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Paragon of Sin Chapter 21 - 30

Chapter 21: Return, Xing Fu

Wei Wuyin spent the entire night wildly absorbing the Meadow Life Wood Essence into his Hearts of Qi. The birthing of an element was a delicate practice, and required a certain level of comprehensive ability.

While the Realm of Qi Condensation could be said as a Realm of Accumulation, it contained a high-level requirement for talent too. The condensation of qi requiring the four essential qualities was the first example of such. The creation of elemental qi was the second, and the infusion of Yin and Yang energies as well as its combination to the sixth phase, Yin-Yang Energy, was another.

When Wei Wuyin had revealed his Violet Lightning Qi and Steel Metal Qi, the only thoughts that the elders had in their minds was regarding his frightening talent. This was because they were high-level elemental essences that required a higher than average level of talent to birth. While one could use the essences to birth normal metal qi and lightning qi, actually birthing those specific qi-types were incredibly difficult.

The Meadow Life Wood Essence was the same. While it could be used to birth normal wood qi, birthing Meadow Life Wood Qi was a far more difficult endeavor.

However, if there was one thing Wei Wuyin had in spades, it was an unbelievably high-level of comprehensive ability.

The motes of light continued to enter his body until the stars faded and the sun rose from the east. He stayed in his cultivation posture throughout, processing the refined essence and its energy, all the way until the sun set to the west.

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"Huuuuu! Haaaa!" He took a deep inhale and a powerful exhale and sent out a wad of turbid qi. This qi was smaller than he expected as the Meadow Life Wood Essence had far less impurities. In fact, the majority of the turbidity originated from the Essence of Heaven and Earth.

His eyes opened, revealing an emerald shimmer that contained an abundant amount of life force. Beneath his skin, the faint glow of bright green traced his muscle fibers, veins, and arteries. The wood energy formulated by his new wood qi was already tempering his body, gaining a higher degree of flexibility, resilience to poison, and heightened regenerative prowess.

"A lucky chance indeed!" With his three elemental qi, his Yang Growth Phase cultivation base, and myriad of qi arts, he felt his strength had risen to a whole new level. Subconsciously, he looked at his arm and saw the number: 171.2. It wasn't written out normally, but in a unique numerical language only those with the Bloodline of Sin could understand.

"Will I receive more lucky chances? More importantly, will I be able to overcome this calamity now that my Karmic Luck exceeds 2.0?" The Black Skeleton once said that a rank two calamity required 1.5 to have a chance of survival and 2.0 to avoid with a chance to benefit.

What would a 171.2 do?

He pondered briefly before shaking his head, he'll see if he can bring this forward to the Sect Leader or Ancestral Elder. Hopefully, he avoids the Sin of Sloth and acts. He stood up, dusted himself off and steadied his breathing. Only when he familiarized himself with his newly enhanced body did he take off.

Woosh!

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In the Scarlet Solaris Sect, Xing Fu, Yan Zhu, Shu Yin, and Elder Bing had long since returned to the sect. Since Wei Wuyin's departure, two weeks had passed. While they searched for Wei Wuyin, they could not find him anywhere nor traces of his disappearance. There was a lot of speculation, including backlash leading to a quiet death. While uncommon, it was possible.

However, his disappearance or death didn't cause any huge waves. In much the same way as Tao Gui and He Long's deaths, many were just preparing to take his position. Unfortunately, until a year had passed without any response, Wei Wuyin would still be considered alive due to his missing status.

In the upper level of the Scarlet Solaris Mountain, Xing Fu was in her residence. She looked a little pale and her eyes had sunk a little. She seemed to have been crying, experienced a lack of sleep, and seemed to be a little malnourished.

She laid on her bed clutching her pillow. From time to time, she'd sob and groan. Lately, her mind had been racked with guilt and self-hatred. It was her pleading to her master, Elder Bing, that led Wei Wuyin to that mission. She didn't know what happened, but she learned that the Aqua Echo Sect had a little grudge against him.

To her, she believed they did something, and blamed herself because of it.

She was an ordinary-looking girl with no outstanding features. Even with make-up, she only reached the level of decently pretty. She couldn't compare to Yan Zhu's valiant beauty, Lang Yi's extraordinary sexiness, or Jiu Lang's holy beauty, but she was a girl. Like any girl, she had her crushes and likes. She had her dreams and desires.

Wei Wuyin was one of them. No, it'll be better to say he was the entirety of them. She was accepted by Elder Bing as a disciple because of her mother being a sworn sister to her, and this elevated her status, but her cultivation base was forcefully pushed to the Second Stage of Qi Condensation. She wasn't very talented.

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In fact, she was a chess piece for Yan Zhu. However, she was excited to be that chess piece. Because of Wei Wuyin.

She had first met him three years ago when he was freshly made a core disciple. Before then, she had heard about this kid who went from an honorary disciple to a core disciple, exhibiting exceptional talent and intelligence.

At the time, she felt it was all just elevated nonsense. Until...

There was a public commotion between an inner disciple's harem. The harem members were picking on another harem member because she was favored by their man over them. That very man had watched in enjoyment as the young lady was tormented and beaten.

There were definitely over a hundred people watching like it was a show, but not Wei Wuyin. He leapt down from his variant eagle and directly crippled the main offender. Then, he took that young woman in.

She had seen many cultivators before, talented, high status, and all the core disciples were selfish and intent on killing each other or others for benefit. However, Wei Wuyin didn't exhibit any of that. He felt warm and familiar. Whenever she thought of that moment, she wondered if she, as an average-looking girl, would also receive such treatment if she was mistreated unjustly.

Perhaps not even Yan Zhu would interfere.

That moment had been seared into her brain and she couldn't get him out of her mind since. However, she didn't have the status nor was the faction she had been a part of, Yan Zhu's faction, an ally to Wei Wuyin's faction. This made interacting with him quite difficult as all sorts of politics would interfere.

Then, she became a core disciple!

It was a dream come true. It was a chance to make her dreams a reality! The only issue was...how could she come into contact with him? A heavenly way opened up as the mission requesting elite disciples to participate arrived.

Yan Zhu showed initiative and the rest of the story is history.

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Alas!

She stuffed her face in her pillow as she reveled in her self-hatred. If something truly did happen to Wei Wuyin because of her...

Knock! Knock!

She lifted her head up to see the door.

"Are you in?" A familiar voice sounded behind the door. It was Elder Bing.

"Yes. Come in," she sheepishly replied with very little energy. Her mood was down-right horrible.

Elder Bing entered and saw Xing Fu's impoverished state. Her expression couldn't help but feel a little pain despite her chilly exterior. "Have you eaten?" Like a caring mother, she walked up and caressed Xing Fu's hair.

"..." Xing Fu didn't answer.

"Haaaa. I know that boy was all you had on your mind, but you still need to focus on yourself. Your talent isn't the same as everyone else, so to ensure you keep your spot, you need to work harder to cultivate. You can't let a boy, who only knew you existed a few weeks ago, hinder your progress." Elder Bing softly berated while advising.

A caring heart was infused into those words, but even she felt it was a pity. Wei Wuyin had birthed two high-level elemental qi-types and reached the Fifth Phase in his mid-twenties. Even if Xing Fu became a concubine to him, she'd already be far-reaching her potential and worth.

"..." Xing Fu still didn't respond.

Elder Bing warily sighed. This little girl.

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Just as she was about to use all sorts of methods to get Xing Fu back on track, she received a message from her transmission crystal. She retrieved it and read its contents with her spiritual sense.

"This?! He's back!" She couldn't help but say in shock.

However, those words were like heavenly heart-nourishing nectar to Xing Fu as her eyes brightened. Was he back?!

Wei Wuyin entered the Scarlet Solaris Sect's mountain entrance. It's been a while since he trekked here by foot, but it wasn't that difficult or long. He even took a slower pace to familiarize himself with wood qi and elemental wood qi arts.

As preparations for his Heart of Elemental Qi, he had taken arts relating to metal, lightning, wood, ice, and magma from the sect. Therefore, he was quite prepared. The wood qi arts he liked best was definitely the Earthly Wood Heal Art and Siphoning Weed Art.

The former could heal injuries of one's self and others, both internal and external, but it required either reaching the Fifth Stage of Qi Condensation or birthing a wood qi with lifeforce energy inherently generated within. As he had reached both, its effectiveness was quite amazing.

The latter was capable of rapidly absorbing wood energy to refine wood qi for immediate usage. It was exceptionally useful in battle if combined with offensive and defensive wood arts in a forest or other green areas. It could also be used in conjunction with Earthly Wood Heal to heal injuries without consuming one's combat strength.

"Ice and magma..." The last two elemental qi were quite interesting. While ice qi shouldn't be too difficult, magma energy was only located in one area within the Wu Country. He would need to take a trip there.

Just as he arrived, a squeal from a crane sounded in the skies. Wei Wuyin looked up and noticed it was his own, and riding it was Du Ling. Du Ling was grinning from ear to ear as he landed next to Wei Wuyin at the base of the mountain. The surrounding crowd was in awe at seeing the rather large crane plummet down like an immortal beast.

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When it landed, its head reached towards Wei Wuyin where he gently gave it a few rubs. A sound of excitement and pleasure resounded from it, giving Wei Wuyin a warm smile.

Du Ling landed near him, "Master, I'm happy that you've returned."

"Likewise," Wei Wuyin echoed his sentiment. During his isolation, he was left alone with his thoughts, and outside of cultivation, he realized that there were many things in this world that he left uncherished. He felt that he needed to enjoy life a little more.

He pushed his right arm forward towards Du Ling's face, prompting a confused look.

"Do you see anything?" Wei Wuyin was curious if the tattoos were visible to others. His right arm from fingers to shoulder was covered in tattoos. Du Ling looked at Wei Wuyin's arm intently, even squinting, but all he saw was a well-defined musculature and impeccable skin quality.

"No? Should I?" Du Ling asked, confused.

Wei Wuyin shook his head, "Guess not. Let's go home." He leapt onto the crane's back and primed it for flight. Du Ling hurriedly followed along and they took flight.

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Chapter 22: Informed

While flying towards his residence, Wei Wuyin came to know about the shocking reappearance of the tens of thousands of cultivators that went missing. Supposedly, they were all found unconscious in a long-forgotten underground tunnel network. The tunnels exuded a natural gas that could influence humans and have them undergo a hibernation of sorts, placing them in a stasis-like state.

So while they were unconscious for months, some even a full six months, they were only a little malnourished and drowsy. It left one shocked because there was still no explanation as to why and how they got there.

When interrogated, their responses were all the same. They only remember falling into darkness and then waking up. That was it.

It was a great mystery that rumbled the country.

The three sects then left, returning to their domains, and continuing to monitor the situation in case something like this happened again. Luckily, no one was hurt or killed.

Wei Wuyin knew that the black skeleton had stolen them, likely even taken the positive karmic value they've accumulated in their lifetimes and gave it to him. He had a strange feeling that these people might suffer a series of catastrophic events down the line.

They soon arrived at his residence.

He felt an odd sensation in his heart. This place had been his home for over three years, but he felt a sense of distance from it. Despite that, he still referred to it as home. Thinking up to here, his heart felt heavy as memories of his family flashed through his mind.

The sound of wings battering the wind roared to life behind them. Wei Wuyin turned around and saw a white crane soaring through the skies carrying two people. One of them was an exceptionally beautiful mature woman with faint traces of frost exuding from her hair. The other was a young girl who looked somewhat pale and malnourished.

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"Elder Bing? Xing Fu..."

The pair landed next to his crane. Wei Wuyin was about to offer greetings when a figure shot towards him like the wind. His reaction was great, as his eyes narrowed and his qi readied for retaliation, but he didn't do anything. His spiritual sense saw the image of a girl in tears lunging towards him with wide arms.

"This?!" Shocked, he let Xing Fu embrace him. Her arms wrapped around his torso tightly and the hot tears seeped through his scarlet robes.

Elder Bing watched this with a helpless expression. Du Ling stepped back and let Wei Wuyin and Xing Fu have their moment. He didn't know much about Xing Fu, except she was a core disciple and disciple of Elder Bing, but seeing this made his mind wander.

The sound of muffled sobbing and wailing was all Wei Wuyin could hear. At first, he didn't know how to react, but for some reason, his heart felt warm knowing someone cared so much about his return. He embraced this average-looking girl and softly comforted, "It's okay. I'm fine."

He had this belief that Xing Fu had a crush on him, but he didn't think it was this strong. If it wasn't for his powerful body, her tight grip could've bruised his skin.

The sobbing lasted for several minutes before it abruptly ceased. Before he knew it, Xing Fu had fallen asleep in his arms. Her body had reached a state of worry and peak exhaustion that the moment she knew he was alright, she had collapsed.

He lifted her in a bridal carry and used his shoulder and neck region as a resting area for her head. Looking at Elder Bing, he could see the relief in her eyes.

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She walked over, "I'm relieved that you're safe. I don't know what happened to you before, but it concerned many. The Sect Leader even sent a search party out for you. That's a rarity."

Wei Wuyin was somewhat shocked by the Sect Leader's actions, but when he thought about it, it made sense. He revealed his exceptional talent and thus his value. While resources can be accumulated with time, top-tier talent required luck to obtain. Especially for a sect.

"I apologize for leaving abruptly. It was not my intention." Wei Wuyin felt it was sufficient to at least state this, albeit wholly unnecessary. With his status, he had no need to be polite or offer apologies to a Fourth Stage of Qi Condensation Core Elder of the sect. Whether in value, status, or cultivation base, he exceeded her several times over in the eyes of everyone.

Elder Bing was taken aback, but smiled in the end. Her normally icy expression seemed to have melted, revealing her incredible beauty. Even Du Ling was awed by that smile of hers.

"You want to take her?" Wei Wuyin asked.

Elder Bing pondered for a bit and nodded. She also said, "She was the one who requested you for the mission. That little girl hoped to get your attention and connect with you in some way. You should know her thoughts now."

Wei Wuyin stilled. "So she was the one, huh?" According to the black skeleton, it had altered his fate to meet him. Originally, he shouldn't have left the sect so soon. It had factored in this girl's personality and will to lure him away.

That's why it was incomparably suspicious. It was a scheme, a scheme of love. He chuckled softly to himself, shaking his head. No wonder she was worried about him. She must've blamed herself.

