

Chapter 501 - 497: Unyielding

A gurgling sound escaped Lin Ming's throat as he felt an overbearing strength completely encapsulate his entire body, his network of meridians, and dantian. He was thoroughly locked down! The hand at his throat felt like the hand of god, claspng his neck with absolute ease!

Before he could even react, he was lifted like a child, his feet dangling just inches before the ground! Even though he wanted to resist, using the Origin Spear to wrench fear, he found the Origin Spear had left his hands, toppling to the floor powerlessly.

It no longer responded to him!

How?!

Why?!

WHY?!?!

His grey eyes glared at the extremely handsome visage before him, who held a faint smile on its face. Wei Wuyin's radiant silver eyes was so bright that it seemed mocking, as if ridiculing him for his idiotic belief in himself, for his confidence.

In truth, Wei Wuyin didn't feel any hint of mocking. He even felt praise. Lin Ming's body was incredibly sturdy and his meridians were highly refined. Still, this was the limits of his current strength, so he no longer bothered with keeping up this facade.

"Surrender now, or I'll end your life." Wei Wuyin showed mercy, not because of any thoughts of appreciating talent, but purely because killing Lin Ming would accelerate his Calamities of Hell. While he was confident of overcoming the second Calamity, he had a few things left to take care of before he faced that uncertainty.

If it wasn't for this, Lin Ming never would've gotten this chance. His life would've ended the moment he was an obstacle to his goals, even with that mysterious woman as his backing.

"!!!" Lin Ming struggled in defiance. An unyielding light surged in his heart, feeling unsatisfied with this outcome! How could he merely accept defeat?! This was a fight where external strength wasn't allowed, but Wei Wuyin was using means to amplify his ability!

As his struggling became more intense, devolved into mindless gurgling and twitching of his limbs, the crowd watched in utter awe, shock, and concern.

Tang Xingyun's heart clenched, she moved slightly but was halted by an invisible force holding her shoulder. Her eyes lit with rage, "What?" She questioned, holding back her anger.

The voice echoed out once more, "He's outstanding, I'll give him that. But he's fighting the wrong opponent at the wrong time. You can't help him either. This is his fight, not yours." A tinge of compassion for the first time was revealed by the voice, no longer being so obstinate and abrasive towardw Lin Ming's existence.

Tang Xingyun's heart softened. If that Holy Son wasn't juiced up on whatever, then Lin Ming would've had a chance! She reasoned, clenching her fists and feeling that the overseer was blind and biased. How could he allow something like this to happen?!

"If he hurts him, I'll deal with him myself. I am a Holy Daughter, after all." Tang Xingyun coldly declared, her eyes frosty and frightening. The force that restrained her pulled back, sighing while doing so.

'It seems that Holy Son was going to be a little unlucky.' the owner of that voice thought, feeling that it was a pity.

The young woman was startled by the abrupt change of pace. It seemed that Lin Ming was about to launch a wonderful comeback, yet it ended before it could even begin! Was Wei Wuyin's enhancement method so terrifying? Well, he did have a thirty-two Centimeter Astral Core! What level of sacrifice must one perform to reach such power?

She could only sigh. It was a pity.

But the old man had different thoughts. *'Was that Elemental Origin Force? No. It wasn't Saber Force either. Was that a third type of astral force?'* He was flabbergasted by this discovery, unsure what to make of it. When Wei Wuyin made his move, a very powerful and terrifying astral force was unleashed, allowing him to empower his physical movements to an unfathomable level.

He remembered that Wei Wuyin had two Astral Cores, but was there a hidden third Astral Core? He was a human, this he was certain of, so he couldn't be a part of that bloodline, right?

He Yanglei snorted on his voidship, "He should've just delayed until his opponent's cultivation suffered backlash. Instead, he wanted to show him what 'true power' is. How hilarious!"

The skinny old man beside him frowned, not adding in any commentary.

Back on the platform, Lin Ming continued his struggle, causing Wei Wuyin to frown. "You have to surrender. I can't end this challenge otherwise, lest I end your life. So Surrender. Send out your spiritual intent to the platform." After explaining how to surrender to Lin Ming, he waited for a few seconds, but was met with unwilling eyes and repeated struggles.

His frown grew deeper. He reminded, tightening his grip and causing Lin Ming to choke out strange sounds, "You need to surrender. Now." He realized there was a problem with this challenge, and that was when one person was unwilling to kill and the other unwilling to surrender.

This stalemate was impossible to overcome.

Lin Ming's grey eyes reflected a will to die rather than submit to anyone, even to fate itself. Those eyes revealed a man who had overcome endless struggles to reach his current cultivation, his current achievement. There was likely a mountain of corpses beneath him, allowing him to climb with stable footing!

But this didn't suffuse Wei Wuyin with any respectful feelings, but with annoyance. "If you don't surrender, I will cripple you. There will be no turning back."

Lin Ming's voice creaked through the clenching force of Wei Wuyin's hand, as if he wanted to say something. Wei Wuyin loosened his grip, allowing his voice to leak through.

Lin Ming said while straining his voice, "...Go...to...hell!" He joyfully smiled, blood still staining his teeth. Even if he was crippled, he swore that he'd never surrender, even under the threat of death! He was no longer that scared little boy in the corner, forced to accept the abuse of his father, afraid to even lift his head up in defiance.

