider him as a slave to oaths, unable to express any sort of freedom, restrained by all sorts of trivialities, and while that might be true, it wasn't his main goal—Wei Wuyin knew this.

Tian Muyang wanted the Alchemic Knight title and the nurturing that came with it; the access to higher-leveled methods, arts, spells, and avenues beyond his current means, the various things he firmly believed Wei Wuyin possessed, or the force that's backing him. A man genuinely invested in Wei Wuyin's big lie. The oaths were merely a pretext to bind himself to Wei Wuyin, guised as seeking freedom but actually seeking benefits extending far beyond.

As long as Tian Muyang does a good job as an Alchemic Knight, adopting in a way similar to Wu Yu, then it would be well within his rights to plead his case to stay as one beyond the five thousand year contract. Or, if brought to greater heights, find greener pastures.

A segway.

He might even believe Wei Wuyin had a way outside, just like the King of Everlore.

This was one of the things that Wei Wuyin was legitimately concerned about. It wasn't that he didn't wish to gather more subordinate power for now, but that this condition would mean he couldn't. Cai Liuyang was a Demi-Mortal Lord with exceptional talent, likely bound by certain Mythical Oaths to protect certain interests.

What force would ever give their geniuses an escape option?

It would be counterproductive. And if it was so easy to obtain such a product, Mythical Oaths would eventually become obsolete in that society, being extremely unreliable. Perhaps if the King of Everlore's product was produced even a little bit, the entire Grand Cyclic Stellar Region's culture would've changed by now. So they might have placed other restrictions on Cai Liuyang, unaffected by this theorized elixir, so why would she need it?

Even if he had the product, he had to seriously consider this issue for other reasons. Not just for gathering subordinate forces, but obtaining allied powers as well. These Mythical Oaths reminded him that it was best to nurture his own force from young seeds for his plans, as the old have been bogged down by seemingly unbreakable shackles. Who knew when he'd reach the level of a Worldly Saint Alchemist?

Just looking at how Tian MUYANG couldn't enter the Elementus Domain without permission, it could be seen how restrained he was, and how limited and useless he would be as an Alchemic Knight, unlike Wu Yu who was bound by none.

At that time he could make that product, if all goes as planned, he wouldn't need a Tian MUYANG fostered by an outdated stellar region. He would have a Zuhei, a Ying, a Su Mei, and the Valkyries.

He slowly opened his eyes, sweeping his gaze across those behind Tian MUYANG, who were watching him intently. When his gaze fell on Yang Chaoyue's sensual figure and lips, he suppressed an urge to loudly sigh. They all had come with fiery ambitions and radiant hope in their hearts.

But he couldn't resort to hiring old heads with their wild ambitions and personalities, bound by unknown oaths, hopeful to use him as a stepping stone to greater pastures. They would consume his time, and after saying yes, it would be difficult to upkeep that imaginary image. So even if he had the product, he didn't think he should use it.

Wei Wuyun had to think deeply about how to handle this, navigating as to not reveal any flaws, so he decided on a specific approach. While he could say no or simply say he didn't have the product, this wasn't advantageous to him.

Spiritually, he seriously replied with: "State your foundation, prior to the Mystic Ascendant Realm, such as Soul Rings, Spatial Resonance, Primary Light Source, comprehended Intent, etcetera, including your current mystic foundation and cultivation base."

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Tian MUYANG's eyes widened slightly. When Wei Wuyun asked about these details, his expression changed immediately. He had believed that any Earthly Saint was of value, but he had neglected to consider that, to Wei Wuyun, he could be low-tier amongst Earthly Saints in his view. Recalling Wei Wuyun's possible background, he actually felt nervous, as if he was being interviewed about his qualifications for a higher position. If anyone knew that an Earthly Saint of the Imperial Clan felt this way to a mere mortal not even a hundred years old, they would be rendered absolutely speechless.

Aa for Tian MUYANG, he was genuinely stunned!

In the end, he regained himself and proceeded to detail certain aspects of his cultivation base, foundation, and attainments. Not factoring in cultivation methods, Tian Muyang had been at the Mystic Ascendant Realm before the Imperial Clan had taken the throne, his Astral Core Realm foundation was not supplemented prior by rich resources.

This was actually indicative of his natural talent. He had been one of the few to reach an Apex-level Elemental Intent, Dark Lightning Intent, and had used that to establish a powerful foundation to ascend. He wasn't an average joe, even now that was the case.

Listening intently, Wei Wuyin was a little surprised. Tian Muyang hadn't just comprehended an apex-level Intent, but reached the ninth soul-ring, the eighth spatial-ripple, and violet-colored Primary Light. While the standard for Chosen in this generation was ninth, ninth, and white being the lowest, it was fascinating for him to have such accomplishments prior to the Tian Clan's rule.

Tian Muyang made sure to allude to that fact, that he had done all this prior to obtaining his grand position within the Tian Clan. As for his ascension, he had reached the 6th Rune Ascension, comprehending 46 Mystic Rune Seeds to 'completion', a full 2 Mystic Rune Seeds short of the Divine King Han Xei's benchmark.

During his Soul of Mysticism and Demi-Mortal Lord phases, he kept diligently cultivating for roughly ten thousand years until he inevitably awakened his Mystic Intent, directly obtaining the qualifications to succeed as an Earthly Saint, much like Wu Yu had. However, he only reached the 4th Runic Ascendant State, comprehending four Ways of Mysticism—Mana, Spirit, Infusion, and Conversion. After his Earthly Ascension, he slowly comprehended his Spatial and Radiant-type Mystic Runes, fully becoming a 6th Runic Ascendant.

That was his current limit.

Wei Wuyin nodded acceptingly, verifying that reaching beyond your Rune Ascension level was incomparably difficult for Ascended beings without a trigger.

In his view, Tian Muyang wasn't weak. In fact, he was much stronger than Han Yuhei on paper, and he cultivated something similar to the Imperial Heaven Qi Method. But if he compared him to Wu Yu or the abnormally patient 9th Runic Ascendant Ma Zheng, he was grossly inferior.

However, he had his uses.

He directly transmitted: "I currently don't have an Oath Breaking elixir on me that'll work for you. I hadn't expected this," Wei Wuyin honestly and seriously responded, rubbing his chin contemplatively as he continued, "however, I might be able to obtain some in a few centuries."

Tian Muyang's initial response was disappointment, but after hearing that Wei Wuyin hadn't accounted for an Earthly Saint to request this, he felt it made sense, and that consoled his state of mind. Why would a mortal keep an oath breaking product meant for an Earthly Saint? All those under him would either be under oaths or never swear an oath for others, only for Wei Wuyin or the force behind him.

The logic was the same as why keep the keys to someone's chains on you or nearby. It only gives them an opportunity to free themselves.

But when he heard that Wei Wuyin might be able to procure one in a few centuries, his eyes brightened considerably. For someone who lived for so long, what was a few centuries or more of waiting for a chance to reach the next level? Wei Wuyin will likely spend that time trying to ascend with the highest Rune Ascension, not rush it at all. In fact, maybe he can't gain further access to resources from his force until he ascends. That was normal too.

This meant he simply had to wait.

"How about this," Wei Wuyin interrupted Tian Muyang's hopeful thoughts, "when I obtain it, I'll take you as my official Alchemic Knight. After all, you barely qualify. That said, we can have a trial period of a century. While you'll still be under oath, I'd imagine it doesn't restrict you from assisting me in some simple matters, right?"

Tian Muyang's brows furrowed. There was no member of the Imperial Clan's Sky or Imperial Monarchs that could become the Alchemic Knight of an alchemist outside of the Imperial Clan, an explicit oath established by the Aeternal Sky Divine Emperor, for obvious reasons.

However, offering some assistance that wouldn't violate any outstanding oaths was...doable. This was also his chance.

This was the chance they all wanted!

However, the 'barely' qualified hurt a little. But it also empowered his desire to a greater extent. He couldn't help but ask, "If you don't mind me asking, what's Grand Knight Wu Yu's runic state?" While it was extremely improper, the urge to ask was irresistible.

Wei Wuyin looked towards the others, "You want to know the initial foundation of my current Alchemic Knight?" He said this in an open manner, allowing everyone to hear, shocking Tian Muyang for a brief moment. He wasn't slow, so he quickly picked up on what Wei Wuyin intentions were. Wei Wuyin wanted to tell the others his standards, allowing everyone to know how his 'current' Alchemic Knight was. After all, how many of them here wanted the exact same thing as him? An avenue to greater pastures? But did they have the qualifications?

"I do," he replied solemnly.

Wei Wuyin held out his two hands, revealing 7 fingers, "7th Rune Ascension." This shook those watching, even the spectators. While revealing Wu Yu's foundation might be seen as unnecessary, it wasn't harmful at all. After all, the Everlore Association certainly knew, and when he eventually fights, this will become public information.

There was a gloomy expression on a few of their expressions, except Tian Lingyu, who felt unconcerned. After all, she also reached the 7th Rune Ascension! Unlike Tian Muyang, she was born during the total reign of the Tian Clan. She lacked neither instructors, resources, products, or methods.

Then, Wei Wuyin lifted an additional finger. "But after a little assistance, he's at the 8th Runic Ascendant state."

"...!" Startled gasps and trembling gazes could be heard and seen everywhere, not just from the Imperial and Sky Monarchs, but those who were observing silently from beyond! 8th Runic Ascendant! But he just ascended!

The way the Imperial Clan members looked at Wei Wuyin hadn't just changed, it morphed into an entirely different emotion. Especially Tian Muyang, as his expression became deathly pale, the first time he revealed anything besides brief astonishment and a smile. The act of breaching one's Rune Ascension was absolutely terrifyingly difficult! Han Yuhei's already was aware of this, but even he still paled a little after hearing this.

Seeing this response, Wei Wuyin was internally satisfied. "I know that you all wish to discuss certain things with me, but this isn't the proper venue or time. How about you leave me your transmission jades, and we can discuss later? I still have to familiarize myself with my cultivation base, so I can't entertain you all. I do apologize."

Before Wei Wuyin could even finish his last sentence, a sparkling jade shot gently through the border, arriving beside him, carrying a faint fragrance. He looked at it in surprise, lifting his gaze to see a smiling Yang Chaoyue. After that, she didn't stay or linger, turning around to reveal her tempestuous backside, shooting away without speaking a single word.

Wei Wuyin was a little speechless, but her actions were definitely memorable. When he finally looked away, inspecting the jade, his expression changed as he got a stronger whiff. There was a prerecorded message, and it seemed to have been made long ago from its temporal aura.

After listening to it, Wei Wuyin couldn't help but look in Yang Chaoyue's direction with eyes of amazement. He suppressed the urge to swallow a wad of saliva.

"How bold..."

Chapter 892: Mortal & Mystic Relations; Transcendent Discovery

"..." There was a brief silence amongst the Ascended beings from afar, still stunned by Wei Wuyin's statement about Wu Yu's mystic foundation and attainments. It was beyond their imagination that an Earthly Saint could reach beyond their Rune Ascension, entering into a higher Runic Ascendant State.

It felt as if their brains were being put into reverse, forced to reconsider their own talent and the potential of having effective nurturing. These were the Sky Monarchs and Imperial Monarchs of the Aeternal Sky Starfield, the strongest starfield and mightiest force within the Grand Cyclic Stellar Region, yet they felt as if their horizons were limited.

Who was Wei Wuyin?

They hadn't attributed this result towards Wu Yu's talent, many knowing he had failed his Third Ascension before, and was later saved and recently ascended to the Earthly Saint Phase, but to Wei Wuyin's backing. He had brought out a genuine Mystic-World grade elixir, using it to support Ma Zheng at the verge of his destined demise, and allowing him to become an Earthly Saint!

Wei Wuyin had the means to be classified as a Saintmaker. Very, very few cultivators had the right to such a classification. Thus, they believed that Wei Wuyin was full of untapped means to help others. These Earthly Saints all witnessed the clear disdain he had towards the Imperial Heaven Qi Method, and they all knew their leaders and deciders were willing to go to war over it.

Yet he tossed it away like trash, not even caring if they paid him for it!

There were even a few that had considerations of acting against Wei Wuyin, robbing him of his wealth using masks and concealments. As long as they didn't kill Wei Wuyin, whoever was supporting this genius wouldn't act too aggressively, right?

However, when they learned that Wu Yu was an 8th Runic Ascendant, their thoughts were hurriedly dispelled in a twisted panic. It wasn't that they were scared of Wu Yu's vengeance, but terrified of losing long term benefits for short, extremely short-sighted gains.

Wei Wuyin seemed to be a gateway, and they shouldn't ruin this for a chance at obtaining some products they may or may not be able to enjoy later.

All that aside, they grew curious who truly supported this genius. Was he actually the King of Everlore's descendant? Or was he simply connected to that legendary figure?

Tian Lingyu bit her lower lip with wisps of fury circulating throughout her eyes as she stared at Yang Chaoyue's departing figure. She clenched her right fist so tightly that her knuckles became white. The Imperial Monarch was unable to accept Yang Chaoyue's wanton actions, especially after witnessing Wei Wuyin's dazed expression. When she saw that prerecorded spiritual jade, not even a transmission jade, she knew its purpose as clear as day.

She clenched her teeth, her right fist grew even tighter, so tight that cracking sounds resounded. She spat under her breath, "Slut."

Unable to hold it in, she turned to Wei Wuyin, loosening her fist, and arriving at the border to meet him by this divider. Tian Muyang gave her a glance, seeing faint signs of blood on her fingertips. He could only release an internal sigh.

Tian Lingyu said with a serene voice, "You should be cautious of the thorny rose. After all, whatever promise she's given you, Mortal beings such as yourself can not be with non-virgin Mystic Ascendants without catastrophic results. And Wei Wuyin, I can assure you, she is by no means pure by any definition of the word."

Wei Wuyin was taken aback by the laced maliciousness within Tian Lingyu's voice, hidden by a calm outward expression. As a cultivator of the Mind Dao, he was extremely sensitive to mental fluctuations, and he was shocked that he could sense it so clearly.

