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Paragon of Sin Chapter 41 - 50

Chapter 41: Aftermath

Near a lake, a nude figure washed himself off. The loose dirt, blood, and peeled skin was scrubbed off with his hands. Besides two pieces of accessory, a necklace of a crescent moon and a ring, there was nothing else on his body.

Wei Wuyin was distraught at his circumstance. His last ditch effort to survive disintegrated his Scarlet Solaris Sect's spatial ring, his clothes, and all his hair. He was bald, without any eyelashes or eyebrows, and even his pubic hair had been turned into dust.

The only two things that survived was the three-layered ring and the crescent moon necklace that came from it. He wasn't too shocked that they survived. He couldn't even figure out the materials they were made of; therefore, they couldn't be ordinary.

"Where am I?" Wei Wuyin asked himself. The nearby crane dipped its beak into the lake, drinking its contents with a satisfied expression. Wei Wuyin's eyebrow twitched.

He was lost.

His current location was far from the maelstrom of destruction. However, he didn't know how fast he was going or how fast the wall went. He tried to make an estimation, believing he had traveled about one hundred to three hundred miles away from the Clear Sky Mountain Range.

"It's not like I teleported, no? But then, why can't I find it?" Wei Wuyin's frustration furthered when he recalled taking the crane into the skies and finding no mountain range. He couldn't have traveled a thousand miles away, right?

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If he did, considering he traveled south, directly opposite to the wall's incoming direction, he would've been in the Jade Lotus Domain, or near it. From the Clear Sky Mountain, west lay the Gaia State of the Earthly Titan Sect and Scarlet Solaris Domain.

Northwest from the Scarlet Solaris Domain was the Sky Sword Domain, directly north was the Aqua Echo Sect, and east from the Aqua Echo Sect was the Wu Central Lands of the Wu Country and home to the Capital.

If he had traveled north from the Clear Sky Mountain Range, he would've been in the Wu Central Lands, but he went south. With only the Jade Lotus Domain being south, bordering another country, he had only two possible locations: the Jade Lotus Domain or Xin Country.

Looking back at the destruction that had occurred, he wondered how many lives were lost. How many families were killed, cities and villages were swept up, and sects destroyed if he truly did travel as far as he believed.

"Even worse, my Hearts of Qi are damaged. They'll need time to recover, even the qi cyclone around them destabilized." Sighing ruefully, he felt the immense pain aching his body. Not to mention the damage to his Hearts of Qi, his actual fleshy body was damaged, both internally and externally.

To make matters worse, he didn't have any medicinal pills to help or qi to bolster his healing rate. He would have to wait with fractured teeth and bones, missing teeth and hair, and bruised flesh until he either obtained the appropriate pills or his Hearts of Qi recovered.

As he looked in the reflection of the water, his handsome visage no longer existed. Instead, he looked like a dirty hillbilly with a toned body. In fact, his hairless state made him somewhat monstrous-looking.

He rubbed his bald cranium and winced in pain. There was a considerable dent in his skull about the size of a baby's fist, and it was quite noticeable. Without qi, he couldn't even smooth this out. In fact, if it wasn't for his enhanced brain's flesh, that dent would've been fatal.

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Even now, he felt his bodily control slip at times, like his brain had suffered considerable damage. When he walked, he would limp at times and even his hands trembled randomly or just outright become useless for a period.

Wei Wuyin knew his motor functions were affected by the rolling and smashing into the ground and mountain. It was already lucky his bones didn't shatter into bits, only fractured and broke, but the extent was throughout his skeletal system. The only piece of bone that had very little damage was the spine, as it was the most tempered aspect of any cultivator.

Despite that, he still felt numbness in his legs.

The crane finished drinking and made its way to Wei Wuyin, it rubbed its beak in his right hand. Wei Wuyin didn't respond, his eyes closed as he felt the dent in his skull with his left.

The crane cried softly, only then attracting Wei Wuyin's attention. When he saw the crane's beak rubbing his palm, his eyes constricted.

He didn't feel that.

He couldn't feel that.

He grasped his right arm with his left hand and squeezed. He even put enough force to further the fracture in his bone. Only then did he realize that his entire right arm had grown numb to pain. He moved it, and it trembled throughout the motion, indicating the severity of his current condition.

Taking a deep breath, he felt a deep pit form in his heart. He didn't want to admit it, but there's another reason why he couldn't realize where he was.

His memory was affected.

He tried to recall things. He recalled time in the Scarlet Solaris Sect.

How he found an essence stone, propelling him to an Inner Disciple, joining Mei Mei's faction, all sorts of missions and events, his engagements with the Jiang brothers, and him cultivating diligently to ascend to the second phase.

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He continued to recall, but after he reached the middle portions of his Core Disciple life, it grew blurry and then blank.

"My most recent memory is my escape! The next recent memory, what is it! What is it!!!! I became a Mortal God, wait. No, Ash Dragon City...No, Jade? Jade...Argh!" His head started to fiercely pound with pain. Wei Wuyin clenched his head and violently fell to his knees with a thud.

"Shit!" He viciously spat, misty spittle and blood escaping from his lips. His wounds opened as they bled once more, covering his body with a sanguine color.

His memories were affected and he had lost a portion of it. As a cultivator, he knew it was temporary. All damage to the brain could be healed with the appropriate treatment, and he possessed the Life Meadow Wood Qi. He needed to wait.

He just needed to wait.

As he thought like this, he felt sleepy. Abruptly, he thought about how dirty and bloody he was from the escape. It made him feel uneasy.

"A lake!" He felt relieved that he could clean himself, he started to rub the lake water onto his flesh, cleaning the dirt and blood off.

Wei Wuyin looked around, unable to recall any landmarks. He didn't know how far he traveled, but it couldn't have been too far, right? A few hundred miles at most.

"Where am I?"

The crane softly cried. Wei Wuyin had gone through these series of changes four times now. He hadn't even realized that weeks had passed. This was the third lake they were in, and they've traveled far, always under his orders to find a lake to clean himself up.

The only solace the crane had was his predictability. Always the fourth cycle would he stop losing his memory and continue forward, always the fourth. Then, they'd leave and travel in a direction until they found another lake. Then, as he's washing himself, he would undergo a series of memory loss once more.

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The crane felt guilty, deeply and completely. Wei Wuyin, in one of his stupors, mentioned giving his energy to save the crane instead of himself. However, he didn't regret it. That being said, he forgot that conversation too.

After Wei Wuyin spat out once more in pain, groveling on the ground, dirtying himself once again, he turned towards the crane.

"Let's go. We need to find the mountain," he said as he mounted the crane. They took to the skies for several minutes, but Wei Wuyin winced once more, the light in his eyes fading and revitalizing once more.

"Gah, I'm so dirty. Let's find a lake nearby on the way." Wei Wuyin said, ordering the crane to continue.

It cried with a hint of sorrow, but faithfully carried out its master's orders.

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Chapter 42: Life Without

In a small village, simple and coarse, a little girl was kicking her tiny legs back and forth from a resting bench. This village was the home of several hundred people, and sat by a river, their lifeblood.

There were rarely any events happening here, as their land wasn't worth much and their people were poor. Out of the typical path from cities and towns, this village went unnoticed.

"Hey mister!" The little girl called out, chewing on some homemade soft candy. "You're not from 'round here, right?" Her big blue eyes and pigtails made her exceptionally cute as they exuded boundless curiosity.

Beside the little girl, laying on the ground as if asleep, was a man. He had unkempt black hair, dirty, black robes with various rips and tears, and no shoes. His robe didn't seem to fit him, being a few sizes too large, and his face was a mixture of dirt and mud.

The dirty man picked his nose, but continued to feign his sleeping appearance.

"I know you're not asleep!" The little girl pouted and kicked her legs out more fiercely.

"Yes I am," the man mumbled. He scratched his crotch a little and then smelled his fingers, his head winced back, and he coughed in disgust. But still, he closed his eyes and continued to feign being asleep.

"No you're not!" The girl argued.

"Yes I am."

"No you're not!"

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"I am!"

"You're not!"

"Gahhhh!" The slovenly man shouted, scratching his head in frustration. "Don't you have a man to please or a candy to suck somewhere else?"

The little girl jumped at his shouts, but hearing his disgusting words, she blushed and grew enraged.

"I'm too young for that!" The girl cried. She was only ten years old, and the ways of a man and a woman wasn't something she was allowed to have or know too well. Even though she knew the doings of her parents in their private time, she knew what she should and should not do. Therefore, she was vehemently against being told off in such a way.

"Pfft! You're too young to suck candy? Haha, must be a baby with no teeth." The dirty man commented, a grin on his face as he rose up with mocking eyes, not even concerned that his insult made little sense as sucking required no teeth.

"No, not that!" She argued once more, her gift of gab wasn't too strong, nor was her experience.

"Then what? Huh? What are you too young for?" The dirty man's eyes lit up as his interest grew.

"I...I..you know." The girl shyly responded, unable to repeat what he said.

"I know? I know nothing. If you can't say it because you're embarrassed, then it must be true. You should run along and do that." Mocking her with laughter, the dirty man pretended to once more sleep, even going as far as to snore loudly.

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"You!!" The little girl wanted to stomp her feet, but they dangled and she couldn't reach the ground. Instead, she slammed her dainty fist on the bench, but the impact caused her expression to change. Her eyes welled with tears as a wave of pain emanated from her fist. She had struck knuckle down, inducing such pain.

She got up and gave one venomous glare at the man before leaving. She hatefully said, "that's why you're homeless now, you stupid-mean-head! Just you wait!!" With a true stomp, she left with tears.

"Homeless..." the dirty man softly muttered. He felt a tinge of pain in his heart when he heard that word. Rubbing his head, he felt a tickle of pain within. Opening his eyes, he revealed a set of silver orbs that was brilliant and bright. However, deep within was confusion.

"Where am I?" Suddenly, those bright eyes became infused with intelligence. The slovenly man stood up, his eyes scanning his surroundings, and then a moment of comprehension dawned.

"Your name's Wei Wuyin. How did you get here? Your memory...your brain..." Wei Wuyin touched his head and noticed that his skull had healed, no longer a dent within, and so had his flesh. However...

"My Hearts of Qi, they've gone dormant?" He could barely sense his Hearts of Qi, but they were still within his Dantian. However, it was bereft of Qi and no energy actively circulated throughout his body. If it wasn't for his strengthened body, he could be considered as a non-cultivator.

Even his meridians and internal cells no longer seemed the same. They contained a unique elemental, saber, and world force within. If he was inspected by someone now and before the incident, no one would believe they were the same person.

"My memory is suffering an acute state of deterioration, and I'm forgetting myself. Moments like these are rare, and they happen, but I don't know how long my last one was." For the last while, his memory had been like a light switch or a broken record. He had become

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aware of it on his exceptionally clear days, like today, where he recalled all of his forgotten memories at once.

He couldn't believe some of the things he'd done, influenced by his lack of memory and therefore his sense of self.

"There's something wrong with my brain and Mind's Eye, and I can't heal it...because my Hearts of Qi is lacking. I need something to change it, so I made several plans. I'm here...waiting. Waiting for the crane!" Wei Wuyin now remembered.