He would rather die today than ever surrender!

Wei Wuyin's frown couldn't get any deeper, and his eyes flashed with silver light, staring heavily into Lin Ming's eyes. For a long moment, both sides merely stared at each other.

Lin Ming wasn't an idiot. He realized that Wei Wuyin wasn't willing to kill him, so he could use this to stall for time. As long as he stalled long enough, Wei Wuyin would likely suffer a backlash from his method soon!

A minute.

Two.

Ten.

The two stayed in this stalemate position for so long, with the only change being Wei Wuyin's shifting expression of killing intent and unwillingness. As if plagued by some ungodly restriction, he was unable to unleash the final killing blow after all this time.

Suddenly, Wei Wuyin's face started to darken. It was so rapid that his entire face became pitchblack in the matter of moments. As if poisoned, his body started to emit a trace of toxic energy that leaked through his pores.

The crowd outside rustled in shock, exclamations were everywhere! What was happening? Was this the backlash? Or did Lin Ming do something?

Wei Wuyin glanced at Lin Ming, killing intent flared wildly within his eyes as he clenched his hand around Lin Ming's throat. "You've forced me!"

A wave of gasps resounded, and even Lin Ming felt his heart sink. He was still restricted! Wanting to struggle free, he called forth his Origin Spear in haste yet couldn't get a response. Was this it?

His thoughts froze as he felt the strength around his neck weaken.

"No!" Wei Wuyin spat, despair in his eyes. "Not yet, not yet!" With shouts, he used his other hand to grip harder, seemingly wanting to break Lin Ming's neck completely. But the force exerted was only slightly weaker.

Lin Ming's eyes brightened, "The backlash is kicking in!" With a surge of happiness, he urged his inner energies and astral force to action, slowly chipping away at his restrictions.

Wei Wuyin realized this issue, letting go, backing away, and trying to retrieve an alchemical pill from his spatial ring. But the moment it was withdrawn, a divine light sucked it upwards and away.

Witnessing this, Lin Ming laughed, already regaining a portion of his strength. "Do you see? These methods aren't true power, unreliable and disastrous. You're a fool, hmph!" With a thought, the Origin Spear returned to his hand.

With a brisk walk, he approached the weakened, blackened, and laboured breathing Wei Wuyin that was scrambling on the floor, his innate energies and astral forces were a complete mess. A faint smile lingered on the renewed Lin Ming's face. This was retribution!

"Surrender now, or I'll end your life," Lin Ming gave Wei Wuyin his words, returning them directly! Aghast, Wei Wuyin struggled to stand but his limbs were too weak. He tumbled back to the ground, unable to rise again.

"The pill's backlash shouldn't have happened so fast!" Wei Wuyin said in fearful confusion, uncertain what went wrong.

Lin Ming merely shook his head, "So it was a pill. You might be outstanding in our starfield, but as I said: alchemy is not invincible. I hope you learn your lesson today, and make better decisions in your next life." He didn't fear killing Wei Wuyin, as after he obtained the Chosen title, his footsteps will carry him beyond the starfield.

Furthermore, Wei Wuyin was merely an alchemist at the Emperor level and without an Alchemic Astral Soul; his future was severely limited in the Alchemic Dao.

With a lift of his spear, he readied himself to launch the fatal blow! At this moment, his strength had entirely returned! While Wei Wuyin's was completely gone!

Wei Wuyin's silver eyes flashed with tangible fear, his face painted with panic, "Wait! Surrender for me, follow me, and I'll use my alchemic skills to ensure you rise far, far beyond the Divine King Han Xei!" Wei Wuyin begged, clearly unwilling to surrender himself.

Lin Ming gave Wei Wuyin an odd expression, "Truly ignorant. Do you not know of your own limits?" With a fierce flash of ruthless light in his eyes, Lin Ming struck. His Origin Spear plunged into Wei Wuyin's heart, elemental origin force erupting!

Wei Wuyin roared with unwillingness, "Save me!" He held the badge and released a vibrant divine light, but it was too late!

Chapter 502 - 498: Surrender

The divine light pierced into the sky, but the Origin Spear and its burst of power was unstoppable. Wei Wuyin's silver eyes exploded from its lethal power! With a last breath, he clutched at his spatial ring as if seeking to find something to use, a last hope.

Lin Ming felt the death of Wei Wuyin through his Origin Spear, a feeling he had felt numerous times before. To think that a character on the level of Wei Wuyin, the Ascendant Emperor of Neo-Dawn, had fallen today due to his own overestimation of his beliefs!

"While you were unwilling to kill me, I'm not like you." He softly said, looking at the lifeless corpse that had black skin and released a deathly-type of toxic energy, likely the severe backlash of whatever pill

Wei Wuyin used to enhance his Astral Core and physical strength. He had acted swiftly, unwilling to let the situation turn again.

With a little sigh, he waited for the platform to fade, for him to obtain the three other badges. But after a minute, it hadn't. He turned to Wei Wuyin's corpse with uncertainty.

"Was he still alive?" As if to verify his thoughts, he lifted his spear and plunged its sharp tip into Wei Wuyin's brain, twisting it and exploding his head into bits of bone, blood, and brain matter. If he wasn't dead before, playing possum somehow, he was truly dead now.

