

Chapter 471 - 467: Ladies Of The Sky Palace

While the elite geniuses of the Myriad Monarch Sect, Elemental Heaven Pavilion, Alchemist Association, and San Clan were exploring the depths of the World Realm, the starfield was still brimming with activity. The most notable was the official name change of the starfield, with many colliding on whether it'll be renamed the Imperial Heaven Starfield or changed to the Neo-Dawn Starfield.

This single topic divided neighbors, incited bloody fights, and broke entire relationships, especially among the Myriad Monarch Planet's inhabitants. The significance of the name played a huge part into who would be the next ruler of the starfield, but the Myriad Monarch Sect was unable to answer.

They were the only one with a legitimate Reamlord, and they were currently on the deniable rise as they had the Ascendant Emperor of Neo-Dawn, the most talented alchemist to exist. There were numerous debates surrounding the King of Everlore and the Ascendant Emperor's alchemic prowess.

There was the cacophony of cries that Wei Wuyin had better talent, being younger and having endless potential for cultivation. Others said his talent might be overwhelming, but unless he reached the likes of Founding Monarch Wu Yu, Divine King Han Xei, Sacred Elven Queen, or Demonic Abyss Master, he would never rival King of Everlore due to his lack of an Alchemic Astral Soul.

There were a lot of energetic discussions revolving around these two and the topic never found a proper conclusion, except with one party being laid out by the other. It was an absolute mess, but a joyful one! Because no matter what was said or how, they were all extremely proud that they could even have these discussions. Their starfield was once more entering a Golden Age!

So while they might fight, they drank and ate meat to celebrate their happiness soon after. As for their discussions? It was irrelevant, and they all knew it. The Myriad Monarch Sect would decide these matters and the Ascendant Emperor would either be greater than the King of Everlore or not, and there was nothing their words could change about that.

A full year had eclipsed in the starfield, so much had happened.

The Myriad Monarch Sect, eighth level of the Extreme Creation Mountain. Wei Wuyin's Sky Palace floated with a bed of clouds as its foundation. There was a powerful horse neigh that shook the clouds followed by crackling lightning as a pegasus broke through the Sky Layer below, arriving at the eighth level.

On this pegasus's large body that reached a height of one hundred and twenty meters in height was a valiant figure donned in black battle armor, leathery with metallic portions at certain areas. Engulfed in lightning, Xiao Bai swirled around in an imposing manner, forcing the young woman to lightly pat it.

No longer playing around, it flew towards the Sky Palace with powerful strides. Its aura was terrifyingly impressive, far greater than before. Its growth was heaven-defying, enjoying daily eighth-grade alchemical products for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

Just the Sky Thunder Bloodline it had awakened was in full flourish, releasing bits of lightning and thunderous booms from time to time. Alongside the expansion of its size, its speed had reached an

unprecedented level, being the fastest mount in the Myriad Monarch Sect. As for its strength? It could fight against Sixth Stage Astral Core Realm experts!

Su Mei directed Xiao Bai to land at the designated spot beside the Sky Palace. When they did, she flew off, throwing a seventh-grade big pill the size of a basketball into Xiao Bai's large mouth. Xiao Bai opened its mouth and ate it, chewing on it with a happy expression. It lowered its head, receiving a rub on its snout from Su Mei.

It released a sound of content. When it was born, it was forced into servitude, but after seeing the life of wild beasts and other beasts, this was the absolute life. The looks of envy it received alongside the respectful treatment was extraordinarily blissful.

By now, most didn't consider him Wei Wuyin's mount, but Su Mei's, but this was even better. Su Mei constantly traveled to different planets and continents, allowing him to stretch his legs and wings beneath multiple skies. Moreover, it had awakened its bloodline and was fed delicious, highly nutritious pills everyday. It was truly the greatest life a pegasus could have.

Su Mei told him to stay, walking inside the Sky Palace. She performed a few handseals at the door. A faint glow of spiritual light effused from the door, and then it opened. In a brisk pace, she walked in. She briefly entered before she encountered two figures.

"Sister Su!" A soft voice exclaimed. It belonged to a red-haired young woman. Beside her was a white-haired woman with a faint icy-aura, but this iciness was no longer cold and dark, but lively. These two were Hong Ru and Xiao Bing respectively.

Su Mei saw them, stopping. "...Sister Hong," she was a little awkward saying such a familiar designation. It felt strange to her. Especially considering she knew that Wei Wuyin's intentions with them weren't explicitly stated. While it felt like he had allowed them in to monitor the resurrected Hong Ru, it could be more than that.

Xiao Bing followed along in greeting with a trace of warmth in her voice, "Sister Su!" Since they've been staying here, Su Mei were overseeing all their matters and needs, such as cultivation or outside errands. She organized their families to arrive to see them, and kept them up-to-date on their activities and status.

As for cultivation, she would periodically arrive with a batch of resources after they've refined their previous batch. It was never-ending, filled with seventh-grade products! At first, they were absolutely terrified by consuming so much wealth and rare resources, but after a while, they grew numb to it.

They had to constantly remind themselves that this was Wei Wuyin's Sky Palace, and Su Mei was a subordinate of his. How could they not have plenty of alchemical resources?

"Is it time for a refill?" Hong Ru asked, excited. She had never had such outrageously generous treatment of alchemical resources and a suitable environment in her life. Just the air here was extraordinary, filled with astral essence further condensed and purified by the Sky Palace's formations. Just cultivating here for a day was like cultivating a month below. In just over a year, she had already reached the Astral Core Realm, re-entering the World Sea Phase with a far greater foundation than before. She had even reached the Ninth Mortal State!

Su Mei shook her head, "Can you two gather everyone into the Main Hall"

"Oh?!" The two were taken aback. They had never had to gather before. This must be important. They looked to each other, seeing both the shock and seriousness in the other's eyes. Whatever it was, it had to be taken seriously!

They nodded, "Of course."

Su Mei nodded. Then added, "Can you bring Na Xinyi as well." After that, she left to the Main Hall, leaving the two bewildered. After Wei Wuyin and Qing Qiumu had left for the Gateway Door, Na Xinyi was moved to the Sky Palace. This was the wish of Qing Qiumu, and Wei Wuyin accommodated.

Soon, the ladies of the Sky Palace had gathered.

Su Mei stood at the highest platform, looking at this exquisitely beautiful array of gorgeous women, all of which had ample breasts and exceptional figures. It was quite outrageous, each being more vixen-like than the last.

If it wasn't for her in-depth understanding of Wei Wuyin's preferences, including his inclusion of all types, she might be a little...she didn't know. Looking at her own pair that was slightly below average, she threw those thoughts to the back of her mind.

Sweeping her gaze over the bevy of beauties, she noted each one.

Hong Ru, Xiao Bing, Lin Ziyan, Wu Baozhai, Wen Mingna, Na Xinyi, Nyla Shur, Xiang Ling, Long Tingyu, and Xue Yifei. These ten women were all present.

Even Na Xinyi was up and about, her complexion noticeably better than before. After suffering from the Dark Chill of the Void, Su Mei had helped her regain consciousness after months of gentle nourishment using Wei Wuyin's products. While her Primal Yin Sources and Physique were still exhausted and drained, she was well enough to do simple activities.

As for Long Tingyu, she was brought alongside Xiang Ling to cultivate, simultaneously wanting to stay close to her Big Sister Na Xinyi as well. While she was biased against Wei Wuyin before, her feelings had become quite complex after Long Chen's actions that day.

Su Mei nodded after seeing everyone had obediently gathered. Since Wei Wuyin left, these women had all entered his Sky Palace at varying times, enjoying the rich environment and resources Wei Wuyin left behind. The current starfield was in a lull, awaiting for change, so they were mostly left with time to freely cultivate.

"It's been a full year since Wei Wuyin entered the Gateway Door, and he left a letter of instructions for me if he hadn't returned by then," Su Mei announced, taking out a white paper envelope that was still sealed.

The group of women were taken aback. A letter? They looked towards each other with curiosity in their eyes. Why would he leave a letter? Most of their gazes sought Xue Yifei out. Out of everyone present, she was the only 'official' woman of status, a concubine, acknowledged publicly with a definitive connection to Wei Wuyin.

But Xue Yifei gently smiled in the face of their inquisitive eyes, "Sisters, whatever he left for us to hear, I'm sure it'll be appropriate and beneficial." This, for some reason, alleviated their worries.

Su Mei glanced at Xue Yifei. After a brief moment, she started to open the letter!

Chapter 472 - 468: The Message Left Behind

As Su Mei moved to open the letter, the hearts of a few women tightened for some odd reason. For an entire year, Wei Wuyin had been elsewhere, vanished into an unknown world with an unknown fate. There was the lingering fear that he might die there, never to return.

To hear that he left a letter in case he hadn't returned in a year was concerning, but they wanted to believe Xue Yifei's comforting words. But in truth, Xue Yifei was the most concerned. She was his official concubine, and while she might not be his wife, Wei Wuyin had yet to take an official wife.

Xue Yifei's gorgeous hazel eyes with navy blue flecks stared anxiously at Su Mei's hands that held onto the letter.

Lin Ziyan was also deeply troubled. She had left Long Chen for Wei Wuyin, believing she had made a mistake with the former, and the latter was her destined soulmate; the one who would unravel her clan's bloodline and free them from their prison. Her concern was far more emotional than Xue Yifei, especially after hearing about Long Chen's true nature.

She glanced at Na Xinyi. When she learned that Long Chen had left her to die from an unknown threat, she knew there was no turning back. And there was no way she wanted to. While she knew that Wei Wuyin wasn't a saint, having eliminated entire clans, taken down factions, at least he didn't hide his true nature.

When Su Mei started to open the letter, she silently prayed that the matter wouldn't be bad news.

Xiang Ling and Nyla Shur were Wei Wuyin's lovers, and he had always treated them well, ensuring they had plenty of resources, good environment, and protection. Their anxiety was even higher than the others, because if something happened to Wei Wuyin, they would lose an incredible lover who was caring and attentive, and an even better provider.

Su Mei could sense the growing unease filling the room. She frowned slightly. Were they all expecting something horrible? She had never once considered Wei Wuyin would or even could suffer any harm. She worried more about the Ascendants, especially Hong Chunhua, rather than Wei Wuyin.

They truly don't know that he's a terrifying cultivator of unbelievable strength. She faintly smiled, and then ripped one side of the letter.

ZSOOM!

From the opening, a gush of white light exploded, catching all of them off-guard. They were blinded by its brilliance, unable to open their eyes for a few seconds.

"Yo-you're here?!" A young voice resounded in bewilderment and shock. It belonged to Long Tingyu! When all their eyes started to regain their sight, a tall, handsome figure was now in the room with a faint smile on his face as he stood next to Su Mei.

"Lord Wei?!" Su Mei immediately recognized Wei Wuyin, but the shock and surprise wasn't revealed on her face. She looked at the figure for a few seconds, and said: "It's a projection."

"A projection?" Xue Yifei was immensely happy seeing Wei Wuyin's figure, but was deeply taken aback by Su Mei's words. He looked so real. He was clad in his black Heavenly King robes, his silver eyes as radiant as before, and his skin looking as supple as the real thing.