He had seventy-three clear days, each spanning from an hour to less than a few minutes. With each one, the time for his sense of clarity seemed to be getting shorter, but the time between was extending.

"It's been at least two years! At least, from what I gathered three clarities ago! If my assumption is correct, then it's been at least four months since my last moment of clarity! The crane should have been back by now! Damn it! If this continues, I'll lose my sense of self completely and die a pathetic, lackluster life." The level of frustration in his heart was palpable, but what could he do?

He didn't have enough time to travel to the Scarlet Solaris Sect or even determine his current location in any meaningful way. Even the crane wasn't sure how to return, and if he forgets, he could just pass the sect completely or worse. This terrified him, and he needed to ensure his recovery and safety above all, even against his sect.

Who knew if someone would meet him en route and kill him in hopes of obtaining his so-called 'cultivation treasure'. This made him even more unsure of how to proceed, so he devised three failsafes.

One relied on karmic luck, one relied on the crane, and one relied on a sequence of events occurring perfectly.

The crane was the most reliable, and when he checked his karmic luck value and saw that it remained the same, his heart knew his first plan had failed. If none of these plans worked, then he could only pray someone healed him or his Hearts of Qi somehow recovered so elemental energy could circulate throughout his body.

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Suddenly, he felt a tingling pain within his head. It was like a falling gate that was keeping out his memories, and no matter how hard he tried to resist, they were being sealed behind it.

Slowly, the light within his eyes dimmed, replaced by a sleepy expression. He looked around with shock and curiosity.

"Why am I in this village?" Getting up, Wei Wuyin poorly dusted himself off and started to walk aimlessly away. When the little girl came with her big brother, who seemed ready to kick some ass, Wei Wuyin had long since vanished as his feet and unclear mind brought him elsewhere.

Several days later, a white crane large enough to hold half-a-dozen people on its back landed in the village. Its long neck shifted left and right, its beak sweeping the area where Wei Wuyin once sat.

"Aria, is he here or not?! We've been searching for him for the last month, y'know!" An adult woman said exasperatedly. She was wearing a green and gold robe, a violet cauldron with a green tree growing out of it was etched into her back.

She was tall, had a somewhat flat chest, incredibly perky ass, however, and a thin body. Her brown eyes and hair accentuated her girl-next-door vibe.

The crane cried, trying to indicate that Wei Wuyin was indeed here before, just not now.

"Aria! You better uphold your promise! As long as I find your previous master and send him to the sect, you're my mount!" The woman said with frustration. Despite saying that, her heart was anxious and excited. This crane had the strength of a Qi Condensation expert at the first phase, if she could have a mount like this, wouldn't her status be extraordinary within the sect?

Kree!

The crane voiced its agreement with a nod and a bird cry.

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"Then, let's hurry up and find him!" The young woman shouted.

The crane flapped its wings causing all the shocked villagers to stare in amazement. With an aerial rise, it took to the skies and tried to locate its master, Wei Wuyin.

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Chapter 43: First Calamity

Prrrshh!

Wei Wuyin, in his slovenly appearance, was standing next to a lakeside. While whistling, he urinated without a care in the world.

The current Wei Wuyin had no memories of his past or the dire circumstances of his future. Therefore, in this rare moment, he felt free and happy. He traveled where the wind blew and ate what he wished.

The earth became his bed and the sky became his roof.

Giving a little wag, he gave a sigh of relief. "Hehe, where's all the women at? With this thing's size, I can have any and many! Maybe I should find some," as this thought entered his mind, he started to wag his 'little man' like a dog would wag its tail.

He laughed, his tone cheerful and childish. As he whipped it back and forth, another idea came to him. With a little motion, he started to spin it rapidly around.

"Look! No hands!" Letting go of his grip, he started to twist as if showing everyone around him.

However...

There was no one around him. The world was silent and not even a peep from the wildlife or wind. It was eerily silent.

Wei Wuyin didn't notice this, and continued to have fun. When he got tired, he decided to dive and entered the lake.

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Surrounding the lake were trees of black wood with leaves of crimson that dripped sanguine liquid that gave the smell of blood. The sky was grey, dull and gloomy. The atmosphere was as if the world was no longer the world.

The lake that Wei Wuyin dived in was exceptionally clear and blue. One could see the very bottom, but when they did, all sorts of images would emerge.

Wei Wuyin floated in this lake, his eyes closed as he felt the refreshingly cold temperature. This continued for a while before he felt a twitch in his leg. He looked downwards and saw images.

These images were of his past, of his future, of alternate pasts, of alternate futures. They displayed a variety of things, with people who should elicit all sorts of responses from him.

Wei Wuyin felt like his mind was immersed, unable to be drawn away, and all the things he saw was the undeniable truth of the world. They have happened or will happen.

The first image he saw was of a young man, his eyes brilliant and his aura noble. If Wei Wuyin had his memory, he would recognize this figure as his relative - his older brother. It displayed his brilliant achievements, and even Wei Wuyin who had lost his sense of self, felt his blood boil by these events.

He silently cheered on this man with gusto, but then an event happened. It led to his death. The death was gruesome, portrayed horrifically.

Wei Wuyin winced, not out of fear, but pity. "A hero dies yet again, when's the next show?" Wei Wuyin asked nonchalantly. He had seen these images thousands of times over, sometimes the events changed, sometimes the people changed, sometimes it was their ages but the events remained the same in terms of ending - gruesome and dark.

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Wei Wuyin often saw this 'guy', he had silver eyes, black hair, slightly dark skin, incredibly handsome, well fit in form, and exuded a calm genius. He had glory and he had failures, sometimes those glory would coincide with those failures.

Wei Wuyin found this 'guy' to be the most interesting as the stories were particularly vivid.

While he patiently watched these images, he would sometimes get bored and did stuff like dive into the lake. He tried to leave, but this lake surrounded by black trees and blood leaves seemed to form an inescapable maze. No matter where he went, he would come back here and the images would become more vivid.

After awhile, he just stopped trying to leave and watched these shows for his own entertainment. They were a decent way to pass the time.

In fact, Wei Wuyin could've said to have been here for seven years and seven months exactly. This was just one of the forty-nine areas that led to various forms of remembrance. They came in all forms, where he would take the form of others, or he experienced several groups of people beg for their lives, asking him to kill himself to save them.

"Pfft." When Wei Wuyin thought of those people, he broke out of his immersion and laughed. As if he would give his life for a bunch of strangers, he'll see them in hell! He chuckled softly, but was immediately drawn into the lake's shifting images once more.

No matter how graphic or terrifying the images, he could only wince in pity and even sometimes laugh. Some people just died in a hilarious manner, and it amused him to no end.

He also saw some that caused him to question females. There was a man who had his head within a woman's crotch, only to have his head pop like a shattered watermelon from her thighs.

It truly made him reconsider some things.

"Pitiful bastard," he kept breaking out of the immersion. However, the images kept trying to draw him in further and further, but continued to fail.

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A gigantic figure, a shadow, stood above in the gloomy skies. It had multiple, seemingly infinite amounts of eyes and arms, and they all looked as if they were grasping the world above and below.

Two smaller figures were standing below this shadow, they were both sporting a pair of wings on their backs. One had bright silver wings, they were full, healthy, and filled with brilliantly dazzling feathers. The other had dark crimson wings, thin, dry, and lacked any forms of feathers - like a bat. Their faces or bodies weren't clear except for their wings.

"He actually passed the entire Calamity of True Loss without a single failure...this is...is he the First Sinner reincarnated?!" The figure with silver wings said in a rough and gruff voice. That voice trembled slightly as it spoke.

"..." The figure with dark crimson wings remained silent, but his figure was visibly trembling, obviously disturbed by what he had just witnessed.

"This Calamity is to have the chosen ones experience the choices of loss, the past of loss, the future of loss, the loss of will, the loss of life, the loss of sanity, and the final loss. With each failure to retain these aspects, they should slowly have their soul deteriorate, until it dissipated within the Calamity itself." The silver-winged figure stated, his voice filled with utter disbelief.

"With each failure, they lose something, but for each success, they gain something. With Calamity comes fortune, one who overcomes the challenge of Hell shall be benefited by Heaven." The silver-winged figure gave a soft sigh as he said.

The dark crimson-winged figure abruptly spoke, "Out of the seven stages of loss, including the final stage, there has never been any wielder of the Bloodline of Sin who has passed all seven stages of the calamity flawlessly..."

"Until now," the silver-winged figure finished his sentence.

"At most three, and the holder of this record had the Bloodline of Wrath. Filled with rage, he cared not for his past, his life, and had already lost his sanity. There's no way they could affect him, yet he still failed in the others. However, this person has the Bloodline of Pride. They've never passed more than one before. Of course, all you need to do is survive, some even fail all of them, but their souls are strong enough.

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"This one hasn't even entered the Realm of Sages nor possesses a Soul of Sin to resist the Calamity. How did he resist all seven trials?!" This baffling aspect left both of them reeling in almost abject fear, and they had some aversion to even interacting with Wei Wuyin, like he was the plague of biblical proportions.

To them, Wei Wuyin had traits only the First Sinner could or should have.

"He's finished." The figure with multiple eyes and arms that loomed like a giant shadow declared. The two winged figures looked downwards to see Wei Wuyin doing a carefree backstroke in the Dark Lake of Temporal Disaster. They trembled once more and gave a simultaneous sigh. Whether it was one of relief or still induced by fear, no one could tell.

"Send him back," the shadow said, shimmering until it vanished. The two figures nodded, held hands, and emitted a jet-black and bright-white light. The world became immersed in light and Wei Wuyin opened his eyes to witness this.

The light felt warm and peaceful, cold and chaotic, but before he could analyze further, he felt his body shift.

"Oh?! Finally!" Wei Wuyin had felt this feeling once before, and that was when all these strange things started happening. He didn't know if he would return to wherever he came from, but this lake was already becoming boring.

In that light, he felt his body had landed on solid ground and the ambient sounds of nature welcomed him. He realized his physical body wasn't wet, but he was naked.

"Where's my clothes? Wait! Shit! I forgot it!" Recalling taking off his clothes to go for a swim, he cursed. Whoever sent him here stole his clothes! After cursing until he was tired, he rose and looked around him.

"Oh? Mousey, you're still here?" Wei Wuyin noticed a white rat-like creature staring at him with curiosity. It could've been an actual mouse, but it was larger than a beachball. Wei Wuyin could ride it, if he tightened up a little.

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This creature had been here when Wei Wuyin was 'abducted'. He thought with how long time seemed to pass, the creature would've grown old or died, yet here it was. It even had the unique birthmark on its right side that looked like a taco-shell.

In truth, Wei Wuyin had been sent elsewhere, but only seven seconds had passed since he left. Only seven seconds.

Shrugging, he didn't put much thought into it as he lifted himself up and picked a random direction. With a nonchalant gait, he left completely unaware that his mishap with his memories had allowed him to overcome the Calamity of Hell!

On his right arm, the various characters on it shifted rapidly until it stopped.

Karmic Luck Value: 652.5.

First Calamity: Survived - 7/7.

Second Calamity: Suppressed - 49 Years.

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Chapter 44: Eden Earth Sect

Kree!