But no change occurred. Lifting his gaze, he saw a sparkling divine light rotate wildly. He recalled Wei Wuyin's last efforts. At the end, he screamed out "save me" with utter desperation. What was supposed to save him?

But then a figure emerged from outside the curtain, and a divine voice erupted from the sky. "The final trial stages have been activated by the Holy Son of Tri-Elementus! All Chosen Candidates will fight until death or surrender! The last one among you shall become Chosen!"

Shocked, he turned to the new figure and noted the sky-blue eyes and pastel green hair tied into a ponytail. He recognized this figure as the Holy Son of Transformative Waters! While he hadn't spoken to him before, he knew he was powerful and an outsider!

"I see," He Yanglei said. Afterwards, he turned to Lin Ming and brought out a whip that moved like a serpent. With a fierce roar, he launched himself at Lin Ming. "I'll kill you while you're weak!" With a malicious expression, he revealed his cultivation at the Sixth Stage of the Astral Core Realm, the Gravity Emission Phase!

He felt that this was his cultivation, but to think it was true! With a shake of his heart, he steadied his mind and began a vicious fight. It was only after he used all of his strength, overpowering the other's Elemental Origin Intent, did he find an opening to kill.

When his spear's edge removed his head, he was covered in blood and outrageously exhausted.

A thud exploded from outside the curtain, causing him to see an indistinct shadow try to pry themselves into the battlefield. Unfortunately, divine light erupted and obliterated the figure!

"His Dao Protector! How unfortunate..." Lin Ming felt it was a pity that an expert of such caliber was killed by the divine light. Suddenly, he was engulfed by divine light and healed completely, even his astral force recovered.

"Another fight?" A sense of dread overwhelmed him as he saw another ray of divine light arrive, showing the figure of a woman. He was startled after seeing her arrive on the platform, feeling her to be extremely familiar, but he wasn't certain why.

The female figure frowned, then touched her face and removed her concealment! A face of utmost familiarity to Lin Ming revealed itself! How could it be her?!

"I need to win this, so unless one of us dies, it'll" she said, removing a white-colored blade from her spatial ring.

He couldn't help but warily smile. This woman had saved his life on the continent, and he had seen her bathing in the nude. They faced the pursuit of a Realm Lord and came out on top, escaping and surviving that incident. He owed her his life and then some. To think she was his final challenge!

But to win, he'd have to kill her or force her to surrender! An unwillingness to harm her emerged in his heart as he gave a wry smile. Even if he wanted to face her, her real strength definitely exceeded his. If the others were to see this woman, only the members of the temple would know this woman!

And she wasn't the Holy Daughter of Absolute Hot Fire!!!

Lin Ming, however, did not know this. With a shake of his head, he said: "You saved my life. While I can kill others, I will never repay a debt with enmity. I surrender!" He held his spear up, sending out his spiritual energy declaration upwards.

"Was that so hard?" A voice echoed out of the world as if a divine god, originating from everywhere and everything.

BZZT!

DUUN!

SWOSH!

The world started to collapse, beginning from the female figure to the platform and reaching the Solar Star that hung above the sky in perpetuity. They disassembled into bits and pieces of multicolored lights, transforming bleak and grey as they fell further away from him.

Before long, he was in a world of complete and utter darkness. There was nothing, and even his body was slowly fragmenting into innumerable pieces. "WHAT IS THIS?!" Fear engulfed his heart at this unknown, uncertain what just happened!

His surroundings changed abruptly, once more meeting a familiar face with a grin. An unearthly handsome face with radiant silver eyes! Wei Wuyin!

Lin Ming felt the familiar force of a hand upon his throat, restraining his voice. Even the Origin Spear used to end Wei Wuyin's life was still lifeless on the ground.

What's happening?! Confused, perplexed, unsure of reality, Lin Ming's mind was dizzy with chaotic thoughts. He had just seen reality fall to pieces, and the curtain of light started to quiver about and recede into the sky. The battle had ended?!

But...how?

Wei Wuyin tossed Lin Ming away, as if tossing a bag of trash. Lin Ming's body bounced and skidded until it finally stopped a distance away, but the restrictions on his body remained. Unable to move properly, he could only turn his head away to see Wei Wuyin floating with the light of divinity upon him.

Before he could react, his body shifted until he and his Origin Spear were brought into the Sky Zephyr Temple. He stood beside Grand Priest Zi Gu, who was looking at him with an extremely strange and hostile gaze. If it wasn't for that woman who vanished suddenly, he would kick Lin Ming out of the temple.

Wei Wuyin was returned to his nine Origin Dragons. They moved and breathed, wanting to get closer to Wei Wuyin. With a faint smile, he looked at the badge in his hand that was nearly complete, and only missing two more. At the moment, he had become the Holy Son of Hepta-Elementus!

The young woman was baffled below, and so was everyone else! Even Tang Xingyun was confused, not matching Lin Ming's image she had of him in her heart with an individual that would surrender! She thought he had dreams and goals that he would never give up on, even in the face of death!

The two were just staring at each other for several minutes, with one unwilling to kill and the other aware of this, unwilling to surrender. The spectators even started to respect Lin Ming's fortitude in the face of death, and a few that considered themselves smart felt that he wouldn't do this lest he was fully aware that Wei Wuyin wouldn't end his life. But as their admiration grew, waiting for Wei Wuyin's eventual backlash, Lin Ming seemed to have surrendered out of nowhere!