The others felt startled too, feeling that Wei Wuyin was extremely real. If Su Mei had said he was an Avatar or an Incarnation, then they would believe it. But a projection?

Su Mei reached out with her right hand, touching Wei Wuyin's arm, and it turned into a white mist that swirled. When her hand returned, the white mist reformed his arm. This verified that he was a projection, not an avatar or an incarnation. The lack of physical form and inability to interact with physical matter revealed as much.

"Wow!" Long Tingyu was thoroughly amazed. She had never seen such a projection of an image with such realism before. If she wasn't told, she would think Wei Wuyin was standing here before them with that eternal smile and bright eyes. She wanted to be able to accomplish something like that one day.

Then, Wei Wuyin started to move, his eyes gaining a life as he swept his gaze through the world. He spoke, a surge of mental energies trembling out and replacing his voice. Despite all of them hearing him simultaneously and exactly the same, it was transmitted directly into their minds.

"If you're opening this after a year, it means I'm..." Wei Wuyin's voice started to sound out, and their hearts sank. Wasn't this how you started a message left behind after death?! Could it be?

"...not back yet. Still alive, no worries. Haha. It's nice to know you're worrying about me." Wei Wuyin's projection laughed, clearly predicting their responses. While he wasn't talking about anyone in particular, they all felt they were being directly talked to. If someone said Wei Wuyin was here, they might instinctively say yes.

Long Tingyu pouted with a hmp, "Who's worrying about you?!" She nearly stomped her feet with a faint blush, but she stopped herself. Why was she acting like this? She didn't even like Wei Wuyin! But the fact she responded made her even more shocked, because Wei Wuyin wasn't even here!

Wei Wuyin continued with a hearty chuckle, "That's so cute. Denying your feelings isn't healthy, y'know."

"What?!" Long Tingyu was taken aback, so was Hong Ru. One might've been vocal, but the other was mental. They looked at the others.

Long Tingyu cried in disbelief, "He's actually here! He has to be, right?"

But Su Mei shook his head, "He's not." After that, she looked at Wei Wuyin's projection and faintly smiled. He had predicted their response, and even who would be present. Perhaps the message was left for Hong Ru, maybe it was left for Long Tingyu. Regardless, it had struck them both equally and they'll never truly know which it was meant for.

"Alright, I shouldn't tease. It's been a full year, so the expedition took a little longer than I expected. If I wasn't back by then, I knew I had to leave this behind to ensure that you're all prepared for what's to

come; to make a decision about what you want." Wei Wuyin continued on, and Wen Mingna started to clench his hands into fists.

The ambient atmosphere became tense and serious. Wei Wuyin's eyes narrowed, sweeping a glance at everyone present despite not being here.

"Over a year ago, I felt a dark, sinister air engulf the entire starfield. It was terrifying, as if the end was approaching. The end of what? The starfield? The living beings present here? Our peace? Everything? I'm not exactly certain, but whatever is coming or about to happen will drag this starfield and its people into the depths of total ruin.

"I went to explore the Gateway Door's hidden realm to find something I needed. What is that exactly? I'm uncertain, but hopefully it'll prepare me to handle whatever is meant to arrive." His words grasped the hearts of these ten women, with Su Mei as the eleventh being unsurprised. She had long since known about this possibility.

"I've never been one to rely solely on a single plan; I have the Ascendants making ample preparations to face whatever comes, but it might not be enough. That's the reason for this message. Each of you here are phenomenal female cultivators, some of you are outstandingly talented, far beyond the innate talents our starfield normally births. Unfortunately, your talents haven't been fully excavated.

"To excavate these talents, to prepare those willing to face this unknown threat, to ensure their safety at the very least, more extreme measures will have to be taken. Measures that are suitable for females only." Wei Wuyin's words startled them. Unexcavated talent? Only suitable for females?

"To be clear, I will not be forcing any of you into this. And it's only available for one type of woman: Mine. I have no intention of heavily investing into a woman that isn't my own. I'm no saint, never will be. If you haven't learned that by now, then you don't know me.

"Before I continue, Su Mei, have everyone who's unwilling leave the room. I'll give you three minutes," Wei Wuyin's voice halted, and he stayed stationary with his eyes closed.

"..." A silence permeated the room.

Chapter 473 - 469: Valkyrie

The women in the room looked at each other. They had just learned that the starfield might be at risk of ending, and that Wei Wuyin was about to prepare a select few to survive the oncoming crisis. It was a lot to process.

"I'm staying!" Xue Yifei stepped forward without hesitation. As Wei Wuyin's concubine, she was tethered to his fate already. While there wasn't any real reason for her to state her position, as it was already clear, she did so anyway to make others understand. Indeed, they did.

Xue Yifei moved forward, standing next to the projection of Wei Wuyin. She swept her gaze across those present.

Su Mei dutifully instructed, "Those who are willing, stand here. Those who aren't, you may leave." She waved her hand, and the door leading outside opened. They all turned to see outside the room, how cold and desolate it was.

"Is this really a question?" Nyla Shur's feisty voice resounded. She stepped forward in long, confident strides and stood next to Xue Yifei. She had already been conquered in body and heart by Wei Wuyin. She felt a little insulted that she was even posed this question. She decided she was going to be a little rougher the next time the two tussled between the sheets.

Xiang Ling didn't hesitate either. She had been betrayed and abandoned before, and she never thought of doing the same to others. Wei Wuyin might have quite a few lovers, but he hadn't abandoned her, so she wouldn't abandon him.

When she stepped forward, a tender hand grasped hers. She turned and noticed Long Tingyu holding her hand tightly. Those violet-colored eyes of hers reflected an anxious light.

"He said extreme measures. What if they're not safe?" She asked, clearly worried for her Master.

She had always seen Xiang Ling as a motherly figure she'd never had. Since she arrived in this unknown world, she had gained a family. A mother, a grandfather in the form of her Ancestor, and many sisters. While she might not know how to feel about Long Chen's actions, he was still the one who took her in from that dark, damp forest filled with death and loneliness.

Long Tingyu was nothing more than a wild girl who lived in the forest, struggling to survive and bitterly cultivating to grow stronger in a merciless world. She deeply cared for those around her, and why she was so conflicted about Long Chen's choice to allow Na Xinyi to die despite their past.

Xiang Ling felt unfathomable warmth in her heart. She tousled her hair, then fixed it up to look even better. "I trust him; he wouldn't hurt us," she consoled and comforted.

After hearing this, Long Tingyu bit her lips and slowly let go. Her reluctance had weakened, but she was still deeply concerned.

Xiang Ling caressed Long Tingyu's beautiful face, feeling the warmth within her palm. "I'll be fine." She turned and arrived at the platform. When she arrived, she noticed Lin Ziyan and Na Xinyi next to Xue Yifei and Nyla Shur. She always had strange feelings about Lin Ziyan, especially how she left Long Chen for Wei Wuyin.

She never really liked her, and likely never will. When she recalled the times Lin Ziyan was lovey-dovey with Long Chen, standing beside him and siding with him on every matter, and then flipping her allegiance so swiftly, it made her feel uncomfortable. Despite that, she wasn't unreasonable.

Lin Ziyan had nearly died, turned into a cripple that was seen as a hopeless soul by every professional in the medical field. It made sense to fall for your savior. But it still didn't sit well with her, so she avoided interacting with Lin Ziyan.

As for Na Xinyi, she was the most quiet and obvious to be there. Long Chen had abandoned her to die, and she had an arrangement with Wei Wuyin to become his wife. While it hadn't been officiated yet, she was fully willing.

The only ones left were Hong Ru, Xiao Bing, Long Tingyu, Wu Baozhai, and Wen Mingna. Unlike the others, they all had different relations to Wei Wuyin.

Su Mei turned to Wen Mingna and Wu Baozhai. "Both of you are excluded from the requirement. Come," she said. Wen Mingna expected this, walking forward and standing next to them. She was a member of the Ascendants, so she was in a similar situation as Su Mei. In fact, she wasn't even supposed to be here. She had a mission that had been delayed.

Wu Baozhai was also supposed to be on that same mission, so she wasn't even supposed to be here. Still, she walked forward with Wu Baozhai, leaving only three girls left.

Su Mei's eyes flashed with ambiguous light. She had delayed their mission exactly for this reason. Wei Wuyin had told her to gather all the female cultivators staying in his Sky Palace after a full year. He wasn't specific about much, so she took some liberties. As for Wei Wuyin accepting a subordinate as a lover? She knew it wasn't too likely, if not outright impossible.

Hong Ru and Xiao Bing looked at each other. Since Hong Ru's resurrection, they have been even closer than sisters, so they sought the other's opinion. Even though Wei Wuyin was the Ascendant Emperor of Neo-Dawn, a Heavenly King of the Myriad Monarch Sect, an Alchemic Emperor, and unfathomably handsome, this was a difficult question. That was because they weren't certain.

Suddenly, Hong Ru bit her lips and turned to Su Mei, and then looked at Wei Wuyin. "I..." Just as she was about to speak, Wei Wuyin's lips moved.

"Oh yeah! There's the issue if Hong Ru and Xiao Bing are still here. If they haven't left yet, then it's fine. I know Xiao Bing's sexual orientation, and Hong Ru's struggling curiosity, and how they feel towards each other. Well, that might've been sorted out after a year. Regardless, both of you can choose to stay or leave, I won't turn either of you away. However, I'm willing to accept both of you as my women if you desire." The words Wei Wuyin's projection said shocked everyone.

They looked at Xiao Bing and Hong Ru.

"I'm willing," Shockingly, it was Xiao Bing who said this! Her icy gaze looked at Hong Ru with a trace of warmth. She grabbed her hand tightly. "As long as you're willing, I'm willing."

Hong Ru was startled, her heart feeling complex emotions. "B-but..." She stammered a little, uncertain what to say. After a while, she hesitatingly said: "He said we could stay. We don't have to agree, especially if you don't want to."

Xiao Bing brightly smiled. Her smile felt as if it could sweep away the snowy coverings of the world, revealing all its glorious beauty and warmth beneath. "I want to," her hand tightened more. The love in her eyes was unmistakable.

Clearly, she was doing this for Hong Ru, but a trace of it was herself. While she wasn't sexually interested in men, she wanted to have children, so she needed to find one someday. This contradictory feeling had haunted her for so long, but it was fine if she chose Wei Wuyin, because he was exactly the type of man she'd want to father her child in this brutal, bleak, and devastatingly crushing cultivation world.

The upside was that Hong Ru and she could be together, no matter what or where.

Hong Ru didn't know how to respond, but she felt Xiao Bing's innermost desires. And she knew her own feelings. The best of both worlds, why would she reject this?

"We're willing."

Holding hands, they stood beside the rest. The only one left was Long Tingyu.

Su Mei glanced at the duo, feeling that Wei Wuyin always intended for this to happen. Or else why the delayed message? To add, he even made it known that he understood their feelings and had no issue with it. There would be no sensation of feeling cheating on the other party, or forced to choose between one or the other.

Long Tingyu felt isolated, but her feelings were complex and tangled. She wondered if Wei Wuyin left a message concerning her, but after a full minute, there was nothing else. She wasn't a part of the Ascendants nor his woman. Furthermore, she felt that she was too young to make this decision. After all, she wanted to get married, not just be a lover.