He looked towards this sleeping girl in his arms and sighed. He owed her one, maybe even the entire sect owed her, so if she felt that he was worthy, he'll take her as his woman for as long as she desired. This was a promise he had made to himself.

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"I understand." He carefully handed her to Elder Bing. They soon took off to return to their own residence.

He watched as they left his senses. A wave of emotions emerged in his heart. He recalled his death and that figure with the black sword. A single swing of that sword left his body a little lighter.

"It's best I handle this before the calamity descends with no return," he thought to himself. He left Du Ling at his residence. Taking the white crane, he flew towards the true upper levels of the mountain. He was going to inform the Sect Leader or Ancestral Elder about Jiu Lang's actions and their possible fate.

At the top of the Scarlet Solaris Mountain was a grand palace reminiscent of immortal abodes of legends constructed of pure scarlet stones. It exuded an exceptionally fierce and aggressive aura that left one in awe and fear.

The scarlet qi roiled off the palace walls. It was so dense that the qi had transformed into a mist that flowed with the wind itself.

In this palace, a figure dressed in scarlet-colored robes befitting an emperor and a golden crown with a ruby embedded within. This ruby was like a neon object, shining ever brighter, effusing all sorts of light like a red sun. A dense aura of scarlet qi flowed around him naturally. This was Wu Xinghong, the Scarlet Solaris Sect's Ancestral Elder and lone Godlord figure.

The true pillar of the sect.

Around him were several grand elders, all of them having reached the God-level, the Sixth Stage of Qi Condensation, False Reality Phase. There were eleven of them standing in discussion, with the Sect Leader acting as a core figure of said discussion.

The Sect Leader was not a man, but a woman. She wore a simple scarlet robe, had phoenix eyes, thin eyebrows, cherry lips, a lithe figure, and hair tied up in a bun. She exuded a natural aura of supremacy and authority as she talked.

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"I've received word that Wei Wuyin has just returned. I've already called back the search team." Her voice was powerful, and only made one forced to listen.

However, a grand elder hastily added, "He's returned. That's great! We can now figure out what cultivation treasure he possesses and use it for the benefit of the sect." His words were alluring and tinted with greed, and many of the other elders had their eyes shine with faint desire.

Wei Wuyin was a nobody from a third-rate clan, subordinate to a second-rate sect that was just a subordinate of theirs. He entered the sect early and suddenly revealed an explosive rise in cultivation. Not many believed it was a treasure, but innate talent, until Jiu Lang started to spread rumors of a cultivation treasure.

The rumors seemed to be further validated by Wei Wuyin's birthing of two high-level elemental qi and reaching the Yang Growth Phase in his mid-twenties. Barely any of them could believe such rapid and astounding progress. He had to be the most talented individual ever since the Scarlet Solaris Sect's inception.

Now, very few believed that sheer innate talent contributed to his achievements. They attributed it to a cultivation treasure that could increase one's talent or potential. There were many records of objects like that existing. In fact, the Imperial Wu Clan had one, which was why the country was called the Wu Country.

In fact, Wu Xinghong, their Ancestral Elder, was a descendant of the Imperial Wu Clan and couldn't be any more familiar with cultivation treasures. If their sect had one, they could reach unprecedented heights. They may even create a few more Godlords!

The thought left many of them salivating. However, the Sect Leader, Su Linya, had other thoughts. "You think we haven't investigated the rumors? Both I and the Ancestral Elder have inspected him thoroughly. There is no cultivation treasure. In fact, his talent is purely his own."

Her words silenced them all. Of course! Even if Wei Wuyin had a cultivation treasure, the moment it was rumored, how could Wu Xinghong and Su Linya not investigate? If they couldn't find anything, then likely there was none.

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However, this frightened a few of them. An elder skeptically said, "So he condensed two high-level elemental qi with talent alone?"

Su Linya shook her head. "The Ancestral Elder generously bestowed him three violet lightning crystals as a reward for his outstanding performance during the Core Disciple Competition. He had also found a thousand-year Steel Essence Source while out on a mission. With those two things, he birthed them."

"What?!" This brought an even greater uproar than before. Only three violet lightning crystals? With two, a person has a high chance of forming elemental lightning qi, but actually birthing violet lightning?! That's...

"I personally watched him during his mission hunting the Violet Moon Sect and while he cultivated in the Yang Yore Fields. With his talent, a bit of ingenuity, and luck, he reached his current cultivation without any foul play involved." Su Linya stated calmly. Since hearing of Jiu Lang's rumors, she had to make sure of the validity of it. Besides being a little lucky, Wei Wuyin had outstanding talent.

If Wei Wuyin heard this, he would be incredibly shocked! Perhaps even a little creeped out. However, more relieved than anything. With this being known, his status was essentially solidified and so was his importance to the sect.

"..." The grand elders all had various expressions, some intrigued at the prospect of Wei Wuyin's talent and the Scarlet Solaris Sect's future, others disappointed that he didn't have a cultivation treasure. It's not like they could steal one's comprehension or thoughts.

"Hm?" Su Linya looked towards the entrance suddenly. She waved her hand and the door to the room opened revealing a figure. With silver eyes, scarlet robes, and a steady aura, he announced himself.

"Core Disciple Wei Wuyin seeks an audience with Sect Leader."

The other grand elders turned towards Wei Wuyin. They weren't shocked that he arrived. If someone as outstanding as him didn't take initiative to meet the leaders of the sect, they would find it odd.

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"Come." Su Linya beckoned for him to approach. Wei Wuyin did so immediately. He was completely calm despite arriving before the true top figures of the sect. Quite a few elders liked his stability and confidence, a few others with loose relations with Jiu Lang felt it was him being too confident.

Wu Xinghong inspected Wei Wuyin, and his eyes brightened imperceptibly. This child had actually birthed wood qi! He could feel the faint natural aura exuded. It seemed his elemental birth had been a recent endeavour, making it difficult to conceal from his gaze. He truly was a lucky one.

To birth metal, lightning, and wood! He must be pursuing a Heart of Elemental Qi! The very thought made Wu Xinghong place an even greater level of importance on Wei Wuyin. He was even considering using his own wealth to obtain high-level magma and ice essence sources. If Wei Wuyin actually established a Heart of Elemental Qi, he had a shot at becoming a true king.

"Seniors, if I may." Wei Wuyin greeted and politely requested to speak freely.

"Speak what's on your mind," Su Linya responded.

"Yes. Thank you, Sect Leader. While I was out, I discovered a piece of information that may bring a calamity to our sect." Wei Wuyin said confidently.

"What?! Calamity? What do you me-" an elder immediately questioned but was interrupted by Su Linya.

"Let him speak!" After quieting the room, she gestured for Wei Wuyin to proceed. She took this very seriously. Wu Xinghong's eyes widened slightly. Wei Wuyin's words felt familiar to him.

"I learned that there was a person kidnapped by our sect's disciple who may be linked to a powerful force. I fear that a powerful force is looking for or already knows where that person is, and will soon be descending upon us swiftly."

At first, he was a little vague, but purposefully. He wanted to instigate questions and disbelief, and then they'll feel compelled to verify this.

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Everyone frowned, and many wanted to speak, but no one did. They allowed him to continue.

"This person has emerald hair, eyes, and blood. It is a woman, and she was captured by Jiu Lang, a core disciple of our sect. It's possible that she is being held in the sect and may or may not already be dead."

"..." Those words were met with resounding silence.

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Home Paragon of Sin Chapter 23: Elven

Chapter 23: Elven

"Where did you obtain this information?" Wu Xinghong had finally spoken, his brows furrowed into a slight frown. This information was far too specific and accurate.

Wei Wuyin did not hesitate, "To be honest, it was from a person outside during my latest mission. I do not know if that person was male or female, where they originated from, or how they found me, but they did. They lured me over, and told me that a calamity was going to befall our sect."

Wei Wuyin did not lie. Not a single word of his was false. If he did, he knew their spiritual sense and instincts of experts would immediately deduce that he was lying. So, he simply told the truth.

"The calamity was due to the greed of Jiu Lang, and the presence of that emerald haired girl. I was shown images of her location and her fate, and then, the person showed me an army of armored warriors with the ability to push our sect into a calamity. It is only my assumption that they would come for the woman as none of them had her particular features, but the armor they wore looked as if it was fashioned from emeralds."

"..." The grand elders, Su Linya, and Wu Xinghong were all silent as they sent their spiritual sense to wildly inspect Wei Wuyin. Any hint of lying and they would know immediately. However, to their surprise, Wei Wuyin had not resisted their spiritual sense and seemed to be telling the truth.

Su Linya pondered in this silence, her fingers caressed her cherry lips in thought.

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"Hair like emeralds, emerald eyes, and emerald blood, you say?" Su Linya asked for verification.

Wei Wuyin nodded.

One of the grand elders could help but say, "Could it be the Elf Race? The rulers of the Mystic Elven Forest?"

Wei Wuyin frowned. He knew that the Myriad Yore Continent had multiple humanoid-like races. They were believed to be hybrids born from the copulation between demons and humans. Because of that, their cultivation path was similar to theirs and many other things.

The Elf Race was collectively called the Elven. They were a race of humanoid figures with long, pointy ears, pale skin, and slim bodies. They had a longer lifespan than normal humans by about three times, but their birthrate was abysmal. They controlled the Mystic Elven Forest, a piece of land belonging solely to them, and oftentimes stayed away from human affairs.

Their hair colors were either white, blonde, or black. While their eyes were a myriad of resplendent colors, such as resembling emeralds if green or sapphires if blue. It was uncommon for their hair to be emerald, which is why Wei Wuyin hadn't thought of them.

Wei Wuyin had seen the image, but the woman's long hair also disguised her ears perfectly. It was impossible to determine if they were pointy or not.

Wu Xinghong also frowned. This frown was very heavy and wrought with worries. He knew that there was a girl kept captive by Jiu Lang, but he only knew her features, and even he hadn't linked it to the Elven. He never personally inspected her, so her ears could be pointy!

The Elven were divided into a myriad of races and factions. The Dark Elf Race, the Meadow Elf Race, and the High Elf Race. Those races were further divided into various factions and

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forces. The Mystic Elven Forest was just as large as the Wu Country as a whole, which goes to show how extraordinary the Elven were.

They were only a measly Scarlet Solaris Sect. They would be crushed if the Elven saw them as an enemy to be destroyed. Even if it was just a singular race making them their enemy, or just one of their major factions...

No wonder Godlord Lin said that Jiu Lang could bring the annihilation of the sect! Not to mention, he had sat on this information for six whole fucking months! The panic set in faster than the movement of light as he started to sweat. A revered Godlord such as himself was feeling fear! Immense fear!!

If they would send an army, then that girl must have an incredible status! How did Jiu Lang capture her?

Su Linya noticed Wu Xinghong's aura erratically fluctuate. It caused her to realize the situation was a lot more dire than she had guessed. Wu Xinghong seemed to know that what Wei Wuyin had informed them of was true. It wasn't a guess, but a fact!

She sent Wu Xinghong a transmitted message, and Wu Xinghong read it. His eyes looked towards Su Linya and nodded.

"Alright, we'll investigate as this matter is of the utmost importance. If what you say is true, our sect will owe you greatly and you will be appropriately rewarded." Su Linya said as she dismissed the grand elders and Wei Wuyin.

Wei Wuyin bowed and left. He did what he could. What would happen will depend on the leaders of this sect.

Before long, only Su Linya and Wu Xinghong were left alone. Su Linya frowned, grasping Wu Xinghong's hand intimately with her own. She tried to calm him down with her touch. It seemed to have worked as his aura stabilized.

"Let's see the situation before we decide anything, okay?" Her commanding voice turned gentle like a wife comforting her husband.

Wu Xinghong nodded, "Let's go." With a shadowy flash, they left.

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One week had passed since that day.

The morning sun rose and shined its radiance on Wei Wuyin's residence. Within, Wei Wuyin was sitting upright at the edge of his bed, his eyes contemplative.

While during this week, Wei Wuyin had kept tabs on Jiu Lang. He wondered if there would be any consequences to her actions, and if they did take action, it's unlikely Jiu Lang would come out unscathed unless they killed the girl and hid it from the world.

That wasn't a scenario he wanted to see, because it could still lead to the army marching their way to the mountains. What he wanted was Jiu Lang killed to appease whatever woman she captured. Unfortunately, there had been no news as of late or movement.

A soft, feminine hand touched his back and reached his shoulder. It rubbed it gently, as a waking moan echoed behind him. "Can't sleep?" A voice asked in concern.

Wei Wuyin turned his head and warmly smiled, "Just thinking."

The woman rose up and placed her chin on his shoulder from behind, wrapping her arms around his torso, and leaned her cheek against his skin. He could feel her naked body and breasts press against his back.

"Xing Fu..." he whispered softly.

After that day, Xing Fu returned the very next day. She confessed her heartfelt feelings and Wei Wuyin had accepted it without hesitation. Shockingly, she had no qualms giving him her body and primal yin. It was as if she didn't care about the Fourth Stage of Qi Condensation.

In truth, she wasn't very talented and had very little chance of ever reaching that realm. She may never even fully complete her elemental birthing of the four elements in her entire lifetime. The only reason she had her status and cultivation base was due to a forceful increase by Elder Bing, and Elder Bing's relationship as her godmother.

He realized she was just a simple girl who just wanted to be loved.

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"I'm fine," he comforted. With a smile, he shifted his naked body and faced hers, gripping her hips in his hands as he brought her closer to him. As they stared at each other, saw the light within each other's eyes, a simultaneous smile surfaced on their faces.

He pressed his lips against hers and felt her warmth, her taste, and her vital pulse. It was long and intimate, inciting all sorts of emotions and arousal. Before she could escape his grasp, they were already on the bed and commencing another battle of pleasure.

It was moments like these that make cultivating worth it. The struggles. The schemes. The periods of isolation. All of it. Moments where you can comfortably stay with those you wish to be with without fearing for your life in a world where the strong ruled.

Several hours passed before they concluded their session.

Wei Wuyin was now out in his courtyard, looking at the night sky dressed in a grey robe. His silver eyes saw the myriad of stars and astonished at how beautiful it all seemed. In legends, it was said that the stars were true gods worshipped through the ages, those cultivators who've become immortal and left that which will last for as long as they lived.