A white crane cried as it swayed its long neck in every direction. From its eyes, one could see a hint of haste and worry.

The young woman on its back had an expression of impatience and disinterest. She glanced around idly, watching the scenery passively.

"Is he here?" The young woman asked indifferently.

Kree!

Abruptly, the crane lifted her beak and cried. She revealed eyes of excitement as she faintly caught the scent of Wei Wuyin, her master! She heavily flapped her wings and took off rapidly.

Woosh!

After a few minutes, her eyes caught sight of a naked figure, shoeless and dirty. The figure whistled freely, looking about, and touching things in boredom at random. It was as if he was the only person in the world.

The crane saw this and immediately knew who it was. When she saw the third leg swaying between his legs, she was even more certain.

"Is that him?" The young woman said, her tone skeptical seeing a dirty man completely naked in the forest. When she had met Aria, the name she had subsequently given the crane, she never would've imagined this type of man, this type of pervert, could be her previous master.

Kree!

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A soft cry of reply was followed by a sharp dive towards Wei Wuyin.

Wei Wuyin had been walking for quite a while, his eyes wandered about without direction as the wind carried his steps. He didn't know who he was or why he was walking, but he liked it and that was enough.

When the cry of the crane was heard, he turned and saw it dive towards him. There was no fear in his eyes watching a bird far larger than him dive towards him. In fact, he cocked his head to the side and smiled.

"Whitey," he dubbed this crane with a playful smile. When she landed in front of him, he didn't hesitate to walk towards her and reach for her feathers.

The crane joyfully cried, pushing her head forward to touch Wei Wuyin's abdomen with affection. Wei Wuyin ignored this action and grasped a feather.

Kree?!?!

With a tug, he ruthlessly pulled out a feather. Inspecting it, he started to play with it, sniffing it, caressing his skin with it, and twirling it about.

The crane yelped in pain, shocked at Wei Wuyin's viciousness. To a crane, their feathers were their life, but Wei Wuyin didn't hesitate to pull one from her beautiful wings. Unfortunately, she could only lower her head as it would never retaliate against her master.

The young woman saw all this happen and pouted, her eyes focused on Wei Wuyin's body, specifically, his lower area. Her face seemed somewhat flushed, but she didn't look away. Her eyes revealed all sorts of perverted thoughts. Her spiritual sense swept Wei Wuyin and learned that he wasn't a cultivator.

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He had no qi fluctuations or spiritual aura, indicating a complete lack of cultivation. Despite that, his body was tone, firm, and tall. In all the right places.

Only after a while did she awaken from her overactive imagination and asked, "Is this him?" She didn't know the story of why Aria decided to make Wei Wuyin her master, but seeing as he had no cultivation base to speak of, she didn't really care.

Thanks to the Animal Communion Spell, a spiritual spell suited for communicating with beasts, she got the general gist of what Aria wanted. Wei Wuyin often used this spell, and it was quite common in the cultivation world.

"The deal is this: We find your master, find him a place in the sect so he can stay safe, and you're my mount, right?" As if to reaffirm the details of their contract, the young woman questioned. However, her tone was a little...odd...

The crane turned towards the young woman and nodded, but internally, she felt some disdain.

Did this woman not know who her master was? When he recovered his abilities, we'll see if you want me to be your mount! However, as the instructions left behind by a clear-minded Wei Wuyin was clear, she openly accepted the conditions.

Despite not clearly understanding the cultivation world thoroughly, from Wei Wuyin's random mutterings, she knew he had attained 'godhood' and was incredibly strong. She was also there when he killed another 'god' in one blow. As a mount of such a figure, she had her own developed sense of pride and dignity.

In fact, her intelligence was growing just being around him. Even she didn't understand it.

"You! Yeah, you! Come on, we're leaving," the young woman beckoned for Wei Wuyin's attention and gestured for him to come up.

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Wei Wuyin saw her and gave her a harmless smile, reminiscent of a blissful idiot. He didn't hesitate to follow her, the crane lowering itself to accommodate his lift, and he comfortably sat on her broad back.

"My name's Chu Lingxi, you can call me Senior Sister Lingxi." She introduced herself, but Wei Wuyin only kept his idiot smile, his head started turning elsewhere in interest. His hands roamed the feathers of the crane and an itch to pull emerged in his heart, but he didn't. Instead, he caressed it more and more.

He liked the softness and texture of the crane's feathers and flesh on his skin.

"Mute? That's fine. When we get to the sect, I'll have them find some clothes for you," she smiled sweetly at the nude and dirty Wei Wuyin. Her eyes flashed a dangerous glow as she once more glanced at Wei Wuyin's body from top to bottom.

When he turned away, she licked her lips slightly. "Let's go, Aria!" She said, and with a flap of her wings, the crane took to the skies magnificently.

South of Wu Country, the prestigious Xin Country was located. Its strength was slightly weaker than the Wu Country, but no wars took place. This was because the Imperial family of Xin and many of its sects are not defined by strength, but legacy of other skills.

The country was known for its practice and mastery of the Alchemic Dao. Alchemy was a legacy of creation, transformation, and combination. Through a myriad of materials from the world, alchemists create pills, pellets, elixirs, and paste. The four states of alchemy.

These items can bolster cultivation base, recover qi, heal the body or spirit, or even the exact opposite in the form of poisons. Not only that, but pellets are often defensive and offensive items, giving alchemists a variety of tools to fight with.

Because of this, the Xin Country was graciously accepted and perceived as neutral by the surrounding countries. Not once has war been declared upon it nor will it ever. As it supplied alchemic products to all the myriad forces of the various countries for usage, and even upper-tier members required its support.

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In fact, it was known to have dealings with the Elven Race and other races as well, being a perfectly neutral country.

In this country, there were many different sects, palaces, towers, clans or academies, all of which have their own legacies or derivatives of such. One such sect was a sect similar to the Five Great Sects of the Wu Country in terms of status in the Xin Country.

It was called the Eden Earth Sect. They specialized in the unique set of alchemical arts called the Eden Creation Method. There were many forces that derived their own legacies from this method, but even still, the sect remained at the top.

A white crane flew towards this sect with two people sitting atop its back. She revealed a relieved expression as she saw the sights before her.

A grand tree, reaching twenty kilometers high, pierced upwards into the sky and clouds like a godly mountain, its crown and leaves were gargantuan, with thick branches capable of holding entire cities. In fact, the branches actually held various buildings and structures.

Upon closer inspection, one could see that the tree's branches had been dug through and became somewhat like an intricate underground network that allowed travel to various locations of the tree.

At the branches, there were window-like pieces missing that showed a dark depth. At times, green leaf vessels would flash through these tree tunnels carrying all sorts of people or items.

A dense aura of wood energy could be felt from the surroundings, one filled with an abundance of power and vitality.

The total area of this tree exceeded the Scarlet Solaris Sect's Scarlet Mountain in both height and width. The only difference was there were no special material qi birthed naturally from the tree, only a dense form of wood energy.

"This is the Eden Earth Sect!" Chu Lingxi proudly exclaimed as she introduced Wei Wuyin to their current location. "This is your new home." She smiled as she looked towards Wei Wuyin. When she saw his awed expression, a deep sense of pride emerged in her heart.

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Wei Wuyin truly gawked at the sight. His silver eyes were wide as he inspected the tree with rapt attention. However, he didn't speak. Instead, he remained silent, like a mute.

In fact, he didn't speak because the girl assumed he was a mute. He felt like playing a prank on her, so he decided to never speak to her.

As they flew towards the sect, a leaf nearly five meters long and three meters wide, soared towards them. It radiated a form of energy and a unique formation. It seemed the leaf propelled itself by relying on the dense atmospheric wood energy and innate wind energies produced by some object embedded at the center of the leaf.

It arrived next to them, revealing a woman. She had short-cut hair, dressed in light green and white light battle armor, and had a stern expression. When she arrived, she halted them with a gesture, "Halt!"

Chu Lingxi expected this, instructing Aria to stay where they were in mid-air. A trace of respect and solemnity appeared on her face as she met this woman. She was a member of the Verdant Valkyries, a specialized group of female elites that handled the affairs of the sect, including its security.

Each member of that group had talent, and not in alchemy, but in combat. They could often fight people above their cultivation level to a certain extent, giving them a great reputation.

Even she wished to become one, as her alchemic talent wasn't the best, and neither was her overall cultivation talent, but at least she had hope.

"Greetings," she respectfully clasped her hands and bowed slightly. To do this to a guard showed how much she respected them.

The female guard seemed used to this and ignored it, she inspected the crane and Wei Wuyin, who was naked. Her eyes narrowed, a trace of coldness within. That was until her spiritual sense swept by and felt him utterly lacking in cultivation. Not only was this dirty man approaching thirty years in age, he hadn't a lick of cultivation to show for it.

Then, she only revealed a confused look. Glancing towards Chu Lingxi, "Name, rank, and purpose."

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Chu Lingxi quickly replied, "Chu Lingxi, Inner Disciple of the Verdant Way Hall, and to induct a member as an honorary disciple. Him." She answered without a single lapse in words, producing a token of status, and pointing at Wei Wuyin at the end of it.

A slight wrinkle appeared on the brow of the Verdant Valkyrie, but she only shook her head as her imagination wandered.

"You may go." Like a flying leaf in the wind, the Verdant Valkyrie left.

Chu Lingxi sighed inwardly as she directed Aria to fly.

"One day, I'll become one of you." Chu Lingxi swore in her heart.

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Chapter 45: Herbal Boy

Splash!

Wei Wuyin played within a wooden bath, his eyes filled with wonder as he scrubbed his body with a beige loofah. The water had a tinge of green, filled with wood energy, and felt wonderful on the skin. It had already been half an hour since he entered the bath.

The room he was in had walls constructed from tree bark, its texture smoothed out by some form of sanding method. It had a single door and large enough to hold a dozen people.

Pa! Pa!

A woman walked into the bath with clear steps, drawing Wei Wuyin's attention. It was Chu Lingxi, her thin body swayed over with what seemed like a sweet smile. When she saw the cleaned Wei Wuyin, she was deeply shocked, her heart fluttering.

Wei Wuyin's silver eyes contained a hint of purity and brilliance unlike any she'd ever seen, his muscles were like sculptured marble, and his handsomeness couldn't be more vibrant. She gulped without much thought, her heart filled with all sorts of fire.

Wei Wuyin softly smiled at this woman, this toothless smile revealed even more of his good looks. However, if he did open his mouth, she would shockingly find him with fractured teeth and missing one's. As he hadn't been able to heal or use pills, he lacked the ability to regrow them.

"Alright," Chu Lingxi collected herself. She held an outfit of brown and white. It was similar to hers in design outside of its color scheme. This was the designated uniform for all honorary disciples of the sect.

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In frank terms, honorary disciples were mostly free labor and servants in any sect. If Wei Wuyin could remember his time in the Scarlet Solaris Sect, he would recall the utter lack of status and value these disciples had. They were numerous, nameless, and unimportant.

However, the Wei Wuyin today didn't seem to care much. In fact, he got up and walked towards Chu Lingxi with his gaze fixated on the clothing. The fabric seemed soft. He liked soft things.