In the end, she bit her lips and turned around. As that lone figure walked out of the door, it closed behind her.

After that, the full three minutes passed.

Wei Wuyin's projection spoke again, this time with a wistful tone, "She's too young and rightfully not ready. It's good she didn't decide to stay or else I'd feel a little concerned." It heaved a sigh of relief, causing the others to be incredibly shocked. They felt that Wei Wuyin was actually here! Or else how could he have known Long Tingyu left?!

"He's a projection," Su Mei reminded them.

"Alright, so! That should leave ten, if you count Su Mei. This is a good number to start with." Wei Wuyin cheerfully said, but this time, even Su Mei was taken aback. She had kept Wen Mingna and Wu Baozhai back by her own decision, how did Wei Wuyin know there were ten?!

Xue Yifei touched Wei Wuyin's chest, but a swirl of white mist formed. The fact he wasn't real was true. He should be in that unknown realm, so there was no way he could glimpse into this projection, right?

"To start, I'll be honest with you all: I am not who you think I am." Wei Wuyin began, causing the women to fixate their gazes on him. What did that mean?

"I am not an Emperor Alchemist. I am a Mortal Sovereign Alchemist, and I have been for over two years now, nearly three!" Those words were like an explosive bomb to everyone present except Su Mei. They reeled in shock, not believing this one bit.

A Mortal Sovereign Alchemist?!

"There's no extreme measures to speak of, really. The only difference will be in what I'll be investing in you all from now on. Which means I won't be holding back. I intend to make all ten of you into a special unit, better suited to protect yourself and our interests.

"I've learned from other's mistakes. If you're not present, or too weak, it's possible your lovers or allies will suffer. To solve this, I intend to make every last one of you outstanding experts of this generation

with my everything, to protect yourself against the world with your own power." When Wei Wuyin reached this point, Na Xinyi, Lin Ziyang, and Hong Ru were glanced at by everyone. They all suffered because of their weakness or their lover's absence.

Wei Wuyin turned his body, facing Na Xinyi in the most inexplicable manner, "I promised I'll take you as my wife as long as you're willing; I won't go back on my word. However, this means you'll have to work several times harder than the others, to prove yourself and to protect everything I have. Because it won't just be mine. I hope you understand this."

Na Xinyi was still half-crippled and weak. She didn't know how he knew where she would position herself, but it gave her chills. Those words brought a rare joy to her heart, because she understood the meaning.

Xue Yifei looked at Na Xinyi, and her hazel eyes flickered with an ambiguous light. Her expression betrayed none of her current emotions.

"To do this," Wei Wuyin turned away, "I intend to establish a secret faction. A secret unit made up entirely of female members of Ascendants and my own lovers. A group of talented, intelligent, and immensely powerful women that could tackle the world in my absence, even after my death."

He paused, sweeping his gaze across each and everyone of them. For so long, the Calamities of Hell had been hanging over his head, and he was most concerned about what would happen to those he loved and his legacy if he failed in the end. To solve this, to feel the most comfortable, he decided to make this decision.

"From henceforth, you'll be my Valkyries!"

Chapter 474 - 470: Pirates On The Horizon

"First Commander, are you certain we shouldn't meet up with his Majesty?" A male demon with a bald head, tribal marks etched in his cheekbones and neck, and wielding a double-sided warhammer nearly twice his size, asked with a heft of his warhammer.

"Are you stupid? Why should we? This is our tempering experience, do you want to rely on his Majesty?" Another spoke, a human male with nearly a hundred spatial rings hung around his neck. Some of them still had colorful blood on them, likely belonging to their original owners.

"Hmph! Rely on? Are you an idiot? I meant to get orders from!" The bald demon argued, glaring at the human male. "It's been two years since we've been here. Who knows what he wants us to do," the bald demon added.

The human male frowned, "You-"

"Enough!" Hong Chunhua halted their argument with an authoritative shout. They went silent instantly, clearly afraid and incredibly respectful of Hong Chunhua. They merely glanced at each other with a fighting spirit, unwilling to lose out to the other.

There were five individuals on a mid-sized boat, traveling across a purplish body of water. The water emitted a toxic and noxious odor. Despite that, there were lively fishes that swam freely within.

Amongst these five individuals were Hong Chunhua and Lian Yu, including three others from the Ascendants.

They had gathered together in search of the others, leaving the Zephyr Plains behind roughly nine months ago. Besides the human male and bald demon, there was a dark-haired female elf with silver-rimmed glasses who was chatting with Lian Yu. She was similarly a member of the Ascendants, but she was a little more quiet and reserved.

Hong Chunhua looked towards the horizon, "His Majesty has claimed the Central Region and the Desolate Lands as his own, becoming the Holy Son of Tri-Elementus in this strange world. If he wanted to contact us, or find us, he would've. This is our journey, meant to temper us."

"See!" The human male exclaimed with excitement, clearly agreeing with Hong Chunhua. But when Hong Chunhua turned and gave him a glare, he shrunk back and lowered his posture.

"Bei Yunhan and Zu Zun, don't lose sight of our objective. You understand?" Hong Chunhua said with a dignified expression.

"Yes!" The human, Bei Yunhan, and the bald demon, Zu Zun, simultaneously agreed. Their expressions relaxed as they grew serious. They turned to the horizon, their eyes flashing with spiritual light as they unleashed their respective ocular-based spiritual spells. They seemingly linked with each other, bolstering their strength.

Lian Yu and the female elf, Li Yingu, faintly smiled at this scene. Despite their on-the-surface rivalry, those two were extremely reliable and exceptionally talented in coordinated arts and spells. In fact, they were more than just that.

Lian Yu watched them and asked, "Are they really together?" She was in utter disbelief at Bei Yunhan and Zu Zun's attitude towards each other. Furthermore, they were both males of different races.

Li Yingu brightly smiled, "Yep." With that, she started tinkering with a compass-like tool in her hand, using her spiritual force to alter certain aspects within its spiritual formation.

"Li Yingu! How's the alterations going?!" Hong Chunhua shouted.

"Almost! Need a few more changes." Li Yingu replied energetically. The compass was how they found the other Ascendants, but it was rendered ineffective since they entered the Noxious Seas. She had been working on it for months, finally close to fixing the issue.

Hong Chunhua nodded. Li Yingu was a Creationist, a dual Forger and Designer. She was extremely talented, receiving special nurturing from Wei Wuyin. As a Forger, she was skilled in constructing tools and armaments, and as a Designer, she can inscribe formations and even set-up powerful arrays.

Lian Yu was shocked that every member of the Ascendants were talented and skilled in certain arts and spells. Despite Li Yingu's specialization, she was terrifyingly powerful at the Spatial Resonance Phase, just like the others. Still, even after two years, she had only made the advancement of entering the Sky Ruler Phase, the Second Stage of the Astral Core Realm.

"There's something approaching!" Bei Yunhan and Zu Zun said in concerted harmony. They executed handseals simultaneously, their eyes brightening up considerably as a result. After a while, they shouted, their expressions odd.

"It's a ship! Furthermore, it's hailing us!" The two spoke as one, clearly their spiritual energies were deeply connected without a trace of disharmony.

Hong Chunhua narrowed her eyes as she observed a navy blue ship slowly emerge from the horizon. This ship was large-sized, capable of holding roughly a thousand individuals in a compact and conservative manner.

"Navy River Elves?" Hong Chunhua asked. The navy blue ships were a signature mark of Navy River Elves, but she felt a strange sensation as she looked at it.

The two formed a new set of hand seals, and a boom resounded! They were pushed to the deck, their eyes bleeding. "Shit! You bastards!" Zu Zun shouted in furious anger, grabbing his warhammer with his aura surging violently. The rage he felt was palpable. He was about to launch an all-out attack.

With his strength, that boat would collapse from a single swing, even from this vast distance.

"Wait!" Bei Yunhan grabbed Zu Zun's muscular arm that were protruding veins carrying his enraged blood. Zu Zun paused.

"It's humans! And the...the Grand Prince is on board!" Bei Yunhan said with an awkward expression. That expression was quite telling.

"Grand Prince?" Li Yungu curiously looked towards the horizon, spotting the incoming navy blue ship.

"Grand Prince? LONG CHEN!" Lian Yu jumped, her sapphire-like eyes emitting endless ripples as countless bombs of happiness exploded in her chest. She rushed to the edge of the boat, holding the railing as she watched the approaching navy blue ship. Her eyes suffused with the light of hope.

It's been two years since they last saw each other. She wished for him every morning and every night, despite the world having no night, wondering if he was looking at the solar star at the same time she was.

Hong Chunhua remained calm, clear-headed. She sought clarification, noticing Bei Yunhan's odd reaction. "Elaborate."

Bei Yunhan wiped the line of blood from the corner of his eyes, looking at the navy blue ship. "He's locked inside, behind a prison cell. It seems he's hooked up to a Energy Conversion Array...I tried to send our spiritual sight inside, but an expert noticed and repelled it. However, I caught a glimpse of his aura. It's unmistakable."

"...What?! Impossible!" Lian Yu shouted in disbelief. "He's Long Chen; how could he be placed on an Energy Conversion Array?!" She had been captured for a similar purpose, so she dreaded such a situation.

Hong Chunhua barely reacted to her disbelief and question, "Strength of the expert?"

Zu Zun responded with a frown, "Just a trifling Light Reflection Phase cultivator, thinking he's hot shit."

"How many on-board?"

"About 300 captives, roughly 800 total crew, and 80 experts beyond the Sky Ruler Phase. A single Light Reflection Phase expert as Captain. All humans, and some of the captives are Navy Blue Elves. It's very likely their ship was hijacked," Bei Yunhan explained thoroughly.

Lian Yu bit her lips after being ignored, but she knew it was best to stay quiet at this moment. She held no power over their next course of action.

Li Yungu walked forward, "Are we taking action, Commander Hong?"

Zu Zun added, "They're obviously pirates and slave traders."

"..." Hong Chunhua furrowed her brows. This situation would normally have very little benefits to involve themselves in, but their Grand Prince was being held on-board. This was a kick in the face to the entire Myriad Monarch Sect. The audacity was outrageous, but she similarly knew about the contention between Wei Wuyin and Long Chen.

"Please..." Lian Yu was about to beg, but Li Yungu placed her palm on Lian Yu's shoulder. Li Yungu shook her head, telling her to be quiet. This was not her decision to make lest she wished to fight them all herself.

After a long moment of consideration, the navy blue boat was still approaching, and the auras on board were clearly in a primed state for battle.

"..." Hong Chunhua was about to make her decision when a voice resounded from behind her.

"There's an Ascendant on the ship!"

The four turned to Li Yungu who held a compass that flickered with light, pointing towards the navy blue ship and becoming brighter with each passing second.

Hong Chunhua didn't hesitate any longer. With her auburn hair flowing with the sea breeze, she clasped her hand around her sword's hilt, and ordered: "Secure the captives. Kill all enemies. We take no prisoners, do you understand?!"

"Yes!" The trio shouted in a practiced, aggressive manner. Even the delicate looking Li Yungu's demeanor had changed, her eyes flashed with violent, heart-quivering killing intent. They, with a simple order, had become battle-ready warriors!