Wei Wuyin knew they were far away celestial bodies, but as a child, he would love to hear the stories of these gods. How they overcame their struggles and became who they were. Even if they were fake, to him, it was as real as himself.

He looked at his Bloodline of Sin tattoo and saw the 171.2. This represented his karmic luck beneath the heavens. While he can not be judged, the Heavenly Daos would still do everything to help him as within its limits.

Ohn!

He twitched. A sting of pain entered his arm. He recognized this feeling as he hurriedly checked the number, the 171.2 had changed. It was now 171.1. His expression changed as he looked around, suddenly feeling as if someone or something was watching him.

An opportunity had been brought here? As he thought of this, he heard a voice behind him.

"You've noticed me? Your talent truly is exceptional."

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He turned around and readied his qi, the seven elemental qi flows surged within his body. At a moment's notice, he was capable of casting any qi art or spiritual spell required.

He saw a white haired man dressed in odd garments. This man was exceptionally young and gorgeous with thin eyebrows, flawless skin, tall and lithe body, and green eyes that were like emeralds. If this man was a woman, he would cause the inner flames of many men to go ablaze. In fact, he could still do so.

The most notable feature was his pointy ears. They were sharp like knives at the top, and slightly longer than normal humans.

"Elf?" As Wei Wuyin deduced this, his mind rumbled with all sorts of thoughts.

"I didn't originally intend to show myself, but I wanted to see the young man who helped my daughter," The elf man said.

Daughter? Helped his daughter?

A thought occurred to him. Was that emerald haired and eyed woman his daughter?

"You don't need to speak. I know you had a long-standing feud with that Jiu Lang woman, and perhaps you intended to use us to deal with her after discovering who she kidnapped. Perhaps you truly were thinking about your sect's future. Regardless, your actions were absolutely correct."

"I've just sent my daughter back home, and that Jiu Lang woman? She'll be a slave for our people until she dies.

"Because of you, we found her alive. Your Sect Leader and Ancestral Elder informed us directly, and told us of the situation. They were even kind enough to even offer a high amount of reparations, so we have no grudge against your sect because of the actions of one person."

The man's words got Wei Wuyin thinking, especially the last part. Perhaps, in his previous future, Jiu Lang killed that woman and led them directly to the sect. He knew that some

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powerful experts could leave marks on people to determine if they were alive or dead. If they died, it would reveal where and how they died.

If the Elven were as strong as he believed, they should have the means.

At that point, to ease the hatred in their hearts, they decided to bury the entire Scarlet Solaris Sect with her.

"That being said, if you hadn't told them what you did, when you did, perhaps I could only see my daughter's corpse." These words said by the elf man confirmed his thoughts. There was definitely more to the situation that he didn't understand.

For example, why did the Sect Leader and Ancestral Elder give the elf man information about him? Or how come Jiu Lang was even capable of capturing that woman? Or! Why was she in Wu Country in the first place?

The elf man walked forward and held out a hand with his palm facing the sky. Wei Wuyin didn't execute any qi arts or spiritual spells in response to this. He became much more accepting that those experts who far exceeded his cultivation base held his life in the palm of their hands.

He also felt that this might be an opportunity, so he wanted to at least see it before doing something futile.

"I heard that you're talented. You've reached the Fifth Stage of Qi Condensation in your mid-twenties. I'm intrigued by your talent, so I have an opportunity for you." Just as he finished those words, jet black and bright white strands of energy started to rapidly gather above his palm.

"Yin and yang energy?" Wei Wuyin was startled.

The yin and yang energy swirled around briefly before touching each other. As they did, they seemed to become stuck by some powerful adhesive-like force. Before long, the jet black and bright white strands of energy started to merge, not just touch. What was birthed as a result of this fusion was a clear, translucent energy without color.

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This continued until only a single strand of translucent energy was left. The elf man closed his palm and a brilliant flash of colorful lights from all over the spectrum erupted. Between the gaps of his fingers spewed resplendent rays of light.

It soon died down, and when he opened his palm, only a solid construct remained. It was a translucent crystal ball the size of a walnut.

"This is a Yin-Yang God Sphere. While they are easy to create for true experts, they were one of the few methods of providing help at reaching the False Reality Phase. That being said, it has a mortality rate of 99%. It contains the purest form of yin and yang energy in the Myriad Yore Continent, and reaching the False Reality Phase with this would make your entire future path far easier." The elf man pushed the sphere to appear and levitate just a few feet from Wei Wuyin.

"However, you can meditate on this sphere and increase your chances of reaching the Sixth Phase normally too. This is my gift to you for helping my daughter return to me." After saying those words, the elf man vanished as if he was never there.

Wei Wuyin stood there somewhat shocked. He hadn't said a single word to the elf man, but he just upped and left. Wei Wuyin couldn't even find any lingering aura from where he stood.

He frowned, "No wonder only 0.1 value was lost. This thing is a death trap and purely dependent on one's talent."

It seemed that the 'help' the Heavenly Daos had given him was to have noticed that man's existence, and then receive this orb. Because it had such a small use, it only took 0.1. He expected that meditating on this orb would be exceptionally useless to all except the most talented of cultivators.

In fact, he had heard of the Yin-Yang God Sphere in books. It could only be created by those who exceeded the Realm of Qi Condensation, at least that's what the books noted. He had also heard that the Wu Imperial Clan had hundreds of these, and it was used to establish a cultivation field much like the Yang Yore Fields.

Members of the clan would meditate on those dozens of spheres, using it to increase their chances of fusing yin and yang.

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"Well, since it's an opportunity, how can I waste it?" He had never been one to waste a lucky chance. Getting into the lotus position, he swept his spiritual sense over the Yin-Yang God Sphere. However, he didn't sense much.

He stayed in that meditative stance, constantly roaming over the Yin-Yang God Sphere trying to decipher something with his various senses, but as the sun started to rise, he hadn't discovered a single iota of a hint or insight.

He took a deep breath and exhaled a wad of turbid qi, "No wonder it is only a cultivation tool." He shook his head. If just a single one was capable of helping someone earn the title of God in the cultivation world, there would be far more wandering the world. That was a whimsical notion.

He got up and walked towards the levitating Yin-Yang God Sphere. With the intention of relocating it to his spatial ring's storage space, he touched the sphere.

Oom!!

An abrupt change caused his expression to flash. He hurriedly tried to pull away his hand, but the sphere seemed to be drawn by something. Before he knew it, the sphere the size of a walnut had vanished inside his body.

His eyes widened with horrified shock and utter disbelief.

"Shit!"

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Chapter 24: Yin-Yang

Within Wei Wuyin's body, the Hearts of Qi were like starving, ravenous wolves seeking a delicious meal. They rapidly rotated like category five hurricanes, targeting the walnut-sized Yin-Yang God Sphere.

He felt a rising sense of panic and danger in his heart as this took place, completely oblivious as to why or how this was occurring. Usually, a Heart of Qi was a passive entity unless actively given a command by the cultivator. He had never experienced something like today, where it seemed sentient and felt desire. That raging hunger made even his abdomen sting in pain.

He clutched his abdomen. The walnut-sized object had been drawn into his dantian. He hurriedly calmed himself down, realizing that panicking would only exacerbate the issue and leave him helpless.

With a thud, he returned to his cultivation stance, his eyes closed and his hands forming handseals non-stop. He utilized several spiritual spells to better connect with the spirit within his Hearts of Qi and sent his spiritual sense inward.

When his spiritual sense arrived, the scene toppled his belief in cultivation. In fact, it taught him an exceptional lesson. When an abnormal aspect of cultivation is entered into any pre-assumed fact about cultivation, absolutely anything, ANYTHING could happen.

He had felt this when his metal energy in his body attracted the violet lightning energy.

Right now, both of his Hearts of Qi were outright devouring the walnut-sized Yin-Yang God Sphere like it was a marshmallow. They pulled it apart into two directions, deforming its spherical shape, and extracting and segregating the yin and yang energy into itself.

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When he received this sphere, the elf man had mentioned using this to reach the Sixth Phase had a 99% mortality rate. He didn't know why, but recalling the book he read, it did detail the vast danger of absorbing unrefined yin, yang, or yin-yang energies, especially pure ones.

The yin and yang energy within people's bodies were naturally refined during fetal growth and could be easily used for cultivation. However, the purer it is, the more dangerous its influences on one's Heart of Qi and body.

He had read once that a man had absorbed pure yin energy and directly turned impotent, grew breasts, and lost his masculine energy. He was barely a man. He had also heard of women absorbing pure yang, but instead of changing gender, the changes caused all sorts of unpredictable health issues, some even resulting in death.

There were speculations and rumors that they literally exhausted themselves to death in self-lust.

However, pure yin-yang energy was far more deadly.

That being said, his Hearts of Qi looked as if they just said fuck it, and were devouring the energy like it was breakfast. Not only was it devoured, they were refining this exceptionally pure yin-yang energy.

"Am I going to die?" As he thought of that, he subconsciously looked at his karmic tattoo, it still read 171.1. Nothing had changed.

"So the heavens can't assist if you cause the issue yourself?!" He felt like flipping the world, but he forced himself to remain calm.

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The energy was currently being split and refined into his Hearts of Qi which will definitely influence his body in some way, he just had to be prepared. For now, he decided to pay rapt attention to the Hearts of Qi.

Time went on.

A minute.

An hour.

When it reached three hours, Xing Fu arrived and saw Wei Wuyin silently cultivating. She pondered whether to disturb him, but decided against it. When she left, Wei Wuyin's eyes opened and looked in her direction. The whites of his eyes were like a battlefield as jet black and bright white energy intermingled continuously.

He wanted to speak but couldn't. His entire body was filled with this energy that restrained even his movement. At first, he thought the walnut-sized sphere wouldn't have a vast quantity of energy within, but oh boy was he wrong.

His Hearts of Qi was still trying to devour the walnut-sized sphere, only getting it down by about ten percent. It was like that walnut contained an ocean's worth of energy within. He didn't even understand how!

He had never had his Hearts of Qi rotate so fast before. They were truly like violent hurricanes intent on sending the world awry!

That being said, he felt enlightened. He had never had the opportunity to examine such pure yin and yang energies before, both unrefined and refined. It deepened his knowledge into those two energy types by a fair amount. Not to mention, he felt like he had grasped something.

That adhesive force that was generated to combine both energies would be split apart, some of it would be dispersed, while some would linger, but none of it was absorbed. He used his spiritual sense to observe the lingering portions of this force. It felt highly familiar, but also unknown.

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It was an odd feeling, like meeting the mother who birthed you after not seeing her for twenty years. It was beyond strange. In fact, he didn't know if his description was accurate, but it was the closest emotion he felt when he observed it.

Hours continued to slip away, and his body remained motionless. At this point, his entire body felt like it was going to fall apart. The energies had done a number on his body, ripping his muscle fibers, pressuring his bones, and erupting within his blood. It truly felt like his body had become a battlefield.

If it wasn't for his Life Meadow Wood Qi that had enhanced his body's flexibility and regenerative abilities, he would've long since collapsed, maybe exploded.

"I-I think I've figured it out!" After what felt like an eternity, he finally realized what that adhesive force was. It was an unrefined qi, termed by him as World Qi. This was a common qi. In fact, it was so common that it was everywhere. It was the metaphysical qi produced by the world itself.

It was said that cultivation had been born from studying the world, taking the world as a teacher, and slowly but surely, cultivation was birthed.

World Qi was a force that the world generated. One could feel it when they breathed, when they moved, when they jumped up and it pushed them down.

The scholars would call that gravity, a unique force of the world produced by its own heart. It was theorized in some writings that the world's core was its Heart of Qi. That the layers and layers of earth were its muscles, and the sky was its skin. This was only an assumption, but it left a profound mark on Wei Wuyin when he heard it.

Because it felt like it said that the world was alive. If so, if the stars outside were celestial bodies, then wouldn't their world be one as well? If that's the case, it was possible for their stories to be epic and truly be gods!

It was this unique force that acted as an adhesive to the yin and yang energies to give birth to yin-yang energy. However, grasping this force was profoundly difficult, unless one knew what they were looking for.

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"In the various cultivation guides and methods I've read, they stated that the Sixth Phase was a phase where no outside instruction held any benefit. Now I understand! Most people would find describing this world qi exceptionally difficult!" He deduced and concluded in his mind, and he felt even more certain.

If he was to instruct his students, he would tell them what he understood, "You need to use the world to help you merge the yin and yang energy." Then, they would ask: "but how do you do that?"

This was something each person had to figure out on their own. They had to find a unique way to connect and use the world qi in the environment. While two people may use similar or the exact same methods, their description of what to do may be wildly different. After all, Wei Wuyin was drawing from his personal knowledge and experiences.

He took a deep breath, and urged his Hearts of Qi to focus. They started to slow down, the yin and yang energies had been split apart and refined, but it was too much to contain, and it was too pure. While the Hearts of Qi acted like hungry beasts, they had no way to get their food. That was why the energies rampaged throughout his body.

He needed that adhesive force to combine these renegades. He also needed it to reduce its surface area! While his Hearts of Qi devoured the yin and yang energy, the world qi was decidedly ignored as if irrelevant. In fact, when he tried to absorb the last bits of it, the Hearts of Qi weren't willing, actively rejecting it.

He had never experienced a direct refusal to follow orders before by his Hearts of Qi. It truly felt that his Hearts of Qi were sentient. This stunned him immediately. Fortunately, he soon realized it had to do with the force itself. They didn't want to accept it. It could be because it was refined by the elf man or another reason.

His Hearts of Qi started to receive his intentions and seemed to share his comprehension. They started to rotate slowly, trying to connect with the world. After all, the spirit had a faint connection to both the world and the soul. It was like a thin bridge or a tightrope that required absolute expertise to cross.

It was now that Wei Wuyin realized that the connection to the world via the spirit was the clue and gateway to the Sixth Stage of Qi Condensation, False Reality Phase!

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The world qi in the air became apparent to him. When it did, he now realized why those in the sixth phase were capable of creation and why he couldn't interact with the world with his elemental qi before. Without that worldly force, all metaphysical qi wouldn't be a part of the world.

It seemed so simple when discovered, but a conundrum of epic portions when unknown.