Chu Lingxi said, "I've handled your processing, you're an honorary disciple of the Verdant Way Hall, a disciple of the Eden Earth Sect starting today." She handed him the set of robes and a parchment. On the surface of the parchment were the words: "Eden Earth's 180 Rules."

Wei Wuyin grabbed the robes and quickly started to place them on himself. It wasn't long before he was dressed, his movements seemed practiced as if done simply by muscle memory. The outfit suited him perfectly, being tight around the right areas, and loose in others.

"Good." Chu Lingxi commented as she watched Wei Wuyin dress without restraint. She already had some plans, but she had her heart burst with a trace of heat. Then, she looked at a ring on her pinky.

This ring was without embedded jewelry and was pure white. Etched in its four directions, it had a single red character: "Companion." When she looked towards this ring, her emotions became complex.

She looked towards Wei Wuyin, felt that he lacked any form of cultivation, and his body left her heart and body blazing hot. He was vulnerable and a mute. This left a very rare opportunity for her, and considering what she was going to give him to, she felt that it was a now-or-never moment.

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A devious desire birthed was often like a seed of inevitability.

"These robes are a little loose, let Senior Sister Lingxi help you with that." She motioned and slowly removed Wei Wuyin's clothes once more. Wei Wuyin was somewhat confused, but since she gave him the robes, he didn't reject. Before long, he was once more naked.

Chu Lingxi's eyes grew misty as she started to take off her robes, her thin body and pert ass revealed itself fully. Her tall form, flat chest, and womanly curves were all clearly shown for Wei Wuyin to see and appreciate. She bit her lower lip, seductively revealing her desires, and caressed Wei Wuyin's face with her right hand while her left hand touched something far beyond the average standard of man.

"Let Senior Sister Lingxi make you feel good, don't you want that?" Her words were actually without much need, as Wei Wuyin's body had already responded and was at full attention. At this point, whether she would be able to get away from Wei Wuyin was another matter altogether.

Inspired, Wei Wuyin just took the cues and embraced her fully. His lips met hers and with a surprised yelp, the bath room was filled with sensual sounds. He followed his instincts completely. An aroma of yin and yang permeated within the bath.

About an hour later.

Wei Wuyin had refitted himself in his sect attire, feeling the fabric with full attention. He really loved this fabric's texture. It wasn't as soft as the crane's feathers, but it was close.

While he appraised his attire, Chu Lingxi was fixing her hair in front of the mirror placed in the bath. Her face was flushed, her eyes bright, and her body thoroughly sated. She soundlessly smiled and chuckled recalling what had happened. She had never felt like that before, and she didn't know what to make of it.

Then, her expression changed as she thought of her plans and became somewhat regretful. "I should've waited a few weeks." With a soft sigh tainted with regret, her mood noticeably dropped.

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"Come, let's go." She said, pulling Wei Wuyin out of the bath. This was her personal room, fashioned within the Tree of Eden, and given to her when she became an inner disciple. When they walked out of her room, Wei Wuyin saw the outside once more.

This was a place within the tree's large body. There were light stones placed above that provided abundant light. This stone seemed to draw energy from the sun and moon, giving off solar light in the daytime and lunar light during the night.

Even though he couldn't see the sky, based on the brightness of that stone above, he knew it was mid-day. It was a majestic feeling.

Chu Lingxi decided to explain the sect's situation, "The Eden Earth Sect is divided into sixteen halls, each hall has their own speciality and disciples from Honorary, Outer, Inner, and Core. There are also the upper echelon members, the Elders, Vice-Hall Masters and Hall Masters. The sixteen halls were divided into two paths, generalized and specialized.

"You're a part of the Verdant Way Hall, one of the eight Halls that is known for its generalized abilities. They train alchemy, combat, and herbal growth. Amongst these three, it focuses a little greater on herbal growth. These herbs are used by the entire sect and even sold, meaning it has some profit.

"You'll be one of the Core Disciple's herbal boys. You'll handle the caring of and retrieval of various forms of herbs. Your life will be herbs, your breath will be herbs, and you'll cultivate for herbs. However, you'll be safe and live a fulfilling life of accomplishment."

As she explained this, Wei Wuyin didn't fully understand, but he was filled with curiosity.

Herbs were plants filled with medicinal energies and could be used for alchemy in pills, elixirs, paste, and pellets. The term 'herb' was quite broad as it incorporated any plant life that could be used for alchemic methods.

This meant even normal grass could be classified as an herb, or even moss. It was simply a matter of whether it was useful for alchemy or not. Even if a flower was grand and beautiful, if it had no alchemic value, it was not considered an herb. Therefore, while it was 'broad' it was also very 'specific'.

In the mortal world, any plant that could be used was considered an herb.

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They walked for a bit, traveling through the paved streets and made their way into a rather large palace. This palace had a huge sign: "Yanlin Palace."

Wei Wuyin gawked at the calligraphic beauty of the strokes. The elegance and pride that exuded from it was praiseworthy. It left him curious about who wrote it.

Chu Lingxi smiled bitterly seeing this sign, a flash of guilt entered her eyes as she saw Wei Wuyin's reaction. However, her gaze turned firm and resolute. She had obtained Aria, and with this, she could obtain greater benefits.

At the doors of the palace were two men, they were thin, young, and handsome. They looked more like flower boys than guards. Even their expressions felt unnatural despite the seriousness within and the weapons they wielded.

"Inner Disciple Chu Lingxi has an offering for Princess Yanlin," Chu Lingxi humbly announced. The two guards had their expressions change as they looked towards Wei Wuyin. Nearly undetectable, a flash of pity and sadness emerged in their eyes.

They, however, quickly receded their emotions and nodded indifferently as if conditioned to do so. They opened the door and gestured for them to enter in unison. Wei Wuyin felt their movements were instinctual and natural, as if their purpose in life was to open the door.

Chu Lingxi pulled Wei Wuyin along, and he entered the palace. When he saw the inside, he couldn't help but be bedazzled. The entry hall was wide and filled with a sense of symmetry. There were stone busts and pillars, paintings and sculptures of exquisite design. They looked rare and beautiful, filled with meaning and stories.

He had an urge to rush up and touch everything, but Chu Lingxi kept her hands firmly grasped on his forearm. Unless he pulled away forcefully, he couldn't. He pouted his lips slightly and followed along.

As they walked further and further in, he realized there were many guards, and they were all handsome and youthful, and all male.

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A large double-door was at the end of the hall, and Chu Lingxi walked forward, but before she could say a word, the doors opened and revealed the inside area. It was a beautiful botanical garden filled with dense wood and medicinal energies.

A rushing wave of pleasant aroma hit them. Chu Lingxi's tense expression grew lax, and Wei Wuyin exclaimed in shock. He touched his abdomen. He had just felt a jolt, but it was brief and light.

A trace of confusion entered his eyes, but before he could think any further, a soft voice sounded, "Come in." The voice was light and made one's guard subconsciously drop.

Chu Lingxi grabbed Wei Wuyin and pulled them inside.

The garden wasn't empty. In fact, it was filled with people. They were male, all handsome and of various ages, tending to the garden. They would sometimes use their hands, and other times use their qi.

The qi they used seemed to be special as he saw a flower draw towards it as if it was an animal being fed. It absorbed the streams of qi and trembled as if in happiness. His eyes were keen and he noticed its growth had extended by at least a millimeter.

There were all sorts of herbs in this garden. He saw one filled with fiery energy, some even swayed continuously without wind, and there was a very large flower that emitted a dense earthen aura.

A path of stones went through the forest until it reached the central area. There, a throne was placed upon a stair-like platform. On this throne was a figure, an old man. His grey hair and eyes gave him a sense of dense wisdom. He was old, but he had no wrinkles, and gave off an unnatural feeling as if something within him wasn't entirely proper.

Chu Lingxi clasped her hands and bowed in greeting, "Inner Disciple Chu Lingxi greets Elder Zhao." Her words were soft and filled with respect.

The old man looked towards Chu Longxi briefly, but turned those wise eyes towards Wei Wuyin. Looking at Wei Wuyin, those eyes lit up. His handsome visage, youthful aura, and strong body elicited a nod of approval from the old man.

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This caused Chu Lingxi to sigh in relief. She had been worried if Wei Wuyin would be accepted. He had no cultivation and was nearly thirty, so she had her worries. Luckily, Wei Wuyin looked young for his age. She attributed it to good genetics.

The old man rose from his throne, retrieved a storage ring from a basket beside him that seemed filled with them and threw it towards Chu Lingxi. With a clap, Chu Lingxi caught it, her eyes filled with anticipation and excitement. As she swept her spiritual sense into the storage space, her breathing became heavy.

With this, reaching the Second Stage of Qi Condensation was a certainty! No wonder people continued to offer boys to this Yanlin Palace. She bowed in gratitude.

"You can go," Elder Zhao shooed her away with an indifferent gesture. Chu Lingxi smiled and was about to leave, but when she tried to leave, Wei Wuyin followed her, causing her to stop.

She looked at Wei Wuyin and felt all sorts of emotions, "You have to stay here. This is your new home, okay? You'll be safe here." She quietly said.

Wei Wuyin cocked his head to the side and nodded. He turned towards this old man of his and smiled a toothless smile. Witnessing this, Chu Lingxi felt a pit form in her heart. Not only did she sell him off, but she used him in his vulnerable state. However, when she thought back to the benefits in the ring, all those feelings faded and that pit filled with satisfaction.

Without a look back, she left.

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Chapter 46: Talented

Elder Zhao walked down from the platform. When he arrived next to Wei Wuyin, he inspected him with both his eyes and spiritual sense. Wei Wuyin felt this spiritual sense and the man's aura from his close proximity.

He carried traces of elemental energies, indicating his cultivation was only at the Third Phase, Elemental Birth of the Qi Condensation Realm.

"Your body is quite odd. You have no qi to speak off, but your body seemed to have been tempered with various energies. Did an elemental cultivator empower your physique?" The more the Elder inspected Wei Wuyin, the more he felt intrigued.

"Your meridians are closed, your dantian is unawakened, but your body is quite strong. You're suitable for cultivation." Elder Zhao nodded to himself as he stated his assessment.

"However, your life aura is nearly thirty. Even if you reached Qi Condensation, you'll likely have various difficulties ahead of you. That being said, your age is too old to be a part of the guards. You also have no cultivation so being an efficient herbal boy is useless. While you're suited, we'll have to start from scratch. Otherwise, Yan Lin would be quite enraged."

Wei Wuyin's eyes remained fixed on the man, not really understanding anything he was saying. He was like an innocent baby chick just paying attention to the events around him.

Elder Zhao beckoned for Wei Wuyin to follow him as he took a paved path, his steps slow and steady. As they walked, Elder Zhao described all that he saw and Wei Wuyin's future.

Firstly, herbal boys were a profession that incorporated innate yang energies with qi, using a variety of qi arts to bolster the growth of herbs. Because of its yang requirements, only males could be members of this profession.

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They all would be cultivated to the Second Stage of Qi Condensation, External Flow, by very forceful means before being placed into work. They would then spend hour after hour, day after day, feeding the plants their qi for growth. In doing so, the herbs could be harvested years if not decades sooner.