However, he felt an urge to say 'I know' after hearing her comment, looking at the spiritual jade. There was no way a 'pure' woman would leave such a message. But he kept it in, a little interested in her comment.

"What do you mean by that? Am I lacking?" He asked, a little angrily as he inquired. He decided to take this stance, as irritated by her insinuation of his inability, but he was trying to drag out the truth. After all, that mysterious woman in the Battlefield was ready to give her virginity to him right then and there. He didn't sense any malicious intent or guilt in her then, so he was curious now.

Indeed, Tian Lingyu responded as he expected. Her eyebrows shot up slightly. She hurriedly shook her head, explaining clearly: "As you know, Mortals and Ascended beings are two different lifeforms. They possess different innate energies, and...intercourse of any type, dual cultivation or otherwise, always lead to intermixing. Taking such a risk would lead to..."

Wei Wuyin was inwardly shaken, but he kept a growing frown. Tian Muyang sent a soft burst of spiritual strength Tian Lingyu's way, to stop considering Wei Wuyin as an idiot or a child that didn't understand a simple concept like this, as if he didn't know the consequences. It was only then that Tian Lingyu stopped speaking on the topic.

Wei Wuyin felt waves upon waves cascade on his heart, especially after considering how, every time he met an interested Ascended female cultivator, they always kept suggesting that he wait to become an Ascended being. He had never heard of this before.

"Don't stop," Wei Wuyin urged. "Explain why it's inadvisable; I would love to hear an Ascended female's take on this subject." He decided to lessen his frown, using his hand to gesture for her to continue.

Tian Lingyu was unsure whether this was mockery for treating him as an ignorant being or a genius question about her perspective on the matter. She was baffled for a bit.

"Humor me," Wei Wuyin said with a faint smile.

Tian Lingyu thought for a moment, gathering her thoughts, and decided that Wei Wuyin was asking for it, so she would give it. But she didn't do so openly but spiritually. The information would take hours to delve into if she tried to explain the complicated process that she learned from her cultivation base and status as a 'pure' female that was deeply interested in this topic before.

Wei Wuyin was soaking all of it in, and his questions were answered without needing to ask another question. Tian Lingyu's words were extremely comprehensive, essentially explaining the incompatibility of Mortal and Ascended beings from both gender perspectives, the consequences, and exceptions to the rules.

According to her, simply put, while dual cultivating, mystic-graded energies flow into the partner's bodies, and then they go boom. The physiques of mortals were unable to handle the strain of mystic-graded, highly refined energies, leading to a rather gorey death of Cultivation Deviation.

If they somehow survive, the mystic-graded energies would overtake the cultivator's body like a parasite, infecting them, and acting like cement to their every action, causing blockages that neither side could effectively remove without extended expulsion formations and spells or certain alchemical products.

However, it wasn't just horrible for mortals, but even more harmful for Ascended beings. The inverse was true, in that while mystic-graded energies were 'too powerful', mortal-graded energies were 'too impure'. An Ascended being's physique, meridians, Mystic Soul, and yin or yang energies can be drenched in this impurity, weakening or outright crippling an Ascended being's prospects.

It was a strange interaction. However, male Ascended and female Ascended did have exceptions. If the Ascended being completely sealed all their energies, their entire cultivation base, drain any excess, and expunge any latent energies using a special method or paste bath, they could sleep with mortals.

Additionally, if the mortal female's 'only' partner was the Ascended male prior to his ascension, they could have typical intercourse without harsh consequences. This was true for Wu Yu and Junia, his wife, who continued their relationship after the former's ascension. However, the mortal female will obtain

zero benefits and dual cultivation, an active exchange of innate energies, would still lead to death for the mortal and consequences for the Ascended.

As for Ascended females, only virgin Ascended females with their Primal Yin intact could safely cultivate with mortals. However, they have to condense their entire cultivation base into their Primal Yin, funneling it through dual cultivation. The Ascended female would be crippled immediately, but the mortal male would receive untold benefits that would remain sealed in their body until their ascension, where it would have unimaginable benefits.

Wei Wuyin now understood that the mysterious woman was likely going to resort to this method. Otherwise, after initial penetration, common logic would dictate that Wei Wuyin should've exploded. It wouldn't be much of a session if he died after a poke or two.

Wei Wuyin honestly said, "Quite an interesting view. I've learned a few things, thanks." He hadn't known about any of this, but now, he realized that as a mortal, the Mystic Dao was truly beyond his limits. He shouldn't even think of touching it.

'I wonder if I'm another exception,' Wei Wuyin thought as he considered his Worldly Domain's ability to control mystic-graded energies, and his strong physical body that could contain Mystic Light. He strongly felt that he was an exception.

Tian Lingyu couldn't help but feel a little odd. Did Wei Wuyin truly learn something? She gave him a faintly questioning glance, curiosity leaking through.

Wei Wuyin didn't tense or grow uneasy at her questioning gaze, giving her a faint smile. "I was a little rude earlier; I shouldn't have spoken like that to you. How about this: take this as an apology and thanks for teaching me something new."

Wei Wuyin calmly brought out a square jade box no bigger than an adult's fist. There was a faint alchemical aura enveloping it, rich in a scent that could permeate even through the Dark Void. There were rays of light leaking out of the openings, very slightly, but it was clearly unique.

"Mystic Light?" Tian Muiyang instantly recognized the light. So did all the other Earthly Saints. Their interests were piqued, some even looking at Tian Lingyu with a look of shocked envy. Was this a Mystic-World grade product?

However, their thoughts were laughable. Even if Wei Wuyin had unlimited backing, how could he treat that type of product like candy? Giving it out to every tom, dick, and harry without worry? Their opinion of Wei Wuyin had just been greatly elevated subconsciously due to Wu Yu's revelation.

They didn't doubt it, because it was remarkably easy to determine a cultivator's Runic Ascendant State with some probing.

Wei Wuyin sent the box floating towards Tian Lingyu, who grabbed it gingerly, her suspicions fading away as she stared at the box. Clearly, she was affixed to its contents. She lifted her gaze to see Wei Wuyin's unfathomably handsome face. Her wild and angry emotions before had caused her to not notice their close proximity, separated by a thin film of energy, and she could see the phenomenal radiance in those silver irises of his, accompanied by soulful black pupils.

"He's even better than little yin," she blushed ever-so-slightly thinking this, recalling that exceptionally talented relative of hers.

Tian Lingyu was about to keep the box when Tian MUYANG sent her a transmission. She pouted as she glanced his way, giving him a little dissatisfied glare. Eventually, she proceeded to open the box. A flush of Utmost Purity Mist and Mystic Light erupted outwards, bringing about an extremely comfortable visual and olfactory feast.

She felt her mind grow abnormally active, even her Mystic Soul slightly moved in the direction of the mist. Unfortunately, the Dark Void dispersed the mist and light with abnormal quickness, vanishing into thin air.

"This is...?!" Tian Lingyu was shaken. Tian MUYANG looked over, inspecting the contents, and his eyes widened too. The other Earthly Saints were just as curious, sending their senses over. Soon, eyes widened all around.

The old Imperial Monarch that had accompanied Tian MUYANG and Tian Lingyu since the beginning said aloud: "Transcendent!" His voice carried far, and various expressions changed in a drastic manner.

Wei Wuyin quietly watched all their reactions, paying rapt attention to every expression change. He needed to gain an understanding of the value of transcendent-quality products, because while they existed amongst public alchemical records, even in the True Element Sect, he couldn't find a single instance where they were publicly sold.

It didn't make sense with so many Mortal Sovereign Alchemists at the Mystic Ascendant Realm. He felt that these figures should be able to concoct transcendent-quality products, selling them at an absurdly high price to top-tier geniuses.

"It's the Astral World-Deluge Pill!" The other Sky Monarch, a middle-aged man, added with a bright gaze that fixed itself to the pill.

"A transcendent ninth-grade product?" Tian Lingyu was open-mouthed, wide-eyed, and just absolutely stunned. She held the pill in her hand in complete and utter disbelief, it was so intense that she resembled a deer in headlights, just frozen outright by the surprise.

Wei Wuyin's heart instantly twisted. He realized it now.

Shit...

He had thought that transcendent-quality products weren't that rare privately, and he might be right, but he completely didn't consider a simple, very easily neglected fact: transcendent-quality products didn't start at the eighth-grade...

When he recalled his second phenomenon of the Alchemic Dao, gaining the Alchemic Stars of Spiritual Transcendence, he gained it from concocting a ninth-grade product, not from his earlier eighth-grade success, the World-Light Refraction Elixir...

Since he became a Mortal Sovereign Alchemist with Bai Lin's help, he hadn't given any attempt at all to make first, second, or up to seventh-grade transcendent products, thinking it was a waste of mystic-

graded resources, only concocting ninth-grade products. He was reasonable, because Mystic-Terra Ore was outrageously expensive!

It was only when those amazed gazes were lifted, honed onto Wei Wuyin's figure with dazzled brilliance that he confirmed his mistake.

The transcendent-quality for Mortal-grade products restarted in difficulty from the first-grade...

"Oh my heavens! This has two unique Mystic Auras imbued within as well!" The old Imperial Monarch exclaimed, pointing out the addition of Terra-Mystic Ore and Nirvanic Flames.

Wei Wuyin directly interjected before the awe and questions pile, hurriedly explaining: "I'll take my leave. You can give Guardian Han your spiritual jades."

Kree!

Bai Lin realized that Wei Wuyin was urgent, and instantly released a cry, erupting in a burst of Nirvanic Flames before shooting off before the other Earthly Saints broke out of their stupor.

Wei Wuyin didn't know, but while his mistake had been a horrendous lapse of common sense, a product of his astonishing talent and pickiness of his Astral Souls, his imaginary backing had all but cemented in the strongest possible manner!

Why? Because while Mystic-World grade products have appeared before, even being created a few times on occasion by the joint efforts of the three Earthly Saint Alchemists before, including dozens of Mortal Sovereign Alchemists, and several Earthly Saints, transcendent-quality ninth-grade products had only been made by the Sky Zenith Alchemic Saint and the King of Everlore!!!

There was no longer any doubt in their minds at this moment. And this seed of thought will soon yield results that would shake the entire stellar region at its core!

Chapter 893: Endless Prosperity, A Will to Reclaim

The Endless Prosperity Domain was a flourishing territory, ruled by the Golden Life Pavilion, situated within the Aeternal Sky Starfield. It had three large-sized planets that had a relatively closer proximity than most, enveloped by a set of metallic rings that formed an 'X'. Orbiting these planets were forty-five lunar satellites called Prosperous Moons, divided by the planets from largest to smallest by seventeen, fifteen, and thirteen.

These Prosperous Moons were terraformed, funneled enriched astral force from the three planets, to act as pseudo-planets, housing cultivators, establishing produce farms, developing long-term ore mines, herbal fields, and so much more. These moons were made to be cultivated in a rising growth-rate, used to cultivate unique materials that required specific environments, provide jobs, generate revenue and supply for merchant dealings, and raise the Golden Life Pavilion's geniuses.

They were exceptional products of ingenuity and effort.

While these Prosperous Moons housed many cultivators, workers, easily exceeding trillions in numbers, the three main planets barely had any inhabitants. They only served to enhance the environment of the Prosperous Moons, being relatively barren, inhabited by only billions, and most were tasked with maintaining the various formations to funnel enriched essence and energies filtered by the Sky Layers.

These Prosperous Moons were varied, some fostering low-temperature environments, snow covered all year-round, or high-temperature environments that resembled barren deserts, scorching hot and dry. There was even a Prosperous Moon that contained many different types of beasts, living in a seemingly natural environment.

one of these Prosperous Moons, named the Worldly Equilibrium Moon, one of the most planet-like lunar satellites in that its environment was increasingly varied, and it housed the highest populace of cultivators. This Prosperous Moon served as a dedicated cultivation ground for many of the Golden Life Pavilion's and the numerous forces living in its territory, used to foster geniuses.

Its natural environment was extremely rich in astral essence, being relatively 80% thicker and 250% purer than any other Prosperous Moon. Just naturally cultivating in this environment, talented cultivators could strengthen their cultivation foundation, Qi Condensation Realm cultivators could reach a high Qi Essence number with greater ease, Astral Core Realm cultivators could expand their Astral Core, and they both could refine their bodies innate energies, and comprehend the profound intricacies of various energies, such as mana.

On the Worldly Equilibrium Moon, there was a group of cultivators of varied races. There could be seen elves, demons, beastmen, and humans, and they were all interacting with each other, holding conversations, sparring in certain platforms, and meditating while absorbing the ambient astral essence. They could be seen for dozens of miles, with dozens of palaces littering the area, a clearwater lake nearby, and a lone mesa nearby.

"Ha!" A strong, vigorous shout resounded on one of those sparring platforms on this mesa. Two figures clashed with breathtaking swiftness, a clash of pure physical power caused sonic booms to fill the air, and the surging mana was flowing in rhythm with these booms.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

The two figures clashed with startling ferocity, each blow was infused with a heavy amount of violence, as if desiring to rip the other apart. They held little back in their attacks. Fortunately, the platform was enveloped by an isolating formation, so all fluctuations of excess power and astral force was easily resisted, redirected and dispelled to ensure that the environment beyond the sparring platform was unharmed.

After several minutes, the two figures halted at opposing sides of the platform, stabbing their respective weapons into the platform. Now, one could clearly make out their identities. One was a young, gorgeous female human and the other was an older, yet equally as enchanting female elf. They were glistening with sweat on their foreheads, a sign of great exerted effort.

The human was none other than Wu Baozhai, the Grand Princess of the Eternal Monarch Sect herself, whose every breath caused her towering breast to rise and fall, and every movement to reveal those exceptional curves, from top to bottom. Despite her tantalizing sight, she gave off a naturally imposing, impressive, and authoritative presence that could only garner immense respect, irregardless of her gender or astounding beauty. With limpid eyes with strong signs of wit, intelligence, and confidence, she looked at her opponent.

A gorgeous elf whose long hair that reached her perky backside was now platinum blonde, her beautiful face and pointy ears were no longer concealed by a misty guise, fully and proudly revealed to the world. She was Qin Rui, the former Grand Imperial Sage of the Myriad Monarch Sect and current Grand Imperial Sage of the Eternal Monarch Sect!