Lian Yu's heart relaxed.

Chapter 475 - 471: Slaughter On The Noxious Seas

"Li Yungu!" An energized and roaring command left Hong Chunhua's mouth, prompting Li Yungu to react with a fierce shout of understanding. The bespectacled elf moved swiftly, forming several handseals in quick succession, sending out waves of spiritual force as she brought out eight stones. With a practiced motion, these stones shot out and transfixed themselves around the box in an octagonal-shape.

The stones were dull and grey, but after they entered this pattern, their colors started to change rapidly as a beguiling mist emerged around them in a large area, concealing their ship in a matter of seconds.

Immediately afterwards, Hong Chunhua formed a seal, and she jumped upwards and out of the mist. The other three followed, with Lian Yu staying behind. The ship rumbled softly and then began to rapidly sink into the Noxious Seas' violet-colored waters. A thin film encapsulated the entire ship, protecting it from the toxic properties of the waters below.

Lian Yu anxiously watched the others leave as she sank, her spiritual senses restricted within. She could only stay behind due to her low cultivation base. A fierce desire for strength ignited within her heart, a desire that had ignited many times before. Unfortunately, she was never able to match these elite experts or Long Chen, always relegated to an observer.

"Captain!" Within the crow's nest, a lookout shouted with their eyes emitting dense and continuous rays of light. "They've hidden within mist! I can't sense or see them!" She exclaimed aloud, ensuring the crew was informed. This female lookout had a cultivation base at the Soul Idol Phase, but her spiritual sense and sensory spells were the absolute best on the ship, so she was extremely well-suited for this position.

A thin, sickly looking man with ash pale skin and a gloomy gaze arrived on the deck, prompting the crew to give looks of respect and reverence. This man was the Light Reflection Phase Cultivator who sent the spiritual sight of Bei Yunhan and Zu Zun away. His name was Buze Yichen. Since the beginning of this year, he had earned the title of Captain of Pale Trees Pirates.

Buze Yichen slightly frowned. "Are they running?" He asked himself this, witnessing the mist start to rapidly spread in all directions, making it increasingly difficult to observe what was happening or in what direction. In mere moments, it already spanned half a mile.

"Men! Prepare for battle!" Buze Yichen gave the order, not being one bit careless. There were only two options available to these newcomers, especially with their little numbers. Firstly, they could hightail it out of here while using a distraction. This might be an appealing idea at first, but they'd never escape their Navy River Elven Tribe's boat designed to navigate these waters.

Or the other option, fight!

He had already pegged their boat way back, realizing there were only five cultivators present, and two of which were at the Fourth Stage of the Astral Core Realm, Spatial Resonance Phase from their spiritual sense. Those two were inconsequential, but to ensure little loss of life, he decided to take action personally. He had always been the cautious sort.

"Find them!" As the men readied for a fight, their previously primed auras translated to legitimate readiness as wards erected ceaselessly around their bodies. The lookout was inspecting the mist, her eyes glowing brighter and brighter with spiritual light as she peered into the mist. They were only a mile away, so she was using her all.

Suddenly, she noticed a particular shift. Her heart leapt with joy as she screamed, "They're still in the mi-
"

A sharp, piercing shriek tore through the air, exploded from the mist, churning the mist as a result. A line of mist formed a long tail of mist, and along that line to its end was a piercing arrow lancing through the void with lightning-like speed.

Pu!

Buze Yichen's eyes constricted, the scent of fresh blood permeated the air, faintly overtaking the toxic aroma of the violet-colored waters.

The lookout didn't even get a chance to scream out in horror or fear or pain, an arrow accurately penetrated the space between her brows. The sheer power of the arrow didn't cause her head to be drilled in, but utterly exploded in an impact of dazzling light. The momentum sent her body out of the crow's nest, falling lifelessly amidst the crew with the thudding sound of flesh meeting wood.

"..." The crew saw this, their hearts sinking a thousand feet with every passing moment.

Pu! Pu!

"We're under attack!" An expert at the Spatial Resonance Phase explosively shouted, his ward reinforced by his astral force several times over. Just beside him, two friends of many years had their lives ended by a swift arrow of light. Their heads exploded gruesomely, and it was simply too swift.

The subdued sound of their explosive deaths were mind-numbing, causing him to reel.

"Activate the defensive formations! Reinforce your astral wards! Beware the Archer!" Buze Yichen ordered fiercely with a reminder, his eyes still reflecting a unique calm befitting a Captain as he inspected the mist. He hadn't expected such a fierce reaction without warning.

The navy blue ship started to flash erratically with various colored lights, soon engulfing the ship in protective spherical shielding. With the shield up, the others relaxed their tensed minds. This was especially so for the weaker members. An archer was absolutely hell to face out in the open seas.

The encroaching mist, however, was unstoppable. It swallowed the navy blue ship whole. Fortunately, the crew watched from behind the shielding, preventing the mist from entering the ship or affecting the crew.

A crew member at the Fourth Stage of the Astral Core Realm, the Spatial Resonance Phase, ran towards Buze Yichen. "Captain Buze, do we retreat?" They had just been attacked after hailing a ship, fully intending to plunder it. Clearly, those cultivators were not going to be robbed and killed without a fierce fight.

Buze Yichen glanced at the speaker, looking at the mist that surrounded them soon after. He frowningly said, "It's too late." As if his words were an ominous premonition of future events, the shielding that held the mist back started to tremble.

The Spatial Resonance expert gawked, "What's happening?!" They swept their spiritual senses across the deck and shielding, noticing the formation's energies were being slowed with some strange power.

"It's affecting the circulation of the defensive formation. A parasitic mist. ALL MEMBERS! BE READY TO FIGHT!" Buze Yichen shouted explosively, his aura at the Light Reflection Phase surged. He took out a saber, his eyes flashing with killing intent.

Soon, the formation stopped working. The shielding powered down and left the ship defenseless. A few unsuspecting crew members hadn't taken the appropriate precaution, trying to conserve astral force. But when the mist touched their standard conjured wards, the mist was like oxygen to an oxygen mask—it smoothly entered with no resistance.

Startled, those careless few tried to push it back yet was forced to breathe in the mist after an unsuccessful attempt. They shouted and screamed out the mist's strangeness to the others, but mid-sentence, their throats seized, their auras faltered, and their wards started to dissipate.

They grasped their throats, trying to scream a cry for help but to no success. But the transformations hadn't stopped. Those unlucky few had their eyes lose color, their skin lose luster, and their bodies falling onto the deck with a lifeless descent. They lost consciousness.

Buze Yichen noticed this, "Idiots! I said to reinforce your astral wards, and don't breathe in the mist!" Despite his roaring warning, a few more were subjugated by the mist. As for those beneath the Astral Core Realm, they were unable to defend themselves.

The Spatial Resonance Phase expert kept the mist encroaching him from all angles at bay, "What is this mist?!" His inquiry was left unanswered as true enemies did not explain themselves in battle.

The crew devolved in a panic, with many believing those who lost consciousness had died, the light in their eyes vanishing and their breathing seemingly stopped. They cried out, some even saw things that weren't there. They unleashed attacks that struck their allies. A few pitiful souls lost their lives by their fellow brethren's blade.

"ARGH! NO!" A boom sounded alongside a horrified scream. The sound of metal hitting flesh and flesh exploding resounded, tainting the mist a reddish tint. This color vanished in a few moments, but soon enough, another boom resounded.

Pu! Pu! Pu!

Three arrows flashed through the ship, finding their home in the skulls of three unlucky cultivators. These arrows were too fast, too strong, and those struck were all at the Sky Ruler Phase. They lost their lives despite their reinforced Astral Wards.

"THEY'RE ONBOARD! DEFEND YOURSELF!" But the mist lowered visibility. A few experts panicked, flying off the ship. But when they exited the ship, a strange gravitational force emitted from the edges of the ship, dragging them down as if a mountain was on their shoulders.

Splash! Splash!

Sizzle! Sizzle!

Those who tried to escape were brought into the Noxious Seas, their screams were abruptly shut off as they seemed to enter a vat of acidic liquid. After a short scream, only their white bones floated to the surface after a few seconds, completely devoid of flesh and clothes. Unfortunately, the visibility was too low, so many were falling to this fate. Even a Soul Idol Phase expert was caught off-guard.

"Don't leave the ship! There's a formation at the edges of the ship!" Buze Yichen soon lost his calm. He knew he was losing control of his ship and crew, with many casualties born out of their enemy's sinister

tactics. He didn't launch random attacks for fear of destroying the ship or killing off his own crew members, weakening their strength further, adding to the confusion.

"Vicious!" He bitingly roared, trying to find the culprits. He shot forward, blazing past a few crew members trying to enter an area that was recently tinted red. When he arrived, he found the crushed remains of a female human. A fierce growl left his lips. He was losing his composure.

Just as he was about to continue his search, a blast of astral force shot towards him. His eyes lit with a ferocious light, using his saber to slice into the astral force, unraveling it with ease, and then retaliated with a flash of saber light. The saber light sliced into the mist.

"AHHHH!" A scream of terror resounded, filled with death and grievance. When Buze Yichen arrived at the voice's location, he noticed it was one of crew mates. He had been sliced into two by saber force, their eyes reflected their shock and despair at the end of their life.

"Fool!" He spat.

Pu! Pu! Pu! Pu! Pu!

Five successive sounds resounded, eliminating five more cultivators! The mist reddish tint at that moment had become deeper, but only for a mere moment. At that moment, Buze Yichen finally saw the trajectory of the light arrows. His eyes blazed with violent light, explosively shooting towards the area they all originated from.

He arrived in almost a blink, yet he felt no one nearby. His expression changed.

Pu! Pu! Pu!

He moved faster, rushing off the moment the sounds of impact were heard. Yet, there was still no one there. He hated this mist with a fierce passion. With it up, he couldn't use his Spatial Mark or Spatial Prison to locate or halt the enemy. If he randomly unleashed his strength, he'll be wasting astral force and might attack his own members. It'll be a double loss.

"Find the formation's core!" Buze Yichen changed his objective as he unleashed several locator-type spiritual spells. He infused ample spiritual force in each, but they all failed to locate the formation let alone the core itself. Unfortunately for him, he hadn't realized the underwater ship's location was directly beneath them, underneath the Noxious Seas.

Buze Yichen knew he wasted time with these actions. The lives of many more died as a result. He could only helplessly hear their pleading shouts and heart-shaking death throes. It was a slaughter...

"Who are you?!" Buze Yichen screamed out, his aura gushing to push the mist away. But the mist kept approaching, his aura only temporarily preventing its movements. Only his astral ward halted its approach, and he didn't dare expand his astral ward to engulf the entire ship.

"Commander, task completed!" A female voice resounded.

"...?!" Buze Yichen knew this voice was new, someone he'd never met before. His eyes glowed with a sharp light as he gripped his saber, his expression revealing a hint of pure savagery. If he found this woman, he swore that he'd ravage her thoroughly. The imagery placated his raging heart a little.

The mist slowly started to recede.