It was a profession that needed to exist. Luckily, unlike women's primal yin, unless the man's primal yang was forcefully extracted, it would continuously replenish itself. Therefore, they could do so continuously.

With the appropriate cultivation method, they could even speed up the recovery of their yang energies.

As a herbal boy, he would truly be safe, but also very restricted. According to what Elder Zhao said, he would continue as an herbal boy until sixty. At that point, one's yang would usually start to deteriorate in quality and quantity unless one reached the Yang Growth Phase of Qi Condensation.

However, at that point, his innate yang would be too weak and his bodily talent would deteriorate. At that time, he would need to find a job elsewhere. In fact, Elder Zhao was once an herbal boy. When he spoke of this, his expression turned nostalgic.

Wei Wuyin listened attentively. He was quite curious about all this. His first thoughts were that this old man liked young boys, so he kept only that type in the garden, but now he realized it was more than that.

Secondly, the master of this palace was called Yan Lin, a female core disciple of the Verdant Way Hall, and daughter of the Vice-Hall Master, Yan Yuwei. She didn't visit much. In fact, she avoided this place quite religiously.

Elder Zhao also seemed to have quite the loose lips as he whispered to Wei Wuyin about how Yan Lin had been taken advantage of by a young, handsome man in an herbal garden when she was younger. Unfortunately, she needed this palace for her own cultivation and profits, so despite its affiliation with her ill-experience, she couldn't discard it.

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Elder Zhao quietly laughed. In fact, the more he talked and the more Wei Wuyin attentively listened, the more he learned. Elder Zhao had been the herbal boy of the Vice-Hall Master Yan Yuwei when he was younger, and now he worked for her daughter. It was an interesting way of fate.

They talked for quite a while, giving Wei Wuyin all sorts of miscellaneous information. They soon arrived at a location within the palace. At the gates was an old woman who was quite on the heavy side. She chewed a piece of gum ferociously with lazy eyes, not caring about her appearance. She seemed to be guarding a door in this palace.

Elder Zhao arrived and smiled, "Elder Ming, how's that gum?" His smile and gaze turned playful as he spoke, but he only received a cold snort as a response. Elder Ming seemed to be unwilling to have any of what Elder Zhao was offering.

Revealing an expression of 'such a pity, no fun,' Elder Zhao turned towards Wei Wuyin and said, "This is a cultivation invigoration chamber. As long as you step into here, your cultivation will rise to the Second Stage of Qi Condensation."

Wei Wuyin looked towards the door and his eyes blinked. Was this chamber so wondrous?

However, how could it be? Cultivating in this chamber would convert one's innate yin into pure energy used to bolster one's cultivation. At that point, not only will one be unable to give birth to life, but they would never be able to reach the Fourth Stage of Qi Condensation, Yin Form, in their lifetime. For those who are already at that phase, their cultivation would drop immediately.

The price would not be worth the reward.

Herbal boys, however, had long since given up their talent for cultivation and work.

The old woman glanced at Wei Wuyin and saw his silver eyes, her expression flickered. With a very scratchy voice, "Have you tested the boy's alchemic rating?"

When she said this, Elder Zhao raised an inquisitive brow and then an expression of shock followed by a palm smack to his forehead. Indeed! He had forgotten.

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An alchemic rating was one's suitability towards developing an Alchemic Heart of Qi. Alchemic energy was hard to define, but it contained extraction, growth, containment, and refinement, creation, transformation, and fusion abilities. It was quite suited for herbal boys and, obviously, alchemists.

In fact, the Alchemic Heart was similar to the Divine Heart. The only difference was its inherent qualities. An Alchemic Heart would make it so that no qi produced could have offensive properties.

Even if you amassed a ball of qi and smashed it onto a baby, absolutely no harm would be done. In fact, the qi would be absorbed into its pores and be beneficial to its growth.

However, in exchange, one's meridians, spiritual sense, physical body, and perception would all benefit from the alchemical energies, allowing their talent in alchemy to soar to the sky. The cost was that one's battle potential would be absolutely zero, zilch, nada, completely without any.

Your entire life would be under the protection of someone else. After all, cultivators could only create one Heart of Qi.

Elder Zhao retrieved a dull, grey stone. When he held it, it released a faint trace of white light. This was an alchemical stone, and it could gauge one's responsiveness towards alchemical energies. That being said, alchemists don't use this to determine if they can or can not be alchemists.

Alchemy was an art form that used all sorts of tools and materials via experience earned, as for alchemical energies, that was something no cultivator with ambition would ever cultivate willingly. While their skills with alchemy would be heaven-defying and their path easy, they would forever be at another's beck and call, unable to protect themselves in a world where the strong dominated the weak. Even the pills they made for cultivation would be mostly useless to them, as a stronger cultivation offered little benefit.

Those who cultivated alchemical energies were exchanging immense talent for being enslaved, essentially. After all, your entire purpose in life within a world of cultivation would be to practice the Alchemic Dao. Even herbal boys could leave the sect at sixty and rule a small area with their Second Stage of Qi Condensation cultivation base. They could establish a harem, build a clan, establish a sect, or more.

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That was because they had strength!

Wei Wuyin didn't understand this, so when the stone was given to him, he grabbed it without hesitation. His eyes were lit up by the bright white light the stone emitted.

Elder Ming and Elder Zhao's eyes immediately widened in shock. The white stone was so bright. It was like a miniature sun. They had never seen that before.

"He's suited!" Elder Zhao had complicated emotions as he exclaimed. Being suited was like asking to be a slave for life, living your life practicing alchemy at the orders of another.

Elder Ming added, "Extremely!"

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Chapter 47: Third? Alchemic Heart! Tree?

Wei Wuyin sat quietly in a chair. He was outside a room, in a long hall, still within the Verdant Way Hall. In front of him was a closed door to another room and within that room was Elder Zhao. Wei Wuyin looked towards the door and saw the small sign that said: Yan Yuwei.

After several minutes, Elder Zhao exited the room and beckoned for him to follow. He had a smile on his face, as if he had just been rewarded greatly. Indeed he had. Bringing an alchemic talent such as Wei Wuyin here lets him see great gains.

"You'll be going to the Verdant Pill Dao Hall, no longer will you be an herbal boy, but a true alchemist!" Elder Zhao seemed excited, which made Wei Wuyin excited. He only understood a little bit of what alchemy was and what it meant to be an alchemist. However, Elder Zhao praised it heavily, so it meant it had to be good.

When his talent for alchemical energies was determined, it had nearly caused Elder Ming and Elder Zhao to have a heart attack. Supposedly, there had only been three people who had such alchemic talent, and one of them was the Young Master of the Eden Earth Sect, so there was no way for him to practice it.

After all, he knew how valuable and the horrific truth of that this power had.

As for the second, it was someone who had found out in the same manner as Wei Wuyin, but he disappeared soon after. In truth, Elder Zhao had held back that the second discovery committed suicide immediately upon finding out.

After all, it was the same as being an enslaved cripple. An Alchemic Heart made cultivation mostly pointless, and one's life would be determined by another. Your entire existence would be to benefit another!

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What's worse, he didn't have a choice in the matter, so he took his own life. The courage to do so was rather respectable. As for Wei Wuyin, because he currently didn't understand pretty much anything about cultivation or the world, he didn't care.

This gave them a very rare opportunity to birth a genius alchemist loyal to the Eden Earth Sect. With a few methods, they could have him devote his life and limitless alchemic potential to the sect. This was why Wei Wuyin was sent directly to the Verdant Pill Dao Hall, the number one hall for alchemy.

There, he will learn the core legacies of the sect, be given the most instructive path, and be led to the top of his potential.

A few days later, Wei Wuyin was seated on a prayer mat with crossed legs. In front of him was a middle-aged man dressed in green and rainbow robes and who regarded himself as the Vice-Hall Master of the Verdant Pill Dao Hall, Jian Ying.

In truth, the past few days were a blur. That was because he had once again lost his memories. This moment, this very moment, was when he awoke anew.

"...So, your potential won't be affected. Concentrate, and let the True Alchemic Mat take over. Understood?" Jiu Ying had a warm smile on his face, obviously revealing a patient and loving appearance to bring about a good impression. After all, they didn't want Wei Wuyin to commit suicide.

Wei Wuyin saw that warm smile and because of it, like a newborn child, he nodded without argument.

"Good." Jiu Ying smiled and left, leaving Wei Wuyin in this large, dull grey room with just a colorful prayer mat beneath him.

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The mat started to release a droning sound that echoed endlessly in his ears and heart. He felt the world shift in a way that was indescribable. It felt wondrous and free, yet controlled and forceful.

He looked at his arm. He realized he was naked, his head cocked as he analyzed it. The arm had traces of rainbow light flowing through his blood vessels and flesh. He looked downwards and saw bits of light, like fast moving ants, travel towards from the edges of the mat and enter his body.

He felt an unprecedented sensation of freedom. He didn't feel like he was sitting, but he was flying in the sky like the legendary roc of legend!

It wasn't long before his body released a sound of decompression, and he felt his body, specifically, his meridians awaken once more. The lights entered his mind, and he felt a sensation of serenity.

In his imagination, he saw a saber, locked behind ethereal chains of his own creation. It was sealed, but it trembled heavily, trying to free itself and return. He felt that it was two in one, and an incredible sense of familiarity emerged in his thoughts.

A silhouette formed beside the chained saber. It looked human and revealed powerful and calm eyes.

"Is that...me?" He questioned himself, but no answer was given. He didn't know how 'he' looked. When he thought about that, he tried to inspect himself in this space and realized he was mist. He had no physical form like the saber or the figure, but a bundle of nascent mind energy birth anew.

The saber trembled, and he turned his attention. A mist, much like himself, was at its tip. When he saw that, his heart pounded in fear. The mist was being eaten! Devoured by the saber!

Was that his fate?

He didn't want that fate!

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Rainbow lights emerged in this space, drawing towards him and ignoring the chained saber. He looked at the rainbow lights and felt like he could be saved, without hesitation, he leapt towards the mist with everything.

"Hhhhhhaaaaaa!" Awakening from his mind's eye, he inhaled deeply in a moment of relishing being alive.

When he did, he noticed his senses had changed. His body contained a unique rainbow energy, a rainbow core and qi. There was an indistinguishable object surrounded by the rainbow core, and it seemed attuned to his body, mind, essence, and soul.

"You've done it! You're amazing!" Jiu Ying was in-front of him, smiling gladly while spouting endless praise.

Wei Wuyin had given birth to an Alchemic Heart of Qi, raising to the Second Stage of Qi Condensation, External Flow Phase, in the matter of months. At first, he thought it would take years, but his talent was truly fascinating.

Wei Wuyin smiled, he survived! He wouldn't be devoured by that saber. He could live!

As he thought this, a deep, unfathomable emotion appeared in his heart. He was free!

However, just as he thought this, his expression turned blank. In his mind's eye, Wei Wuyin's true 'self' roared with panic, using its all to pull the 'Wei Wuyin' from before towards him.

The 'Wei Wuyin' from before, the one who met the crane, arrived at the Eden Earth Sect, couldn't resist the pull of its mind and entered their mind's eyes, and later was devoured by the true Wei Wuyin.