Qin Rui's aura contained a distinct worldly power that affected the ambient spatial energies, a clear sign of her achievement as a Realm Lord. While Wu Baozhai's aura wasn't as distinct, yet she exuded a similar worldly power. She had yet to reach the Realm World Phase, but she could fully control her Neo Dawn Eclipse Pill formed Worldly Domain!

Qin Rui wiped the sweat off her brows, giving Wu Baozhai an inspective stare. "You've adapted quite well to your Worldly Domain. To think you're already this strong, Grand Princess." She soon broke out in a small smile, a wisp of pride within her eyes.

Wu Baozhai deeply inhaled, her posture growing a little lazy, a little relaxed, and she expelled a breath of pent-up breath. "It's only due to all the training and effort of everyone over the last four months." She soon straightened her posture.

Qin Rui's smile grew, "And because of him."

Wu Baozhai couldn't hold her wry smile back, replying: "And because of him." Then, she suddenly thought of something and pouted. Shockingly, Qin Rui also did the same expression, as if struck by the same thought.

Wu Baozhai grabbed her halberd by the shaft and pulled it out of the platform, its crescent blade shone with a cold light. "Wherever he is," she begrudgingly said. Qin Rui felt the same. That image of the unrivaled handsome man that said he would wait for her to be ready to accept him, that had forgiven her for acting against his interest, and given her notably more than her peers, had emerged in her mind.

He hadn't forgotten the fierceness of her pride, and he would never be able to. Those were his own words told to her by Tuo Bihan.

The two clearly had their own grievances built-up. At first, they were aware that Wei Wuyin wasn't in the Aeternal Sky Starfield from his messages, so his absence was perfectly okay, but after hearing about Wu Yu's Earthly Ascension and Announcement of an All-Alchemic Clash Royale, they knew Wei Wuyin was here. Despite that, he hadn't visited or given them any messages.

The two simultaneously looked at the spatial rings on their fingers. His aura was still on this ring, and they carried it with them everywhere. Since they last saw him nearly eight years ago, a decade for Qin Rui, he had provided them with unimaginable resources.

They wanted for nothing at their cultivation stage. Even now, this top-tier environment was selected and given to them by Wei Wuyin. The various races here were all the Eternal Monarch Sect's elite talents, both young and old, brought here by Wu Yu and the Third Manager of the Ma Clan, Ma Zheng, and allowed to cultivate here freely.

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Qin Rui decided to change the topic. "Grand Princess, your cultivation foundation is definitely more than enough to tackle the Realm World Astral Tribulation and succeed. There's no doubt. Why haven't you

done so?" Wu Baozhai had been at the Gravity Emission Phase a few years now, and while a few years might be small, she had endless resources and high-end alchemical products to supplement her cultivation base. If she wanted, she could blitz her way to the next stage of the Astral Core Realm.

Wu Baozhai elegantly spun her halberd, feeling its weight and inspecting its condition. She lightly replied, "Because of him." She was always keen and aware of things, especially the aspects of the Alchemic Dao. She had decided to join Wei Wuyin's Ascendants in large part of his ability to establish the greatest foundation.

She knew that rushing it wasn't good. She wasn't like Qin Rui, who was older, her potential already excavated and set. Qin Rui had a weak Soul Idol, Spatial Resonance, and Primary Light foundation, and Wei Wuyin had driven that to a peak, but not the 'peak'.

Wei Wuyin was bound to be able to open up entirely new paths, as long as she wasn't rash. She'll wait until Wei Wuyin gives her the okay to make that final, cementing step.

Woosh!

"Good instincts," a figure descended from above. A handsome, middle-aged man with a royale beard and innate imperial demeanor landed before the two of them. Qin Rui was taken aback for a moment before she hurriedly performed proper etiquette, deeply bowing as she greeted: "Grand Monarch."

Wu Yu looked at this elven beauty with a wry smile. He always felt stressed when women that Wei Wuyin was interested in decided to be overly respectful. If he saw that, what would he think?

Wu Baozhai could see Wu Yu's expression, finding it incredibly amusing. She said, "Grand Sage Qin, Grand Knight Wu isn't the Grand Monarch of the Eternal Monarch Sect. It's best to not make things awkward for him, given your...relationship with the Ascendant Emperor." She thoughtfully said, referring to Wei Wuyin as the Ascendant Emperor.

Almost every resident of the once Neo-Dawn Starfield still called him that formally. She wasn't any different.

Qin Rui had been told this before, but she kept forgetting to demonstrate the taught response during her many years. She looked at Wu Yu, a great Earthly Saint, a top-tier figure amongst the entire Grand Cyclic Stellar Region, with a little awkwardness. It would be a little awkward if your boss' woman bowed to you, especially if this happened in front of them.

When she caught how she considered herself, she blushed slightly.

"Grand Knight Wu, we've been here for four months, while we're all thankful, can you tell me why we're here and what we're waiting for?" Wu Baozhai kept her halberd, exerting a natural aura of grace and strength.

Wu Yu pridefully smiled. Wu Baozhai was growing into a fine inheritor of the Grand Monarch Lineage. "The Young Lord is concerned for your safety, so I thought I could kill two birds with one stone. That said, you don't have to worry; I'll return everyone in two months' time, just before the Saint Cyclic Renewal Summit begins. I do hope that you'll accompany me there, however, and represent the Eternal Monarch Sect as its Chosen."

Wu Baozhai frowned slightly. Wei Wuyin was concerned about her safety? Was it the Everlore Association? She thought for a moment and then nodded. "I'll go." While it was an extended stay that might last five years, she knew this was a good opportunity to have the Eternal Monarch Sect's name resound slightly louder amongst certain circles, taken seriously despite their lowly start.

They may have come from an inferior starfield, but they didn't lack talents!

"Great," Wu Yu was excited. He will dominate the older generation and Wu Baozhai can rule over the young generation, bringing the Grand Monarch Lineage to the forefront of this world. His burning desire for conquest hadn't changed, and he was happy to see that Wu Baozhai had the same burning fire in her eyes.

They talked a bit more, discussing the details of their stay and any needs. With Wei Wuyin's wealth and means, anything they needed was merely a word away. Especially for Wu Baozhai and Qin Rui.

Suddenly, another figure descended. It was an old man with vibrant vigor. He was dressed in a grey and golden robes, giving off a feeling of wealth and friendliness, befitting a capable merchant. The robes weren't too flashy, but they weren't too modest either.

Ma Zheng!

Wu Yu's expression changed slightly, looking at the Earthly Saint that decided to make a large gamble, paying off with a 9th Runic Ascendant State. He asked with a dignified expression, "Now?"

Ma Zheng nodded, giving the two beautiful women of Wei Wuyin's personal circle a friendly smile and greeting. They didn't stay for long, the two Earthly Saints shot off into the sky under the watch of Wu Baozhai and Qin Rui.

While they soared to the edges of the Worldly Equilibrium Moon, Wu Yu looked towards Ma Zheng with a stern expression. As if knowing what he wanted to ask, Ma Zheng calmly answered: "Everything's set."

Wu Yu looked away, looking at the space at the center point of the three planets. "Good. If anything happened to her during these four months because of your planning...you should know the consequences."

Ma Zheng wasn't startled in the slightest by Wu Yu's statement. "I know." Xue Yifei was far too important. She was the only genuine link to Wei Wuyin's heart known to those who mattered. If something happened to her, who knew what level of hell would be unleashed.

'It's time to reclaim what's mine,' Ma Zheng thought with eyes suffused with steel-like resolve.

Chapter 894: Endless Prosperity, Dragonborn Guest

At the center of the three large-sized planet's orbit, there was a Gateway Door of exquisite design, coated in gold and silver, marked by large the 'Life' character at its center, and divided into two doors that push away horizontally. It led to one of the eighty-one World Realms of the Endless Prosperity Domain, the most important one: Endless Prosperity.

It wasn't tagged by the term 'Realm', referred to plainly as Endless Prosperity. If one delved into the ancient records of the Golden Life Pavilion, Endless Prosperity was the very first World Realm created at

its initial establishment, it was 'the' starter realm that led to all they had now, a Domain of Endless Prosperity that expanded across an entire stellar region.

And it wasn't the establishment of the Golden Life Pavilion, a name taken after a series of ownership changeovers and hostile acquisitions over millennia, but its original, initial identity when it was nothing more than an insignificant existence with a mere dream held up by a cunning, intelligent, and optimistic owner.

Within the Gateway Door, the entire World Realm awaited. Endless Prosperity wasn't an ordinary World Realm. Not only did it act as the central realm for the Golden Life Pavilion's leadership, the main headquarters of the entire pavilion, it was outrageously opulent in the grandest of manners.

Despite only seemingly having a single entrance, the Gateway Door worked with a similar mechanism as the Four Extreme Continent's, having multiple tube-like spatial tunnels, allowing all entries to enter and be diverted to different locations. Unlike the Elementus Chosen Trial, the locations could be freely chosen as long as one has the correct permissions.

Wu Yu and Ma Zheng arrived at the Gateway Door, giving this gorgeously designed Gateway Door an appraisal. Wu Yu was a little anxious. It had been four months since he left Wei Wuyin's side, and while he had secured Wu Baozhai and the Eternal Monarch Sect's members' safety in accordance with Wei Wuyin's orders, he felt a wave of agitation after sitting on his thumbs for so long.

"What is it?" After a few seconds of waiting, Wu Yu gave Ma Zheng a look accompanied by a frown. He was already aware of the aspects of this Gateway Door, and had mentally prepared himself for various scenarios.

Ma Zheng sighed heavily, a little bit of emotion leaking through. As the Third Manager of the Golden Life Pavilion, he possessed an omni-key that allowed access to all spatial tunnels, capable of freely entering and exiting, having some control over the initial arrays and formations of Endless Prosperity. With a wave of his hand, he brought out a golden-colored key without any notches.

Wu Yu saw this and prepared himself. If they were to be sieged immediately, if they fell into a trap, then he was ready to unleash his Third Grand Transformation instantly.

However, Ma Zheng didn't use the key to open the Gateway Door. He instead shook his head slightly, saying with a wisp of ridicule: "I'm ten thousand years too old for this move to work on me, and you're twenty thousand years too young to try it." With a harsh crunch, Ma Zheng clenched his fist and crushed the golden key.

Wu Yu was shocked.

"Their attitudes are now clear," Ma Zheng stated with an indifferent tone. Wu Yu was confused, giving the bits of flowing golden dust particles a look. Continuing, Ma Zheng looked off to the side with a smile, seeing a faint silver light approaching from afar, "Right on time."

Wu Yu's attention was drawn towards the approaching silver light to see a middle-aged woman dressed in maroon robes with a strong, stable Mystic Aura. She was an Earthly Saint, her eyes exuded boundless serenity, and her posture was upright, proud, and noble. She was definitely an exceptional member of her gender, be it in looks, demeanor, or cultivation, and she looked quite familiar.

At the woman's right, another younger woman, very similar in appearance, sporting the same dark-grey hair color as the middle-aged woman. However, their demeanors were definitely dissimilar, one gave off the sensation of a noble grace while the other was more of a patient, diligent young woman.

That young woman was none other than Ma Sujiang!

The two were riding a small-sized Voidship that emitted a strong, resonating silvery light that stirred the ambient spatial energies of the Dark Void. It seemed as if it was spatial shifting through the world yet also not. It was definitely unique.

When they arrived a few tens of meters away, stopping at that point, the middle-aged woman didn't even give Ma Zheng a look as she calmly said while looking around: "No obstruction?"

Ma Sujiang pouted a little, giving the middle-aged woman a look of dissatisfaction. However, the middle-aged woman didn't seem to care about her mood.

Ma Zheng didn't seem bothered by her attitude, replying: "Those here have already decided on their side. They've left on my orders."

The middle-aged woman faintly nodded as if it was expected. If Ma Zheng wasn't able to seize control of some measly guards, he might as well quit now. "Then why haven't you entered?" She finally looked in Ma Zheng's direction, noticing Wu Yu who released a strong Mystic Aura. At the moment, Wu Yu was wearing a concealing mask given to him by Ma Zheng to hide his identity, and while his distinct signature was hidden, his Mystic Aura wasn't. As for Ma Zheng, he gave off a distinct aura of a Demi-Mortal Lord.

The middle-aged woman was unable to determine who Wu Yu was, just that he was an Earthly Saint. Still, the leaking curiosity was clear to detect within those serene eyes of hers.

Ma Zheng didn't keep anyone in suspense, "the Gateway Door has some suspicious points. I discovered that it's been fitted with various hidden formations to seal, expel, or harm."

Wu Yu finally realized why Ma Zheng destroyed the key, releasing a soft sound of understanding. However, his eyes sparkled with spiritual light and he gazed at the Gateway Door. He found nothing nefarious or abnormal with the Gateway Door or the spatial tunnels that led into the depths. While he wasn't able to obtain a perfectly clear picture, he was an Earthly Saint who had a Spatial-grade Mystic Rune.

At least, he should be able to detect formations embedded in the tunnels. He was baffled.

"I don't sense anything," the middle-aged woman flew over, inspecting the Gateway Door and stated plainly. She found Ma Zheng's statement to be without any visible merit. Moreover, why would they harm the entrance to Endless Prosperity when they were unable to determine the timeline of his arrival?

It seemed like a stretch. What if someone else fell into it? It might even clash with some Mythical Oaths sworn by the Golden Life Pavilion's leadership.

Ma Zheng didn't care if she believed or not, "We're going to use the Star-Hex." The Star-Hex was none other than the tiny ship that the middle-aged woman and Ma Sujiang had arrived on. It had tremendous

infiltration and stealth capabilities, designed for war. That said, whether it was capable enough to bypass all the defensive and restrictive formations of the Endless Prosperity was uncertain.

"That's a very risky action," the middle-aged woman stated. If they failed and were caught by the Endless Prosperity's defensive formations, it would be quite unfortunate.

"Yes, but we must; the meeting's today," Ma Zheng said as he flew to the Star-Hex. Wu Yu followed along. He didn't care if they used stealth or force, but he needed to enter.