The world qi was absorbed, refined and converted by his Hearts of Qi into its own unique worldly force. When both Hearts of Qi birthed this force, the wild and rampant refined yin and yang energies were drawn to it like moths to a flame. In a blink, they entered both hearts and condensed into a mist at the center.

The mist was translucent like glass, but still visible, also like glass.

This was Yin-Yang Qi.

At the moment it was formed, he collapsed with his arms and legs spread about haphazardly. He took several deep, inconceivably heavy breaths. A wave of exhaustion entered his mind.

"Oh!" He immediately rose up, inspecting his body with his spiritual sense. His eyes widened with excitement! The pure yang energy contained a vast vitality that promoted his healing factor, and the wood energy flowing through his body seemed invigorated by the pure yin and yang energy.

He lifted up his palm and produced a trace of non-elemental qi, gave it the form of a cube, and instilled a sense of vitality within. It looked ethereal, but present. Now, he drew upon the mist within his Hearts of Qi, the yin-yang qi, and infused it into the cube.

It solidified, gained a shadow from the light, and interacted with the world normally. He even felt it tremble from the faint, but consistent seismic activity of the ground when he placed it on the floor. This was something that wasn't possible before.

He had just created an actual cubical construct with mass and matter!

While it hadn't gained permanence, he could maintain its shape, form, and weight with just the infusion of his qi. When he stopped sending in qi, it slowly started to shift. It first lost its

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solidness and it became like a drawn object in a painting. It didn't affect the world unless the creator wanted.

Then, it lost its vitality, and started to lose its sense of realism and life. Its opacity lowered, making it more translucent. Then, it lost its form, and turned into a mass of unrecognizable qi.

"Incredible!" He had done it. Using a lucky chance deemed 0.1 on the karmic luck scale, he entered the world of gods! A grin of utmost excitement formed on his lips.

"You finally finished cultivating?" He heard a voice nearby. Xing Fu was dressed in her core disciple outfit, obviously having just returned from her usual daily activities. For some reason, she seemed far more attractive than normal.

His eyes flashed as arousal and lust borne from his success emerged in his heart. With a step, he had already reached Xing Fu and lifted her up in a bridal carry. With her cultivation base, she could barely react before being picked up and held close. She cried softly in surprise.

"You?!" She had questions, but the way Wei Wuyin looked at her caused her to blush and become embarrassed. She had only recently learned the aspects that were relations between men and women, but that look of his had already been ingrained into her mind.

She stayed silent as Wei Wuyin laughed, swiftly carrying her into his room.

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Chapter 25: Resolution

Within the Scarlet Dao Temple.

Su Linya stood upon a tall platform, beside her were several grand elders. They all had neutral expressions and looked downwards at the various youths that stood in a line.

There were eight, all of which were disciples dressed in signature scarlet garbs. Wei Wuyin, Xing Fu, Jiang Wei, Jiang Bei, Mei Mei, Shu Yin, Yan Zhu, and Ling Ya stood in a line shoulder-to-shoulder. They all had various expressions as they looked above the platform of upper echelon members.

Su Lanyi, the Sect Leader of the Scarlet Solaris Sect, started to speak. "As some of you are aware, the sect has experienced the highest series of core disciple deaths or crippling since its inception this generation. With the latest addition to this: Jiu Lang."

Her words induced a gloomy atmosphere. Jiu Lang was the latest addition. She was added to the list with He Long, Tao Gui, Qu Gao and Shu Yang. Mei Mei nearly made this list, but her rapid recovery allowed her to reclaim her position.

Wei Wuyin quietly glanced towards Mei Mei. Outwardly, he carried a neutral expression, but internally, he felt all sorts of emotions. He knew that the trust Mei Mei had given him was no longer there. This was the first time he saw her since the incident.

Whenever he tried to meet, she refused him outright. He respected her choice, but still wanted to explain away his involvement in her injury. While he wasn't at fault, Han Yu was still a member of his faction, and a trusted one at that.

Their relationship was close before. They had shared night skies, white sheets, and passionate intimacy together. He had feelings for her, respected her intelligence and will. To lose that, it felt painful.

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"Due to this, we'll be investing more in this set of Core Disciples in the hopes that events like this won't happen again. Therefore, each one of you will have a Grand Elder personally instruct your cultivation and answer any questions you may have. We'll also be assigning personal bodyguards to ensure your safety." Su Linya announced.

Wei Wuyin coldly laughed inside hearing this. While the others were happy about this, he knew this was essentially a way to keep tabs and spy on their actions. Jiu Lang nearly brought down the sect due to her freedom, while Shu Yang was crippled because of his hubris towards a Godlord.

That would've taken a turn for the worse if Godlord Lin attributed his actions with the sect. Those events were a reminder that these disciples had all sorts of schemes, brash confidence, and haughty arrogance. These were recipes for disasters.

While Jiu Lang had contributed heavily to this, the sect also wanted to tailor the future core disciples to their maximum potential. Giving them personal guidance by Grand Elders who were 'Gods' were useful in that regard.

"Understand?" Su Linya asked.

"Yes!" The core disciples responded in unison.

"Any questions or objections? Say so now." Su Linya's eyes swiftly swept the faces of each core disciple.

"I have one," Ling Ya spoke up. She was still a vixen, as her voice contained an attractive charm that drew one's interest.

"Speak."

"These bodyguards, will we have the ability to choose them? I'm concerned that the men..." Ling Ya's words trailed off, but her intentions were clear. She didn't trust men serving beside

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her closely, especially those equal or stronger than her. Her unique art could induce all sorts of ill-intent within their hearts. To be frank, she had no desire to fight for her life or body because of dangerous lust from her own bodyguards.

She also had that concern that the Grand Elders may be the same, but if she voiced her distrust of their intentions, perhaps she wouldn't even know how she died.

"You'll be given a selection. The women will have priority over the other women guards. I understand your concern." Su Linya answered, causing Ling Ya to take an exaggerated breath of relief.

"Anyone else?"

A wave of silence was met prompting a nod from Su Linya.

"You all can leave. We'll have someone bring you a folder for guards you may choose from in the coming days. As for which Grand Elders, they will choose you." Her words were stern as she dismissed them. Abruptly, she added, "Wei Wuyin, stay."

Wei Wuyin paused. He stood where he was and watched Xing Fu and Mei Mei leave. Xing Fu looked back with a hint of concern, but Mei Mei remained face forward, never turning back. A soft sigh echoed in his heart.

Before he knew it, only he, the Grand Elders, and Su Linya remained.

"I said before that if what you said held water, allowing the sect to prevent a calamity, then we'll reward you accordingly. As you know, Jiu Lang had abducted and kept prisoner a woman of great personage within the Elven. We have since dealt with that issue," Su Linya said with a hint of frustration in her tone.

"It seems Su Linya doesn't know that that elf man visited me, or that I know she is the daughter of someone who exceeded the Realm of Qi Condensation," Wei Wuyin thought.

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If a person like that decided to bury the Scarlet Solaris Sect, no one would say a thing.

Su Linya continued, "Therefore, the council has decided to allow you access to the top floor of the Scarlet Dao Temple. You can select one Qi Art, Spiritual Spell, or Qi Method of your choice. Also, we'll be bestowing you with one hundred essence stones."

Wei Wuyin was shocked. One hundred essence stones was a tremendous amount of wealth and resources. He had used one to ascend into the Qi Condensation Realm. A single one could help accelerate recovery or help cultivate any Qi Method.

They were small oval stones that had been refined and purified through a qi formation, allowing them to be easier to absorb and process. According to the black skeleton, him discovering a single essence stone was worth a karmic luck of 0.3. Yet, now they directly rewarded him with one hundred?

Wei Wuyin didn't display happiness or excitement from this. Instead, he furrowed his brows in contemplation. He was certain that his cultivation base had not been exposed, because if they knew, perhaps the one meeting him would be the Ancestral Elder.

That being said, he sighed in relief. They were directly showing their belief in his value. He knew they wanted to nurture him into a Godlord figure, and he was fine with that. The more support they visibly gave, the more he would be indebted to the sect, and the more they could use him.

Su Linya wasn't bothered by Wei Wuyin's silence. In fact, if he displayed happiness instead, she would be wildly suspicious. Wei Wuyin had shown a high-level of talent, intelligence, and great luck. Someone like that would and should question every windfall they were given, and it worked out for her. At least, he would know her intentions in her actions.

"You may choose now or when you're ready," Su Linya added. She then walked up to Wei Wuyin, stepping off the platform and arriving in front of him. She turned over her hand, a trace of spatial energy rippled, and a black bag was held in her hand.

She handed it over, "the one hundred essence stones."

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Wei Wuyin didn't bother with any hesitation, he directly accepted and gave proper thanks. After storing it away, he turned towards the stairs leading to the upper level of the Scarlet Dao Temple.

The Scarlet Dao Temple had seven floors. The first was the main hall and was essentially the entrance. The second floor was for all outer disciples and above, they contained basic qi arts.

The third floor was only for those at the Qi Condensation Realm. They had internal qi arts and qi methods of a slightly higher level.

The fourth floor was for those at the Second Stage of Qi Condensation, External Flow. At this phase, spiritual sense is born and external qi arts are enabled. Therefore, it contained spiritual spells, qi arts, and qi methods. It also contained various information about cultivation and lore of the country.

Much of what Wei Wuyin knew about cultivation originated from this floor. He must've spent over a thousand hours on that floor when he had become a core disciple.

The fifth floor was only for core disciples, inner elders, and those above those ranking. The sixth floor was only for core elders, grand elders, prime elders, and the sect leader.

The seventh floor contained the core material and doctrine of the Scarlet Solaris Sect. Only Sect Leaders, Prime Elders, and the Ancestral Elder were allowed entry.

Wei Wuyin wasn't actually sure what was above the fifth floor, but he was definitely interested.

He walked to the stairs, the eyes of the grand elders watching him curiously. "I'll go now." Saying this, he didn't show a hint of hesitation as he walked upwards. It wasn't long before he passed the second, third, fourth, and fifth floor.

He paused at the first step of the sixth floor, looked back, and felt like he saw his younger self three years ago. He had a lot more energy and excitement in his heart and life. He saw the smile on his face, and his dreams at the time. The blurry image of his past self looked up with gleaming eyes of anticipation to one day ascend these steps.

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It was as if it was looking at him.

He smiled.

He was now a God figure and had the right to enter the top floor.

Could his past self ever believe this?

But...he still felt somewhat hollow in his heart. He glanced at the tattoos on his right arm and felt a pressure on his heart.

Could his past self believe this?

He shook his head. His path had just started and it would either end in his death or his triumph. There was no way to know what the future will bring.

He continued upwards, directly ignoring the sixth floor and proceeded to the seventh. When he arrived, he saw four bookcases filled with scrolls and thin books.

They were well-maintained without an ounce of dust. He approached one of the bookcases and grabbed the book. He realized there was a string wrapped around the book, preventing it from opening. However, its cover had its name and a brief description.

Qi Manual - Battle Qi Creation Method.

A method in cultivating battle qi. He recalled the colosseum that contained traces of battle qi. It was an Ethereal Qi birthed from spirit and mind. According to the description left, battle qi contains a dense aura that can elevate one's concentration while lowering your opponent's willpower, influencing their mind and spirit. At a high enough level, just your aura can force an army of ten thousand to lower their weapons in fear.

Wei Wuyin was truly intrigued. He had only read stories about battle qi, but now he felt that he had a greater understanding.

"Will you choose that?" A voice sounded from the corner. Wei Wuyin wasn't shocked. He hadn't even moved because of this abrupt voice. While that figure had hidden himself

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purposefully, Wei Wuyin had given birth to Life Meadow Wood Qi, his perception of lifeforce was far greater than now.

While his aura and presence was lower, the owner of this voice couldn't conceal his lifeforce perfectly.

"No," he placed the manual back and looked towards the corner. An old man with white hair, wrinkles that seemed capable of crushing berries, and grey eyes that felt lifeless was dressed in a black robe.

From those grey, lifeless eyes, Wei Wuyin could sense some appraisal and surprise. He hadn't expected Wei Wuyin to be so calm before him.

"Greetings Senior, I'm Wei Wuyin." He offered his introduction with clasped hands in respect and waited.

"You can call me Old Bai. It seems our sect has given birth to a decent seed," Old Bai responded with a smile.

Wei Wuyin smiled in return, "Thank you." After that, he started to search the room. There were a lot of qi methods, qi arts, and spiritual spells in three of these four bookcases.

He arrived next to the only bookcase with just scrolls. His eyes lit as he realized that none of the scrolls had a string connected to it. He picked one up and read its inscription.

The Origin of Mortal Gods.

He picked up another one.

World of the Myriad Yore Continent.

He kept reading each scroll's inscriptions and knew that these were documents detailing a wealth of information. The Origin of Mortal Gods had to be about the God and Godlords title and how they came to be.

He looked towards Old Bai. "Can I read these?"

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Old Bai frowned slightly. It seemed he was trying to come to a decision, but after a while, his brows loosened and he nodded. "Normally, only leaders of our sect could read those, but I don't see why not. After all, since you've been brought here, they must have boundless belief in you."

This brought excitement to Wei Wuyin's heart and he stopped caring about the arts, spells, or methods and focused solely on these scrolls.

A whole new world seemed to have been opened up to him.

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Chapter 26: The Truth of Mortal Gods

"During the reign of the Divine King Han Xei, the title of Mortal God was born. Originally, it was decided for those at the Fourth Stage of Qi Condensation, Yin Form Phase, but near the end of his reign, it had changed. It became the designation of those at the Sixth Stage of Qi Condensation, False Reality.

"This continued through the three later eras of the Myriad Yore Continent. The titles are as such, Mortal God at the Sixth Phase, Mortal Godlord at the Eighth Phase, and Mortal Godking at the Ninth Phase. The full title for Mortal Godhood actually was shortened for False God of Mortal Dao, False Lord of Spirit, Mortal King of Qi. This became divided into the three titles."

Wei Wuyin continued reading and felt shock and awe in his heart. "So those considered Gods are nothing more than False Gods. It's unknown if Divine King Han Xei was mocking those at the Qi Condensation Realm or praising them." As someone who had just become a False God of Mortal Dao, a Mortal God, he had mixed feelings when he read this.