Chapter 476 - 472: A Coordinated Attack

Buze Yichen had bloodshot eyes as the mist receded, revealing the truth about his ship, his crew, and their fate. The ship was marred in the glaring blood of his crew, crushed flesh and headless corpses everywhere.

Their corpses, this vicious scene, nearly caused him to lose his mind. But he slowly calmed himself, realizing that everyone besides those beneath the Astral Core Realm and himself were dead. Those below the Astral Core Realm were unconscious, lying in the blood, brain matter, and fragmented bones of their formerly living allies.

"Why?!" Buze Yichen shouted through clenched teeth, his calm still holding itself by the thinnest of threads. He just saw the death, the one-sided defeat, and felt boundless grievance.

"I knew he was an idiot," a voice said with a sneer. It was filled with contempt and disdain. Asking why? How ludicrous was that? You enslaved, slaughtered, and likely plundered the riches of others, and when someone kills you, you ask why? An idiot might be a little too kind of an insult.

"Focus!" A commanding voice followed, causing the previous voice to assent with a grunt of obedience. The Captain's mental state aside, he was still an extremely powerful cultivator that shouldn't be taken lightly. Lowering your opinion of a target, of an enemy, subconsciously lowers your guard against them.

Hong Chunhua knew this, ensuring those under her charge remained focused on the task, underestimating no one.

Buze Yichen finally could see the enemies that had slaughtered his crew, ending their lives with many holding lifelong grievances. After being derided for his words, he no longer spoke and merely observed those present.

An auburn haired young woman with a valiant look. She was a beauty, fierce and fiery. She was even better than his imagery before, but her voice wasn't the same as the female from earlier. He licked his lips with a trace of savagery leaking from his eyes.

Her cultivation base was only at the Spatial Resonance Phase, a full stage below his. As for the other speaker, it was a warhammer wielding bald humanoid figure. His eyes constricted slightly, noting that the figure's appearance was outrageously different from those he was familiar with. But there were numerous unknown cultivation methods that can instigate vast physical changes.

The faint demonic air that person emitted must also be a product of a unique technique. He, too, was at the Spatial Resonance Phase. With that unique air and aura, he decided to eliminate this individual first. And after seeing the warhammer, which was covered in fresh blood, he knew the culprit of all the crushed piles of flesh and bones.

Then, he felt a presence behind him. He turned to see two figures. A female elf and a human male that had a necklace of dozens of spatial rings hanging around his neck. That elf must've been the first voice. When he saw the human and elf together, his expression became fierce with a wisp of hatred.

"I think he wants to kill us," Bei Yunhan seriously said, holding onto a longbow in his hand. He had no quiver, but his hand was covered in spatial rings, at least three on each finger, fitting perfectly on each section of his fingers.

Li Yungu's eyes radiated endless killing intent, completely unlike her normally gentle appearance. Her hands gripped two scrolls in each of her hands. "He wants to do more than that," her voice was extremely low.

Bei Yunhan nodded, "I bet he does." He lifted his longbow, a bowstring of white light formed. It emitted a misty light, giving it a strange and mysterious feeling.

Buze Yichen might be angry, but he still noticed that the four present were all Spatial Resonance Phase cultivators, having a strong, sturdy aura about them. These four were not normal, but he couldn't recall four identities that fit their descriptions in his memory.

Despite that, he was still at the Light Reflection Phase, and cultivation level couldn't be easily ignored. His Primary Light energies gave him boundless advantages which allowed him to keep his confidence and composure. Furthermore, the mist had receded.

While he knew their actions were likely because the mist wasn't suitable against those of higher cultivation, or it affected their own battle prowess, it still had his expert's will. "I do intend to do more than kill you all. I'll ensure you men suffer life worse than death, and you women will enjoy your last moments in this world. You should thank me. I'll indulge in your bodies, and then give you to a few mortals to appease the souls of my crew. I'll..."

Zu Zun shook his head, his eyes reflecting pity. He recalled what Wei Wuyin had once said during a training exercise, and that was to never gloat or talk without purpose. The vocal language was your weapon, but it was a double-sided blade. You should only use it when it suits your goals. His threats were pathetic, its main purpose to soothe his own mental state

When he asked Su Mei to further expand upon this concept, she said with a flat, cold tone: "Words are a distraction or a weapon to cause emotional instability or psychological manipulation. Anything that will grant you an advantage. If you're not using it in these ways, then you don't deserve to be an Ascendant."

They were talking to incite their enemy, but also to delay. Yet this so-called pirate captain was speaking for the sake of speaking. If the situation was swapped, and he had the cultivation advantage on four cultivators who encircled him, he would've attacked after speaking a few words to catch them off-guard.

Hong Chunhua had no intention to admonish this Light Reflection Phase cultivator for his actions. "Now!" She shouted after noticing the two scrolls in Lin Yungu's hands flickered with light, and Li Yungu smiled. Her vicious expression became gentle, focused, and pleasant. The two scrolls in her hand were unfurled.

Boom! Boom!

They exploded into a murder of cyan-colored crows. They each unleashed waves of spiritual power that permeated the surroundings. They were extremely fast, swirling around Buze Yichen in a flurry.

Buze Yichen hurriedly erected his astral ward. He felt shocked by the swiftness of the crows, barely capable of following their movements. What were they?! Each crow had a vast amount of spiritual energy within!

He felt a headache, his Astral Soul was trembling as the waves they emitted were targeted spiritual assaults. Even his sea of consciousness was besieged. What was this?!

Zu Zun held his warhammer with both hands, but he didn't engage in close-combat. He was well-aware of the cultivation advantages of a Light Reflection Phase cultivator, and entering close range, rapidfire exchange of blows will leave lower phase cultivators at an absolute disadvantage. Their Primary Light energies allowed their astral force to flow several times faster, capable of unleashing stronger, faster attacks with less preparation time.

Before he launched a single attack, he might have to deal with three. Unable to match such speeds, neither of them, not even Hong Chunhua, was going to engage this expert in such a careless fashion. He used the pummel of his warhammer and smashed it on the deck's surface. An explosive surge occurred as a formation embedded in the warhammer rapidly extracted his demonic force.

His demonic aura weakened, roughly 80% of his demonic shadow force left his body instantly, forming a dark violet arrow, it emitted no aura. The arrow vanished into a storage ring, not a spatial ring. And it appeared almost magically in Bei Yunhan's hands, clearing they shared a linked storage space.

Bei Yunhan unhesitatingly nocked the arrow constructed from demonic shadow force, infusing his light force within and causing his expression to grow pale as it trembled. The arrowhead was fixed on Buze Yichen's position.

The murder of crows formed a twisting storm that kept Buze Yichen on the defensive. He would, from time to time, unleash a palm to destroy a bundle of them. Li Yungu's eyes were dimming with each crow's destruction and her expression grew paler.

Hong Chunhua gripped her sword's hilt, the Sword Intent in her eyes were becoming more and more radiant. As for the sword itself, the sheathe was leaking sword light.

"Fire!" Hong Chunhua ordered with a transmission, and Bei Yunhan acted. He roared, pulling the arrow back into a full moon, and released it!

BOOSH!

The arrow was fired! The space rippled, the winds shifted, and the world felt pulled as a violet and white light formed a long trail, penetrating through the void with incredible speed!

Simultaneously, Li Yungu severed her connection to the crows, causing them to lose their powerful means, becoming lifeless crows formed from spiritual energies.

The timing was perfect.

Hong Chunhua pulled out her sword, engulfing herself in sword light as she blitzed forward for a short moment, halting her steps, and unleashing a devastatingly powerful flash of sword light. It was vast, large, and extremely noticeable!

The two attacks came from both sides, but when the crows halted their moments, Buze Yichen noticed the sword light and Sword Intent flared violently towards him. Even this attack was terrifying, so he gathered the bulk of his astral force to defend against it.

Yet, this attack left his back exposed.

"NO!" He shouted violently in his mind, realizing his mistake. But it was too late, only noticing when the demonic light arrow touched the base of his skull, drilling an inch in. A light of despair flashed for a moment, boundless regret reflected in his pupils, and his world darkening as his head was penetrated.

The power contained within ravaged his head!

The arrow kept going, directly between Hong Chunhua and Zu Zun. It vanished into the horizon.

Chapter 477 - 473: Worldly Changes

While the events took a while to describe, the event itself occurred in a blink of a mortal's eye, unleashing in such a coordinated effort that it was utterly flawless.

The four were all pale, experiencing an exhaustion of their respective energies and forces. But they had eliminated a higher stage cultivator with no losses due to their concerted actions, their planning, and flawless execution. In normal circumstances, a Light Reflection Phase expert was capable of killing dozens of Spatial Resonance Phase cultivators with ease, their cultivation level advantages were far, far too oppressive.

In a frontal fight, perhaps they could claim victory, but not without losses. That was unacceptable.

These cultivation advantages became more and more oppressive as phases rose, with the Worldly Domain almost determining invincibility beneath their phase no matter the numbers. It was fortunate that the Season of Regression was present, lowering the cultivation advantages of everyone, and the higher their cultivation level, the greater the restriction.

Even Wei Wuyin at the Spatial Resonance Phase was fearful of a restricted Worldly Domain, unwilling to enter it for a mere moment. If it wasn't restricted, capable of fully converting ambient mana, energies, and essences into its own power, the terror would shake the most talented, fearless experts.

But without the Primary Light energies capable of merging with the ambient mana, connecting with the ambient light energies in the surroundings, the Light Reflection Phase lost roughly 70% of its strength.

Still, they claimed victory.

Zu Zun walked towards the corpse, his eyes filled with contempt. "He talked a lot of shit. Look where that got'em," he shook his head at the corpse that was almost headless.

Usually, Bei Yunhan would speak words of disagreements, but he didn't. Instead, he arrived beside Zu Zun, asked with concern: "Are you okay?" The concern originated from his heart, his tone soft as he hurriedly withdrew a handkerchief.

Zu Zun was shocked for a moment. He touched his nose, realizing he was bleeding. He had overexerted the extraction, taking 80% of his demonic shadow force in one go, causing his body to suffer internal injuries. His eyes turned to Bei Yunhan as he saw the worry, a touch of warmth entered his heart.

"I'm fine..." He answered in a soft voice. Taking the handkerchief, cleaning his nose before Bei Yunhan could do so.

"You didn't need to use so much astral force," Bei Yunhan gently scolded. His face was also pale because he hadn't expected to handle such a massive arrow of power. His hands had trembled when he nocked it.

Zu Zun scoffed dismissively, not arguing. He wasn't in the mood.

Li Yungu was more focused, already looting the corpses. Her eyes flashed with greed and she was extremely practiced in her actions, an experienced looter. At times, she would laugh a little too evilly as she inspected the ring's contents. Then, she would hurriedly move to the next.

Hong Chunhua didn't mind them or their antics. "Kill the rest. I'll handle the captives," she ordered before soaring towards the stairs leading downwards.

Li Yungu withdrew a blue dagger. When she looted an unconscious crew member, she'd plunge her dagger into their temple, twist, and pull. Her actions, once again, were extremely practiced. She began to hum.

The other two showed their understanding with simultaneous nods. Zu Zun used his foot, stomping on the soft heads of those members until they burst. Bei Yunhan gave these members a more complete death, sending a surge of astral force into their brains through their nose to swiftly end their lives.