"The meeting is today?" The middle-aged woman's voice changed for the first time, revealing some surprise. "How do you know? They've temporarily removed you from your position so they have no obligation to inform you in accordance with the oaths, and I don't imagine they'll leave any opportunity for others to inform you. Moreover, it's spontaneous and unpredictable for a reason, and they wouldn't give this opening unless it was a world-changing scale of importance." She returned to the Star-Hex.

Ma Zheng only gave a faint smile in response.

Ma Sujiang had wisps of pride in her eyes, fueled by her father's extraordinary foresight.

The middle-aged woman realized Ma Zheng wasn't going to reveal anything else, and much like the gaze Ma Sujiang sent her way earlier, she shot Ma Zheng a look of dissatisfaction. It was quite easy to determine they were mother and daughter, and while they seemed different, they had similar mannerisms.

"Let's go," Ma Zheng took control of the Star-Hex. It instantly melded with space, vanishing from visual perception. If Wei Wuyin had seen this, he would be absolutely startled because this was Spatial Merging! An ability he had only gained after attaining the Spatial-Convergence Ripple!

Within the World Realm of Endless Prosperity, the world was bathed in golden and white light originating from a golden solar star, titan-sized, and two strange circular halos above and below, emitting wisps of white light. These two halos were broken apart into uneven segments, but they spiraled consistently without scattering, as if controlled by a unique power.

They strongly resemble Mystic Radiance Belts, yet there was a strangeness to them. That said, they diffused outwards mystic essence and light that was refined from the astral essence from the Solar Star, enriching the World Realm, but not all of it.

The World Realm was a mixture of astral and mystic-graded light, the golden and white lights respectively. Therefore, there was a distinct lack of consistency that complete Mystic Radiance Belts had.

Endless Prosperity was home to billions, the size of it was greatly disproportionate to its population, capable of housing trillions, but it seemed abnormally clustered, with every piece of land used or occupied by large Sky Palaces, grounded mansions, mining efforts, or active farming. Even Endless Prosperity was a sign of endless generation of wealth.

The entire World Realm seemed endlessly active. There was a network of Sky Palaces and grounded mansions, interconnected through bridges of sleek light that were being used by ships. They traversed

these bridges, exiting or entering through various Void Gates that either led to the other eighty World Realms of the Endless Prosperity Domain or other branches of Golden Life Pavilion throughout the stellar region while carrying various goods.

The Endless Prosperity wasn't just the central territory of the Golden Life Pavilion, the capital of the Endless Prosperity Domain, but it was the main spatial port of their business. The bridges that overlapped through a complex network were not without its purpose, and each bridge led to a different territory with different rights throughout the stellar region.

Some of these Void Gates could directly bypass the spatial sealing arrays of certain Starfields, Domains, or Territories to deliver or retrieve goods. Of course, these Void Gates were all pre-determined and limited, restricting those of a certain cultivation level from entering or only arriving at a heavily-guarded area of that territory.

This mostly depended on what the forces' preferences were, and the Golden Life Pavilion would freely accommodate their needs.

Within this vast territory, there was a huge palace that was grandly designed, outfitted with various formations and arrays to drastically improve quality of life. There was a large, expansive area of grassland within this palace with an artificial sky.

Situated atop an azure-scaled beast, a young woman dressed in a black cheongsam with violet-colored dragons beautifully embroidered on its surface stared at the artificial sky. She had a supremely calm expression, her hazel eyes with navy-blue flecks shone brightly beneath the light.

"Gruuuu..." The beast beneath her released a soft, earth-rumbling breath. Xue Yifei revealed a gentle smile, caressing the large scales of the Horned-Firmament Azure Dragon beneath her. Anu had stayed beside her through it all over the last couple of months.

Recalling the last eight years, Xue Yifei sighed.

"Lady Xue, is there anything you need?" A voice politely asked.

Xue Yifei kept her eyes towards the artificial sky, not looking in the voice's direction even a little.

"Anything I need?" There was a hint of amusement and mockery in her tone, but she didn't lash out. She simply ignored the voice right after.

"If there's anything you need, as our most honored guest, I'm here to serve you to the fullest extent of my capabilities.." The voice said, as polite as humanly possible. Xue Yifei couldn't help but frown. As steps began to get further, Xue Yifei moved. She turned her head to see a well-dressed middle-aged woman with short brown hair. Her entire body gave off an physical aura of unfathomableness, very distinct to Highlords, or those at the Demi-Mortal Lord Phase.

"Wait," Xue Yifei called out. The footsteps ceased immediately, the middle-aged woman turning with a faint smile of friendliness. "Has my offer been accepted?"

The middle-aged woman wasn't shocked by this, saying calmly: "Something so important requires the deliberation of all Managers. The Pavilion Master, Branch Managers, and the Golden Council have all gathered in haste to consider it now. It won't be long until a conclusion is reached, I assure you, Lady Xue."

Xue Yifei nodded slightly, not even looking in the middle-aged woman's direction. When the woman finally left, Xue Yifei released another sigh.

'Just a little more.'

Chapter 895: Endless Prosperity, Golden Meeting

The World Realm of Endless Prosperity was plunged into a state of excited activity. There was news trickling in about visitors from the various branches arriving, including the Branch Managers, Golden Councilmen, and that the Pavilion Master himself was organizing this event.

A Golden Meeting!

A rare event that only occurred when something substantial might begin, such as a Golden Auction or a change in the Golden Life Pavilion's ruling laws. With the upcoming Saint Cyclic Renewal Summit on the horizon, the latter seemed more likely, so quite a few individuals from within and outside the Golden Life Pavilion were highly invested in this event.

The sights of all types of grandiose Voidships arriving, and then smaller-sized Skyships that were just as impressive, sporting the markings of the First Branch, Second Branch, and Third Branch, further stimulated the fiery imagination of Endless Prosperity. As a World Realm highway of import and export, the word soon spread across various Domains and Starfields.

The last time this occurred was the unveiling of the Neo-Dawn Eclipse Pill, a product that caused a cascade of rampant changes and developments, including the Ever-Domain Pill's public reveal that heavily contributed to the Saint Cyclic Renewal Summit's initiation. The thought that this could outright induce another extraordinary change that would reshape the current era was infectious.

Quite a few top-tier experts sent proxies to inquire with those on the Golden Council or worked for the various branches, holding high positions, hoping to gain some inkling on what was to come. However, there was a strict silence surrounding the topic. It brought forth a stronger curiosity from all spectating parties.

What could it be?

It was impossible for the thought of Wei Wuyin to not appear in the minds of everyone, thinking that his arrival in the last half decade or so had weaved numerous changes, and the Golden Life Pavilion was the first to have contact with him. There was also an unverified rumor that the Golden Life Pavilion was in talks with Wei Wuyin regarding a future partnership. This was one of many rumors spreading, with some even suggesting that Wei Wuyin's concubine was acting as a proxy, staying in Endless Prosperity, to conduct business on his behalf or was kept prisoner, turning their relationship sour.

It didn't take long for the Skyships to all dock at the central headquarters of the Golden Life Pavilion, a grand building, the grandest building amongst the cluster of impressive buildings, that stood as an unwavering skyscraper with four interconnected structures, all representing the four branches of the Golden Life Pavilion. Those extremely important personages shuffled their way with an entourage of members, carrying exceptional auras and dispositions befitting businessmen and women of the finest quality, all dressed in varying taoist robes.

While the leadership of the Golden Life Pavilion has changed numerous times throughout its history, the manner of conduct and rules remained strong and stable; an aspect fought for by none other than the Ma Clan. And it served the Golden Life Pavilion extremely well, nurturing fine men and women of excellent business standards, cutting off an aura of arrogance and unimaginable wealth. A wisp of modesty and friendliness naturally exuded.

That said, it would be a great exaggeration to say these cultivators who grasped great wealth and power weren't arrogant, haughty, and felt a sense of superiority over others. They most certainly did, but they were trained very early on to never show it before customers unless it fit the customer, someone who needed to be reassured that their assets were handled by those proud and strong beings.

At the tallest building of the headquarters, dozens of figures had gathered around an oval table crafted out of mystic-graded Oakfall Wood. At the sides of the table, Sea Rousing Incense, a low-tier, Mystic-Earth grade alchemical paste, was burning and releasing a pure scent that could stimulate the Sea of Consciousness, enriching the mental energies and promoting faster processing of one's mental means. It was very beneficial for discussing matters, bringing everyone around the table to the greatest focus they could.

The various members who saw these incenses had thought-provoking expressions or wisps of shock in their eyes; this was an indication that this meeting was bound to be extremely important. The last time this was used was during the world-changing Skyship design discussion, where pricing and how to conduct the Golden Auction were decided.

The Neo-Dawn Eclipse Pill might've elicited such a move, but the Ma Clan had solely handled that matter, only announcing that they were hosting the Golden Auction discussing minor details. Since some sought the fall of the Ma Clan, wanting nothing more than to see them embarrass themselves, digging themselves in a hole, they were allowed to act. There was no way a ninth-grade product would be worthy of a Golden Auction, waiting for the Ma Clan to trip and fall, allowing them the justification they need to remove them from that position.

Unfortunately, or fortunately, depending on the perspective, the Neo-Dawn Eclipse Pill hadn't just changed the Golden Life Pavilion; it changed the entire Grand Cyclic Stellar Region after the Grand Demonstration was completed. In truth, if the Neo-Dawn Eclipse Pill was the Ever-Domain Pill, this would've certainly caused the Ma Clan's downfall. It simply wasn't sufficient enough alone to justify the Golden Auction.

The room had a total of seventeen seated, including members which included the thirteen Golden Councilmen and four Branch Managers. The Golden Councilmen weren't all active managers of vital locations or merchants; many were providers or those elected due to their investments and the power these investments gave, granting them some decision-making power and authority amongst the Golden Life Pavilion.

For example, some Councilmen were top-tier Creationists. They were Prime and Grand Mortal Sovereign Alchemists, Mystic-Level Architects, and Forgers. They headed various departments, from product concoction and the creation of varied methods, to the development of certain materials via formations and arrays at a planetary scale. They each contributed enough of their expertise in reshaping and enriching the Golden Life Pavilion, gaining their place here today as a result.

Of course, not all of them were the direct result of their personal investment, some had inherited their seat from their ancestors hard fought efforts, passing it down as their families or clans continued to contribute. There were also numerous times when this succession failed, with later generations losing the qualifications to be amongst this council. These relegated councilmen would be given lesser positions; meanwhile, each person present here who gained their seat by succession had all retained it through their own arduous effort.

Others were legacies, clans such as the Ma Clan that had led the Golden Life Pavilion at one point or another but lost their rights to lead, given this position as a result, and continued to work for the Golden Life Pavilion.

Regardless of how they got here, they all earned their seats and continued to do so. This was why they held the power to decide matters of the pavilion and were given a greater voice to their thoughts. It also helped that none of these figures were beneath the Mystic Ascendant Realm, with the lowest amongst them being at the 'failed' Ascended stage, the Mystic Star Phase.

At the lead seat was a middle-aged man with rich, vibrant, and warm beige skin, with a tall stature, a stern facial expression, and an air of importance about him. He had a clean beard with signs of greying, and his long, dark hair was tied neatly in a half-ponytail, giving him a strong feel. Coupled with his chiseled facial features, he was quite handsome.

He gave off an exceptionally profound aura, clearly indicating his existence as an Earthly Saint, as he commanded the room with just a sweep of his light brown eyes. All those seated and those throughout the entire Grand Cyclic Stellar Region would find this man unforgettable; he was well-renowned and the current Pavilion Master of the Golden Life Pavilion, the Head Manager of the Life Branch, and one of the two Earthly Saints belonging to the Mystic-tier force!

Sheng Jizi!

The attention of the sixteen others was all on Sheng Jizi. There was an air of seriousness circulating, and this caused quite a few of these powerful men and women to grow increasingly dignified.

However, that tense air was dispersed when Sheng Jizi revealed a small smile.

"Before we begin this 87th Golden Meeting of our Golden Life Pavilion, I'd like to welcome Ban Ma to his first meeting as the newest Third Branch Manager." Sheng Jizi spoke with a deep, powerful, yet soothing voice that flowed through one's ears like silk touching one's skin, making it quite hard for one to not find comfort in it, and when he clapped in welcome, the others subconsciously followed.

Ban Ma was a young-looking man with the air of a scholarly merchant, well-read, well-learned, well-traveled, and wore a pair of round spectacles with thin frames. He wasn't too handsome, but he wasn't bad looking either. He used his finger to push his glasses up the bridge of his nose, smiling as he rose. He bowed to Sheng Jizi, giving a long-lengthy thanks and a small speech of acceptance for his new position.

Ban Ma belonged to one of the main clans of the Third Branch, the Ban Clan. They handled the mining division for ores within the Third Branch, handling dozens of high-end mines and contracts. They were the fiercest of competitors over the Third Branch's leadership. Ban Ma was the suggested replacement for assistant manager after Ma Sujiang's firing. While young, he's shown himself to be quite capable, rivaling even Ma Zheng in some matters.

While his cultivation base was disappointingly at the Mystic Star Phase, he did have the backing of a legitimate Demi-Mortal Lord in the form of his great-grandfather to act as his strength. Moreover, he was perfect for taking over for the role of Third Branch Manager, for now, considering his 'failed' Ascended state. A temporary replacement.

The others knew this, aware that Sheng Jizi was placing him in the vacant seat to fill the void, gain a supporter, and decide if the Ban Clan was suitable to remain leaders of the Third Branch. If not, he could easily push for a better candidate.

While the Golden Councilmen were all applauding and smiling, they each had their own ambitions. If they could take that seat as the Third Branch Manager, they wouldn't just have the power they currently wielded but further access to incredible wealth and connections.

As for Ma Zheng? They all were fully aware that the Life Branch and Second Branch had been trying to remove the Ma Clan as leaders of the Third Branch for quite some time. But due to the Ma Clan's connections, continuous climbing profits, and renewed contracts every passing year, it was challenging to justify the removal of the Ma Clan.