"What happened?" The young woman asked the old man, truly confused by this event. Why would Lin Ming surrender in this situation?

The old man frowned for a long moment, inspecting Wei Wuyin. "I don't know. Perhaps he made a deal with him?" He, an expert of his level, was entirely unsure what just happened.

"Regardless of what happened, the former Holy Son of Grandgale had surrendered. This is reality." Declaring this, he felt that he had to learn how Wei Wuyin convinced the unyielding to yield. What level of cunning and skill, of manipulative means, must one reach to do such a thing?!

Chapter 503 - 499: Decision

Wei Wuyin ignored the shocked gazes, inspecting the seven tokens that had merged into one. He was interested in the three that originated from outside, realizing that they were of the elements Wood, Metal, and Magma. He felt a trace of absence from Wood and Magma. After a comparison, he discovered that they had been used to open caches.

But the Metal Badge of Divinity was entirely untouched. °Perhaps the Wood and Magma Caches were stored in the Scorched Skies and Zephyr Plains, but metal was located in the Desolate Lands? Is this why Lin Ming couldn't claim it?° As he considered this possibility, he felt his thoughts were aligned with the truth.

After spending some time inspecting the tokens, he kept them.

'Using the Eye of Illusion is always so draining. Creating an illusionscape, using eden's unique mental energies to prod for clues into an individual's conscious and subconscious thoughts and memories is unimaginably difficult. The more powerful the cultivator, the more complex their Sea of Consciousness, the greater the difficulty.'

Wei Wuyin had used the Eye of Illusion, generating a false reality and projecting that into Lin Ming's mind. It took a while to simulate a scenario where he'd yield to an opponent.

'Why does it have to be so difficult?' With a heavy internal sigh, he rebuked the rules. While surrendering wasn't useful in a one-sided manner, to show mercy, an opponent must first yield to their opponent, placing their fate in their hands. Lin Ming trusted that woman in his memory, felt deeply indebted and connected, so it wasn't hard to prod out a scenario that would force him to yield.

The Celestial Eyes of Spiritual Divinity was an exquisitely designed multi-spell method that contained boundless potential, only limited by one's own strength. It was truly fortunate that his mental energies and Sea of Consciousness were so terrifyingly strong, durable, and vast lest he be unable to even conjure a single illusion.

'This spell definitely is not suited for Mortals.' This thought was affirmed by its exceptional abilities. If it wasn't for his uniqueness, the chances of successfully cultivating this technique in the Qi Condensation Realm would've been in the negative value, utterly impossible.

Holding back from the splitting headache, he lifted his eyes to glance at the Sky Zephyr City that floated peacefully within the sky. After claiming the badge, in theory, those within the temple and all its members should belong to him. A light of contemplation flitted through his eyes.

In the end, he decided against completely culling the temple until the situation was clarified. If these remaining experts could settle in his corner, then they should have their uses.

He turned away to look at the Voidships that remained flying within the air, not even showing any signs of retreat. There wasn't a hint of surprise in his eyes, because these Holy Children from outside would never feel threatened by him. After all, they had guardians.

While he may have shown Lin Ming an illusion of one of these guardians being eradicated by that old ghost due to interfering, he didn't believe that was capable. The old ghost, Wang Yutian, who was the overseer of this trial, likely did not have the ability to restrict Mystic Ascendant Realm cultivators.

If he did, they would be limited to specific areas like Starlords. There was the possibility that an agreement was reached, but he wasn't certain of the specifics, and Wang Yutian had never mentioned outsiders. Perhaps it was because these outsiders hadn't participated in these trials before, perhaps it was something else.

With a calm expression, he stood upon the Metal-Origin Dragon's head, its breath releasing gusts of silver flakes that sliced the air leaving visible marks. With arms folded, he urged his Metal-Origin Dragon and the rest to soar, approaching the Voidships. The hearts of those watching clenched. Was Wei Wuyin about to unleash another massacre?!

Wei Wuyin reached several hundred meters of the Voidships, and the crew was absolutely fearless. There wasn't a single member that backed down, fully willing to use their lives for this upcoming fight. This inspired confidence in those who had false confidence, affirming a sense of unity amongst the group.

A few turned to their Holy Child, hoping to gleam some thoughts of theirs from expressions, but both were mostly indifferent. In fact, there was an icy chill within Tang Xingyun's eyes. While He Yanglei had an indifferent, unbothered smile.

From the latter's eyes, Wei Wuyin felt that He Yanglei believed him to be using a forceful means to bolster his cultivation, his strength, and those eyes of his were extremely dismissive. As for the former, Wei Wuyin didn't understand where the chill originated from. Regardless, he calmly spoke.

"I wish to speak to your two Holy Children. I have no desire to erupt in conflict with either of you or your temples, only seeking to complete my objective." With powerful, stable, and firm words, Wei Wuyin

explained his intentions. While he hadn't explicitly stated his desire for their tokens, as outsiders aware of the details of the trial, they should know his meaning.

As for them becoming the Chosen of the True Element Sect? He felt that their level of background or respective forces weren't that much different from it or they likely were unable to become a Chosen due to other complications. He could be wrong, however.