He kept reading and learned much. The most important detail that he had read from these scrolls was a detailing of the Qi Condensation Realm to an even greater level. In the Sixth Phase explanation, it never mentioned world force or the qi of the world, but that one needed to meld their innate yin and yang energies with the ever present life in the air.

This was just the personal description of whoever reached the Sixth Phase at the time. This only reinforced Wei Wuyin's belief that those who ascended to the Sixth Phase had wildly different beliefs as to how they ascended. If Wei Wuyin heard this before, he wouldn't know what to do with that.

Hearing it now, Wei Wuyin still felt it didn't fit, but he knew that it held truth but from a different perspective.

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The Seventh Phase, Sublime Qi, is all about refining one's Heart of Qi to its limit with essence, expanding its size and abilities. It's a realm for refinement and solidification of one's foundation. It was considered the simplest phase and had no requirement for talent or comprehension. It embodied the Realm of Accumulation that the Qi Condensation Realm was often described as.

Recalling the one hundred essence stones, he wondered if it would be enough. It didn't describe how much one would need, but that it required an immense amount of Essence from the Heaven and Earth.

The Eighth Phase infused spirit with qi on a higher level, giving qi spirituality and a unique connection. Even if one's qi was no longer in direct contact with the creator, they could sense it and the activity around it. They could direct and control it while its form still existed. While one's spiritual spells would take a huge leap that could influence others' spirits or minds.

The Ninth Phase gave birth to Qi Essence. Before, Wei Wuyin wouldn't have any idea as to what that was, but now that he had grasped world force, he had a clearer view of cultivation. Qi Essence was a condensed force similar to the world's force, allowing one to work on producing their own internal world.

According to the scrolls, the next realm involved creating a world. Wei Wuyin was awed by this. A door had been opened to his path of cultivation.

"Yin-Yang God Spheres!" Wei Wuyin found a scroll describing it in detail as well. He had many questions about it, and this scroll answered all of them.

It was true that only those who reached the Realm beyond Qi Condensation could create them, and that it wasn't difficult. Supposedly, it used the purest of yin and yang energies within the world to structure. However, the force used to keep it together wasn't the force he was completely familiar with.

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It was the world force refined and produced by those experts themselves, not the ambient force prevalent in the world. This was why Wei Wuyin's Hearts of Qi rejected that force. While it had similarities to the world force, it was the elf man's personal force. It was different from Wei Wuyin's current world force that fused yin and yang.

This could be considered force birthed from the world and refined by him, but their force was birthed by their Qi Essence and refined by them. It was solely belonging to them.

"No wonder, no wonder!" Wei Wuyin's eyes lit in excitement. This question had kept him awake at night, and now it had been answered. It also explained how the Yin-Yang God Spheres helped others ascend to the Sixth Phase. It gave one a very small, nearly invisible clue, but it was also the most vital. If one could grasp it, the Sixth Phase was near.

He continued reading and learned many things. Before he knew it, four days passed. He had finished reading every last scroll.

"Incredible!" He sighed in utter amazement at the sheer amount of information he'd just consumed. Yesterday, there was so much about the world he hadn't known. Today, he felt like he had seen the light above his dark well. He had an itch to leap out and see the true world now.

Licking his lips, he turned towards the Qi Art, Spiritual Spells, and Qi Methods. Grinning, he browsed through them quickly and found what he wanted.

Qi Manual - Divine Element Formation.

It was the qi method used by the Divine King Han Xei. It had been publicly distributed before his death in hopes of finding a successor. However, according to the stories, he had never found a successor which led to the collapse of his legacy and thereby his empire.

The reason was that, unlike the current method he had, the Elemental Qi Transformation Method, this required one to establish high-level metal, lightning, wood, ice, and magma qi. The Elemental Qi Transformation Method was basic in comparison, only requiring the nine elemental qi birthed.

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Wei Wuyin had met the high-level conditions with his metal, lightning, and wood qi. All he needed was a high-level ice and magma qi. He could then transform one or even both of his Hearts of Qi into a Divine Heart of Elemental Qi.

It would change not just the qi his heart produced, but the core of the heart itself. The benefits noted to his mind, spirit, matter, and essence that was connected to it was described, and Wei Wuyin knew that description did not do it justice.

He felt thrilled at the prospect of this method. Normally, he wouldn't have picked this Qi Method as finding a high-level ice or magma essence might be rarer than phoenix feathers and qilin horns, but with his karmic luck value, he felt that the heavens would help him.

No, he knew it would.

He laughed heartily, causing Old Bai to be caught off-guard and flinch. He was somewhat embarrassed as he quietly turned his blushed face away. Having become used to the silence, how was he supposed to react to Wei Wuyin's spontaneous outburst?

Stretching his limbs, Wei Wuyin was ready to leave.

He bowed to Old Bai in respect, giving him thanks for watching over him before departing. When he exited the Scarlet Dao Temple, he was caught by surprise.

A bulky, giant of a man with beady eyes and bald head was pacing back and forth, mumbling words underneath his breath. Wei Wuyin frowned, "Wei Si, why are you here?"

This was Wei Si, his cousin. Usually, he stayed near the Yang Yore Fields cultivation grounds to absorb the trace of yang energy and handle the unique condition of his body. Wei Wuyin hadn't seen him since he departed for the joint mission with the Sky Sword Sect and Aqua Echo Sect.

"Wei Wuyin!" Wei Si cried after hearing Wei Wuyin. He hastily made his way over. That bulky body of his and the momentum he could generate caused a turbulent wind current to form. Wei Wuyin felt battered by the wind before Wei Si even reached him.

"Hold up!" He held his hand out, sending a strand of qi to halt Wei Si's advance. Wei Si's large body touched that strand of qi and felt like he was being held by an almighty hand of

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god, forcing him to a complete stop. He was shocked, looking down and witnessing a silver string of qi.

"I'm sorry." Realizing his rushing may have caused some discomfort, he immediately apologized.

"Mn. Just tell me, what's wrong?" Wei Wuyin walked up to Wei Si instead. He had always taken special care of this cousin of his, and helped in any way he could.

"Yes! It's Big Sis Mei!" His voice was filled with panic.

"Mei Mei? Speak!" Wei Wuyin ordered, his expression changing and his aura leaked. Wei Si trembled slightly, he had never seen this cousin of his so fierce and powerful.

"Mei Mei had disappeared! She vanished two days ago."

Disappeared? Wei Wuyin's mind trembled as he searched his mind for information, "How? She should've had bodyguards!"

Wei Si hastily added, "Yes. The sect gave her three Third Phase guards, but they were found unconscious. The sect did a search, but came up empty!"

A hole was punctured in Wei Wuyin's heart, forming a pit of despair. Mei Mei was his former leader, his former lover, and most importantly, his friend. She was important to him.

"They found nothing?" His voice trembled slightly.

"No...they didn't...but I know who's responsible!" Wei Si dejectedly said, but added the last bit with gusto.

"You do? Why haven't you told the sect!" Wei Wuyin shouted, enraged.

Wei Si shrank back, he timidly muttered, "I did..."

Wei Wuyin frowned.

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"The person who's responsible is also the one she made a deal with, and the sect can't act. I know because they needed my blood!" Wei Si said.

"Blood?" Wei Si had a unique constitution and physique, it was heavily influenced by yang energies, forcefully giving him a powerful body and strong vitality. His blood could theoretically be used as a medicine or a cultivation resource. However, it wasn't that potent or reliable, so the sect didn't waste its time.

"They used my blood to create a tonic to help her recover. She was pretty badly injured after The Challenge, so much so that she was physically crippled. She couldn't walk or feel as her nerves and spine were practically destroyed, in complete shambles the medics said. She called over someone by the name of The Helios Witch, she took my blood, and Mei Mei rapidly recovered. Her cultivation even strengthened.

"I smelled that witch when I arrived at the scene of capture!" Wei Si explained.

Wei Wuyin had all sorts of thoughts running through his mind.

Wait.

"The Helios Witch?" The moment he recalled this name, his expression turned ugly. No wonder the sect couldn't do anything even if they knew. That was because the Helios Witch wasn't a normal human, but one who had deep affiliation with the elves. She was rather well known, classified as a Mortal God-level character.

If they wanted to find Mei Mei, they would have to travel to the Elven's homeland, the Mystic Elven Forest, and search for the Helios Witch.

Wei Wuyin deeply frowned as his heart felt conflicted, yet incredibly curious. A high-level elf was captured by Jiu Lang and Mei Mei had dealings with this Helios Witch? Could there be a link between this or was this a coincidence?

Suddenly, Wei Wuyin's eyes became incredibly focused and driven. "Are you certain?"

"Yes! I am certain, because when she took my blood, I heard the Helios Witch mention taking back something, and her scent was at the scene! Who else but someone at her level could escape the scope of the sect." Wei Si fearfully said.

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Wei Si had a unique physique, and this physique elevated his physical senses. His sense of smell was greater than a dog's. Therefore, Wei Wuyin trusted him. If the Helios Witch's scent was there, then she was there.

Someone at the Helios Witch's level wouldn't leave any trace of aura, but it would be difficult for her to hide her smell. This was similar to how Old Bai could disguise his aura but not his lifeforce.

"The sect said they couldn't verify it, and that they'll do their own investigation, but...I don't know if it'll be too late then. I don't even think they're taking it seriously!"

Wei Si had a deep connection with Mei Mei, even willing to give his blood for her. During the time Wei Wuyin and Mei Mei were together, Wei Si had interacted with Mei Mei many times. She wasn't judgemental about his appearance and treated him nicely, so he didn't want to see any harm come to her.

"Even if they verified it, they couldn't take action. The Mystic Elven Forest isn't someplace they dare to march an army against." Wei Wuyin said with an ugly expression.

"I'm going," he decided.

"I'll go with you!" Wei Si was willing to throw himself in the fire for Mei Mei, but Wei Wuyin shook his head.

"I'm going to the Mystic Elven Forest, you may have the physique rivaling a Third Phase expert, but you're still too weak. You can barely hold your own against a true Third Phase expert let alone a God-level figure like the Helios Witch. You'll stay." Wei Wuyin's tone brokered no argument.

"But Wei Wuyin, you can-"

Boom!

Wei Si was just about to argue but his mouth closed shut in an instant.

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Wei Wuyin's aura infused with yin-yang qi, the four basic elements, lightning, metal, and wood qi exploded like a volcanic eruption. His black hair fluttered with the wind as various energies coursed through his veins. As he stood there, it was like the world had become one with him.

He had become a god. True fire, crackling lightning, vibrant leaves, streams of water, wads of clustered rock, wild currents of wind, and silver mist was birthed as real as they could be.

"I am enough! If she's alive, I will bring her back. If she is dead, I'll bring her murderer's head. I promise!" His words were like thunder as they resounded within Wei Si's eyes. He had never seen such power, such force, such realism before. He could feel the biting wind, heat, and electricity in the air. Gulping heavily, he subconsciously nodded.

Wei Wuyin gently smiled, his aura faded and the elements dispersed. He whistled.

Fweet!

Kree!

A shriek sounded not too far away. His crane which was stationed at a stable near the Scarlet Dao Temple took to the skies and flew over with immense speed. Wei Wuyin leapt upwards, his descent met by the crane's arrival perfectly as he landed on its back.

He looked at Wei Si as the crane turned directions, "I'll be back."

With fierce eyes, he looked towards the east. With a pat, the crane took off eastward.

Mystic Elven Forest, here I come!

Ohn!

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Chapter 27: Mount Inferno

Flying away from the Scarlet Solaris Mountain was one man and one beast, soaring at maximum speed through the skies unobstructed.

Wei Wuyin's expression was the picture of solemnness. He was currently examining his right arm and the karmic luck value imprinted in it. The moment he decided to travel to the Mystic Elven Forest in search of Mei Mei, his arm stung with pain. His karmic luck value decreased by 8.7, to 162.4 from 171.1.

He harnessed his powerful spiritual sense and swept it around himself. Now that his Hearts of Qi contained world force, yin-yang energy, he had a greater perception of the world itself. His spiritual sense's range increased by nearly ten-fold, while its clarity was greater than ever before. He could even sense moisture levels, the degree of temperature in his surroundings, and the minute dust particulates in the air.

This was one of the benefits of absorbing and refining the pure yin and yang energy within the Yin-Yang God Sphere. The elf man was correct in saying the pure yin and yang energies would benefit one throughout their cultivation.

Wei Wuyin already knew his qi's basic strength had skyrocketed nearly twenty-fold from the Yang Growth Phase. According to records, the increase in strength was typically three-fold while one's spiritual sense doubled in range.

This was the average rate of increase.

That being said, despite the sweeping of his spiritual sense, he discovered nothing. This left him confused as to why his karmic luck value would drop so suddenly. When it dropped before, the world underwent an immediate change, or the opportunity revealed itself quickly.

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He hadn't understood much about how the timing or mechanics of karmic value worked even with the scripture, but he did know that he'll be given an opportunity soon.

"I hope it doesn't delay me," Wei Wuyin muttered before he started to cultivate atop the crane. With two Hearts of Qi, his absorption and refining speed was four times as great as before. With his cultivation base rising, the refinement speed also increased.

He decided to use this time to refine his Hearts of Qi. He withdrew the black bag given to him by Su Lanyi, and pulled out a greyish-white oval stone. It was the size of a baby's fist and as smooth as its skin. He clutched it within his hand and drained the essence within.

When it was absorbed through his meridians, as it was already refined and pure, it was easily refined to make it suitable for him in minutes. The stream of refined essence made its way through his various Qi Pathways and into his dantian. The two Hearts of Qi, which like cyclones, rapidly rotated and drew the essence towards them. The strand of essence split off into two paths and entered the core of the Hearts of Qi.

Slowly, the multi-colored spherical core started to expand ever so slightly. The core contained various colors and was about the size of a fingernail. Its colors embodied the various types of energies within. These were elemental, yin, yang, and yin-yang energies.

"So it can grow!" Wei Wuyin was caught in a wondrous feeling. Before, whenever he had sent essence into his core, it would merge it with the various forms of energies and send out strands of refined qi like a fleshy heart pumping out oxygenated blood. There would be no growth.

However, now, he felt a secondary option made available due to the yin-yang energy within. The yin-yang energy kept together by the world force refined a unique form of force that could expand the core. As the core expanded, so did its ability to refine, the amount of energy contained within, and its durability.