Hong Chunhua walked downwards with the compass in her hand, following it until it flickered erratically with a faint droning sound, indicating that she was directly before the Ascendant. Her eyes flashed as she saw the metal door that blocked her way. With a fierce kick, she blew the door off its hinges, sending it flying into the wall.

When she arrived, she noticed there were a dozen or so humans connected to an Energy Conversion Array, with strings of light connecting to their meridians, pulsating with energies.

The array would send unrefined, impure energies into the meridians, and forcefully caused the body to refine it, but before it could be used for cultivation, as it reached the dantian, the array extracted all the energies. There was a large tube that covered the entire abdomen, clearing sucking out all the energies within the dantian.

The array would then compress the energies into stones that could be used for cultivation, creating high-grade energy stones suitable for armament creation, cultivation, or other objectives. For example, yang and wood energies could be extracted to nourish certain herbs.

It was because of these means that the continent had remained as strong as it currently was. It was extremely vicious, but it bypassed the main issue of refining energies and injecting one's body with impurities. If another handles this task, these risks, then all you had to do was cultivate with the purest energies. It wouldn't just accelerate one's cultivation, but the impurities won't affect a cultivator's innate talent or meridians.

There's no need to waste time refining out impurities or purchasing purification products.

She found little wrong with the act itself. The only reason their starfield hadn't popularized such a thing was because the hegemonic forces never allowed it. But Evil Cultivators often used similar methods, oftentimes being executed for it. It made it forbidden and scared numerous individuals, morality of it aside.

The Alchemic Proxies was another reason for their high cultivation bases. With Alchemic Astral Energies of a similar quality as Alchemic Astral Soul could produce, using them for alchemical concoction elevated success rates, overall quality, and reduced refining time. A cultivator could practice alchemical methods without an Alchemic Soul or having to use their own energies, alleviating the strain and reducing the stress one suffered.

While this made it impossible to give birth to an Mortal Sovereign Alchemist, it helped birth three Starlords!

When Hong Chunhua learned of this, she felt this world was blessed, horrific, and unfortunate. While cultivators could grow stronger at others expense, it limited their world's potential, because they kept using talented individuals for Alchemic Proxies and Energy Converters, with nepotistic practices of the strong being extremely prevalent.

And they had a huge aversion to the concept of cultivating an Alchemic Astral Soul, likening it to choosing to be a slave. A Mortal Sovereign Alchemist would never be born with such a horrendous outlook on alchemy.

Looking at the compass, she found the individual that it pointed to. Her eyes narrowed, a glint in her eyes.

It was Long Chen...

After the assault on the ship, the captives were interrogated. For those originating from other looted and defeated pirate ships, they were killed without mercy. The Navy River Elves were spared, not because they were innocent, but because of a favor they owed another Navy River Elf they met on their journey that had helped them, only asking they spared those Navy River Elves that were unfortunate.

Since Wei Wuyin had taken down the two Holy Clans, the world's climate had changed. The clans and forces of the Central Regions were forcefully expelled after a few months of war, the entirety of the three regions, Noxious Seas, Scorched Skies, and Zephyr Plains, barreled forward.

Without their Starlords, with their numbers outrageously overwhelmed, the forces who inhabited it in utmost safety had no choice but to surrender and be expelled from the territory. They would soon experience the harshness of the Season of Devils.

The vast majority of elves with important bloodlines moved, performing another great excursion for non-religious purposes. Purely for the sake of taking the territory and finding a new home, unwilling to stay in the vicious and dangerous living environment of the three regions.

The exiled clans and forces were forced to take action, trying to establish themselves in the three regions. So there were skirmishes and forces being produced every day, with many lives lost and other forces falling as a result. The overabundance of piracy in the Noxious Seas was a byproduct of this event.

The Navy River Elves captured were those unable to venture into the Desolate Lands or Central Regions, or those who refused to leave their homes and prayed to their god for a Holy Child to be born in this changing world. They would then be saved, keeping their homes!

But the fights and conflict was continuous, reducing the population and number of experts considerably.

Hong Chunhua knew this was Wei Wuyin's intention, because she would've done something similar. The Four Extreme Continent was a terrifying world with powerful experts, while their starfield had a single Realmlord! If these cultivators somehow escaped into their starfield, they would be utterly helpless.

It wasn't possible for these elite experts to fight without cause or benefits, so this was the best possible scenario to whittle away at their strength. Unfortunately, it wasn't sustainable.

Is what she originally thought.

But from what she learned from the interrogated pirates, the Central Region had devolved into a series of territorial wars between multiple factions, humans and elves clashing fiercely with lethal intent. A storm of blood and greed was currently unfolding to determine ownership of various cultivation grounds and resource rich areas.

As for the Desolate Lands? Not a single faction fought there, utterly peaceful due to their Holy Son's presence. The unity was unprecedented, but it still restricted those from the Central Regions from entering, forcing them to enter the three other regions.

The total land area for the three regions were 474,000 miles, while the Central Regions was merely a third of that, yet more than sixty percent of the population from each region had entered, including the elven and human race this time. The overpopulation was an issue. To add, a third of that territory was already reserved for Wei Wuyin, and no one could fight for that lest they be expelled.

Hong Chunhua found this dynamic interesting, feeling that Wei Wuyin was extremely terrifying. Fortunately, he was their leader, not their enemy.

Zu Zun asked as he casually carried Long Chen's exhausted onto their ship, "His Majesty...what do you think he's planning?"

Bei Yunhan frowned, "I don't know. Whatever it is, if it needs us to act, he'll call for us."

Li Yungu added, smiling as she held a spatial ring that contained all their precious loot, "His Majesty could take over all the regions at any point, if he wanted. We shouldn't speculate about his plans, only think about ourselves for now." Her smile was extremely pleasant to look at.

"..." Hong Chunhua was silent. She realized they hadn't caught on to the systematic whittling of this continent's forces. The call of war, the expert dangling of bait, and the absolute silence at the abundance of violence surging about. In her mind, she knew the likely possibility: *'This continent's inhabitants are going to be freed...'*

The thought caused her heart to shiver. But why? She didn't know, but if Wei Wuyin was acting in such a way, then his intent was clear. He was either preparing for the worse or he knew it was going to happen.

When they returned to their own sea vessel, Zu Zun was rushed by Lian Yu, who was looking at Long Chen in fear. Only when she felt his life aura did a heavy weight lift from her shoulders, her hand lightly caressing his face.

"Enough, enough! If you're going to get lovey-dovey, you take him." Zu Zun tossed Long Chen to Lian Yu, causing her to shriek in panic. She urged her astral force to hold him, preventing his fall.

She glared at Zu Zun after Long Chen was safe, "He's your Grand Prince! You dare treat him like this?"

Zu Zun shrugged. "He got himself captured, forced to be a tool for others. He isn't worthy. He should've died in battle, not allow himself to get turned into a slave."

Bei Yunhan added in Zu Zun's defense, "When the sect learns of this, he'll be stripped of his title. It's against the rules for such a humiliating thing to occur."

Lian Yu paled, "No! No they won't!"

Li Yungu turned her gaze to Lian Yu, lifting her glasses further along the bridge of her nose. "They're right. The future Grand Monarch must have an undefeated record, exemplifying a Monarch's Excellence. When he ascends, he has to receive the unanimous acceptance of the sect. He had been captured, turned into a slave, and defeated. In fact, it'll be embarrassing if he thought he should retain the title," her words were soft yet brutally honest.

"Argh..." Long Chen's awakening voice resounded.

"Finally, let's get some answers." Hong Chunhua said.

Chapter 478 - 474: Long Chen's Tale

Gulp! Gulp! Gulp!

The sounds of heavy drinking filled the air. A young man, dark-haired, sunken cheeks, dried skin, and ravenously cold eyes took a large-sized vial of seventh-grade elixir and downed it immediately. This young man was none other than Long Chen, currently sitting on Hong Chunhua's ship.

Bei Yunhan and Zu Zun were watching from afar, mostly focused on spotting incoming ships or other abnormal activity out on the Noxious Seas. Li Yungu was establishing a detoxification formation to rid Long Chen of the toxins accumulated in his body during his stint as an Energy Converter.

Lian Yu sat quietly and supportively by Long Chen's side, her eyes reflected her relief and happiness. Despite what the others said about Long Chen losing his Grand Prince title due to this incident, she didn't believe it. After all, Long Chen was personally selected by the Founding Monarch who was still alive in spiritual form.

While he hadn't told others about this, their relationship had become extremely close after the events surrounding Na Xinyi and the others. Long Chen showed an unrestrained level of trust in her, telling her many of his secrets.

Hong Chunhua's eyebrows were tightly furrowed, her hand folded at her chest as she eyed Long Chen. She didn't rush him in speaking, allowing him to recover to a relatively sufficient point. After downing the elixir she'd given him, Long Chen entered the Detoxification Formation set up by Li Yungu and started to have the impurities and toxins extracted from his meridians and blood.

This lasted for three full hours.

"...Thank you." Long Chen had regained a little of his former handsomeness, his valiant demeanor, and imposing aura innate to the Imperial Heaven Qi Method he cultivated.

Hong Chunhua grunted with a half-hearted nod, not really caring about this thanks. It was already lucky that she afforded him this time to recover, especially since he kept setting himself at odds with Wei Wuyin.

Li Yungu pleasantly smiled, "You're welcome!" She was rather joyful, especially seeing how effective her formation was. After a quick inspection, she left the three alone on Hong Chunhua's orders.

Long Chen felt extremely awkward. He turned to Lian Yu, her eyes comforted him, but he didn't know why she was traveling alongside Wei Wuyin's stooges. "You've ascended the World Sea Phase?" With his body recovered, he noted Lian Yu's improvement and felt excited. Cultivation was a difficult struggle, without fortuitous encounters, an excellent environment, proper teachings, and vast resources, reaching a high-level was impossible.

There were many Astral Core Realm Cultivators who've never ascended past the World Sea Phase in their thousand or so years of life. So to see her make a breakthrough in her cultivation was a joyful event no matter what, especially without him supporting her.

Lian Yu warmly smiled as she nodded with pride, "I did." While she sought a stronger strength to be relevant, cultivation was difficult, and so any improvement was an extraordinary feat. Even Wei Wuyin struggled for some time in the Sky Ruler Phase, only ascending to the Soul Idol Phase after glimpsing enlightenment from multiple sources.

"Alright; It's time for some answers." Hong Chunhua didn't want to watch this lovey-dovey display anymore than Zu Zun. "To start with: How did you acquire a Mark of an Ascendant?" Her question baffled even her, and she dearly wished to know.

The Mark of an Ascendant was a special spiritual formation inscribed on any and every Ascendent, allowing them to verify their identities and gain access to certain locations. It also enabled them to use a special form of merit point system to obtain resources by completing missions. They obtain more points through joint effort as well. This was Su Mei's design, and it provoked a sense of unity as well as competition amongst the faction.

There were even high-tier eighth-grade products that could be earned, terrifying many members when they heard it while simultaneously exciting those to strive for it.

The only way to get a mark was to either obtain it at the induction ceremony or being bestowed it under special circumstances by the Commanders, Su Mei, or Wei Wuyin. And she never gave him a mark.