If that were bent on becoming Chosen, then he would have to face them. This wasn't something he feared.

Tang Xingyun's eyes became colder. She regarded Wei Wuyin negatively, even though he spared Lin Ming. It was because Lin Ming was humiliated, and this stain of surrendering before death will always be remembered, always be used to hinder his future path. Even her idle dreams of their future had been crushed, the voice behind her only sighing and not even speaking any words of negativity or consolation.

She refused to oblige to Wei Wuyin's will, giving him the position that Lin Ming should've had after using despicable means. Even if he became a Chosen, it was using illicit means. But her thoughts weren't said, just her eyes became glacial.

Yet while she kept her thoughts to herself, a similar sentiment was echoed by He Yanglei, and he wasn't silent. "Your objective? Are you even worthy?" He Yanglei's words were said indifferently with a sneer. In his mind, how could Wei Wuyin hope to become a Chosen?

Wei Wuyin frowned. Were they really under this ridiculous assumption that he used some ungodly method to raise his cultivation strength, forcefully and with risk? Were their starfields lacking those of his level, even with Mystic Ascendant Realm Cultivators?

Those so-called Chosens were said by that young woman to be able to fight Realm Lords, genuine Realm Lords, at the Spatial Resonance Phase! That's a full three stages difference in cultivation, and the unfathomable gap of possessing a Worldly Domain!

He hadn't even shown his full strength, not even a percentage of his true power. He still had his ten-ringed Soul Idols, his Spatial Shift, all things Saber, and Draconification! Even the Multi-Link Spiritual Astral Array, the Dragons of Origin, had far more abilities than what was shown.

It was almost laughable that they snagged onto this ridiculous notion. But he was okay with them being ignorant, not wishing to force the issue. If they wished to be blinded by ego and arrogance, then he had no obligation to lead them to the light.

With a faint smile, he calmly replied: "Worthy or not, there's no other candidates." While others might not understand his words, those two would.

"..." He Yanglei went silent. Wei Wuyin was indeed right, there were no other Chosen Candidates. If he wanted to join the True Element Sect, the He Clan would mark him as a traitor, then stop at nothing to kill him. And it was absolutely, utterly impossible for Tang Xingyun to accept. Her fate would be worse.

Tang Xingyun coldly said, "This does not mean I have to give you my badge. Especially if I don't feel you deserve it." Her words were spoken to the world, causing numerous people to gasp. Was Wei Wuyin trying to collect all the Badges of Divinity?! Was that even possible?

Wei Wuyin felt the animosity within her tone, clearly her dislike of him was astonishingly high. He didn't know why. "We can fight for it, if you want." Those words were spoken with a playful smile, and Tang Xingyun's eyes became so cold that literal icy light effused from them. She clearly didn't like this, taking it as a threat.

And it was a threat.

Wei Wuyin would rather avoid fighting these two, because he would be met with a very, very similar situation as Lin Ming. If they refused to surrender, to yield, he would be forced to kill—to show no mercy. Those were the rules. Unfortunately, such actions would prompt the timely interference of a Mystic Ascendant Realm Cultivator.

Who knew whether his life would be at risk, whether Wang Yutian could keep them at bay. If a Realmlord was so terrifying, imagine a cultivator that had broken past Mortal Limits, capable of forming Solar Stars and establishing World Realms of this massive size and ecological stability. He had a healthy and reasonable amount of fear towards such beings.

He Yanglei said, "Then fight." With a smile, he urged as if daring for Wei Wuyin to take action. He didn't fear Wei Wuyin, with his cultivation at the Gravity Emission Phase, he feared no one in this entire World Realm, not even the restrained Starlords.

"No need," Wei Wuyin glanced at He Yanglei, "how about we make a deal? I've obtained a cache deposit. You can split it in half, in exchange, you both surrender your badges to me." Since Tang Xingyun had revealed his intent to the world, he fearlessly bribed in an open manner.

He Yanglei's eyes lit with greed.

Tang Xingyun merely stared coldly.

The temptation for another cache was extraordinary. The resources within were not negligible, even for them. While He Yanglei was tempted, despite knowing he wouldn't gain anything from obtaining the Chosen title, he felt no reason to bend the knee to some insignificant cultivator who used forceful means to elevate his strength. While revealing a smile of derision, he countered: "Or I can just take it from you."

"..." Wei Wuyin's eyes slightly narrowed.

Tang Xingyun hadn't even considered Wei Wuyin's offer, because that cache likely originally belonged to Lin Ming. Why would she ever accept? Furthermore, after Wei Wuyin's insidious methods went awry, suffering backlash, she could give her token to Lin Ming, allowing him to get a second chance at obtaining the Chosen title, redeeming himself. As for Wei Wuyin? She already felt he was a dead man, one whose life will eventually be claimed by Lin Ming.

After a long silence, Wei Wuyin's narrowed eyes uplifted into a smile that could snatch away the hearts of men and women alike. "Then how can I get you both to change your minds? I can offer alchemical products, rare resources, as long as there's a way, we can find it."

He Yanglei felt contempt at Wei Wuyin's pleasing and desperate attitude. With a gentle smile, he said: "Oh, I know! I want the entire cache you offered, and the Grand Earth Cache contents you have. You know, the one you stole beneath the nose of everyone? The one you used to frame the Lei and Shuang Clan. Then, you can have this badge. If I'm in the mood, of course."