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The Sublime Qi Phase, also known as the Seventh Stage of Qi Condensation, was reaching the peak size of this Qi Core. It'll grow from a fingernail in terms of size to an actual walnut-sized existence.

With each increase in the quantity of energy, the quality of qi would also increase in turn. It was a fabulous balance that left him in awe.

"I wonder!" Wei Wuyin suddenly had an idea. Since he had two Heart of Qi, could he independently refine them both? Normally, it would be impossible as the Heart of Qi had to focus on an object to absorb it, this would take all his mental power. Now, he could be considered to have two-times the mental power.

He had to at least try.

Pulling out another essence stone, he clutched one in both hands and focused. He had both Hearts of Qi hone onto just one essence stone each. Suddenly, he felt a miraculous feeling as his mind seemed to be joined by another.

This was his cloned mind. In his mind's eye, an arming sword stood tall. It suddenly split perfectly in two from a clearly divided point. When they split, Wei Wuyin felt like he had two sources of thought.

He tested it out.

"Mei Mei."

"Xing Fu."

Simultaneously, he heard two overlapping voices in his head, both his own.

"Incredible!" He shouted aloud. The excitement in his voice was nearly tangible. The profound feeling of possessing two independent yet interconnected minds was intoxicating. As the two essence stones were absorbed through his meridians by force of his Hearts of Qi, directed into his dantian, he found an even greater, far more miraculous discovery.

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Unlike before, the two Hearts of Qi didn't split the essence, but focused solely on their own strands of essence. Yet, the refinement speed hadn't decreased. This was a true representation of twice the result with half the effort.

Kree!

The crane beneath his feet cried. He awoke from his cultivation and noticed that the sky had become dark and the astral bodies were brilliantly shining in the starry sky.

"How long have I been cultivating?" He quietly muttered. If the crane was reaching its limits, it should've been morning, not night.

After taking a look behind him, he noticed the Scarlet Solaris Mountain was no longer in sight and the area was mostly filled with rocky, barren terrain with sparse trees and vegetation. The wood energy was lacking, but the earthen energies were brimming and full.

There were hills and smaller mountains in the distance.

He recalled the map within his mind and the noticeable features of the land. Having traveled eastbound the entire trip, he should be in the Earthly Titan Sect's Gaia State. They deemed it as a state, but it was a part of Wu Country.

Only now did he recall the vast distance to the Mystic Elven Forest from the sect. Even if he had the crane fly without rest, it would still take two weeks. If he had a black crane, that time could be shortened.

He communicated with the crane using a spiritual spell, gaining a rough estimate of his cultivation time. It had been roughly thirty-nine hours since they left. The crane also communicated its immense exhaustion and desire for rest.

Wei Wuyin couldn't help but give a helpless smile. He had been so riled up that he forgot his mount's limitations. A true God-level character would have a unique mount that was both faster and had a greater degree of stamina than his white crane, such as a black crane that was several times the size of a white crane.

He hadn't exposed his cultivation base, and because of rank requirements, the sect hadn't given him an exception and bestowed a black variant crane to him. He understood and had

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little need for a better mount until now. In truth, he enjoyed having this crane as a mount. It had served him faithfully and their relationship was stable.

"Sorry," he apologized with a rub to its feathers. It cried in acceptance, the exhaustion evident by its weakened sounds.

"Let's find a place to rest." After instructing this, he once more recalled the map of the Gaia State. There were several important locations marked in that mental map, such as the Earthly Titan Sect, Mount Inferno, and Dao Canyon.

"Mount Inferno!" Mount Inferno was the location where magma essence and magma stones were located, bought, and traded. According to legends, the heart of the mountain contained a high-level magma essence called the Blazing Inferno Magma Essence. It was reported to be so hot that it could melt mountains. From the ranking of elemental essences noted in the seventh floor records of the Scarlet Dao Temple, it was also in the top three of all known magma essences in the Myriad Yore Continent.

Wei Wuyin examined his karmic luck value and then recalled something. The route he was taking, whether by fate or coincidence, was Mount Inferno. His eyebrow twitched.

"The Heavenly Daos are quite interesting! If I didn't have this karmic value tattoo, I wouldn't have noticed various oddities. For one, this crane usually lasts eighteen hours maximum, but it exceeded double that time! I thought it was just its healthy state at first." As he said this he recalled his first thought waking up, finding it strange, but dismissed it soon after.

"I also just said eastward, but many things can shift the path the longer you travel and I didn't particularly pick a route, yet I'm heading straight for Mount Inferno. And, there's a city next to it, suitable for resting while also being the closest city! Incredible!"

He had never been exposed to this coincidental-type of karmic luck before, at least not since he became aware. Now that he thought about it, the Three-Point Yin Body female he came across was also coincidental and appropriate at the time. He just took it as luck, but...

He shivered slightly, fearful of the heavenly daos.

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Regardless of his emotional shock, he still steered towards the city. He didn't have much choice in this matter, nor did he wish to waste his karmic luck. Communicating his plans to the crane, it cried in happiness before speeding up towards the city.

Several minutes later, he saw Mount Inferno and the city, Ash Dragon City. It had obsidian walls that towered twenty feet, had towers positioned in eight locations, and it created an octagonal city. The towers radiated a powerful qi fluctuation, indicating the inherent formations built within.

According to the legends, despite being mere fourteen miles away from the base of the volcanic mountain, and suffering three separate eruptions, the city still stands due to its unique formation that can withstand the flowing lava.

"Magma originates from beneath the earth, lava is the excess that rises above. Theoretically, with magma qi, one can withstand great pressure and the liquid heat of lava. Is that how the formation works?" Wei Wuyin speculated as he observed the walls.

"Let's land," Wei Wuyin rubbed the crane as he sent his instructions. The crane shot down and arrived at the city gate. This gate also stood twenty feet and was created from a silver metal. Wei Wuyin realized it was froststeel. He had come across it when he met the crazed prisoner.

When he landed, he had the crane take steps towards the gate.

At the city gate, two guardians radiating auras at the First Stage of Qi Condensation stood guard. This elevated his understanding of the city. To have gate guards at the Qi Condensation Realm meant the city held strength. In his clan, those who guarded the gate were measly Meridian Awakening Phase cultivators, those at the Foundation Establishment Realm.

He saw their weapons and realized they were qi weapons which contained faint traces of fire qi. It was similar to Yan Zhu's scarlet qi spear. This was quite valuable. As for their armor, they emitted an aura of earth qi.

His own silver saber contained metal qi. However, its quality was only on par as he'd obtained it before reaching the Elemental Birth Phase. He knew the strength of weapons imbued with qi were far stronger than those without.

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After all, weapons of that level required refined qi stones or those at the Elemental Birth Phase to set up a formation and spend months to years of infusion.

"Halt!" One of the guards ordered with his palm out. His voice was powerful and his aura was already circulating in intimidation. Wei Wuyun laughed inwardly at this. Did they want to intimidate him?

Regardless, he halted with a smile.

"Entry is currently restricted. You can return after the entry ban has been lifted." The guard stated coldly.

Wei Wuyin was shocked. He thought this was an extortion tactic, but instead, it was a direct order of denial. He grew curious as he saw that the gate had indeed been closed. Also, everyone who was at the gate was lingering around with idle expressions.

He had thought it was the issue with the fee, but now he knew it was something greater.

His curiosity grew. He wanted to see inside.

Wait.

He frowned. The strong feeling to stick his nose in other's business, while not unlikely, wasn't natural.

Then, he smiled as realization dawned on him.

"Fine. You want me to look inside, then so be it." As if speaking directly to the heavenly daos, his eyes grew bright. He fully intended to wreak havoc and forcefully enter.

Boom!!!

His eyes widened as the closed gate dented and then straight blew off its hinges. One of the doors that rocketed outwards like a bullet crashed into one of the guards. He didn't even get a chance to yelp before his entirety was crushed in meat paste. His bones made a crushingly eerie sound as a splatter of his organs painted the ground.

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The other guard was swatted away like a fly, blood creating a crimson line following the trajectory of his body. He even saw an arm twisted oddly, nearly ripped off at its joint.

Wei Wuyin hastily conjured a strand of silver qi, creating a square wall to defend. One of the doors that flew towards him were directly halted like a flying marshmallow meeting a stone. It deformed, but couldn't even cause a ripple in the wall of qi.

A swift figure shot out from the entrance, and directly passed him.

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Chapter 28: Thieves & Chase

"Kill her!" A commanding voice bellowed in anger and with power. It caused the nearby loose rocks to tremble and the generated air currents to push them away. Even Wei Wuyin's ears slightly rang in response.

Then, Wei Wuyin finally saw the figure clearly. It was a hooded woman, her breasts and slim physique were clues to such, and she was speeding away with wind qi beneath her feet. She seemed to be gliding across the earth, like a speeding bird soaring close to the ground.

He turned towards the voice and his eyes lit up. He saw from the destroyed entrance dozens of elite soldiers outfitted in qi armor and wielding weapons of death. They were rushing forward without mounts, executing a variety of movement based qi arts that propelled them.

The leader of this group had a set of dark crimson wings constructed from qi on his back that carried him forward. He was dressed in black and red armor with a scaled-helmet that covered most of his face. However, his eyes were revealed and they radiated fierce killing intent and ferocious determination.

They soon passed him, ignoring his existence. He dispersed his qi and watched them silently. That commander with wings had reached the Fourth Stage of Qi Condensation, Yin Form Phase, and had birthed Magma Qi. Those viscous-looking dark crimson wings that emitted heat was proof of that.

"Is she a criminal? Did she steal or murder someone? Regardless, I can't just let something so interesting go, no?" He coldly chuckled in his heart.

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He hadn't felt like this in a while. Before, he had always been cunning, cold, and inherently did as he wished when he could. He was the type to slaughter an entire force, enslave a portion, and make one of them his servant.

He had maintained his state of a cautious mind and always kept his arrogance in check due to the sect, but in the outside world, he could allow his desires to flow free!

After meeting Godlords and those who exceeded that, he had felt that his life was no longer directed by his own choices, but having to follow the flow. While the Heavenly Daos had brought him here, why would he just patiently listen or allow that manipulation! After all, wasn't he abusing and using the heavens? Wasn't he fooling it?!

His blood boiled as he felt a shift. The Bloodline of Sin seemed to resonate with his thoughts, influencing them as well. He grinned.

He rubbed the crane and transmitted his thoughts. It made a soft sound in acceptance. He jumped off and it flew into the sky to find a resting location nearby, one that was safe. Luckily, the crane itself was as powerful as a First Stage of Qi Condensation expert, at least its basic physical attributes.

In the outside world, apart from sects, it was an elite expert.

He concealed his aura, lifeforce, and smell with an earthen scent and shot forward. He was like a shadow as he remained at an appropriate distance to tail. He traced their route and actions, his spiritual sense kept keen watch over all things.

He realized that the woman was at the Third Stage of Qi Condensation, Elemental Birth Phase. She seemed to have transformed her Heart of Qi into a Heart of Wind Qi. With that, her wind-based qi arts were at least three-fold in strength.

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This was the reason she could outrun an expert at the Yin Form Phase. However, that commander still maintained a certain distance and never lost sight of this woman. As for his soldiers, most of them were at the First Stage of Qi Condensation with a three at the second stage and one at the third stage.

The weaker ones immediately fell behind. Only two, one at the second stage and the one at the third stage kept up. They followed their commander closely with their utmost ability. Wei Wuyin could see the second stage soldier falter, the exhaustion of qi taking its toll on his body.

After a full thirty minutes, the two had long since been left behind. Only the commander remained, fiercely chasing the woman with daunting determination.

"This commander has an exceptional spiritual spell!" He marveled at how this commander had kept the woman's aura on lock, never losing her for a second. She had even employed several stealth and disorienting spiritual spells in an attempt to lose his tail. Unfortunately, none of them worked as the commander was like a poor dog after a golden bone.

Looking at their cultivation difference, it's unlikely the thief will be able to escape. With every cultivation base increase, one's physical body would jump in quality, thus as a result their movement-type qi arts used less qi.

He could faintly hear heavy breathing from the thief at this point. Her fuel was running low.

Wei Wuyin couldn't figure out her goal. She seemed to be wholly intent on going in one direction. If she was looking to escape, she should've known outrunning the commander wasn't possible. Her best option was to fight at this moment, yet she kept running.

"Hm. If I was a thief, I would leave a contingency plan to resort to incase I was being chased. There are generally three ways I would do it, a pre-established trap, backup ambush, or a location suitable to lose my enemy. The last would require a lot of intel gathering beforehand, and is the least likely given the terrain in the Gaia State." Wei Wuyin pondered her options. At her current qi levels, it'll be difficult to do anything but stall her enemy for a short period, but who knew what trump cards he had?

The last option he would take would be...

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As he was thinking this, he sent his spiritual sense further outward in the direction she was running towards. He grinned. There were two figures lying in wait. He could feel a yin and yang energy with strong life force. They were youths, one male, one female, but their cultivation was only at the Second Stage of Qi Condensation, External Flow Phase.

Beneath their feet was a spiritual formation. He could feel the faint traces of spirituality within. This had to be a bewildering or offensive formation set to attack the spirit. If someone's spirit was attacked, controlling their qi would become rather difficult.

Wei Wuyin now knew her plan now. He decided to see how this played out. If this commander truly had a powerful spiritual spell, it's likely he also has a strong defensive spell. If he could defend against their planned ambush, things would get rather interesting.

Before long, the two arrived at the location of the formation. The woman thief shot right through it like there was nothing there.

The commander following eyes lit up as he frowned, but he quickly concealed his expression. He tightly gripped his spear in his hand and continued chasing. He landed on the spiritual formation.

"Now! Jade Spirit Crushing Formation!" A young man shouted, holding a cyan arrowhead in his hand. A young woman also rose up holding a cyan arrowhead as well. These two arrowheads were the formation flags, or control tools, for the formation. They both injected their qi within and their spiritual energies.

Beneath the feet of the commander, a scintillating cyan light erupted outwards in multiple rays. His eyes turned dark crimson as he hurriedly executed a defensive spiritual spell.

"Knew it!" Wei Wuyin wanted to slap his thigh at his prediction. This was quite fun.

The cyan rays of light entered his body with a swiftness.