"..." Long Chen looked at Hong Chunhua, his expression betrayed none of his thoughts. Lian Yu was concerned after hearing that, feeling the air fill with a hostile tension. She placed her hand on Long

Chen's back, giving her support. Long Chen turned to her, seeing her concern and worry, but also her supportive gaze.

Long Chen faintly smiled, "I was given it by an Ascendant. His name was Jian Cui."

"Jian Cui?" Hong Chunhua was taken aback by Long Chen's words. Jian Cui was an Ascendant. Furthermore, he was under the charge of the Second Commander, someone personally selected by Su Mei roughly half a year ago. He was a human who possessed a Wind Astral Soul, adept at using a spear.

"After I arrived in the Noxious Seas, I was traveling for some time before we met. We fought, but I won; I spared him in the end. After that, we met again, fighting a common enemy. Soon, we ended up traveling together for roughly a year. Then, Wei Wuyin threw everything into chaos!" Those last words of his were quite biting.

"Powerful cultivators flooded the Noxious Seas, pirate crews swarmed the region, and no one could be trusted. We were met with waves of enemies after enemies after our lives, left exhausted and weak. In the end...he suffered a fatal injury. In his last moments, he gave me some spiritual mark and told me it carried a message to his clan. I'm going to deliver it to his clan." Long Chen finished with his eyes radiating a light of anger and frustration, alongside a wisp of sadness and gloom.

"..." Hong Chunhua frowned. She half-believed Long Chen's story. The only verifiable aspect was that he met Jian Cui and Jian Cui transferred the spiritual mark to him. As for the rest, they were subjectively based on Long Chen's own beliefs of events.

"And how did you become a captive?" She pondered for a long while before asking.

Long Chen scoffed, "None of your business."

"..." Hong Chunhua stared at Long Chen for a long moment. After that period of time, she decided that it wasn't worth it. Long Chen's circumstances weren't that important. "Show me the spiritual mark."

Long Chen started, staring at Hong Chunhua with a vigilant expression, "Why?"

Hong Chunhua's eyes flashed, "I'll give it to Jian Cui's clan. This is an Ascendant matter, so I'll handle it. You don't have to burden yourself with such a tedious task." She reached out, about to prod for the spiritual mark, but Long Chen slapped her hand away.

"I was given his last will! Not you! So I'll deliver his message, and I won't entrust it to anyone else." Long Chen barked, his eyes reflecting a determined look immersed in a steel hardness.

Hong Chunhua looked at her hand for a moment, and then smiled. *'So you do have some suspicious points.'* She thought. She calmly responded with, "Not entrust that message to anyone else? Alright then, fine. I won't take the spiritual mark. But allow me to inspect the message in case you die, then I can pass it on."

But Long Chen was vehemently against this. "Inspect? I can't trust that you won't do something with the message. He told me he had enemies within your faction." His words sounded logical, even the enemies and not trusting others felt sound.

At this point, Li Yungu had returned after Long Chen's outburst. When she arrived, she noticed Lian Yu's tense expression and Long Chen's defensive posture. When Hong Chunhua looked her way, she asked: "Commander Hong, is there an issue?"

Hong Chunhua frowned for a moment, bringing her gaze back Long Chen. "I can swear an oath, no matter how vicious, that I won't take away or purposefully alter the message in any way." When she offered this alternative, Long Chen's expression became slightly unsightly.

Li Yungu realized some things, and her pleasant smile disappeared with an indifferent stare. She started to twirl her fingers around with Spiritual Light at their tips, concealing her actions by putting her hand behind her back.

Long Chen shook his head, "I don't know what tricks you'll pull. I can't risk it."

Lian Yu felt something was wrong, her heart racing a little from this. She tightly held onto Long Chen's hand for comfort.

Hong Chunhua didn't seem bothered by Long Chen's refusal. She added, "You can come up with the oath yourself. What tricks can I pull? Unless there's more to the story than you're telling. Or maybe, the entire story is a lie. Do you know there's another way someone can obtain a Mark of the Ascendant?"

"..." Long Chen was silent, his eyes betrayed nothing, but his body language was defensively positioned.

Hong Chunhua gripped her sword hilt, "the Mark of the Ascendant can be left on one's murderer or as a clue to one's own death."

The tension in the air became so thick that a knife might fail to cut it. Clearly, Long Chen was keeping some things concealed, but she never thought Long Chen, their Grand Prince, would kill a member of his own sect. It was against the rules to commit such an act. Most grievances would be handled by the sect, and they had no issue with you settling those grievances with death.

Even Wei Wuyin used the Imperial Combat to bash someone to death out of a minor conflict. There was no backlash. In fact, the sect sanctioned such practices and actions, but only when it was overseeing these events. An act of killing your sect member outside of these sanctioned events were looked down upon, even prompting one to be crippled or executed.

For example, Zuhei had gone absolutely crazy and attacked individuals out of rage, killing multiple individuals outside of an Imperial Battle. He was imprisoned for a century or so and crippled, left to live out the rest of his life in absolute agony. Or Qing Qiumu, who used a talisman to kill members of the Ji Clan. She was brought to an execution platform despite her backing and those implicated were imprisoned.

The sect did not tolerate such actions of unregulated conflict amongst members, as it bred chaos and distrust. Most things, especially competition, was aboveboard. It was this system that allowed the Myriad Monarch Sect to build the best competitive and nurturing environment, always giving birth to the greatest talents from unknowns.

The Gateway Door's Expedition was entirely different from the Grand Spirit Trials, and killing a fellow sect member was not sanctioned. They were meant to work together, not kill each other.

Li Yungu had finished her preparations, ready to act. But Hong Chunhua gave her a glance, and she waited.

Hong Chunhua stared into Long Chen's eyes, "I have no intention of killing you; that would be against the rules that I respect with everything I have. I also don't have the authority or proof to forcefully capture you, no matter how much I want to.

"So I'll let you leave," her words caught Li Yungu and Long Chen off-guard. Let him leave? Right now, Long Chen was at his weakest state, surrounded by the ship's formations, and they could capture him easily.

"But I recommend that Lian Yu stays with us. She's too weak in this disaster-filled world, and I don't trust her with you." Hong Chunhua stated her thoughts. As Lian Yu was someone she saved, someone his Majesty saved, Hing Chunhua felt responsible for her safety.

"Absolutely not!" Long Chen didn't know what Hong Chunhua was up to. He fully expected a sneak attack to occur, so he was fully on-guard. If things truly went awry, he'd have to use the one trump card that he didn't wish to.

Lian Yu bit her lower lip.

Hing Chunhua turned to Lian Yu, "He was captured as an Energy Converter. He has no ship, and he's suspected of killing a member of our faction, or at least involved in his death. We can't allow him to stay if we spare him, but you're different.

"To add, he has no future. The Spiritual Mark isn't something a cultivator could simply get rid of without spending years erasing it. As a captured individual, he lost the rights to retain his title as a Grand Prince after this expedition. Let's not say what happens after he leaves, or whether he could weather that storm, but there's still years left before the entrance to leave opens. The entire continent is embroiled in bloody and desperate conflict.

"You'll be a burden if you remain with him. Are you certain you want to do that?" Hong Chunhua spent a lot of effort explaining her reasoning, slowly and clearly. From her actions, one could see she'd grown fond of Lian Yu.

But Long Chen felt this was a hidden scheme, he stood up, grabbed Lian Yu's hands and said with a wisp of anger: "She'll never be a burden and I won't allow any harm come to her. As for whether I can keep my Grand Prince title or not, that's not any of your concern."

Lian Yu felt immense warmth in her heart from his actions and words. Comforted, she nodded to herself and made a firm decision. She looked at Hong Chunhua and said with conviction, "I trust him."

Hong Chunhua looked at Lian Yu for a long time. "Then leave, both of you." She waved her hand dismissively, and Li Yungu's formation started to surge with energy.

Long Chen noticed this and frowned, grabbing Lian Yu and flying with the little astral force he restored. They left, floating while looking at the ship. He thought about using his trump card to take the ship, but if they fought back, its possible the ship would inevitably be destroyed in the conflict.

Unwilling to use it in such a risky way, he looked at the direction the other ship sailed off to and tightened his grip around Lian Yu's hand. He flew away with her in tow. In truth, he always had a way to escape his captured predicament, but he was waiting for a perfect opportunity when the Light Reflection Phase expert wasn't present, and if the sect heard this, they'll understand. At least, that's what he believed.

Zu Zun walked forward after they left, frowning as he questioned: "Commander Hong, why let him leave? He clearly killed Jian Cui or at least helped in his death." One could tell that their entire conversation was heard by him.

Hong Chunhua's expression was calm, but her eyes reflected her anger and vexation. "His Majesty once said to Su Mei, who later informed me, that if there was ever a time where I wanted to act against Long Chen, I must ensure he doesn't have the ability to do anything or was aware of my presence before I went for the kill. Otherwise, the chance of being counter-killed by some inexplicable development was extremely likely.

"I was also ordered to not act against Long Chen, to allow only his Majesty to handle any conflict personally, unless absolutely necessary. Even if we acted, our hands would be tied because we can't kill him without proof in hand. If we did, we might be marked by some strange Grand Prince safeguard, and implicate his Majesty or cause our own deaths." Hong Chunhua sighed at the end. Her frustration at these events were at an all-time high.

Bei Yunhan frowned, walking beside Zu Zun, "We shouldn't have helped him."

"Hindsight is twenty-twenty, but it helps no one." Li Yungu was a little moody. She didn't like that Long Chen was let go, but she also believed in Hong Chunhua's judgment. Long Chen never revealed any sort of fear, even after Hong Chunhua called him out on the suspected murder of a fellow sect member.

It seemed he was absolutely confident in coming out unharmed somehow. This feeling made her very uncomfortable.

"We'll find the others," Hong Chunhua breathed out a heavy breath of heavy air and readjusted their focus. "Let's go."

Chapter 479 - 475: San Yongli's Book Of Heaven's Path

The chaos of the Four Extreme Continents hadn't reduced with time, but escalated as the Season of Regression neared its ends. At times, thousands in every region would die to others, plundered and reaped by greed and fear. The Season of Devils provoked untold levels of desperation and terror, especially to those residing in the Scorched Skies, Noxious Seas, and Zephyr Plains.

With the Desolate Lands now protected, the Desolate Devils would find their way to the other regions, in a similar way as the Frost Devils and Thunder Devils had, those devils that once plagued the Central Region. With less space, more devils, the mortality rate was expected to reach half of all those present in the three regions.

This estimate was terrifying to hear, yet there was no easy solution for those exiled and unable to enter the Desolate Lands or Central Region. They could only take over former strongholds left behind by the native humans and elven tribes in hopes of fending off this calamity.

While the conflict in these three regions revved up, the conflict within the Central Regions weren't any less intense. The fight for treasured lands and good environments were extremely bloody, with more deaths happening here than in the three regions combined. Every day, blood would rain!

The Elven Tribes and Human Clans decided to hold a summit, a discussion to decide things, hoping to end the violent conflicts and skirmishes occurring across the Central Region. While this summit was planned, a temporary truce was met with universal agreement.