However, after Ma Zheng withheld the Neo-Dawn Eclipse Pill's Concoction Method, the firing of his Assistant Manager, and his increasing age, he no longer had a successor and was at the end of his life. With a little bit of maneuvering and a timely requested status assessment after his recent...assault, he was determined unfit to continue and pushed out via forced retirement.

It might sound simple, but there were centuries of evidence and established bylaws used to do so, and without all this effort and those impetuses, it would be impossible to remove him outside of a vote. Unfortunately for the Life and Second Branches, a call for a vote, such as lack of confidence or being unfit in a professional or personal capacity, required reasoning behind them.

Most of the Golden Council were cogs in the grand scale of the Golden Life Pavilion and heavily relied on the Branch Managers for their earned profits through contracts and prior percentage deals. Why remove someone that was providing them immense benefits? Let alone the one that was earning them the most.

Ma Zheng knew precisely how to secure his position, giving up a portion of the Third Branch's earnings to those with power, giving away some of the Ma Clan's wealth for security. It was a crucial and strategic sacrifice.

Sheng Jizi nodded after Ban Ma gave his speech, gesturing slightly with his eyes, and the latter sat down obediently. "I've called this 87th Golden Meeting, bringing you all here because of Xue Yifei."

Xue Yifei?

Quite a few members were shocked by that name. They knew of the Dragonborn Saintess, not only because of her accomplishments as of late, which were nothing short of extraordinary for a junior of her age but because of her status as Wei Wuyin's official concubine! She was the only living official relationship they knew of, and she was guarded by the Ma Clan's experts.

She also had a Worldly Domain forged by a Neo-Dawn Eclipse Pill, and it was higher quality than even Ma Luling's, suggesting a high-quality or higher product, further solidifying her relationship with Wei Wuyin. There were rumors of her being in Endless Prosperity.

Sheng Jizi only paused for a short while to see if there was anyone ignorant of that name. Seeing how they all reacted, he nodded, saying: "Miss Xue has offered to exchange the Neo-Dawn Eclipse Pill's Concoction Method."

What?!

The expressions of everyone changed.

"Is this true?" An elderly, white-bearded man with a lively gaze asked in disbelief. He was Shui Yu, the foremost alchemic authority within the entire Golden Life Pavilion, the only Grand Mortal Sovereign Alchemist, and leader of the training of younger alchemists. As the teacher of almost every Mortal Sovereign Alchemist of the Golden Life Pavilion, he had tremendous power and sway over many matters, holding his seat as a Golden Councilman with his own merits.

When he asked this question, the others listened and looked at Sheng Jizi. Was this for real?

One must know that the Ma Clan were the sole earners of the Concoction Method, and with Ma Zheng being removed from his position, it was highly unlikely they would obtain the Concoction Method through them. As for the product they obtained through other channels, studying it intensely, their Mortal Sovereign Alchemists were unable to deduce how it was made. Even Shui Yu was unable to figure it out, baffling almost everyone.

Of course, if he was given enough time, a decade or a few centuries, he might be able to figure it all out, but even a century was an exceptionally long period of time for Demi-Mortal Lords despite their lifespans going up to 30,000 years.

"It is," Sheng Jizi confirmed. After the Ma Clan's refusal and Ma Zheng's expulsion, they felt that the concoction method was lost. As for forcefully stealing the method, this would only invoke Wei Wuyin's ire. To steal the concoction method of an alchemist was one of the greatest affronts to their name and no different than stealing from them. Of course, if they deduced how it was made and made alterations, that was evidence of their skill, and they could justifiably sell the product under a different name.

This was a widespread practice amongst alchemist associations—a fiercely competitive platform.

If Wei Wuyin wasn't a giant enigma that kept growing in terms of personal forces, especially the recent Grand Knight Wu Yu, they might've been a tad bit more unscrupulous. But stealing also meant an acceptance of one's inferiority; even the Everlore Association had its own pride, making the Ever-Domain Pills.

Still, this matter was definitely important enough for Sheng Jizi to call forth a Golden Meeting. The entire dynamic of the cultivation world would change if they obtained the concoction method of the Neo-Dawn Eclipse Pill. Ma Sujiang had once thought that the Ma Clan could've kept it a secret and use it to foster a horde of talented geniuses and then explosively dominate the entire Stellar Region. Her thoughts weren't wrong, but most of the figures present were thinking of using it as a way to gain exceptional wealth for their own cultivation. A payday of epic proportions.

How much would the Everlore Association pay to gain the rights to concoct Neo-Dawn Eclipse Pills? Or the twenty-one Starfields with numerous alchemist associations? Especially if the Golden Life Pavilion could control the finer details of concoction and pricing, setting limits, and controlling distribution.

They would control the future Chosen, the future Leaders of the Stellar Region!

A gorgeous woman with short blonde hair spoke out, her demeanor impeccable, her voice just as impressive as Sheng Jizi, "For what, Pavilion Master Sheng?"

"..."

The faint sounds of interest and shock settled instantly. They all looked to Sheng Jizi, who calmly answered:

"A seat at the table."

"..."

Chapter 896: Endless Prosperity, Interruption

"A seat at the table?" The beautiful blonde woman frowned slightly, tapping her sharp fingernails painted in a frosty violet. Her words prompted the others to exchange glances, sending brief spiritual transmissions amongst themselves.

"Just for the Concoction Method?" Shui Yu, the sole Grand Mortal Sovereign Alchemist of the Golden Life Pavilion, the foremost authority on alchemy within the Golden Life Pavilion, and teacher of countless alchemic talents, asked with a wisp of ridicule. While the Neo-Dawn Eclipse Pill's concoction method would save them some time, this was insignificant compared to a seat at this table. They ran the most successful business enterprise of the entire Grand Cyclic Stellar Region.

It wasn't so simple that a ninth-grade product, convention-breaking or not, was capable of buying its way into. There were more frowns than anything as everyone considered this matter seriously. While some dismissed the possibility, they were all businessmen.

A Golden Meeting was a venue for discussions and thus for open negotiations. It would be foolish for a businessman to treat it as a joke and not a starting point. Since Sheng Jizi had summoned them, calling forth the 87th Golden Meeting, there was definitely more to this.

The beautiful blonde-haired woman's tapping ceased. She gave Sheng Jizi a look, "Who's obtaining the seat?"

"..." They all realized that they had neglected to determine this, and when they looked to Sheng Jizi to see his faint smile, they realized therein lies the complexity of this issue. Even Shui Yu wiped away his disdain, replacing it with a solemn frown.

There were three likely possibilities:

Firstly, Xue Yifei, the Dragonborn Saintess, wished to obtain a seat herself, using her husband's method as a gift due to his love for her. This might seem like getting Wei Wuyin's favor, but he was far removed from the situation. This was the option they all considered, not taking it seriously. Xue Yifei might have

the backing of Wei Wuyin, but this wouldn't translate to being able to offer enough to justify her taking the spot.

Secondly, Wei Wuyin himself. This was a little complex to consider. It was, at this point, largely believed by everyone that Wei Wuyin had the backing of a mysterious force. Furthermore, he had at least two Earthly Saints acting in his pocket. While the strange Earthly Saint that fought against the Tang Clan was undetermined in origins and purpose, Wu Yu, the Grand Knight of Neo-Dawn, was his publicly acknowledged Alchemic Knight.

However, the incoming reports about Wei Wuyin's True Element Sect's visit had detailed using the Fire Phoenix as a mount. This made sense as the Fire Phoenix had only arrived recently, and it was a beast with the strength of a Demi-Mortal Lord. Considering the difficulties for the beast to cultivate, and no one discovered her Nirvanic Transformations, it was definitely not a part of the Grand Cyclic Stellar Region prior. It likely came as he came.

This option was still a little tenuous but acceptable. Wei Wuyin was a mortal; he had potential and an Earthly Saint at his beck and call. He would be a useful addition if he developed in the right track.

But the third option was the one they all didn't wish to see, especially the leadership. There wasn't a single person here who didn't know the story about the King of Everlore and the Godpill Association. Long ago, the Godpill Association was the foremost authority on Alchemy, led by none other than the Evergod himself. The legendary, unfathomably talented King of Everlore arrived, growing in reputation and means, breaking records and generating all sorts of unconventional products that skyrocketed the region, and then took over the Godpill Association.

It was now named the Everlore Association, the Evergod reduced to a vice Association Master even after thousands of years of the King of Everlore's continued absence. It was quite...

If Wei Wuyin's mysterious backing decided to use this as a way to worm their way into the Golden Life Pavilion, chances were...it'll be the Golden Neo-Dawn Pavilion very soon. If rules were reshuffled, their interests might be outright threatened, lessened, or stripped from them. Inviting a tiger into their homes was a folly of unparalleled idiocy. A folly they were unwilling to perform.

Sheng Jizi could understand all their thoughts and concerns, so he alleviated their worries by explaining: "The Dragonborn Saintess seeks the seat, not Wei Wuyin or those behind him."

The Golden Councilmen all had varying expressions, most leaning heavily on disapproval. Xue Yifei might be a Saintess, her talents exceptional, her feats great for her age, but she was just a mortal with very little to offer except the youngling dragon that stood behind her. The Neo-Dawn Eclipse Pill's concoction method was exceptional, and they wanted it greatly, but the ask was too much.

"This might be to our benefit," the blonde-haired woman resumed her table-tapping, her clear light-green eyes looking at Sheng Jizi. "While Xue Yifei has no prospects of growth as of now, she could grow. Crucially, she would have to contribute in accordance with the rules or else be expelled, and her placement isn't a threat to our interests, unlike the uncertainty of Wei Wuyin. Moreover..."

Shui Yu chimed in at this point, adding: "She's the link to a possible second King of Everlore. Is that what you think, Lady Shuang?" The others grew into a somber mood. The possibility that Wei Wuyin ended up

as a second King of Everlore was indeed possible. While it was too early to foresee, if he did have a connection to that figure, chances were he was bound to reach unimaginable limits in a few millennia.

Sheng Jizi replied with a silent smile.

Lady Shuang was Shuang Xi. There wasn't a single person that didn't know her name throughout the entire Grand Cyclic Stellar Region. At least those that had any significance. She was amongst the top three Architects in the entire Stellar Region, rivaling the Yu Clan's Yu Yilang and Soul-Creation Saint of the Ninestar Sainthall.

She was also the inventor of the Skyship that redesigned travel and assisted heavily in the creation of the Sky Destroyers used by the Imperial Clan. Her feats didn't stop there, as she led the project of constructing and designing the entire formation structure of the Endless Prosperity's highway of import and export, including the interconnected 81 World Realms.

"You wish to make an investment?" Shuang Xi directly asked Sheng Jizi.

"I do," he replied.

"There's a lot of risk to this," Shui Yu added.

"I know," Sheng Jizi remained confident. The others chimed in as well, but Sheng Jizi remained certain that this investment was justifiable to make. While it was a heavy one, it could benefit them greatly in the long run. First and foremost, they weren't an alchemist association but a business. There was no 'genuine' centralized leadership. If someone tried to change how they operated, the Golden Life Pavilion would certainly collapse.

They functioned on neutrality and fairness, seeking profit and relations, and this kept them alive through it all. Despite being the Pavilion Master, besides a few additional powers, such as being able to call forth meetings, assigning interim Branch Managers, or removing those from their positions with justification, he wasn't that powerful. He had to act in accordance with the rules, just like everyone else.

If it wasn't for that, how could the Golden Gate Pavilion last for tens of thousands of years? While it has suffered a few name changes over the years, its operations were fairly consistent. There was no need to change what was extremely effective already.

The entire group debated for an hour, discussing whether they should accept this offer.

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"If so, then I say we negotiate for more. Preferably, we obtain some other benefits alongside the Neo-Dawn Eclipse Pill's Concoction Method," Shui Yu suggested. He was very curious about what other concoction methods Wei Wuyin might have.

At this point, when everyone was already clear on accepting this proposal, if only to obtain the immediate benefits of the Neo-Dawn Eclipse Pill in this surging and changing cultivation society. In truth, their greed won over them. While many felt the urge to reject the proposal, it was only an initial reaction, and as they thought more about the Neo-Dawn Eclipse Pill's effects and potential profits, capable of allowing them to reach every single edge of the stellar region, opening up to possible deals to

enable them to operate in other starfields, and gain territory to freely do so by opening up lesser branches, it was gradually more accepted. The idea of expansion was too tantalizing.

There weren't many experts that would accept their talents being far, far worse than their peers. The Neo-Dawn Eclipse Pill would sell. This was an indisputable fact. What they would get from this, such as the operating rights in other starfields or territories, was a matter of course.

Usually, investments were speculative with unexpected variables, but the Neo-Dawn Eclipse Pill was a certainty. Moreover, with the entire Golden Life Pavilion working towards concocting it, the Ever-Domain Pill would be trounced. It wouldn't be a one to six, but a close one to one.

There would be no competition.

That said, the Everlore Association will definitely have a market for the poorer cultivators. This meant there was enough room for them both.

Sheng Jizi agreed with Shui Yu's suggestion.

However, Ban Ma, who remained quiet all this while, spoke out in curiosity: "Are we certain that Dragonborn Saintess Xue has the Concoction Method?"

"..."

This question had itched his heart for quite a while. It felt interesting how this wasn't discussed. What if she didn't, and she hadn't asked Wei Wuyin, and if so, then what if he said no? Shouldn't they be discussing this with Wei Wuyin first, not Xue Yifei? If he was Wei Wuyin, he definitely wouldn't leave such a valuable method to Xue Yifei, his concubine.

She wasn't even his wife.

Moreover, why would she need it?

"..."

Shuang Xi gave Ban Ma a quiet look, a faint smile on her lips.

"Of course she has the concoction method! She suggested this offer," a Golden Councilman exclaimed exasperatedly. This junior was a little too slow. What would Xue Yifei gain by lying about this? And those words of the Golden Councilman alleviated many of their spontaneous concerns, realizing that the question was indeed quite brainless.

"She does; I've seen the method in her possession," Sheng Jizi said, further alleviating everyone's worries. As for why Sheng Jizi hadn't taken it, it was unbecoming of a businessman to rob others, and offending Wei Wuyin was not on his to-do list.