"Ha!" A steel blade with a faint wind qi shot out towards the commander's heart. It was a deadly strike. The thief had been decisive. The moment the formation activated, she urged all her remaining qi into this strike, condensing it into a single blow.

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The commander reacted swiftly, with his spirit protected, he used his spear to meet the sword aimed at his life. A fierce clash of wind and heat erupted and a minor explosion was produced.

The thief let out a panicked yelp, retreating after the failed killing blow. She barely had any qi left, if any, so she couldn't do anymore.

That being said, the commander couldn't follow up as the clash had sent him backwards, smashing against a nearby boulder. The wind was knocked out of him as he gasped upon impact.

"I got him!" The young woman shouted with gusto. She wielded a thin shortsword and sent a wave of non-attributed qi towards the commander. This attack was the full strength of a Second Stage of Qi Condensation Realm expert!

"Hmph!" The commander coldly sneered, recovering from the impact rather quickly. He grasped his spear's spine and with a heft, he threw it fiercely towards the retreating female thief. He seemingly decided to rely on his qi armor to protect him from the wave of qi. Crossing his arms into an 'X', he intended to use only his qi armor in defense. With his spirit protecting against the cyan spiritual light" he had no choice.

The spear was like a missile. The thief hadn't expected it as the spear pierced through her right shoulder and nailed her to a rock. She screamed in pain as the sound of crushed bones echoed in the air. The sheer force had destroyed the left arm, shoulder and ribs, rending her flesh and even a faint burnt smell lingered in the air.

The surrounding skin was burning, destroying her nerves. It was unlikely that her left side will ever be the same at this rate, unless high-level treatment was performed.

"Elder Jiao!" The young man shrieked in panic. He seemed to have seen red as he rushed to her aid without care. He tried to grasp the spear, but his hands burned and he winced away. His expression was full of concern and the deflated left side of the thief didn't offer any relief.

Wei Wuyin watched this with a calm expression, his mental state was quite neutral.

At this rate, the three were going to die. Perhaps their fate may be a little worse.

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Pow!

Just as he said that, the commander had already withstood the young woman's blow with his armor and struck her fiercely. She was incapacitated instantly. With the difference in cultivation, and sharp difference in physique, the commander, even in his tired and weakened state, dealt with the girl in a single dash and strike.

It was laughable really. There was a reason why cultivation level was important. The difference between each was massive, accompanied by a wide-variety of benefits.

For example, those at the Elemental Birth Phase establish four elements throughout, each element tempers the body. When one reaches completion, they are tempered by all four energies in unison, being far stronger than individual enhancement.

The Yin Form Phase not only had all four elements, but yin energy that benefits one's mental capabilities, clarity of spiritual sense, and strengthened qi.

The young woman had yet to have her body tempered by a single element, so against someone with the four basic elements and magma qi, she was not even close to being his match.

"Qiuyue!" The young man cried as he witnessed this horrific scene. His expression was incredibly ugly as he realized his situation. Retrieving his sword, he was ready to kill the man before him or die trying!

Wei Wuyin felt a little hungry, he rubbed his stomach lightly. He had just realized that he hadn't eaten since the meeting at the Scarlet Dao Temple. While he had abundant energy and didn't require mortal sustenance, he still felt hunger and cravings from time to time.

"I should find some meat later, or maybe the city will open after." As he considered these things, the commander had already struck. Despite not having a weapon, he clashed with the boy with just his armored fist.

The last stand of hope in putting his life on the line, or achieving some form of breakthrough and becoming a hero to those two women, was all just an impossible dream. He didn't even last a single exchange before being struck on the stomach.

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A geyser of blood spurt out of his mouth as his organs were definitely injured. He kneeled with his face flat on the ground. His posture was incredibly awkward, with his ass in the air.

"Haha! You fools! You think you can steal our City Lord's treasures from his vault and leave alive? Hahaha!" The commander gave an exhausted laugh as he roared in jubilation at his victory. He had already swept his spiritual sense and felt no other presence around.

He went towards the thief, her hood covering her face and hid her identity. His curiosity got the better of him as he violently ripped it off.

"You?!" The commander was shocked. Then, he laughed coldly. "You seduced that profligate son of the city lord just to set up this scheme? I knew you were a slut, but who knew you were also an idiot! Hahaha!" He stepped on her right leg, on her femur, and pressed down. Horrific cracking sounds echoed along with the thief's pained screams.

She clenched her teeth after a bout of screams. Her eyes spat flames of murder and death.

Wei Wuyin got a good look at this woman. Outside of the blood stains on her lips and dirt on her face, she was quite beautiful and young-looking. Her short cut light brown hair, black eyes, and full lips were definitely the marks of a beauty.

The commander saw her eyes and his own turned ruthless and filled with ridicule. Abruptly, his eyes lit up. "I have a little while before my men show up. I should have some fun!" He coldly laughed as he walked towards the young girl who remained unable to move from that earlier strike.

"No!" The hoarse voice of the young man spat with a trace of dirt. The despair was clear in his eyes as well as hatred, regret, and unwillingness.

"Stop!" The thief shouted. "You can do anything to me, but leave her alone!" She begged, the fire in her eyes dimmed.

"Fools," he coldly mocked. He arrived near the young man and kicked his face, a wad of his adult teeth and blood flew towards the other side. It was deliberately done so the teeth and blood landed on the thief's face. The splatter caused horror to flash in the thief's eyes.

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Arriving next to the young woman, he licked his lips. He rubbed his crotch quite heavily and fire blazed in his eyes. "Quite a pretty one, aren't you?"

He could see the fierce hatred in the young woman's eyes. If looks could kill, the commander's soul wouldn't even escape. It excited him further.

This was a common scene and occurrence in the cultivation world. It was so common that Wei Wuyin didn't feel an ounce of pity. Not to mention, he had done similar things in the past. While he hadn't forced himself on enemies before, the Three-Point Yin Body had to trade her purity for her life.

Otherwise, reaching the Yin Form Phase at his age was nearly impossible.

He preferred mutual consent, but on a realistic level, no cultivator at the complete stage of the Elemental Birth Phase would ever let a Three-Point Yin Body escape. It would be foolish as fuck. Whether she agreed or not didn't matter, the end result would've been the same. The only difference was her state afterwards.

It was the misfortune of having a treasure others wanted or needed. Didn't Jiu Lang try to kill him using various schemes for some imaginary treasure despite being a core disciple of the same sect? There was barely any difference.

That being said...

Woosh!

A sharp silver qi shot out at an unprecedented speed. It formed a saber image and traveled like lightning. Before another step could be taken, the commander's head was already separated from his body.

It took a few seconds before death caught up to him. A red line of liquid flowed ceaselessly from the commander's neck, nearly popping off his head. He grasped his neck as if it were the last command his mind had given his separated body. With a look of horrified confusion, the commander's head tilted back and fell.

Thud.

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Chapter 29: Three-Layered Ring

While Wei Wuyin held zero pity for the thieves' situation, he still felt that letting the situation devolve further was a little too extreme.

After ascending to the sixth phase using pure yin and yang energies of the Yin-Yang God Sphere, Wei Wuyin's combat prowess was exceptional. Even if he ascended using normal means, he could still instantly kill any fourth phase expert easily.

Therefore, when he sent out his attack, it wasn't any qi art, but just the manifestation of yin-yang and metal qi in the form of a saber. Even he was taken aback by its strength and swiftness. In a blink of an eye, it had reached the commander from nearly two hundred meters away and severed his head before a reaction could be made.

"Is this why those at the sixth phase are considered gods to those below?" As he pondered this, he leisurely made his way over to the commander's beheaded corpse. When he arrived, he observed the three thieves who had opened mouths and bulging eyes.

They didn't even see how the commander died, and their souls had nearly left their bodies in shock. When they suddenly saw Wei Wuyin waltz over without a care, their expressions all changed. The girl and boy let out yelping sounds, while the female thief remained quiet.

Wei Wuyin praised her inwardly for being able to regain her calm so quickly.

He swept his spiritual sense through the commander and found two spatial rings. One of which was on his finger, the other was stored deep in his flesh, hidden away from prying eyes. "A secret ring?" As he noticed this, he couldn't help but wonder.

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Spatial rings were gateways to off-site storage areas. Usually, they would be set up within the stronghold of a powerful force and made from incredibly durable materials with no way to enter except through the spatial ring.

His spatial ring was the same, connected to the Scarlet Solaris Sect's storage department. Only those who reached the Sublime Qi Phase had a chance to forcefully rip through those containers.

Therefore, keeping a secret spatial ring embedded inside one's flesh left him curious. He deduced that even if he was at the Fifth Stage of Qi Condensation, his spiritual sense would not be powerful enough to locate the ring. In fact, he wasn't confident normal sixth phase experts could either.

Only because he refined the purest of yin and yang energies, established a secondary Heart of Qi, did he have enough spiritual strength in his spiritual sense to recognize the spatial ring.

At first, he thought that the lucky chance was the City Lord's valuables in the thief's possession, but now he was rethinking things. "Could it be, the higher the karmic luck value decreases, the easier it is to obtain the maximum benefits for the lucky chance? The lower, such as with the Yin-Yang God Sphere, meant the harder it is?"

This crossed his mind as he decisively stabbed his finger into the commander's flesh, extracting the spatial ring stored inside his body. When he extracted it, his eyes flickered as he realized it had a unique spiritual formation embedded on its surface.

There were three types, and as he examined it more, he realized this ring had three different containers. Despite his incredibly powerful spiritual sense, he could only enter two of them, being decisively blocked by the third.

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"This? Three layers, each requiring a stronger spiritual strength than before? That's..." This was his first time encountering a ring so odd. He could also tell that there was originally a gate-like formation that needed to be broken. There were traces of dense magma energies that seemed to originate from dozens of years of constant infusion.

He quickly realized the commander had used his spiritual sense and several decades to wear down and destroy the gate ahead of the required strength. The most recent infusion was about three years ago.

At this point, the pieces were now gathering together. The commander had found this ring and discovered the gate formation and its uniqueness when he had been at the Elemental Birth Phase. Slowly, he used his spiritual strength to wear down and destroy the gate formation preventing access. Then, three years ago, he gained entry and used whatever was in the first storage container.

He realized the first container in the first layer had been swept clean. "Could it be that his spiritual spell originated from this ring?"

He did find it odd that the second strongest soldier beneath the commander's elite soldiers was at the beginning of the Elemental Birth Phase, while the rest were at the Second Stage of Qi Condensation. The disparity was a little too great.

The ring likely contained resources too that helped the man reach the Yin Form Phase.

However, the spiritual sense of the commander hadn't reached the level of requirement to reach the second layer. He smiled, fortune truly comes in pairs.

He took the standard spatial ring from the commander's corpse and turned his attention to the three thieves.

"You can decide, I can kill you all here and now, or you can give me what you stole." He said with a faint smile. His handsome visage, black hair, and silver eyes left a heavy impression on all three.

The female thief struggled slightly. Through clenched teeth she said, "Help us and its yours!"

Help? Wei Wuyin found this hilarious.

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"Fine, I'll just kill you all." As he said that, a flame was conjured in his palm. This was true fire made by fire qi and yin-yang energies. This qi could incinerate them all into ash and leave no evidence just like a normal fire would.

"Wait!" The young girl shouted with all her strength in a hoarse voice. She had barely been able to speak or move, but she forcefully did so by rapidly circulating her qi. Her eyes clearly revealed that she did not want to die like this.

She pulled out a badge and threw it on the ground.

Wei Wuyin looked at the tossed badge and examined it. It was made from a trace of wind qi. The image etched in it was of a white lotus in full bloom. It looked alive and pure.

"Jade Lotus Sect?" He realized that those two youngsters were members of the Jade Lotus Sect. How interesting.

"Spare us, and as members of the Jade Lotus Sect, we'll owe you our lives!" The girl cried.

It seemed all three were members of the sect. Looking at their cultivation bases and ages, if one used the standard of the Scarlet Solaris Sect, then these two were core disciples. As for the female thief, she was likely an inner elder subordinate to the two, or related to them.

With her Heart of Wind Qi, she could be a core elder. After all, the Jade Lotus Sect was slightly weaker than the Scarlet Solaris Sect. In fact, it was considered the weakest of the Five Great Sects.

In accordance with overall strength, from first to last, it would be the Sky Sword Sect, Aqua Echo Sect, Scarlet Solaris Sect, Earthly Titan Sect, and Jade Lotus Sect.

"To think the Jade Lotus Sect members are so brazen as to invade into the Earthly Titan Sect's Gaia State and rob one of their most prominent cities. Such gall! I give praise." He felt like clapping in applause. Of course, they failed horrendously, but it was still an 'A' for effort.

The expressions of the young girl shifted with fear seeing Wei Wuyin unmoved.

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She asked, "Who...who are you?" The despair in her voice was tangible as she felt death looming.

"Scarlet Solaris Sect's Wei Wuyin," he answered without hesitation. Those words were like a bomb on all three of their minds. The Jade Lotus Sect and Scarlet Solaris Sect had entered into war several times. They were anything but allies.

"Here!" The female thief decisively extracted the spatial ring with a little bit of her recovered wind qi and sent it over. She had even thrown over her own. After realizing Wei Wuyin's status, her only chance was to give up the gains. It's not like she wanted to die.

However, the young girl felt a wave of hopelessness, unsure if this was enough after declaring their identities, and fiercely pleaded, "Please! I'll do anything, please don't kill us!" She bit her lips and forced an awkward smile as she once more said "anything" with meaning.

Wei Wuyin smiled, "Fine!" He dismissed the fire qi and retrieved the rings. After a brief inspection, his eyes brightened up.

"I owe your Jade Lotus Sect a favor, so this can be considered repaid." As he recalled the old retired blacksmith who forged his silver saber, he couldn't help but sigh.

The old man originated from the Jade Lotus Sect and was even a disciple. However, his talent was poor and he resorted to crafting to make a suitable living to raise his family. He had made weapons for the Jade Lotus Sect for decades, finally quitting and retiring to the Scarlet Solaris Sect's domain where his grandchildren had moved.

Although the man had never said to spare any disciples, he knew he had strong feelings of loyalty and gratefulness. While Wei Wuyin was cold and callous at times, he still held importance to relationships. Even to those who've passed.