"WHAT?!" The crowd entered a clamorous uproar. They turned to He Yanglei and back to Wei Wuyin. Framed? Stole from beneath their noses?

The entire world knew that the Lei and Shuang Clan had stolen the cache, hiding its contents somewhere. But He Yanglei had just said otherwise! Those experts who scryed the world for the cache, interrogating and killing countless members of those two clans felt their heart pound with an indescribable emotion.

Was this why there was no evidence of the Grand Earth Cache contents? That most remained ignorant of its whereabouts?! If this was true, were they all played like donkeys at a circus?

Tang Xingyun's eyes brightened considerably. This move of He Yanglei was extremely malicious! She looked his way, wanting to give him a thumbs-up, but as he was a deplorable existence that she didn't wish to associate with, she could only look at him.

"..." That smile on Wei Wuyin's face slowly fell, losing its brilliance to become a neutral, dull expression.

With a faint sigh, he glanced towards the old man who stood next to the young woman. Wei Wuyin could see the old man's shock and a wisp of concern in his eyes. With a clasp of his hands, he looked at the sky for a moment as the demanding stares mounted, piling on the pressure.

Deeply inhaling, Wei Wuyin absorbed all his scattered emotions, his wants, and his goals into one.

With a sharp exhale, his expression soothed out.

Wei Wuyin's heart reached a decision, nodding to himself. He faced He Yanglei and said, "I wanted to settle this peacefully, to complete this without any risk, yet..."

He Yanglei sneered, "Yet what?" He interrupted with a mocking tone, feeling that Wei Wuyin wasn't even remotely worthy of his time.

"You just had to decide that today was the day you die."

Wei Wuyin reached out his hand, the faint trace of unique soul energy birthed from his glabella.

"Element!"

Chapter 504 - 500: Already Dead

"Element!"

Those words weren't spoken aloud, but a burst of explosive spiritual strength erupted, twisting the surrounding air and space as if it had! From Wei Wuyin's dantian, King's Astral Core was illuminated in Annihilation Saber Light, revealing its existence to the world! From within his World Sea, the Nascent Saber Soul released a resonating howl!

"Two Astral Cores?!" All observers were thunderstruck by this scene as they discovered the second Astral Core of a different nature nestled within Wei Wuyin's dantian. It existed directly beside the still-glowing Elemental Origin Astral Core, releasing cascading waves of light.

Wei Wuyin ignored their shock, ignored their questioning gazes, with his silver eyes revealing only the utmost calm. With a clasp of his outstretched hand, a saber formed. It was constructed from the purest of his innate energies, its physical body representing a strength equivalent to his own flesh and bones.

Feeling the Nascent Saber Soul firmly within his grasp, emitting a saber howl that shook the space, he recalled his brother's teachings:

"When you use a saber, you must ensure you always follow through. You should never unsheathe your saber unless you're intending to take a life with it or protect a life with it!"

A stern voice, sturdy back, and clear smile formed within his mind. That figure that passed along his convictions and principles in the absence of his parents, watching over and protecting him, even at the cost of his own life. Everytime he wielded a saber, he would feel his presence, guiding his every stroke.

Since he brought out his saber, his intent to kill had solidified. Even if gods, demons, or ghosts sought to halt his edge, he would bring them all into ruin with it!

He Yanglei was deeply shaken. Two Astral Cores? Both at Thirty-two centimeters! How could such an absurd thing exist in this world? While there were those who had a unique bloodline that could generate multiple Spirits of Cultivation, leading to multiple Astral Cores, he had only ever heard of it.

There were methods that could form multiple Spirits of Cultivation, then merge them prior to reaching the Astral Core Realm. This was something even their starfield had, but the difficulty in cultivating such a method, the heightened lethality of the tribulations, and the need to use far, far more resources to advance, made it not a worthy investment.

But a method that allowed one to form multiple Spirits of Cultivation outside of that specific race? Was that even possible? What type of background must one have to even accomplish such a feat? To support it?

A tinge of unease emerged in He Yanglei's heart, forcing him to reconsider Wei Wuyin's origins and abilities. What if his Astral Cores weren't a product of a self-harming method? Unfortunately, this thought was entertained for merely a moment before being dismissed. The concept of two thirty-two centimeters at the Light Reflection Phase went against cultivation plausibility within his mind.

ROAR!!!

Wei Wuyin moved his saber, hefting it through the air, and the nine Origin Dragons violently roared in unison. The voidships shook from the sheer force of their roars, causing those onboard to become ashen as they were bombarded by a wave of spiritual strength.

Woosh!

Without a single verbal command, nine dragons explosively shot towards He Yanglei's voidship. While standing atop the Metal-Origin Dragon's head, Wei Wuyin was carried forward. At the moment, with a saber in hand, he seemed like the Commander of Dragons!

The Voidship had no defensive or offensive formations outside of basic protective formations meant to isolate the Dark Chill of the Void and sustain living conditions. They shook from the mere movement of the thousand meter long dragons.

The crew yelled out in anger, rage and fear, wishing to defend themselves against this assault. A few Realmlords felt themselves mighty, jumping off the ship in defense of their Holy Son. Unfortunately, they were met with an unexpected World Pressure and were ruthlessly suppressed.