The moment it was pulled into the mind's eye, the true Wei Wuyin had taken temporary control of his body to completely merge his meridians and physical essence using the Haven Heart Qi Method. Since his catastrophic incident, his flesh and meridians had changed greatly, no longer being the same, and primed for another execution of the method.

As for mind? The mist was a nascent form of a mind, he didn't need to split. After waiting so long, he found this opportunity and directly attempted to seize control.

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Of course, he could only take over for a few months, and not actively. He could only drive his body towards a certain direction, and practice the Haven Heart Qi Method instinctively.

Despite that very limited control, because of his Elemental Saber Life Securing Art, he had changed the substructural composition of his meridians and physical essence, so it was far easier than he thought.

With a new essence and matter, a fresh mind, all he needed was his soul. Due to his newly devised method, he didn't need to sever his spirit, but draw upon his soul directly once more. He had created a third spirit!

As he devoured the mist that was the 'new' Wei Wuyin, he was connected briefly with his Alchemic Heart of Qi. Alchemical energy was rainbow colored, and embodied seven traits: Extraction, Growth, Containment, Refinement, Creation, Transformation, and Fusion.

While these were its seven traits, many were rather broad in their abilities. For example, transformation and creation both included recovery and production of new things, such as cells.

With his everything, he connected his Alchemic Heart of Qi with his two other Hearts of Qi. It was just this action that he could do before the chains restraining his mental image grew stricter, making him once more sealed within his own mind's eye.

As he was sealed, a mist formed from within his Mind's Eye by some unknown force, as it had done hundreds of times already, producing a new 'mind'. Wei Wuyin became helpless seeing this, unsure of what or how this was even happening.

He didn't understand why he was sealed or why his mind's eye kept producing fresh minds. At first, he thought it was damage to his brain, but that had long since been healed. It was far more complex than just that. However, he knew that, as long as he continued devouring those newly produced minds, he wouldn't be replaced.

He was afraid, deeply afraid that one of those new minds would become the new him, which was why he devoured them without question before they could fully develop. Unfortunately, he had to time it right, otherwise...

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He stayed in his mind's eye, watching as the fresh mind grew, filled with knowledge and sometimes even a distinctive trace of personality. When he felt it might become a threat, he would go all out to draw it in, wiping its slate clean.

The only benefit was that all its knowledge and memories would become 'his' and so he hadn't missed anything in his life.

However, when he recalled the calamity trial, all those horrific, mind-crushing memories, his heart nearly shattered into a thousand pieces. Those memories were vivid, and if he faced any of those as himself, perhaps he would've immediately failed the trial. With his fragile soul, death was a certainty.

He got immensely lucky.

While chained by these unknown shackles within his Mind's Eye, he continued to look at the growth of his new mind, unable to tell what was happening on the outside.

He didn't have a good grasp of time, but he could tell the knowledge portion of this new mind was growing rapidly. He was about to devour it, but he hesitated. If it was growing at such a rapid rate, then that meant he was learning, being taught.

If he devoured it now, he would lose the ability to grow. He would have to start over. Should he risk it? Thinking about it for a bit, gritting his teeth, he became decisive!

He will risk it!

The Eden Earth Sect was one of, if not, the top alchemist sect in the Xin Country, and that's saying something considering the innumerable legacies and alchemists in its territory.

While the previous him didn't understand the implication of an Alchemic Heart of Qi, how could he not? They wanted to enslave him, make him a tool to craft high-level pills, elixirs, pastes, and pellets for them. If he learned their methods, his alchemic talent would rise to its limits!

Unlike others, he had two other Hearts of Qi and Sixth Phase cultivation base, he didn't fear them. The moment he recovered, he would leave! Therefore, he decided to take the risk of being replaced despite his fears.

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He watched the mist grow firmer and firmer, his mind anxious at the rate of its growth. Hopefully, it's just knowledge and skill, not memories and personality development. Fortunately, the sect only wanted a puppet, so they didn't care about his personality. As long as he wasn't suicidal, that was already a blessing!

Ohn!

Oh?

Wei Wuyin felt strange. His body was changing. He frowned as he also felt a tingle. This was familiar to him, it was the loss of karmic luck!

A lucky chance!

As he thought of this, he hoped this version of him could grasp it completely! Unfortunately, he didn't know if it was a tiny or large chance, but it's been a while since his last one in who knows how many years!

Come on!

Zroom!

A sound erupted within his mind's eye space, the mist rapidly started to transform into something else.

What?!

No!!

Wei Wuyin panicked. With his true 'self' sealed, if his mind's eye gave birth to another complete mind, it could become completely independent to himself, and if he was unsealed, he could develop multiple personality disorder, or even worse! It could try devouring him and succeed!

He couldn't allow that to happen, he absolutely couldn't! The risk from before went on for far too long, he had to take action.

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With a soundless roar, his mental image transformed into a silhouette of himself and grasped towards the transforming mist. It was pulled towards him, but it was incredibly difficult. He felt this 'self' was becoming more and more tangible, growing outside of his control.

He opened his mouth and roared with his entire mental being, the space quivered as waves of oscillating energy emerged from his mouth. They started to flow towards Wei Wuyin.

"You! You want to devour me?!" A voice, one that didn't seem like 'his', echoed from the mist.

What?!

His eyes flashed as he came to a realization. His expression became frightened, and true horror emerged in his heart.

Someone was trying to invade his mind?! He was in the process of being 'possessed!'

This was way outside of his expectations, but it only fueled his desire even further. If this person entered his mind, he would no longer be 'him' in any sense of the word!

He sucked in, drawing upon the full strength of both his minds! The transforming mist screamed, shouted, cursed, and was pulled in slowly. It fought vigorously, but it couldn't pull away. Its shape became more distinct, however. It was a tree!

When Wei Wuyin saw this, he nearly had his mind collapsed with shock. Wasn't this the Tree of Eden?!

What the fuck!

As he retained the memories of his previous selves, he knew this was the exact shape of the Tree of Eden, the headquarters of the Eden Earth Sect.

"You agreed to allow me to take over you, you agreed! Why, or even how, are you even doing this?!" The Tree of Eden spoke, its voice filled with the same horror that suffused Wei Wuyin's heart. After all, 'Wei Wuyin' had not only agreed, but allowed him to directly claim his mind.

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The Tree of Eden was flabbergasted. How could he be trying to devour him? His mind was already his?!?!

It made absolutely zero fucking sense to it.

"No! Please! I'm sorry for tricking you, but don't, don't kill me!" The Tree of Eden begged upon seeing his situation, but Wei Wuyin didn't care. In fact, the Tree of Eden should be able to, with a thought, abolish Wei Wuyin's mental strength like it was nothing. The issue lay in that it took over a mist of 'Wei Wuyin' giving over complete control somehow. In the same way Wei Wuyin devoured the other 'minds' of his, the Tree of Eden was unable to break whatever mysterious force that allowed it.

It couldn't fight back, and the fact it could even resist for this brief time, showed how incredibly strong it was. Yet, it was useless.

Die!

Wei Wuyin's eyes turned cold. In fact, a sense of deadly crisis emerged in his heart when he heard the Tree of Eden's words. He knew his ignorant self had foolishly been tricked by this old fox of a tree and gave up his mind!

He directly pulled the Tree of Eden into the tip of his saber that was his true mind and devoured it ruthlessly!

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Chapter 48: Tree of Eden

The Tree of Eden was a unique existence. A sentient entity born from a Dao, a Dao of the Mind.

In the world, there were three thousand types of Dao beneath the Heavens and each Dao was further divided into three thousand daos, which once more divided in such a manner.

The Daos that Wei Wuyin knew of were the Dao of Sin, the Dao of Material, the Dao of Weapons, and the Dao of Mind. These were only four of the Heavenly Daos, but they were grand and vast.

The Dao of Sin wasn't one he was particularly familiar with, but he knew it embodied the antithesis of action regarding the Three Thousand Commandments of the Heavenly Daos. If one went against the rules of heaven, they would be practicing sin.

The Dao of Material, as said by the apparition of the Myriad War Dao Palace, was that it encompassed the entirety of creation from the world. This included the elements, and unnatural sources like the Scarlet Qi formed by the Scarlet Solaris Mountain.

Then, there was the Dao of Weapons. It encompassed the entirety of war and all its tools. This included things like a trebuchet or sword. All things that could be formed by man to kill or harm was within this Dao.

The one that still left him in a state of question was the Mind Dao, said to encompass all forms of enlightenment.

The Tree of Eden did not have a soul, but it did have a sea of consciousness, it did have a mind's eye, thoughts and memories, but without a soul, it could not cultivate, and it could only live according to natural laws.

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It was an existence that had birthed a Dao of the Mind. It called its unique Dao: Eden's Remorse.

It could see the world and its vastness, but only such. Forever will it remain tethered to this world, lo' and behold its woe. It regretted being born as a tree, forcefully being used by others, being cut into, forcefully inhabited, and treated like property!

A day, over five hundred thousand years ago, a seed was planted. By whom or how, it was unknown. This seed used its instincts to absorb the moisture and nutrients of the world to develop. It grew roots.

Slowly, day after day, week after week, it worked hard. It's desire was to feel the light. When it grew, a small green head sprouted from the ground. It was merely a strand and two splitting leaves, a sapling.

The sun, it had now felt it! It was miraculous, extraordinary and warm, like a parent's embrace. It helped it generate its own food, cared for it, and watched it grow.

The sun was its father, forceful and all-encompassing, while the moon was its mother, gentle and looming.

The sapling grew into a beautiful sprout. It glistened with a verdant green lustre. Then, suddenly, it met a catastrophe. An animal, basic in intelligence and form, crushed it beneath its feet, nearly taking its life.

While it did not have ears nor did it have a spiritual sense, it recalled the vibration of the world. Through this vibration, it would soon come to understand what it was and why it was crushed.

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A battle had taken place, and a human had crushed him beneath its feet in carelessness as it begged for its life. That was the first day it tasted blood instead of water.

Luckily, it was strong. It healed and continued to grow, returning into the beautiful sprout it had once been. The sun remained, the moon remained, and so did the humans. As it wished to grow, it was constantly in the way.

As it became a young tree, a human had taken it as a training post, smashing its fist into him over and over. It was painful and horrifying. He was beaten without pause all for the sake of this human lifeform, ripped into and forced to handle its insecurities and anger.

It had nearly been broken into two one day, and then abandoned. That was its only solace in its state of near death. However, it still wanted to grow! It wanted to reach the skies, meet its mother and father.

As this desire grew, so did its form. As it healed, its body expanded and grew. Then, suddenly, it bore fruit. These were products of its desire to produce, to bring more of itself into the world.

Unfortunately, because of these fruits, those humans returned. They claimed the fruits for themselves, greedy and unwilling to stop killing its eggs! Those fruits weren't meant for them to eat, they were for it to have a family!

They WERE his family!!

Their greed and ambitions knew no bounds and they cared only for itself. However, it was innately peaceful, pacifistic in its belief and attempted to find a better solution. It drew upon the energy of the sun and the moon, of the earth, and grew.

It continued to grow.