A small connection was all he needed to spare the Jade Lotus Sect members. However, that didn't mean he wouldn't gain anything from this. With a wave of his hand, a trace of qi wrapped around the spear and pulled it out of the female thief's shoulder, inducing a hellish shout of pain in response.

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Wei Wuyin retrieved the qi weapon and examined it with rapt attention. "Definitely of high-grade. It has yin and yang energies structured within, including magma qi. If my saber is compared, it's like steel to rock." He sighed with emotion.

This spear was useful to even fifth phase experts, let alone a fourth phase expert. His saber had already become obsolete, unable to withstand the infusion of his powerful qi. That's why he hadn't used it often, especially when he reached the fifth phase himself.

After a few more looks, he stored the high-grade qi spear into his storage ring. He placed the other spatial rings in his various pockets and walked towards the young girl. He observed her and realized her primal yin was still intact, while she could be considered a beauty, but after realizing she didn't have a unique physique, he sighed.

If he decided to dual cultivate with her, the one who'd benefit massively would be her, not him. With his dense elemental and yin-yang energies, her cultivation would probably reach the peak of the third phase with a chance to birth lightning, wood, or metal qi with her talent. Not to mention, her foundation would be paved.

As for him, he'll just get a mild, insignificant increase in his yin energy. With how strong it was now, that increase was truly unimportant. He wasn't so heartless as to pluck her primal yin one-sidedly, and that wasn't very enjoyable for either party.

Shaking his head softly, he decided to just take both of their spatial rings. He quickly dumped out the contents of the three rings and stored it into his own sect-located spatial ring. He also dumped out the contents of the commander's personal ring and relocated it into his own.

Then, he returned the rings. He took the things important to him, pills, elixirs, manuals, objects with various types of energies, or oddities that stood out. What was left was just trash at that point.

He didn't want them communicating with their sect and having their possessions removed from their storage containers before he could take them, so he retrieved all his desired contents.

Witnessing their stuff being taken caused them to clench their teeth in indignation.

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The young girl saw Wei Wuyin's lustful eyes and shrank back, her heart feeling fear, but when he revealed a trace of disappointment, she felt a sense of loss. Like she had just lost out on an outstanding opportunity.

"Well, good luck." He brushed his hands and readied to leave.

"Wait!" The woman, originally referred to as the female thief, shouted while grabbing her nearly collapsed left side. "My name's Jiao Ning! I'll remember you."

Jiao Ning? Wei Wuyin looked towards her and smiled, "Okay."

Just as he was about to take off, within his spiritual sense's range, he noticed several soldiers approaching rapidly. He frowned. The commander must've left trails for them to follow, otherwise just a slight degree off, and they would've been somewhere else. Instead, they followed the path straight to here.

Noticing his gaze shift towards where they came from, the young boy who couldn't speak, as his jaw had been dislocated and several of his teeth had been knocked out, realized the soldiers were approaching. He mumbled incoherently in panic.

Even if Wei Wuyin spared them, those soldiers will definitely capture them. He was likely dead and those two females...

They were in no shape to escape or run. Their fates were sealed.

However, Wei Wuyin's eyes lit up. "More wealth!"

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Chapter 30: Easy Fool

In terms of wealth, Qi Condensation Realm experts had deep pockets. Even the first stage expert had a wealth worth at least an essence stone. However, considering they were all elites, they may have two or three essence stones worth of resources. Their qi weapons and armor were already worth a fortune.

Thinking this, he nearly forgot about the commander's armor. If he sold just their armors to the black market, he could gain dozens of essence stones, and what he needed most for cultivation was pure essence stones.

Just from absorbing and calculating the rate of growth two essence stones gave, he realized that his requirement for cultivation was high. If it was just one Heart of Qi, he may need about four hundred essence stones to reach the walnut-sized requirement to step into the Sublime Qi Phase, but with two...

Eight hundred essence stones was an absolutely disgusting amount of wealth.

And this was only an estimation, who knew if he would need a thousand or more?!

Now that walking bags of money were racing towards him, an insatiable greed emerged in his heart. With a quickness, he removed the commander's armor and stored it into his storage space. His eyes were the picture of avarice.

Seeing Wei Wuyin's hasty actions, the young man panicked thinking he was taking what he could before abandoning them. He started to incoherently plead, but even if Wei Wuyin could understand him, he would still ignore him.

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The young woman and Jiao Ning noticed this as well, but what could they do? Like before, the young woman cried, this time trying to rise, "The other soldiers are coming, aren't they? Please, don't leave us!"

She was about to beg or show her willingness to do anything for a chance at life when the rustling of the earth caught her attention. In her view, several dozen soldiers were marching forward with murderous momentum.

Jiao Ning's heart clenched. She gritted her teeth and wanted to cry. There were even thoughts of killing herself. If she landed in those men's hands...

After ensuring that he took everything of value from the commander's corpse, Wei Wuyin revealed a self-satisfied expression. His gains would be massive!

Just as he was about to slaughter those incoming soldiers, Jiao Ning once more shouted. "If you save us, I'll tell you a crucial secret!"

Secret?

Wei Wuyin's ears perked immediately, "What secret?"

"It relates to the City Lord and why he's not chasing us!" She said, her panic increasing as the soldiers' footsteps neared.

"There they are! Forward men!" In the distance, the highest ranked soldier shouted with power.

"Well, out with it." Wei Wuyin urged, his expression a little bored.

"!" Looking at the soldiers, she clenched her teeth and decided to bet it all. While this secret was important, whether it was of any worth to this unknown youth was still up to question. If

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she revealed it and he lost interest, wouldn't she suffer? Originally, she wanted to use it as a lure to get him to defend them, but that didn't seem like it'd work.

"The City Lord found a piece of Mt. Inferno's heart essence! He's trying to refine it now and give birth to the Blazing Inferno Magma Qi!" She spilled it all. As she had seduced the City Lord's profligate son, many secrets were revealed including that. It was because of that that she was willing to rob the city's vault.

"Oh!" As he heard this, his eyes burned with desire. No wonder the Heavenly Daos urged him to spread his spiritual sense through the city and led him here. He thought it had to do with the three-layered ring, but it was he who misunderstood!

The Heavenly Daos also gave him an opportunity to enter without the city lord having his elite protection while simultaneously being preoccupied! Wasn't this a glorious chance?

However...

With his cultivation base, did he need to avoid those soldiers? That's strange. Did the Heavenly Daos miscalculate his strength?

As he thought about it, he considered how strong he would be if he hadn't used his own efforts and relied solely on the Heavenly Daos lucky chances. He wouldn't have two Hearts of Qi or reached the False Reality Phase.

Was this lucky chance predicated on his assumed cultivation? According to his current knowledge, the City Lord wasn't a Mortal God-level character, but that might be wrong.

Or...

If he considered it with the assumption of a Fifth Stage of Qi Condensation strength, then he couldn't avoid the commander's powerful spiritual means. He would be noticed, and if the City Lord was a recently established Mortal God...he could die.

However, if he acted while the City Lord was occupied with refining the magma essence, then even he as a Fifth Phase would have a small chance to snatch it or kill him. Even if he failed, he would still have an opportunity to escape as breaking the refinement would've injured the City Lord.

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Without his soldiers, he couldn't catch up!

"Wow!" He exclaimed in awe as if he felt the puzzle pieced together nicely. With that, he pushed out his palm as sharp sabers formed from his metal qi and sliced forward. Without any suspense, the heads of all the incoming soldiers left their shoulders and soon they became corpses.

"You all, stay here and remove their armor, weapons, and spatial rings for me. I'll be right back." He was filled with urgency as he executed the Thunder Step elemental qi art and left with an explosive boom.

The three had eyes of shock on their expressions.

He...dealt with them so easily.

In Ash Dragon City.

In the City Lord's Palace.

There was a sealed room that was suitable for cultivation. It had a myriad of spiritual and qi formations that promoted cultivation and gathered yin, yang, magma, fire, and earth energies. The room was fortified on the outside, making penetration by anyone less than a Mortal God-level figure extremely difficult.

Even a Fifth Phase expert would require several minutes to break into the room.

Within this room was a man with dark hair and obsidian eyes. His long beard was majestic, his eyebrows were thick, and his body was fit. He looked like a middle-aged general.

Before him was Blazing Inferno Magma Essence. It was a dark crimson stone that emanated a high degree of heat. Within it, traces of magma continuously flowed without end. It was as large as a basketball and had no real defined sharpness. However, it looked like it was only a piece of a whole.

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The man was using his Heart of Qi to absorb strands of magma essence from the stone. Carefully, he refined that essence with his meridians, passed it to his dantian, and absorbed it through his Heart of Qi, entering its core. He hoped to give birth to Blazing Inferno Magma energy which would in turn give him Blazing Inferno Magma Qi.

The commotion outside had not reached him and he was not disturbed. That being said, his son, a guardy dressed young man, paced back and forth with anxiety outside the door. The city's vault was robbed and he had an idea as to who took it. Fearing his father may kill him in anger, he wished to beg for forgiveness the moment he left seclusion.

He didn't dare to disturb his father and try, otherwise he would truly be killed.

A shadow emerged in a corner unbeknownst to the young man. Wei Wuyin had suppressed his aura and presence as he looked at the young man. He realized that there were formations set up to protect the room, and while he could breach it, it would give the City Lord a few seconds to notice.

He needed the formation key to enter inside quickly and quietly. Then, he could strike without anyone noticing.

"Is this boy the son mentioned by that commander?" He recalled a profligate son who gave up core secrets for some ass, and couldn't help but feel pity for him. Can't men simply lay with a woman without giving up all their secrets?

This was even worse for powerful men. Their women oftentimes knew everything and were their most trusted confidants. Even Xing Fu didn't know he reached the Mortal God level. He made it a habit to keep his strength unknown.

Loose pants usually meant loose lips.

Wei Wuyin felt satisfied that he didn't indulge in a lifestyle of debauchery. While he had many sexual partners, most of them were one-night stands with mutual benefits. Only Xing Fu, Mei Mei, and another girl named Dai Lin were more than that.

If Wei Wuyin had known that the profligate son hadn't even enjoyed any sexual relations with the pretty thief, Jiao Ning, yet still he gave up all those secrets, what would he think then?

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He refocused.

Swosh!

With a swift strike, he beheaded the son without hesitation. He used only his saber so no qi fluctuations would be generated to ensure that no one would notice. After searching the boy's body and spatial ring, he found a formation flag in the shape of a small spherical rock. This flag was a control tool interconnected with the myriad of formations here.

"Is it really that easy? This City Lord trusted his son a little too much, no?" Thinking about this, he couldn't help but coldly chuckle in his heart. After using the flag, he bypassed the formations quietly and entered the room. The temperature within the room was up by a hundred degrees from outside, making it a literal scorching chamber.

If a normal mortal was in here, their blood would start to boil. Luckily, with his cultivation base, there wasn't even a mild discomfort. When he arrived, he realized the man was focused wholeheartedly on refining the magma essence of the Mount Inferno heart.

"It can't be this easy, no?" He questioned the Heavenly Daos as he swiped his saber at the City Lord's neck. With what should've been an epic battle, was only a head falling off a shoulder and crimson blood spewing everywhere.

Wei Wuyin was taken aback so much that he just stayed where he was, stunned for several seconds. "So...it was that easy?" Shaking his head with a sense of loss, he inspected the City Lord's body and felt yin-yang energy within his rapidly dispersing Heart of Qi.

He truly was a Mortal God.

He took his spatial ring and swept the container. The city lord's spatial ring wasn't connected to the vault, but to his own secret container. He immediately transferred all the contents to his own ring and took the magma essence.

He didn't store the magma essence in his ring, but in the three-layered ring's first layer, which was empty. If he placed something like that with other objects, who knew if he would come back to a container filled with ash.

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Rubbing his face, he still felt this was a little surreal. He now realized that not only was the Heavenly Daos unable to judge him, but it can't even properly perceive his cultivation strength, running off on an assumption of strength. While he could be wrong, he felt that that lined up with the Bloodline of Sin's abilities.

"So is that how one overcomes the Eighteen Calamities of Hell? By fooling the Heavenly Daos into giving easy lucky chances. Haha, how hilarious." His laugh was a little self-deprecating because the calamities will still hit and he wasn't sure when it would come or if he could survive them.

He gave a low sigh and left. Just like when he came, no one noticed him leave. Before long, he had arrived back near the three thieves. When he returned, he found the spatial rings, armor, and weapons lying separately from the corpses.

The three were patching up their wounds, and using medicinal energy from pills to heal. His eyebrow twitched when he realized they took some of the soldiers' pills to do so.

That was his wealth, you know!

But...

Considering she had given him this windfall and did what he asked, he would let it slide.

When he arrived, the three pairs of eyes sharply turned to him with hints of worry and fear. It was as if they expected someone else, but when they saw Wei Wuyin's handsome countenance, silver eyes, and tall figure, they inadvertently gave a sigh of relief.

The young woman said, "We're sorry, but we needed the medicinal pills..." her expression and tone would normally invoke pity and a desire to protect from her vile male counterparts, but Wei Wuyin directly ignored her. He swept up the armor and weapons, emptied the storage rings and sent everything into his storage space.

As a core disciple of the Scarlet Solaris Sect, his storage space was incredibly large and barely a third had been filled with all those things.

After tidying up everything, he needed to find the crane. He would find somewhere to rest, inspect his gains, and quietly cultivate before leaving for the next city.

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He still needed to find Mei Mei and the Helios Witch. If she was alive, he would definitely bring her back. If she was dead, he would bring back the head of those responsible. However, he wasn't in a rush. It would take two weeks of non-stop flight, but realistically speaking, it would take at least two months with the white crane.

If Mei Mei was kept alive, it's unlikely they'd kill her at all. She didn't have much importance anyhow. And if she was already dead, then it didn't matter when he arrived. He rather strengthen himself before making his way there.

While he cared for Mei Mei, the most important thing was still his own safety and strength. That may sound cold, and a tad bit heartless, but he was realistic in his thinking. Only with strength could he do what he wants, whenever he wants, and however he wanted.

As he thought of that, he felt a hot itch in his heart. A tinge of lust emerged and he looked towards the three. While dual cultivating would offer benefits and expend his energy, normal relations wouldn't do much. He could scratch this itch of his while finding a place to rest.

Walking up to the woman named Jiao Ning, he warmly smiled.

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