"They emit World Pressure!" A quick-witted male cultivator at the Realmlord level shouted.

"What?!" The crowd couldn't even properly react before the Fire-Origin Dragon breathed a torrential outpour of fire-attributed breath his way, engulfing him and reducing the Realmlord into a smoldering cinder of seared flesh and burnt bones. He died before he could even scream out for help.

The nine Dragons of Origin wrecked untold havoc, surrounding the ship and entangling it with their long bodies. Those who met their breaths were all slaughtered, and for those unfortunate enough to meet them head on, they were crushed by forceful slams.

In seconds, the voidship was tied up by the dragons' bodies, with their tails and claws digging into the ship's surface. It creaked and groaned as if breaking apart. The Earth-Origin Dragon burrowed into the ship's deck as if it was soft earth, swimming through the hull and killing all it came across.

He Yanglei was slow to react, not because he lacked strength, but the dragons were simply too fast. In mere seconds, they had snared the ship and started to break it into pieces. There were even fragments falling off and crashing into the ground below!

"How come they're all so fast?!" He Yanglei was startled at the swift and explosive movements of each dragon. Their movement speed was several times faster than before. They all seemed to embody the essence of lightning, swift and explosive!

The Metal-Origin Dragon twisted its body, slowly bringing its head near He Yanglei. A Realmlord roared, shooting towards the individual at the top of said head, with fierce and suicidal intent. But as he flew with maddened resolve and steeled eyes, a saber howl resounded!

Thud!

The Realmlord's body soared aggressively towards Wei Wuyin, but was met with a breath of silver flakes that eviscerated his body into an unrecognizable mess. Fortunately, his head was untouched as it had already been removed from his neck, rolling on the ship's crumbling deck with widened eyes still reflecting that resolve to die for his cause.

He Yanglei was startled for a moment, but quickly regained his calm. With a faint smile, he looked at Wei Wuyin completely unbothered by the carnage occurring before him. Those loyal members of his temple were eaten, crushed, and blown apart, yet he remained entirely unfazed.

"Using an external array to fig-"

"Silence!" Wei Wuyin coldly shouted with impatience. He didn't hesitate to blink away from the Metal-Origin Dragon's head, utilizing Spatial Shift and covering the remaining distance between them. When

he arrived before He Yanglei, he activated the tokens challenging rights. As he activated the challenge, He Yanglei's token also lit.

A ray of divine light descended from the sky, engulfing the two before pushing everything else away. The ship had received incredible levels of damage during the shove, causing it to split into three large pieces and innumerable smaller ones. Those pieces clattered to the ground in quaking slams.

When the light faded, He Yanglei and Wei Wuyin were standing atop a platform of light and surrounded by a familiar cylindrical curtain. The two stood opposite of each other, causing the spectators to grow quiet. But when they saw He Yanglei's calm smile, they were quite confused.

If they went by their assumptions, wasn't Wei Wuyin still under the powerful effects of his amplification method? Why was He Yanglei so unbothered?

But how could they know about He Yanglei's internal confidence in himself? His high cultivation base? And his absolute ace: his guardian! There was no danger to his life here, completely and totally devoid of tension!

Wei Wuyin calmly observed as He Yanglei sized him up with disdain. The latter was seemingly fearless. With a sneer, "You think you'll fight me as easily as some nobody? A little boy at the Spatial Resonance Phase?" With a thought, He Yanglei no longer hid his cultivation!

With an explosion of air that caused his ponytail to flutter about endlessly, He Yanglei's body emitted a strong gravitational force that distorted fixed space, ambient light, and the surrounding essence. His Astral Core revealed itself with a bright radiance!

Ten Centimeters!

To have such a foundation in the Gravity Emission Phase was testament of his extraordinary cultivation foundation and outstanding talent! While most were still under the impression that Wei Wuyin's Astral Core was falsely achieved, they gawked and awed at He Yanglei's terrifying foundation!

To frighteningly add, to become a Holy Child, a cultivator must be under three hundred years old! That meant he was a Gravity Emission Phase cultivator at a ridiculously young age with such impressive foundations! Where did he even come from?

He Yanglei awaited Wei Wuyin's shocked reaction, but was met with silence and a calm expression. With an amused smile, He Yanglei asked: "Scared now?" To him, Wei Wuyin was definitely feigning confidence.

Wei Wuyin looked towards the ground, looked outside the curtain for a moment, and then at his saber.

'Just need a hundredth of a second.'

BOOSH!

Not hesitating a single moment longer, Wei Wuyin's figure shot towards He Yanglei at his greatest speed! He didn't just blur, his speed had caused distortions to space and the surrounding flow of light,

creating countless afterimages in his wake. The distance between them was already short to begin with, so Wei Wuyin arrived before He Yanglei almost instantly!

He Yanglei's eyes constricted as he felt a sensation of deadly crisis, he urged his astral force inside him to act. With a cold light flickering within his eyes, he was about to launch a violent palm in retaliation!

BOOM!!!

BAAAAAMMMMM!

The light curtain that shielded the platform collapsed in bits of tiny, scattered lights in the most thorough manner. Even the light platform had been eviscerated, exploding into bursts of light that blinded the audience.

Time seemed to slow for He Yanglei as he felt his vision distort. One moment, he saw Wei Wuyin move, and the next scene had totally changed at such a fast speed that his perception and senses hadn't been able to register it!