How could he even consider scheduling this meeting without proof that she had the bargaining chip in her hands? Sheng Jizi wasn't incompetent.

Shui Yu nodded, "Then, let's discuss what other things we-"

RUMBLE!

A terrifying, hectic rumble shook the entire room. Everyone except Shui Yu, Shuang Xi, Sheng Jizi, and Bai Jiang, the First Branch Manager, rose from their seats in a rush. Their eyes glinted with spiritual light, and their Mystic Auras slowly expanded protectively.

"What's happening?" A Golden Councilman asked.

"Are we under attack?!" Another asked.

Sheng Jizi frowned so deeply that his eyebrows nearly went vertical. He sighed with a clenched fist, "The Star-Hex, huh? Why not just give up?" Sheng Jizi glanced at the furthest edge of his position, the wall that was currently twisting and fluctuating as if in chaos; a mirage of shimmering visuals was ceaselessly occurring there.

Soon, all of their eyes and senses found that spot. The disturbance of spatial energies was far too great not to notice eventually.

From the shimmer, four silhouettes could be made out. As the silhouettes came into focus, the Mystic Ascendants could all see each of them clearly. At the lead, an old man with vibrant eyes and a Demi-Mortal Lord cultivation base. He was a person they would never forget.

Ma Zheng!

Ma Zheng had a calm smile on his face as he sauntered to the table, causing the Golden Councilman who was in his way to stumble to the side, nearly toppling to the ground. The chair that was directly across from Sheng Jizi was empty, remaining so as no one had occupied it, and it pulled out of the table as if preparing to seat its rightful owner.

Ma Zheng slowly sat down, staring at Sheng Jizi from what seemed like a far yet extremely close distance. "Give up? I'm just reclaiming what's mine, Little Jiji."

Sheng Jizi coldly scoffed.

Chapter 897: Endless Prosperity, An Issued Challenge

All eyes were on Ma Zheng, his swagger was suffused with the exceptionalism of a wise sage, great merchant, and knowledgeable scholar. Whether it was the glinting light from his vibrant, energized pupils, or his hint of a smile that contained indescribable confidence, he gave a profound impression to the others.

Some were startled into silence, caught off-guard by Ma Zheng's arrival and brazen demeanor. Others, like Shui Yu and Shuang Xi, were exceptionally calm. There was another, a middle-aged woman with a homely appearance, with two star-studded earrings and a pearl necklace. She was none other than the Manager of the First Branch of the Golden Life Pavilion, the second Earthly Saint amongst the Golden Life Pavilion.

She was just as renowned as the rest, her age and reputation dating back to the early years of the Golden Life Pavilion. Sun Li, one of the four original founders of the Golden Life Pavilion. When she observed the sitting Ma Zheng, there was a deep complexity within her eyes flickering ceaselessly.

"THE AUDACITY!" A voice, powerful and earth-shaking, erupted. The room shook even greater than before, with some of the hidden formations activating to resist the force from the sonic boom

generated. A gust of wind sent everyone's robes fluttering about chaotically. Those at the lower stages of the Mystic Ascendant Realm—Mystic Star, Soul of Mysticism, and Demi-Mortal Lords—had to conjure their Mystic Aura to remain sitting.

But all that force rushed towards Ma Zheng like a raging storm. If a Demi-Mortal Lord was hit by this surging sonic wave, it'll be fortune if they were just mildly injured.

"Hmph!" A cold, forceful snort resounded. A figure appeared at Ma Zheng's right, their right hand outstretched as they waved it carelessly. The sonic surge was dealt with, dispersing instantly.

"How crude, savage and low. Is this how the Golden Life Pavilion managed by the Radiant Lion Golden King acts?" The one who interfered was none other than Ma Sujiang's mother, her demeanor impeccable, her facial expression noble and stately. She seemed unbothered by this all despite knowing of their intrusive actions.

Sun Li gave the middle-aged woman who came to Ma Zheng's defense a close inspection.

"Huoyan Liulan! Is this a declaration of war by Hexaflame Starfield on our Golden Life Pavilion?" The one who sent out that fierce sonic attack had a sullen expression, his aura as a Demi-Mortal Lord was impressive and flourishing, refusing to back down as he threatened.

The voice belonged to a bald, strongly built, middle-aged man with a heavy beard, and his physique was quite impressive. He exuded a domineering aura of physical might unlike typical Earthly Saints. He was just as renowned as the others, being the long standing manager of the Second Branch, Yangzi Yanshi!

"Hmph!" Huoyan Liulan, Ma Sujiang's mother, didn't deign to give a reply, merely coldly harrumphing and ignoring Yangzi Yanshi. The reaction caused Yangzi Yanshi to exude a stronger aura, threatening to attack. Despite that, Huoyan Liulan gave him a disdainful glance.

A mere Demi-Mortal Lord dared to threaten an Earthly Saint? Did this idiot think the Golden Life Pavilion could protect him if she wanted his life? She represented the Hexaflame Starfield, the third strongest starfield within the Grand Cyclic Stellar Region. The Golden Life Pavilion might be impressive, but it wasn't to the point it couldn't be taught a lesson.

"Enough!" Sheng Jizi calmly exclaimed. The irritated Yangzi Yanshi settled down, only narrowing his eyes towards Ma Zheng.

A calmer Golden Councilman decided to speak, looking at Ma Zheng: "Highlord Ma Zheng, you're no longer Third Manager of the Golden Life Pavilion; you have no right to be here. I think it would be best that you leave, before the activation of the protective arrays and formations ensure you stay here indefinitely." The form of address deftly reminded all the other councilmen that Ma Zheng no longer held any power or status here.

They were reluctant to speak due to his status. He'd always been there, even when some of their ancestors had earned their seats, he was always there. His presence was a never-ending constant, even if the seat of Pavilion Master changed hands, the status of Manager Ma Zheng was never altered. A glorious and fantastical feat.

They were reminded that he had been expelled, plotted and schemed against until his age and condition was in justifiable range to establish an interim Manager in his place. There were all sorts of complex emotions in almost everyone's eyes as they looked at Ma Zheng's calm smile.

This old man had taught them quite a few things, and they learned by his exemplary conduct with business, investments, and life. They were fully aware that, at some point, Ma Zheng led the Golden Life Pavilion. Hearing him state that he was only here to reclaim what was his, they all understood his intentions.

Sheng Jizi shook his head. "You've been expelled; you have no right to claim anything. As I respect you deeply, I'll give you one last chance to leave."

Ma Zheng lifted his right brow. He chortled amusedly, "One last chance? Little Jiji, the moment I set foot in this room, you've lost the initiative. Why play it off as if you're considerate of me? It's best if you think of your next play, not try to ease your way out of this."

Not many had ever seen Ma Zheng express amusement in his expression, it added a unique charm that was seemingly lost long ago. Sun Li's eyes flickered with faint light, her emotions invested in Ma Zheng's current state.

Sheng Jizi sighed, coldly saying: "Don't force my hand." There was a killing intent blazing within his tone.

Ma Zheng flourished his open palm, gesturing with a smile. It was as if he was saying: "Go for it." He verbally added, "You tried once and failed. Don't miss your second shot, Little Jiji. Otherwise, some might think you're incompetent."

Sheng Jizi's eyes grew so glacial that the temperature in the room dipped instantly, even Dan Ma shivered slightly despite his Mystic Star Phase cultivation base. The air was stifling. The rage of an Earthly Saint was not simple. However, there was some confusion as a silence formed. The two simply stared at each other.

This lasted a full minute.

Ma Zheng clasped his hands together, "See. Are you done?" Those words confused quite a few in the room. They looked at Sheng Jizi's cold glare, but there was no response from him. They felt that he should at least attack. This was the Golden Life Pavilion, even if Huoyan Liulan was an Earthly Saint of the Hexaflame Starfield's ruling clan, this was Endless Prosperity, the formations and arrays here were enough to suppress an Earthly Saint.

However, nothing happened.

Sheng Jizi's fists clenched slightly. "So that's where your confidence resides, huh? You have three minutes. What do you want?" As if accepting circumstances, Sheng Jizi directly asked what Ma Zheng wanted instead of forcefully arresting or expelling him and his entourage.

Ma Zheng nodded approvingly, "Better." The others were still baffled by it all, but Shuang Xi explained openly: "The Star-Hex has isolated us. We're both inside Endless Prosperity and not, there's no formation key that can send a signal outside at this time. But it won't last; those outside would've noticed the Isolated Bubble, seeking to burst it apart."

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An exclamation of enlightenment resounded from one of the Golden Councilmen, awed by Ma Zheng's means using isolated spatial forces to accomplish this. He effectively bought him time.

Shuang Xi added, "Star-Hex deserves its reputation as the strongest Spatial-type Voidship outside of the Void Voyage Sect's Three Grand Voidcrafts. I hope I can study its formations one day." She was genuinely praising Star-Hex, and her status as one of the top three Architects lent an exceptional air to Star-Hex's feat.

Huoyang Liulan revealed a slight smirk. The Star-Hex was hers. She would never allow others to casually examine it, but with a sufficient enough price, she might yield.

Ma Zheng stood up. The air slowly grew tense.

"Pavilion Master Sheng Jizi, by the Law of Endless Prosperity, I challenge for the right of ownership!" Ma Zheng strongly declared, the emotionally charged declaration sent shivers down everyone's spine!

When was the last time a declaration of challenge for the Pavilion Master's seat was contested for?! The Law of Endless Prosperity was a never-changing, unyielding, and unerasable rule of the pavilion! It was etched in the very foundation of the organization, and it was largely the reason for many changes of ownership over the millennia and the continued existence of the Endless Prosperity throughout the ages.

It was both simple and extremely complex.

Sheng Jizi's eyes lessened its chill. A smile replaced his glacial expression, an extreme calmness overthrew his ill-intent. There wasn't a speck of killing intent in his aura or eyes, merely that serenity.

Ma Zheng stared at Sheng Jizi, but this wasn't the typical response. He frowned. Shui Yu, Shuang Xi, Huoyan Liulan, Yangzi Yanshi, Sun Li, and the rest all had varying expressions. They couldn't help but look towards Sheng Jizi's response, with Yangzi Yanshi smiling with amusement. He turned to Ma Zheng as if he was looking at a fool, entering into a deep well without knowing its depths or contents.

A trap!

Sheng Jizi laced his fingers, placing his mouth on the interlocking fingers, and he slightly gestured with his fingers, "You must have all the criteria to challenge. So, please."

Ma Zheng's eyes narrowed slightly. He regained his confident demeanor, proceeding as Sheng Jizi had said. The Law of Endless Prosperity required three criteria for a challenge to be made. It could be exerted for any position, even managerial.

Firstly, one must have contributed a certain amount to the organization. As someone who's been a part of the organization since its founding, there was endless evidence of his contributions. There was no need to delve into this. He merely brought out spiritual jades, delivering it to all Councilmen and Branch Managers, including the Pavilion Master.

They all grasped their respective jade, infusing their spiritual senses within to read the vast amount of information listing Ma Zheng's numerous contributions. Ban Ma and a few others choked slightly, their

eyes and hands quivered as they lifted their eyes to see Ma Zheng. Even Shuang Xi was taken aback by such detailed records, her gorgeous light-green eyes revealed wisps of shaken emotion.

She had barely contributed a tenth in comparison.

This much?

Holy fu-

"Any objections?" Ma Zheng asked.

Shui Yu snorted softly, "Barely over myself." As the teacher of the Mortal Sovereign Alchemists, a Grand Mortal Sovereign Alchemist himself, and the foremost authority on the Alchemic Dao in the Golden Life Pavilion, his contributions extended to every taught pupils, their feats, including all nurtured experts that he helped. Despite Ma Zheng's contributions being insane enough to cause one to puke, he closely matched if they were measured in points.

In fact, he originally thought he had the greatest contribution on paper out of everyone here. He was truly shaken that Ma Zheng had contributed so much despite his lack of a high-level Creationist status.

"You closed the Liu Clan's Beast-Dual Contract?" A Golden Councilwoman was baffled by this fact. The contract helped the Liu Clan retain their Noble Clan status and regained their strength over thousands of years, creating a continuous surge of endless beast bloodlines and exotic materials for cultivation methods and forging. After the Liu Clan was defeated, their Earthly Saint trounced, this contract brought them back to life, and they were strongly allied.

But no one knew how this contract had been established. The jade contained indisputable proof of Ma Zheng's investment and coordination with the Liu Clan, changing their direction, forging a new path, and supporting them. It was mind-blowing how detailed and documented the process was.

Of course, the Neo-Dawn Eclipse Contract was detailed too. There was no need to provide much in-depth detail on this matter, and everyone accepted it.

Sheng Jizi was unbothered, "No objections from me."

The others didn't have a say. They had no need to contest any detail listed here, and it'll be a waste of time to do so. They were interested in Ma Zheng's preparations.

The next criteria!

Past contributions were past contributions. What allowed the prosperity to be endless was the challenger must submit an acceptable contract that was capable of elevating the pavilion to the next level!

When this thought emerged in their minds, the eyes of almost everyone looked to Huoyan Liulan!

The middle-aged woman that gathered all their attention stepped forward at this crucial moment. "I, Huoyan Liulan..."

Chapter 898: Endless Prosperity, Law Invoked & New Rule!

"I, Huoyan Liulan, represent the Hexaflame Starfield's Huoyan Clan to offer a branch establishment contract with the Golden Life Pavilion, included with full territorial privileges and spatial transference rights."

"...!" Several Golden Councilmen gasped slightly, with Yangzi Yanshi exhibiting a dumbfounded expression. A branch establishment contract? Full territorial privileges? Spatial transference rights?!

This was no different than allowing the Golden Life Pavilion to fully operate in the Hexaflame Starfield! A fourth branch would be created as a result. Their operations in that starfield would no longer be limited, exports and imports unrestricted!

It was no different than the greatest form of expansion. But it was outright impossible to achieve, because most starfields refused to allow the Golden Life Pavilion to function so thoroughly in their territory given the Aeternal Sky Starfield's leading position and the lingering presence of the Tian Clan, the strongest clan in the Stellar Region.