Before long, it had become a grand tree capable of standing fiercely over the world. That's when the humans congregated at its base, they meditated, worshipped, and prayed to it. They treated it like a god!

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These people, these humans, were different. They didn't harm it, but gave it offerings. As they did, so did its desire to grow and spread out its influence to these fine creatures.

Then, it suffered a severe injury. A giant beast attacked one day, nearly destroying it, and the humans fought to defend, but in the end, they left in defeat. The giant beast soon left as well, finding other prey to hunt.

The humans soon returned. They prayed, offered, and did what they could to heal it. It was grateful. It knew that it had not been abandoned. Then, when they grew frustrated that his healing was taking too long, they discussed in their homes all sorts of solutions.

One day, a young girl, about thirteen years old, was brought before the tree in holy clothing. The girl prayed to it for three days and three nights, and the humans did something unthinkable!

They beheaded the woman, sprinkled her organs and blood at the base of the tree!

It didn't know what they were doing or why. It hated the taste of blood, but it couldn't stop them. They acted as if they heard 'its' voice, performing all sorts of sacrificial offerings of young children who had holy auras.

It wasn't long before it healed fully, but that was its natural growth speed. The blood, the deaths, it did nothing. However, as it grew, the less humans were sacrificed, so it grew. It desired to grow more and more, so it would no longer witness such atrocities.

Time passed, and it grew bigger and bigger. Its aura became grander. As it grew to a point, the humans marveled at it, sat in its surroundings in droves, sometimes tens of thousands at a time. It was peaceful once more.

It could now grow in peace, until it could reach its mother and father.

Then, a battle once more occurred. This time, it wasn't sacrifices, as the newly arrived humans slaughtered the inhabitants of the tree. This happened not just once, but many times. The group that sat beneath its leaves would sometimes stay, sometimes go, or be replaced by an entirely new group.

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It no longer kept count, but just wanted to grow. This time, it could get away from humans. From these beasts who sought blood and death.

Then, it happened.

The humans no longer remained at the base. They dug into its chest, drilled into its feet, climbed into its limbs and stationed themselves there. They treated him without care, constantly injuring it to keep their pathways and palaces safe.

All sorts of odd things formed inside it, changed it, and soon, somehow, it developed a mind. It didn't know if it always had one, but it could now, under specific circumstances, communicate. It communicated with the leader of these humans, but instead of helping it, the leader used its intelligence to his advantage.

It was threatened with an axe, fire, and further harm. It was a slave to humans now, and it couldn't retaliate. It knew that its life was over. It was just a 'piece of property.' They drew upon its life force, wood energy, and innate vitality using a variety of formations for their own benefit or to kill!

Then, it met a young boy. He was innocent and free, and followed along like a puppet, and offered no defense. It knew that the young boy was also weak, his life no longer his own, and felt sorrowful for his fate. An idea soon was born.

What if it could leave?! As it drew upon its memories, the vastness of such accompanied the lectures and conversations of all the humans that lived on and in it, it learned a unique art called Mind Possession. It could merge the aspect of the mind into another willing subject, and if it worked, it could take over its body!

So, it devised a plan. When the boy was brought to its roots to cultivate, it grew more brazen. If it became 'human' it could move, fly, and see its parents! It would be free!!

However, it wouldn't leave it at that! It would take everything that was his and give it to the child, and cause all those evil humans to suffer! Its mind was now filled with opportunity and motive!

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When the young boy arrived, it communicated with him, and realized he was more than willing to do so. After some lies, some coaxing, some benefits, the boy conceded his mind. Before, however, it was vicious.

It drew the entirety of its lifeforce and wood energy nurtured for countless years into a single runic mark. It placed the runic mark on the boy's heart, its vital organ, drawing the vast power into it smoothly. With this, he could not only cultivate but retain its natural force!

However, that meant the damage to the tree would be abrupt and sudden, and the entirety of the tree would collapse the moment his mind was condensed and left the tree. The buildings, tunnels, and everything beneath it, will be met with total destruction from the near-instantaneous collapse of its gigantic body.

They deserve it!

They all deserve it!!

Despicable humans, filthy, disgusting, horrifying, and vicious things they were! They all mercilessly fed off him, used his energy, cultivated using his lifeforce and forced him to help their cultivation when they discovered his intelligence! They made him a slave!

It didn't know when it started nursing thoughts of hatred and disgust. Perhaps it was when he was threatened, perhaps it was when that human stepped on his small, fragile sapling body without any care. Regardless, its mind had become filled with hatred.

"Hhhhhhaaaaaa!!" Wei Wuyin inhaled deeply as he was awoken from his memories. No, not his memories, but the memories of the Tree of Eden.

Without hesitation, he felt his face and body. He was happy to realize that his teeth had once more become perfect. An overwhelming sense of excitement surged into his heart as he thought about what had happened. He didn't know how, but after devouring the Tree of Eden, he had enough strength to shatter the chains that sealed his original mind!

He now was himself and only himself!

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Tears dropped down from his eyes like a stream. The amount of happiness in him caused his pride and dignity to be worthless as he cried without restraint!

"I'm alive!" He roared fiercely, but then he felt something was off. He recalled a certain aspect of the Tree of Eden's memories and his eyes widened in shock!

"I need to leave!" With that, he didn't hesitate to dash into a nearby tunnel. He was currently in the roots of the Tree of Eden, and a tunnel was formed by the tree so it had an escape route. It knew that when its mind had left the tree, it would result in a catastrophic calamity for all those living on or within the tree.

He couldn't care to warn them, he didn't have the time, so he urged his physical body to the maximum as he dashed away. His body felt incredibly light.

He frowned as he analyzed his body and felt a powerful force within his heart. It throbbed with boundless life force and wood energy.

"This?!" This was the mark left behind by the Tree of Eden, its entire power and quintessence. While he knew it was pretty much passive, it would constantly nourish his body and give incredible benefits.

Creeeek!

Looking at the tunnel, his heart pounded. He rushed forward even faster. After an hour of running, he finally exited the tunnel. When he did, he drew upon his full cultivation base and whistled in a unique way.

Fweet!

"Come on!" He cried, turning around, he saw the giant Tree of Eden tens of miles away. It looked normal, but he knew that in a short moment, the entirety of the tree would collapse.

He gulped.

Creeeek!

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It released a loud sound like a squeaky door, and then, without any warning, the tree that nearly touched the sky fell apart like a house of cards.

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Chapter 49: Eden Qi, Mind Dao!

A chaotic trembling reverberated beneath his feet as a unique rhythm of the collapsed pieces of the Tree of Eden smashed into the earth. An utter cataclysmic wave of dust and loose rocks formed like an oceanic wave after an earthquake.

He could see the dust cloud approach at speeds that left him bewildered. Before he could even garner a reaction, him, who stood tens of miles away, was battered by the resulting clouds of dust and dirt. He didn't even bother shielding himself as he simply felt the force from the collapse.

The quaking of the earth lasted several minutes before it ceased. He didn't hear any screams or see any rays of light soar away from the destruction. All soon subsided into silence.

He felt a distinct lack of life.

He watched millions of lives end in mere minutes.

"..."

Wei Wuyin wasn't someone with a saint's conscience and felt a need to blame himself for matters like this. After all, while he was partially responsible, the situation could've happened with anyone.

Not to mention, even if he did tell all those people the circumstances of what happened, would they believe him? Who knows? The Godlord might have locked him up and searched his memories. If that happened, he would've definitely either been a retard or died alongside them.

Pause for a moment and think what would happen if they did believe him, could they evacuate millions of people in the span of an hour? The majority of which were low-leveled cultivators or mortals.

Absolutely not.

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Therefore, he only felt it was a pity that the Tree of Eden felt that this was necessary. However, when he recalled its memories, even he felt some hatred for humans, their irresponsibility, and penchant for abusing things they consider beneath them. When they discovered the tree had gained a mind, they enslaved it for generations and forced it to help them.

That was incredibly selfish.

He couldn't help but think if the Scarlet Solaris Mountain had similar thoughts. Did a mountain or every plant have memories as vivid as the Tree of Eden or was it just a special circumstance due to it forming a mind of its own?

When he recalled those memories, he felt that the incident of blood splashing on it as a sapling was why and how it gained a mind. Whoever bled must've had an incredible bloodline to give a tree sentience. At that moment, it seemed like it gained an intelligence, and as time passed, it questioned things around it and watched intently through a unique form of perception.

He looked at the destruction in the distance and sat down. He was going to wait for the crane to return. If it didn't, then its death was fated.

He sighed as he inspected himself. Due to the sequence of events and unique circumstances, he now had three Hearts of Qi: Divine Heart of Elemental Qi, Divine Heart of Saber Qi, and Alchemic Heart of...wait what?

He frowned. The third Heart of Qi was...missing?!

He started to panic. With haste, he searched his dantian deeply, trying to find his third formed Heart of Qi!

He found nothing.

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"I..." he was speechless. He tried to recall the events.

He knew that, from his understanding of time gauged from his memories, he was thirty-six years old. He had spent over seven years studying the Alchemic Dao in the Eden Earth Sect, practicing the signature Eden Creation Method. It incorporated top-tier refining, concoction, and creation techniques for alchemy.

He had over one thousand and thirty-one recipes of pills, three hundred and ninety pastes, eight hundred and seventy-seven elixirs, and one hundred and eight pellets in his mind. They included the very core of the Eden Earth Sect's legacy.

According to his memories, due to his Alchemic Heart of Qi and natural talent in alchemy, he had risen quickly through the Eden Earth Sect. He had even met the Sect Leader, and was given personal instruction from him.

He had fashioned top-tier pills, pellets, elixirs, and pastes for the sect. His former name was quite well-known as even the surrounding sects wished to meet and exchange pointers with him.

Supposedly, he had engaged in several high-level competitions amongst alchemists and always placed in the top three. Someone had even tried to kill him, but his tempered body was far too difficult to handle. After all, with his body alone, he could face Mortal Gods. This wasn't something that could be dismissed by his lack of 'self'.

He had entered the roots of the Tree of Eden for training as it contained a deep wood energy, and they wanted him to birth wood qi, but he couldn't do so. The reason was simple: All the wood energy would subtly be absorbed by the Divine Heart of Elemental Qi to help recover itself.

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While both of his Hearts of Qi had been restored, they remained dormant and in hiding. Even if the previous 'him' tried to control them, it couldn't. After all, they were connected to one of his 'his' two minds, not its.

Since he devoured the other self's mind, he now had the ability to control all three Hearts of Qi. While he was still only two minds merged, he had devoured countless smaller 'selves'.

Giving a deep sigh, he felt completely out of tune with his body. It's been ten years since he'd had full control, and many things had happened since then. It was like he watched others live his life in his body. It was horrifying!

Even if he lost his third Heart of Qi, it was fine. As long as he was himself.

Bop!

Just as he thought that, he felt a smashing sensation in his head. His eyes widened as he grew horrified. His first thoughts were that he would be sealed again, so he hastily entered his sea of consciousness, within his Mind's Eye, and felt the situation with absolute caution.

"What?!" He exclaimed in shock. In his Mind's Eye, he saw something that shouldn't be there!