A peaceful period was entered as the summit's date approached.

Since entering the Gateway Door, venturing into this grand world that seemed to come out of the declining Golden Age of the starfield, it's been two years and ten months. For such a large amount of time to have passed, those amongst the three thousand entrants who entered this trial, those who were still alive, all made terrifying advancements. When they left, re-entering the starfield's environment, they might be regarded as geniuses of the highest standard!

"Everything's changed..."

In the Zephyr Plains, two female figures were traveling together. Ming Shufeng stood next to the cloaked woman, turning to her after she said those words. In truth, she felt the quivering sense of loss and uncertainty in her voice, and felt the exact same.

As a Heavenly Seer, an individual that receives glimpses of Heavenly Fate, the future intent of the Heavenly Daos, and consistently finding out her predictions had changed so drastically or been entirely inaccurate, she was unable to feel anything but lost.

"San Yongli, are you certain your book is reliable?" After staying with San Yongli for so long, she finally learned that she had obtained a book that could predict the future events of grand characters in the future, such as their fortuitous encounters, disastrous struggles, and outcome. Of course, she felt that San Yongli hadn't told her everything, but how else did she know about these details without cultivating Fate Energies?

San Yongli, this cloaked woman, lowered her head. She murmured something indistinguishable. After a while, she stomped her feet. Her actions caused the wind stored in the grass to surge out, slicing towards them. She waved her hand, dispelling the slicing wind with ease.

Ming Shufeng knew San Yongli was powerful, so she wasn't shocked by her display.

"Wei Wuyin never became the Holy Son. He wasn't the one who should have taken over the Central Region, and they never entered such a disastrous war before. Everything changed, and I can't be certain of anything anymore," San Yongli said.

Ming Shufeng frowned, "Did someone else in your book do this?"

"...Yes. The True Elemental Emperor. He became a Holy Son, and fought the Holy Clans. He won, becoming the possessor of the three badges. After, he united the humans and the elven race violently rebelled." She explained this with a contemplative hand on her chin.

"Rebel? Why?" Ming Shufeng might be a Heavenly Seer, but the course of history had already changed from what San Yongli knew, so it wasn't possible to peer into those answers with her cultivation.

San Yongli shook her head, "It had to do with the True Elemental Emperor forming an irrefutable conflict with the elven tribes. I don't know the exact reason." Since nothing was going as expected, she was thoroughly lost. She had even left Lin Ming enough resources to keep the events consistent.

She was terrified that a single change would alter everything, but how could she not act with her foreknowledge? After all, she wanted to experience a better life in this second chance of hers. But then Wei Wuyin abruptly arrived without warning, a character that shouldn't be relevant at this current point in time.

San Yongli even suspected that he was like her, someone who came from the future, likely holding a similar book in his hands that detailed certain events of the future. How else did he change everything so drastically, acting completely different from what was written?

It was also possible that her actions prior to this, something very small, erupted into a tempest of unfathomable change. If that's the case, then her every action, no matter how small or careful, had the power to alter history drastically. The Book of Heaven's Path would soon become absolutely useless lest it changes, capable of adapting.

Just as she thought this, a minuscule golden flash of light flickered at her glabella. It was swift, unnoticeable. Her crimson eyes behind the shade of her hood brightened soon after.

"You okay?" Ming Shufeng asked after realizing that San Yongli was acting a little strange.

Suddenly, San Yongli spoke: "The True Elemental Emperor becomes the Holy Son tomorrow. But..." She frowned, peering into the second figure that had caught her eye. The Grand Monarch...

"What? Tomorrow?" Ming Shufeng was startled. Wasn't it supposed to happen a month from now? Why did her prediction suddenly change? Incredibly curious, she waited with expectations about this development.

"They are no longer male? A female? What...?" San Yongli was extremely confused after reading the changed contents in the Book of Heaven's Path that was within her Sea of Consciousness. According to it, the Grand Monarch was given the title the Grand Monarch Wu Baozhai, not Grand Monarch Long Chen. Furthermore, prior to this, it detailed Long Chen's advantages, struggles, and fortuitous encounters for the next decade.

Now?

There was no mention of Long Chen.

At all.

...what the hell happened?

Chapter 480 - 476: Perfect Foundation

"IMPOSSIBLE!" A female voice filled with the air, suffused with disbelief and shock, a tinge of surprise and joy.

The voice originated from the True Desolate Temple within the Desolate Lands. It had become a Holy Site of the highest order, being undisturbed and worshipped daily by the natives and inhabitants of the Desolate Lands, human and elf alike.

At this moment, Wei Wuyin was gently touching the Soul Mirror of Endless Reflection, the tool used to measure an individual's spiritual strength, reflecting their spirit units.

The voice came from Grand Priestess Si De who wore a tight-fitting priestess robe that accentuated her curves. She no longer hid her exceptional figure and those proudful mounds of flesh that created a deep, sensual valley that many wished to explore yet only one had the right to do so.

She held her mouth with her hands, her eyes rippling endless as she inspected the Soul Mirror of Endless Reflection dim. She turned her eyes towards Wei Wuyin, and her heart raced with explosive thumps so frequent that her chest heaved up and down in a gorgeous and mesmerizing display.

Wei Wuyin looked at the mirror, a faint smile on his face. Since he decided to spend his time cultivating, it's been two years. While his cultivation base hadn't ascended to the next realm, his foundation was pushed to their absolute limits. Thanks to the Grand Earth Cache, he obtained Soul Ash of Divine Jade, the main ingredient to concoct the Soul Deity Invoker Elixir. He perfectly concocted three more vials, using each with his three Astral Souls.

They had all evolved, excavating their greatest potential, converting the hidden Manifested Soul Energy into a tenth-ring! With their tenth-ring born, he decided to test his Spiritual Strength level. If before, his 39,300 Spirit Units were absolutely terrifying to behold, the degree of his Spiritual Strength was vastly superior, taking Si De's breath away.

Not only had he concocted this heaven-defying elixir, but the Spatial Divine Resonance Pill, the similarly heaven-defying ninth-grade product capable of alleviating one's Spatial Resonance from nine-ripples to ten-ripples! The reflection of Spatial Resonance reflected the amount of spatial energies that astral force can properly refine into itself, adding it alongside physical, spiritual, mental, and essence energies.

Furthermore, the higher the resonance, the greater the Spatial Powers one could unleash. For example, the presumed base abilities of Spatial Mark and Spatial Prison weren't actually abilities defaultly granted with no requirement. The ability to construct a Spatial Mark required a one-ripple Spatial Resonance while Spatial Prison required a four-ripple Spatial Resonance. It was that most cultivators reached the four-ripple Spatial Resonance at the lowest in the starfield.

If a cultivator reached the seventh-ripple Spatial Resonance, they acquired another ability—Spatial Sense. Spatial Sense was an empowered Spiritual Sense, allowing cultivators to delve and dive into sealed areas naturally. When Wei Wuyin was in the Soul Idol Phase, when he first arrived on the continent, he didn't sense the tunnels beneath the ground unless he forcefully penetrated through the ground with his spiritual strength. With Spatial Sense, he could send his spiritual sense through obstacles, inspecting everything above Sky Layers and beneath earth layers.

These abilities grow stronger and stronger the higher one's Spatial Resonance reaches, but when Wei Wuyin entered the ten-ripple Spatial Resonance, he acquired an ability he called Spatial Shift. It allowed him to mark a location in fixed space, and shift his physical body through a layer of fixed space. It reminded him of the outrageous legends of Immortals who could achieve Teleportation. Of course, it wasn't so exaggerated or remotely close to such legendary powers.

With four ten-ring Soul Idols and ten-ripple Spatial Resonance, he had maximized his foundation to the utmost limit! There was no other way to increase his cultivation foundation, but this was reached long ago. His concoction speed and his Astral Souls refinement speeds were outstandingly fast, so in the first three months, he had reached this state.

The next nineteen months was him diligently cultivating, but not his foundation, but learning an array of spiritual spells, arts, and application of his multitude of powers. He had delved fully into strengthening his abilities as a cultivator, broadening his horizons and allowing him to make full use of such tremendous foundational strength.

Grand Priestess Si De calmed herself after a very long moment, trying to accept this newfound knowledge of Spiritual Strength. She took several breaths, "If others knew of your spiritual strength, especially those proclaiming themselves geniuses, would they ever have the confidence in revealing themselves? To call themselves talented?"

Wei Wuyin softly laughed. She understood her emotions. Even he was startled by the level four ten-ring Soul Idols brought to his spiritual strength, their united spiritual power.

Grand Priestess Si De walked to his side, looking at the Soul Mirror of Endless Reflection. "The average spiritual strength of those at the Soul Idol Phase, the third stage of the Astral Core Realm, is roughly 1,000. Even ascending to the Realm World Phase, becoming a Realmlord, one's Spiritual Strength might barely exceed 3,000." Her voice still quivered with a trace of undisguised astonishment.

Wei Wuyin frowned. He was aware of this standard, already being an absolute irregularity in that regard. Unlike others, he had four Astral Souls, two of which were Divine. To put into perspective, if that mysterious young woman had four Astral Souls of a similar standard, she'd reach 36,000 Spirit Units. But that was his unique cultivation advantage, and dwelling on what ifs of others weren't healthy. Still, it allowed him to understand that those from other starfields were absolutely terrifying, not to be underestimated no matter what.

Furthermore, there were Chosen at the Spatial Resonance Phase who could fight Realmlords, even defeat them. While he killed two, they were suppressed by the unique environment, their Worldly Domain, their greatest power, was heavily restricted. While he had confidence to fight against one without fear, it made him realize there were others out there who were just as fearless, just as terrifying.

But his enemies weren't those geniuses. They weren't even those Blessed. It was the Calamities of Hell and the Heavenly Daos themselves that sought to end his life through these Calamities.

Grand Priestess Si De softly touched the mirror's edge, not activating it. She softly whispered, "73,000." Her sightless eyes turned to Wei Wuyin. A fiery emotion flashed within those eyes of hers, causing Wei

Wuyin to note her change. With a grin, he grabbed her delicate waist, pressing her ample breasts against his chest.

She yelped a little, her eyes growing misty. She was clearly extremely desirous of Wei Wuyin. Her hands already moved to press against his crotch, moving energetically about.

Wei Wuyin was always surprised how a grand priestess of a holy temple, a woman that reached a level of unfathomable strength while maintaining her purity, could become a horny little minx. Did he corrupt her? Or was her repressed urges of over a thousand years too much to bear?

Regardless, he benefited either way.

Just as he was about to carry her off, his expression changed.

A divine hum echoed throughout the world, causing them both to lift their heads. A projection screen formed, revealing a bright, airy background and the face of a grey-eyed, handsome youth garbed in white.

Si De exclaimed in surprise, "A Holy Son!"

Wei Wuyin's silver eyes revealed a distinct light of excitement. "Finally!"

Just as he said this, another divine hum emerged! This was slightly different than the other.

Another screen projected itself on the sky, to be witnessed by every life on the continent!

"A Second Holy Son!" Grand Priestess Si De was stunned, her mouth agape.

But another divine hum emerged before her emotions could even fully display itself on her expression!

A THIRD!?