There wasn't a guarantee that the Imperial Clan wouldn't push some schemes through, act against the Golden Life Pavilion or the Hexaflame Starfield through this connection. This was unprecedented!

Yet it was also the greatest goal of the Golden Life Pavilion! This was merely the beginning, and lesser starfields would definitely be open to establishing a contract if the Hexaflame Starfield venture bore incredible benefits for the forces there.

Shuang Xi stared at Ma Zheng, saying merely a single word: "Incredible." This was a contract that no one had been able to accomplish without severe concessions that couldn't be made due to oaths and the possible threats to the Golden Life Pavilion's livelihood. Thus far, the Golden Life Pavilion only partially operated in other starfields, but they operated mostly in the Aeternal Sky Starfield and limited exports and imports to certain forces.

Most importantly, this would grant them a very simple yet exceptional benefit: Void Land. The Dark Void might seem limitless, but like a planet, there was only so much fertile space for growth of materials. This was limited and defined by the reach of the Solar Stars of that Starfield. The Solar Stars emissions were essence and light, allowing light and growth.

If they could purchase Void Land in the Hexaflame Starfield, they could create a second Endless Prosperity Domain! While it might seem like they had 81 World Realms, the vast majority of their profits come from the planets and Prosperous Moons in the Dark Void. While World Realms were amazing, many lacked genuine Mystic Radiance Belts and Solar Stars of appropriate size and quality.

The Hexaflame had six flaming Solar Stars that would certainly generate tremendous materials, leading to additional profits and higher quantity of products. This would unmistakably increase their earnings by an insane amount with time!

Sheng Jizi slowly moved his serene gaze from Ma Zheng to Ma Sujiang who wore a neutral expression, hiding slightly behind that masked figure. He returned his focus to Ma Zheng, smiling amusingly:

"Must've been in the works for a long time. Wonder how she feels to be used as a chess piece since her birth. No, before she was even born."

His words awakened many from their shock, looking towards Ma Sujiang who bore a remarkable resemblance to Huoyan Liulan. They realized the connection, looking at Ma Zheng a little strangely.

It was true it wasn't possible for the Hexaflame Starfield to take this step unless they had certain assurances of their power within the organization. The oaths heavily prevented this, but Ma Sujiang was a bonafide citizen of the Aeternal Sky Starfield and was an assistant manager of the Golden Life Pavilion.

She was capable of leading the branch in the Hexaflame Starfield as its new Branch Manager with no conflicts, avoiding every carefully curtailed oath made. Cunning yet devious. Well planned and well executed.

Shockingly, Ma Sujiang was unbothered by this revelation. She was clearly aware of the circumstances of her birth. She was the result of an Earthly Saint and a Demi-Mortal Lord, a noble birth that very, very, very few could relate to. Her cultivation was supported solely by Ma Zheng, but she would eventually have the support of both the Hexaflame Starfield and Golden Life Pavilion.

Ma Sujiang might've been a product of this deal, a long-standing plot and scheme to regain the Golden Life Pavilion and expand into another starfield, but she felt her father's love and care. That was indisputable. If she didn't feel that, she wouldn't have cryingly begged Wei Wuyin to save him, or losing thousands of years of lifeforce for him.

As for this mother of hers, she barely felt anything except some familial respect.

"Ma Sujiang life is her own; if she was unwilling, I certainly would've found another way." Ma Zheng said softly, showing a little of his heartfelt emotions for this exceptional daughter that refused to let him die. Even if he died, she would still be able to take the Ma Clan and migrate to the Hexaflame Starfield to avoid being schemed against.

An escape route for his beloved daughter.

"I see," Sheng Jizi no longer tried to unsettle the relationship between the two. As for Huoyan Liulan, she had a neutral expression. She had given birth to Ma Sujiang, but it was all for this purpose. If it wasn't for Ma Sujiang's talent and accomplishment of becoming an Ascended being, she wouldn't have cared for a short-lived child.

How many children have she conceived and lost to the cruelty of cultivation? How can a mother have 30,000 years of life, must procreate within a certain timeframe lest she loses her ability to do so, and have children that either fail their Ascension or never make it close. At a certain point, a person's heart hardens.

Some might see her as cold, cruel, and uncaring, but she was merely someone hurt by the reality of a long life and difficulties of cultivation. Those at the Astral Core Realm, at best, lived 2,000 years or so. She lived over fifteen times that.

If one were to explain a comparison from a mortal's perspective, then a mother of twenty years old has a child, and when she becomes twenty-four, their child was at the end of their lifespan, pathetically clinging on in the midst of their greatest failure in life.

That...was cruel.

Doesn't mean she neglected connecting with Ma Sujiang when she could, otherwise they wouldn't have had similar mannerisms. She was a mother.

Ma Zheng felt the sullen atmosphere growing. He continued, "I ask, in this Golden Meeting, before all the members of the Organization's Central Leadership, is this Hexa-Branch Establishment Contract sufficient for my challenge?" The second criteria needed to be approved by the majority, hence the reason a Golden Meeting was absolutely essential!

Sheng Jizi softly laughed, "As if they'll say no to this." If they said no, the contract must be rejected. Clearly, this would hurt ALL of their profits and benefits. Moreover, if they agreed, even if the challenge ended in failure, the contract would've been completed prior and set. There was no going back.

The organization benefited either way.

It was a flawless design, supported by Mythical Oaths. The creator of the Law of Endless Prosperity surely anticipated the ambition and competition within the organization, capitalizing to always make the organization benefit regardless.

If it was anything else, Sheng Jizi could've used his influence and allied members to devastate a majority vote. All of Ma Zheng's schemes would crumble in his mouth then and there. But no one here, not even himself, would reject this. It would be absolutely fucking foolish.

Sheng Jizi felt an urge to clap in applause, so did Shuang Xi, Shui Yu, and Sun Li. Ma Zheng's move was unmatched.

Sun Li smiled, 'How could the creator of the Law of Endless Prosperity not know how to capitalize on it?' She was there when Ma Zheng wrote this rule. She felt no one would accept this law, destroying it if the seat changed, but no one did.

For this exact reason.

There's been many challenges over the organization's life, and every deal from the challengers had also benefited the pavilion greatly. Their complex schemes and exerted energy funneled into the organization's continued success.

Sheng Jizi took the lead, "All those who believe this deal is insufficient to support the challenge, raise your hand."

Not a single person moved. Ban Ma looked at Sheng Jizi, seemingly looking to see if he should reject or not. This caused Sheng Jizi to faintly smile, but he didn't raise his hand and neither did this interim Third Branch Manager.

"Then the deal is accepted," Sheng Jizi looked at Huoyan Liulan as she brought out the pre-listed details of the contract and the oaths that must be sworn by the leadership. She represented the entire Hexaflame Starfield, and all those in power would be affected by the oath as they knowingly accepted her right to act on their behalf in this matter. A level of trust that was incredible. Her status in the Hexaflame Starfield was clearly exceptional.

As expected, Ma Zheng was so prepared that the oaths and details were perfectly outlined, and they were sworn after a few minutes. Sheng Jizi didn't count on the isolation bubble to pop, because the

challenge meant the challenger could not be assaulted by any member of the Golden Life Pavilion, upheld by a Mythical Oath.

This would be pushed to its completion, regardless of the outcome.

With past contributions settled, future contributions settled, the last criteria was the most difficult: Means.

This was a world of cultivation and strength was extremely important. Whether its rallying strength, wealth, or personal might, means was crucial to determining if a person can claim a seat in the organization.

Moreover, this wasn't a managerial seat, but the Pavilion Master seat! This seat had an additional condition that was quite brutal, and it was the last obstacle for Ma Zheng to reclaim what he had built all those years ago, returning the Ma Clan to the leadership position that they once were!

Shui Yu was intrigued with the last criteria. As a Grand Mortal Sovereign Alchemist, he had Alchemic Knights and the rallying strength to summon forth Earthly Saints. Of course, the price to do so would be absolutely heavy, but it was within his means.

Shuang Xi was a talented architect, but her wealth and rallying strength greatly paled in comparison to alchemist. While she could use her accumulated wealth to summon an Earthly Saint, she might clean herself out doing so. They weren't cheap beings.

It was already extremely rare that Venerable Spiritwalker had conned Han Yuhei into helping her refine Mystic Origin Liquid to ascend beyond the Soul of Mysticism Phase, entering the Demi-Mortal Lord Phase. It was very, very hard to get one of these great beings to move.

That said, Sheng Jizi was an Earthly Saint himself. His personal might was undisputed, but he certainly had friends he could call upon in his cultivation realm. This was going to be a difficult challenge for Ma Zheng, especially since challenging the Pavilion Master meant an added difficulty!

COMBAT!

Sheng Jizi explained to the Golden Council, "As per the Law of Endless Prosperity, Ma Zheng has the right to designate three champions to fight on his behalf. Their cultivation levels can be of any stage equal or beneath the challenged seat's cultivation base."

Sheng Jizi's posture straightened, granting him an overwhelming demeanor and suppressive air. His eyes illuminated with a distinct, mystical brilliance and his Mystic Aura flared. The room was flooded by his aura, revealing a strong, dense Mystic Intent. Sheng Jizi calmly gazed at Ma Zheng.

"So, what surprises do you have?"

Ma Zheng had made many concessions to retain his position, quietly lurking and diligently working as he suffered loss after loss while trying to stay afloat. There was no way Ma Zheng could match Sheng Jizi in wealth. Furthermore, the champions selected CAN NOT be a Manager or Golden Councilmen, eliminating Sun Li, the First Branch Manager as a champion.

This tested their means to the limit. The stronger the seat, the harder it was to overtake their position.

Ma Zheng was completely calm despite the odds against him. He gestured to Huoyan Liulan. She was one of the strongest fighters in the Hexaflame Starfield, and she was bound to claim a win with ease. With Wu Yu, he wouldn't have to fight. It was as he thought before, when Wei Wuyin arrived, all things would be easier than he anticipated.

"I, Ma Zheng, select Huo-

"As Pavilion Master, I invoke a Golden Vote for a Transient Council Member." Sheng Jizi interrupted. Ma Zheng stumbled over his words slightly, staring at Sheng Jizi.

Ma Zheng was confused, "Transient Council Member?"

Sheng Jizi revealed his pearly white teeth, grinning a little as he explained: "I apologize, you aren't aware of this new rule due to our retirement. The four Managers of the Golden Life Pavilion had unanimously agreed upon a new rule: Transient Council Member Seat. A temporary member of the Golden Council added solely for the sake of a deal to ensure all details will go smoothly, if it's within the interests of ALL the Central Leadership. However, if it's rejected, the deal will be deemed as untrustworthy despite all previously established oaths, and the contract shall be prematurely ended."

The eyes of Huoyan Liulan contracted. Sheng Jizi was trying to...

The others were startled. They had voted in this rule because it felt as a matter of course, a way to benefit partners in the future, and they all saw the benefit in doing so. Those placed in this seat don't have much power, only relating to the deal itself. Furthermore, it was an excellent loophole to escape from a deal going sideways.

"To all those who agree to accept Huoyan Liulan as a Transient Council Member for one month, raise your hands!" Sheng Jizi announced with his smug grin that bore his sly nature.

The Golden Councilmen and Branch Managers all looked to Ma Zheng. They couldn't refuse, regardless of who they supported.

Ma Zheng's eyes dangerously narrowed.

Chapter 899: Endless Prosperity, First Champions

"..."

The entire room was silent; Sheng Jizi had sprung this ruling up on the rest of them earlier, and they had all agreed because, logically, there was no detriment nor a way it could effectively harm them. Yet, here they were.

Sheng Jizi's plot was insidious, timely, brilliant, and rich with unexpected foresight. Shui Yu felt an urge to praise Sheng Jizi, but held himself back, wondering if Ma Zheng had a rebuttal to this move. After all, it all but sealed Huoyan Liulan's fate—she would not be Ma Zheng's champion!

Huoyan Liulan had a thunderstruck expression, completely different from her neutral, serene, and profound appearance befitting an Earthly Saint. She subconsciously turned her head towards Ma Zheng, her eyes flickering with all types of thoughts.

She was an undeniably strong Earthly Saint, wielding sufficient power to place her firmly amongst the top 40's amongst all Earthly Saints throughout the entire Grand Cyclic Stellar Region, which roughly numbered two hundred or so. As a nominated champion, she felt confident in securing a victory, especially with all the tremendous preparations she had made for this event.

The price she paid for certain armaments, improvement of her various arts and spells by elite Architects, and much, much more. She invested an absurd amount of wealth into her strength, all for this single play. Over two thousand years of extreme planning, the act of birthing Ma Sujiang, of using Star-Hex, all of it was nullified off a single move that she had never expected.

She, in her disbelief, asked: "How can this be allowed?" Her tone was a mixture of unwillingness and frustration.

Shuang Xi frowned slightly, her displeasure leaking, speaking with an icy-chill: "Primal Flame Hex Queen, be mindful of where you are. Our Pavilion Master's authority and rights vested in him by the organization are not for your casual judgment. Furthermore, we all agreed unanimously to implement this rule."

"..." Huoyan Liulan's vexation only grew with those words. She felt that Ma Zheng's handle on this matter was slipping. If he hadn't been expelled, this could never have happened, and she would've brought home a victory. She clenched her fists tightly. If it wasn't for her thread of awareness, she might've been more aggressive.

Shui Yu's aged face couldn't help but form a slight smile suffused with amusement. There was a reason Sheng Jizi was their Pavilion Master and the Life Branch Manager of the Golden Life Pavilion. It was clear that he was aware of Ma Zheng's attempt. Moreover, he was aware that Huoyan Liulan was guaranteed to be his champion.

The rule didn't seem like much at first glance, but it specifically targeted Ma Zheng and Huoyan Liulan. He hadn't

registered at the time it was proposed that it could be used in this blockade fashion. He decided to make a mental note that all other rules that Sheng Jizi wished to implement or change would have to be deliberated for much, much longer.

He wasn't the only one. Which amongst the Golden Council didn't have a sense of business and interest, and this scheme of Sheng Jizi had shown them that seemingly benign rules that could act as a safety net could also be used as a barbwire. Ma Zheng was a real life example of this.