His Heart of Qi!

Directly below his mental avatar of a saber, he saw a cyclone of metaphysical qi with a rainbow color rotating calmly. It was far more ghostly looking than any of his other Hearts of Qi.

"A Heart of Qi can exist in one's sea of consciousness? When?!" As he questioned this, he inspected his Heart of Qi and came to an understanding.

"I can't believe it. My Alchemic Heart of Qi seemed to have a unique Qi quality that is similar to the aura of the Tree of Eden. Was it because I absorbed it that the Heart of Qi changed or was it changed by the Tree of Eden unintentionally when it entered my mind or established that runic mark?"

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As he pondered this, he sighed. The memories he had allowed him to know that the Tree of Eden did not intend to do this.

Since it had the Tree of Eden's aura and was mind-based, he would call this new Heart of Qi the Alchemic Heart of Eden Qi.

"So...what does this mean for my qi?" As he focused his mind to connect with this new Alchemic Heart of Eden Qi, he suddenly felt a rumble. A strand of qi exited his mind and entered his body at a speed similar to the electrical impulses sent from the brain to the body. It was faster than his other Hearts of Qi by quite a bit.

This qi strand was soon externalized into the air, and he felt that it had an alchemical aura, one suitable for the seven traits of alchemy, and contained a unique mental force.

"My Heart of Qi is normal...but its cultivation base isn't shared by my other Hearts of Qi?" As he thought of that, he realized he would need to raise his cultivation base once more.

Unfortunately, because of the Divine Heart of Elemental Qi quietly absorbing all elemental energies, it couldn't reach the Third Phase of Qi Condensation, Elemental Birth.

However, now that he had regained control over his other hearts, he should be able to use the Divine Heart of Elemental Qi and its pure elemental energies to infuse it with various energies and birth the elements.

He still needed fresh yin and yang energy...however...

He sighed, sitting down and started to cultivate. He was curious how his Divine Heart of Elemental Qi could bestow his other Alchemic Heart of Eden Qi.

He extracted a small portion of elemental energy and tried to send it to his Mind's Eye, but the moment it tried to enter his fleshy brain, his eyes flashed with bright lights and he nearly fainted.

Gritting his teeth, he realized sending pure elemental energy to the brain in such a direct manner was like stabbing it with a needle. It induced horrific pain.

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"Of course...elemental energies aren't metaphysical, but a flow of energy. It can't just enter the Mind's Eye. If that's the case, does it mean...my Alchemic Heart of Qi is stuck at the Second Phase of Qi Condensation?" These mutterings caused his heart to drop. If that was the case, that would truly be unfortunate.

"Wait!" His eyes lit up as he started executing the Externalize Heart Qi Method. His Divine Heart of Elemental Qi left his body through his mouth and hovered there. It was lively and pulsated excitement. Wei Wuyin warmly smiled, "Good to see you too."

For some reason, he felt that his spirits had their own consciousness. They were like clones that could deeply communicate with him. With them by his side, he never felt alone.

Wei Wuyin then tried to use the Externalize Heart Qi Method on the Alchemic Heart of Eden Qi. With barely any difficulty, it exited smoothly from his Mind's Eye, leaving from his glabella. When it left, it trembled as it 'faced' the sky, looking at the sun.

The cyclone gave off a sense of melancholy. Wei Wuyin took a deep breath and felt even more so that Eden had influenced it and his spirit somehow. He sent it a thought, and it 'faced' him.

"Let's exchange energies here!" He said, but when the Divine Heart of Elemental Qi sent a strand of elemental energy over, the Alchemic Heart of Eden Qi dodged it swiftly. It floated around, expressing its disapproval of this type of action.

"What's wrong?" Wei Wuyin frowned as he questioned. He realized this Heart of Qi was far more intelligent than the others.

The Alchemic Heart of Eden Qi communicated with him, and he immediately understood. He directed the Divine Heart of Elemental Qi to enter his Mind's Eye. It revealed 'confusion' but didn't refuse. It sped towards his glabella and vanished.

"This!" Wei Wuyin didn't think it would work, but it did! His Heart of Qi was surrounded by Metaphysical Qi, which was both false and true, but moreso, they were constructed from his mind and had ease of access and influence. They could enter and exit as they pleased.

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The Alchemic Heart of Eden Qi gave a 'happy' shake and hurriedly entered his Mind's Eye. An exchange of energy immediately occurred. Since the energy wasn't directed towards his brain or flesh, there was no obstruction within his sea of consciousness.

They exchanged energy freely, but it was much slower than before. In fact, the cultivation speed of the Alchemic Heart of Eden Qi was about as fast as his normal refinement speed before he gave birth to two Hearts of Qi.

"I see...this is different as it's true cultivation. It'll take time, so it couldn't just stay outside without protection. This thing is smart." He commented after realizing the awareness of this spirit.

Kree!!

His eyes suddenly opened and he smiled with elation.

"You're alive!"

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Chapter 50: The Adventures of the Crane

Over seven years ago, the crane had brought its master, Wei Wuyin, to the Eden Earth Sect. When she arrived, she believed that it would be shortly before Wei Wuyin regained himself and they returned home.

Unfortunately, a sequence of unpredictable events led it to a very interesting fate.

When Chu Lingxi returned, she abided by the agreement and became her mount. It was okay, but a far cry from the treatment Wei Wuyin gave her, so she inwardly felt disdain for this woman. However, as time passed, Chu Lingxi ascended to the Second Stage of Qi Condensation, External Flow Phase.

Her status underwent a subtle shift. Then, the treatment she received was much better. She had her full of nourishing food created by alchemists. There were all sorts of meaty paste and colorful liquid given to her.

She actually, for a while, thought the treatment here wasn't so bad. Even her strength rose as her white feathers became brighter and her body enlarged. This continued for a few months before Chu Lingxi accepted a mission that required her to leave the sect.

As her mount, she had to follow along. As they flew with a group of others, a sudden betrayal occurred. She didn't understand it well, but a man had a very vengeful expression as he drove a blade through Chu Lingxi's heart.

The other members of the group only watched with indifference, some even laughed. The thoughts of humans were frightening.

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The crane was horrified by this, taking off immediately. They followed, attempting to hunt her down. She had then been forced into an epic chase for her life. In truth, they probably just wanted to tame her, but she didn't dare risk it.

She flew fast and true, using her instincts and intelligence to evade their pursuit. After several days, she escaped with some luck.

Unfortunately, she was lost and couldn't return to the sect. She wasn't sure when or if Wei Wuyin would heal, and so it was quite dangerous for her. The only option was to survive, stay nearby, and hope Wei Wuyin would find her when the time came.

And so, she survived.

The nights were cold and the days were filled with struggles for food. She missed the safety and comfort of a roof and Wei Wuyin. While they traveled, he had various tools to create a fire or use his qi to help make the environment comfortable.

He also had immense power and could stay anywhere or fashion a cave from any mountain surface. It was incredibly convenient. She could also sleep in peace knowing Wei Wuyin had set up protections unlike now.

One day, while she slept in a grassland, a group of cultivators ambushed her with a net. The net was heavy and clung to her feathers. She struggled to escape, but it was merely a futile exertion on her part. While she did injure and even kill a few of her captors, she was still caught in the end.

She was forcefully brought before a strong-looking, musky man. The man gave some hyperbolic speech about taming her through any means, but the crane was smart. When the man gave an order, she followed.

Why did she need to be tortured?

She wasn't some strong willed animal that wouldn't bend to anyone but her master. That was dumb, and she would survive using whatever means it took. This was also something Wei Wuyin, her true master, had taught her: be adaptable.

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The man was incredibly shocked at her swift responsiveness and submissive nature, but was happy nevertheless. This allowed her to avoid many painful sessions or even death.

During the next three years, she was in this man's service. She had been tasked as a warrior beast, not just transportation. Supposedly, her strength rivaled the top experts in the area and generated pressure on the other forces. She was ridden into battle by the man in full armor, her visage was elegant yet fierce.

She killed who she was asked to, and flew where she was asked to. She found this to be quite enjoyable. Especially when she stomped on heads, causing them to explode like a squashed watermelon. They were pathetically weak, unlike her true master. Unfortunately, humans seemed to be vicious beyond belief.

One night at the end of those three years, the musky man had brought a young woman into his bedroom. That very day, he was dead.

Supposedly, from what she garnered from the conversation and gossip of others, he had brought in an assassin who had been planted with a virus. A beautiful woman with a disease that was directly transmitted sexually and highly fatal to men. It was interesting, but unfortunate.

With his death, she was taken in by the man's son, who was even more vicious than the father. After a few months, the crane saw the same woman enter his bedroom. She thought about doing something, but shrugged in the end.

It wasn't her life.

Predictably, the son died of the same disease.

At that point, she decided to just leave. No one could stop her, and the entire force was in the midst of fierce civil war and vicious battles. Their territory and land was being taken over by others, especially with the father and son dead. There was a lot of internal strife.

She was done.

With a flap of her gigantic wings, she took to the skies and didn't come back.

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She pondered whether to return to the sect, but decided against it. However, it was best to linger nearby until her true master called for her. She believed he would.

The crane's luck wasn't that bad. The next four years were quite peaceful and she was smarter now, not allowing herself to be ambushed. She'd only sleep in hard-to-reach places for those without wings, and was a lot more aware of her surroundings.

She avoided humans mostly and kept to herself.

One day, she found a tree.

This tree had a low-hanging fruit. It was only one fruit and the fruit was golden. Curious, she walked up to it and poked at it with her beak. When she realized it smelled normal and nothing happened, she swallowed it whole.

Over the next few months, her beak and eyes slowly turned golden in color. When she looked in a lake and noticed the changes, she was hysterical. Even more, her body started to expand and felt like it was filled with endless energy.

She grew three times her size, and was like a towering existence. At this point, she could rival the black cranes back home. She didn't know how strong she was, but it was an extraordinary feeling.

What she didn't know was that Wei Wuyin was nearby at that moment, his scent covered in a medicinal smell. He had activated a karmic lucky chance, but it was for her, originally.

In the world of karmic luck, oftentimes it wasn't just the wielder that benefited but those close to them. Her finding the fruit when she did was a lucky chance by extension. If Wei Wuyin had his normal degree of caution, he would've noticed the golden fruit and given it to the crane or another valuable beast.

Her changes were quite interesting. She realized she could send out a beam of golden energy from her beak. This beam was powerful and explosive. An invincible feeling emerged in her heart. She played around a little, becoming the queen of the nearby flying beasts.

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Her reign was majestic. These small birds that were barely the size of her wings bowed in deterrence. Was this what it felt like to have power? To be unrivaled? Her heart throbbed with endless excitement.

She started to delegate her tasks to these lesser beasts. Food was brought to her, including setting up a boundary for her to safely sleep. She had her own territory and ruled it! All the humans that entered it left their lives behind.

Then, she heard a sound that she remembered all too well.

Fweet!

Wei Wuyin!

She abandoned everything and flew towards it instantly. Despite being tens of miles away, she had heard the sound as clear as a loud whisper in the ear. It was familiar and melodious to the ears. Before long, she saw Wei Wuyin seated. She cried with joy!

They can finally go home!!!

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