Of course, if Ma Zheng was still a Branch Manager, this rule would have certainly never passed considering his intentions. To capitalize on this short window to immediately snuff out Ma Zheng's strength, nothing short of extraordinary.

The voting commenced.

Ban Ma raised his hand.

Shui Yu raised his hand.

Shaung Xi raised her hand.

The rest soon followed. Everyone had their hands raised in favor of allowing Huoyan Liulan to become a Transient Council Member, temporarily entering the Golden Council, invalidating her qualifications to be a champion for either party. The alternative was losing the extraordinary expansion contract into the third strongest starfield, a deal none of them was willing to lose for this.

Huoyan Liulan didn't even conceal her exasperation. She glared at Sheng Jizi, who merely smiled at her. He calmly said, "No worries Primal Flame Hex Queen; your daughter's future position isn't threatened regardless of the outcome." There was a wisp of consolation within his tone, alongside a hint of an apology.

Huoyan Liulan's expression changed. She was actually somewhat relieved after hearing this from Sheng Jizi. Even if Ma Zheng lost, this was the same as saying the branch opened through this contract will likely be managed by her daughter. This actually served all her interests.

In fact, with this hinted at, there was no need for her to feel the slightest bit frustrated. She was in a win-win situation now regardless of who came out on top, so she settled down. She hadn't expected Sheng Jizi to be willing to make this concession. Sheng Jizi's few words directly neutralized a vexed Earthly Saint.

"Good," Sheng Jizi concluded the vote with an official declaration. He gave Huoyan Liulan a unique emblem designed for a Transient Council Member of the Golden Council. "Apologies for the interruption, Senior Ma. Continue with your challenge." His tone was extremely genuine. If one were to hear it without context, they would never guess that he'd just gutted Ma Zheng with a butcher's knife, taking off a strong limb from his body with one swipe.

Ma Zheng inhaled, exhaled, and soon regained his serenity as he smiled. A show of strength and confidence, yet there were few in the Golden Council that felt it was genuine. This was a best of three, needing three champions, and the winner would take the seat in question at this point.

However, the brutality of a Pavilion Master challenge was far, far greater than Managerial Positions. A two win, one loss, and zero ties victory was still a hard, fat loss for the challenger. The challenger, without question, must prove themselves superior without a shadow of a doubt. At this point, they must reveal that their connections were terrifyingly strong, their rallying power was consistent, and they had sufficient intelligence to prepare against an opponent.

The challenge itself gives the initiative to the challenger, and the challenged must defend with what little time they have, against an opponent who has likely done tremendous intelligence gathering of their abilities and limits. It would be foolish to challenge without being certain of victory.

"I, Ma Zheng, select..." Ma Zheng gestured towards the masked figure beside him. Wu Yu took a step forward, and all eyes focused on his impressive demeanor, and his stable aura. The mask lent him an air of mystery that was quite alluring. A few of the Councilwomen looked Wu Yu up and down.

This was an Earthly Saint!

Sheng Jizi's eyebrows narrowed imperceptibly, giving this masked cultivator a piercing look. In truth, he was fully aware of his fellow members' limits, and he knew that Ma Zheng had a swathe of connections to call upon. He couldn't stop them all, but he could reduce a certainty. Huoyan Liulan was certainly a trump card of Ma Zheng. A trump card that had been prepared for two millennia.

He had an idea of his other two challengers, and he had fully prepared against them. However, this masked figure was unexpected. FREE WEB NOVEL. COM

"Highlord Ma, I'll remind you that, unlike other contests, all champion's identities must be known prior to any battle to prevent any rule-breaking through deceit," Shui Yu explained. Recently, Ma Zheng had a masked Soul of Mysticism cultivator fight for him, and that cultivator dominated his opponent so badly it was quite depressing. That said, this wasn't a simple matter like then.

Ma Zheng's smile grew slightly, "Of course."

Wu Yu didn't need to be prompted as he removed his mask.

"...!"

"You?!"

"The Grand Knight?!"

The Golden Council devolved into a commotion. Sheng Jizi's eyes contracted slightly. Wu Yu! This was Wu Yu! The recent Earthly Saint that defeated the Ever-Knights! The Alchemic Knight of Wei Wuyin, the Grand Knight of Neo-Dawn—Wu Yu!

Everyone was stunned.

What did this represent?

What did this mean?

While they knew that Wei Wuyin was connected to Ma Zheng, this was almost the same as stating his position in this contest for the Pavilion Master! He lent him his Alchemic Knight!

The curiosity, shock, and anticipation in the room elevated several degrees. While Wei Wuyin wasn't a terrifying existence, so much that he could single-handedly decide the seat of Pavilion Master, but his potential was abundantly clear.

Sheng Jizi had to take a breath, looking at Wu Yu with a little gloomy glint in his eyes. "Are you here representing your Alchemist, representing Wei Wuyin?" This question instantly silenced the commotion.

Wu Yu maintained a neutral expression. This was to be expected. Since Wei Wuyin's name has graced the Grand Cyclic Stellar Region, he has made waves upon waves. Unfortunately, Wu Yu didn't lie this time.

He truthfully answered, "I'm acting on my own free will, permitted by my Young Lord."

"..." The rising excitement died down a little. Wu Yu was here by himself, acting on his own interests, so Wei Wuyin wasn't invested in this attempt. If Wu Yu had said otherwise, they wouldn't have doubted it, but it certainly would change the Golden Life Pavilion's attitude if Ma Zheng lost this challenge. With this stated, it was clear that Wei Wuyin had yet to throw in his lot fully with Ma Zheng.

If he had, then there might not be one Earthly Saint from Wei Wuyin. If that strange Earthly Saint that toppled the Tang Clan was here, or others he might have in reserve, this might not even be a question of if, but when Ma Zheng will become Pavilion Master.

"Is he aware that this challenge can lead to deadly consequences?" Shuang Xi asked Wu Yu.

Wu Yu didn't show any flicker of emotion. He was aware that this challenge could lead to deaths. Typically, the position would be fought with Soul of Mysticism or Demi-Mortal Lord cultivators, not Earthly Saints. Considering their immense power, chances of death were extremely high if neither side held back.

Unfortunately, Wu Yu couldn't answer this because Wei Wuyin was entirely unaware of the details of this event. He remained silent, not answering, but this was an answer in and of itself.

The others knew that Wei Wuyin likely gave him free reign, trusting in him to do as he pleased without bringing trouble for him. As for the details of what was happening, he might not even be aware!

"...select Wu Yu as my first champion." Ma Zheng finished his declaration.

Sheng Jizi nodded and calmly announced, "I, Pavilion Master of the Golden Life Pavilion, Sheng Jizi, select Nansi Yuangu as my first champion."

Woah!

Nansi Yuangu! The Earthly Saint of the Nansi Clan?! The leader of the external clans of the Elementus Domain!

This was bound to be a battle of giants. The spectators couldn't help but grow extremely interested.

Chapter 900: Endless Prosperity, Champions Selected!

There were rumors that Nansi Yuangu was absent from the Elementus Domain, healing from injuries brought about by cultivation efforts gone violent! They hadn't expected Sheng Jizi would call forth Nansi Yuangu as his first champion, baffling everyone with a single announcement.

While everyone was looking at Sheng Jizi, awed by his declaration, Wu Yu's expression grew a little strange. Wasn't Nansi Yuangu injured? Wei Wuyin had surmised that the Nansi Clan's Earthly Saint was the third cultivator that had suffered injuries by the Legion Commander.

He was selecting an injured cultivator? That was baffling. Or perhaps, he had healed from his injuries in such an extremely short period of time? 'Guess I'll find out,' Wu Yu thought. If he was given the opportunity...

A dangerous glint suffused his eyes, threatening to pour out in a torrential storm of killing intent.

Ma Zheng and Sheng Jizi continued their selections. However, Ma Zheng's next selection strangled the air from everyone's lungs, their eyes widened with shock, disbelief, and a strong belief that Ma Zheng was insane!

"...select Faye Liying as my second champion." His announcement of that name was extremely calm! But no one was capable of doing so!

Pa!

Yangzi Yanshi slammed his palm on the table, his eyes intense. "Are you fucking crazy?!" He violently questioned Ma Zheng without holding the slightest. The vulgarity of his was unbecoming of the Second

Branch Manager, but the situation somewhat called for it. The eyes of Shaung Xi, Shui Yu, Sun Li, and the rest all stared at Ma Zheng.

Sheng Jizi was the only one that remained totally calm, clearly having anticipated this event and this champion. "Are you certain?" He asked for verification purposes.

"IS HE CERTAIN?! Pavilion Master! This is the Soul-Rising Saint!! THE SOUL-RISING SAINT! A wanted criminal by the entire Ninestar Starfield! How can we permit this?!" Yangzi Yanshi was clearly panicking. The entire Ninestar Sainthall was hunting this woman! They had already declared that any who harbored her was declaring war against the entire Ninestar Sainthall!

Was he certain?!

Ma Zheng calmly responded as if Yangzi Yanshi's words were air, "She'll represent me as my second champion."

"..."

Sheng Jizi nodded acceptingly. Ma Zheng's connection with the Ninestar Sainthall wasn't insignificant or concealed to the astute. The War Devil Realm had sealed a contract with the Ninestar Sainthall to find Dharma Protectors for various youths, including an opportunity to receive masters through this deal.

Additionally, the Ninestar Sainthall had won the Golden Auction. Their wager limit was certainly higher than anyone could've expected. In hindsight, it was quite clear...

Sheng Jizi continued, "...select Yang Chaoyue as my second champion."

"...What?!" Another heavy bomb! The others looked at Sheng Jizi. Why did Yang Chaoyue, one of the Sky Monarchs of the Imperial Clan, accept to become another's champion?! Amongst the Sky Monarchs, she was certainly amongst the strongest, if not, the strongest, somewhat exceeding Huoyan Liulan's strength and reputation!

This was a challenge to test the means, rallying strength, and connections of these two. To call forth two Earthly Saints, one who defeated the True Element Sect, forcing the Lin Clan into a puppet position, and the other who was one of the top Sky Monarchs, how terrifying was this?

Wu Yu and Faye Liying were equally as terrifying!

These two were drawing upon all their connections and planning thus far! Who knew the stories of how the traitorous Soul-Rising Saint and Sky Monarch Yang Chaoyue were recruited?! Yet here they were! Yang Chaoyue's powerful reputation might even be linked to Sheng Jizi's investment!

Maybe even the Soul-Rising Saint's recent reveal of her foundation was linked to Ma Sujiang!

Not a single individual here wasn't impressed, deeply enthralled as theories and possibilities of millennia long plans floated in their thoughts so wildly.

According to the rules, the challenged announces their second and third pick together, while the challenged loses the advantage by saying their first and second before them. This gave those challenged some time to select appropriate counters to the first two match-ups, an extremely beneficial advantage.

However, the last pick was the challenger's advantage. However, considering this was a Pavilion Master challenge, where a single loss was a loss overall, this was all in the pavilion master's favor.

Sheng Jizi used the last advantage he could. As the Pavilion Master, he had the right to use personal strength to fend against all challengers! While he was the Life Branch Manager, typically disqualifying himself for this right, three predecessors ago, this matter came up and was changed to only factor in the challenged position that was in danger of being lost.

Right now, he was temporarily not the Life Branch Manager, just the Pavilion Master defending himself. As such, he did what any Pavilion Master should be able to.

"I, Sheng Jizi, select myself as my third champion!"

The others expected this, so the commotion wasn't much. But Ma Zheng threw the very last bomb! The greatest bomb yet!

"I, Ma Zheng, select MYSELF as my third champion!" Ma Zheng strongly announced, staring Sheng Jizi in the eyes without backing down in the slightest.

"Wait what?!" Yangzi Yanshi was thunderstruck. This was legal? He had a grin of disdain, "Has your mind become addled with your age? Branch Managers can't part-" His upcoming words clung itself to his throat as he stilled. Ma Zheng was no longer Branch Manager!

"Interesting." Sheng Jizi knew that Ma Zheng was considered as one of the strongest Demi-Mortal Lords in this era, the only one that had the slightest chance of overcoming the insane difference between Demi-Mortal Lords and Earthly Saints. With his position as Branch Manager gone and lack of a Golden Council status, he was fully within his rights to select himself!

It was an unexpected loophole!

Most challengers, no, every challenger thus far for the Pavilion Master seat has been a Branch Manager or Golden Council Member!

But it was as Sheng Jizi anticipated. Ma Zheng's third was Huoyan Liulan. He was left with no other choice but to choose himself. In Sheng Jizi's eyes, Ma Zheng wasn't weak. That said, Sheng Jizi wasn't an ordinary Earthly Saint either. While he might not be top-tier, he was definitely nothing to scoff at.

Unlike Alchemists, Forgers, and Architects, businessmen like them did not have to focus their time on studying complex matters. They could split their focus between managing and cultivating. It was why Ma Zheng could be so absurdly strong, and with their wealth accumulated from investments and delegating tasks, establishing profitable deals, making efficient trades, they had far, far greater cultivation resources than others.

Ma Zheng finding a replacement that could match Sheng Jizi in the short timeframe of a few minutes was extremely unlikely. And Sheng Jizi's thoughts weren't wrong. Ma Zheng's third in his original plans couldn't make it.

She was occupied with keeping her daughter out of the clutches of that unsavory organization. With Wu Yu as a replacement, it worked out just fine. He didn't press her to follow through with their plans

because he felt it wasn't necessary. Not because he didn't expect Sheng Jizi's insidious trick, no, it's because he was confident in dealing with everything Sheng Jizi had!

'I will take back what's rightfully mine today!' All the pieces for Ma Zheng were there and at the ready. What was left was to ensure that he didn't lose a single match! To reclaim his spot as the Pavilion Master of the organization he spent his entire life building!

"Selections have been completed. All involved parties will summon their champions to these Void Coordinates! To the Prosperous Arena!" Sheng Jizi announced as everyone was seething with excitement. The battle of a lifetime, with an entire organization on the line, was now about to commence!