But he felt it.

A cold, icy sensation at his neck.

When he looked down just a little bit, he found a saber just mere millimeters from touching his skin. It emitted an extremely terrifying saber light that caused his heart to fiercely jump. Holding this saber was an exceptionally handsome face with eyes that exuded an unfathomably calm, but heavy sweat dripped from his forehead.

At the edge of that saber were two aged fingers, holding tightly to it, keeping it from moving that last bit of distance into his throat. When his vision trailed those two fingers, he found that familiar skinny body directly beside him.

"You're an impudent one," the skinny old man remarked. If he had displayed the slightest negligence, the consequences would've been disastrous. Wei Wuyin's speed was terrifying!

Wei Wuyin merely looked at his saber, unafraid. It was as if he and his saber were the only two existences in this world.

He Yanglei felt a surge of terror inside his mind. His guardian had acted? Was he going to die? Confused and enraged, he asked Wei Wuyin in disbelief: "You tried to kill me?"

Wei Wuyin didn't answer immediately, the sweat on his forehead increasing as the skinny old man's finger pressed against Element, nearly shattering it! This was just the slightest power of those who surpassed the Mortal Limits!

But in the end, Wei Wuyin smiled with a relieved breath. "Tried?"

Those words caused the skinny old man to frown, his eyes dangerously narrowed. What did this youth mean by that?

"You're already dead," Wei Wuyin glanced at He Yanglei, and then added as he eyed the skinny old man: "You were a little late."

The skinny old man's eyes constricted, his head snapping to He Yanglei at an inconceivable speed!

He Yanglei felt his blood freeze from those words, turning to the skinny old man who stood just a few inches away from him, as the two eyes met, he found a trace of fear, pity, and regret.

He wanted to respond, to question, when he felt his vision darken without reason, his thoughts stagnate, and he could no longer feel his...anything...

Chapter 505 - 501: Beyond Mortal Limits

When unsheathing his saber, a life must be taken. The term 'taken' was loosely defined. It did not always mean 'must be killed', but it must be taken away from fate. If he used it to protect, then he took that life back from the jaws of death, and if he used it to kill, then he took that life away.

The moment he conjured his saber, Wei Wuyin was willing to risk his everything to ensure its edge claimed a life today!

A glaring line of crimson slowly revealed itself from He Yanglei's forehead, slowly descending downwards. It went between his eyes, his nose, his lips, between his collar bones, and through his torso.

The skinny old man inspected this line, noticed how He Yanglei was thoroughly bisected! But before his body could split into two, spewing out his innards before the crowd, he waved his hand towards He Yanglei. That line vanished, and the dimming light within He Yanglei's eyes had brightened.

With a light frown, he grasped He Yanglei's shoulder. Sensing his state, the skinny old man felt amazed, "You split him through every crucial aspect. They had also been annihilated. Quite thorough of you."

The skinny old man marveled, realizing that it wasn't just He Yanglei's body that was split in two, but his Mind's Eye and World Sea. It was a thorough death. But only if one was bound by Mortal Limits.

Wei Wuyin tightly clenched his teeth. Element was still between the two scrawny fingers of that old man, unable to budge, unable to move, and feeling an immense pressure. This was what it meant to be before a cultivator that surpassed Mortal Limits? It was a harrowing experience!

The skinny old man moved his hand, pressed his index finger against He Yanglei's glabella, and then moved away. It was such a simple set of movements, no godly light or eruption of divine power was present. It was just a simple tap.

Almost immediately, He Yanglei's eyes that had brightened earlier regained the light of life. His hands twitched as he sharply inhaled a breath of fresh air, his entire body quivering without end.

Revived!

Through some means that even his Celestial Eyes couldn't observe, the skinny old man had brought He Yanglei's back from death. As for the man himself, his eyes swirled around as if reacclimating to his new situation. It took a moment, a long dreadful moment for Wei Wuyin, before He Yanglei's eyes settled on Wei Wuyin.

"Y...you!" He Yanglei's expression twisted with an unsightly look. He just recalled the moment before, unsure of what happened, yet aware that his life was brought to an untimely end. Fortunately, his soul hadn't been dispersed. Fortunately, that was far beyond Wei Wuyin's means.

Wei Wuyin dispersed Element, regaining his freedom as it receded back to his dantian. The three stood together with varied expressions, but Wei Wuyin had the most helpless. But there wasn't a hint of regret or fear in his eyes.

Others might consider his actions reckless, and it certainly was, but it had to happen. This He Yanglei had to die. He didn't believe that He Yanglei would surrender in a Chosen Candidate challenge, and it was clear from earlier that he felt no sense of danger or fear from him. If he acted petty, there was nothing Wei Wuyin could do but take his life for the Badge of Divinity.

He could faintly hear the cries of those dragons within the Auric Sea. He could hear their desperation and sorrow, their fear and madness, and it wasn't something he could accept.

"If I had to make the choice again, I would still swing my saber," He quietly told himself.

"Kill him! KILL HIM! KILL!!" He Yanglei's eyes reddened and he shouted in unrestrained rage. Despite being merely a few feet away from Wei Wuyin, he still demanded someone else to take action. The skinny old man glanced at He Yanglei, a trace of contempt emerged in his eyes, and he looked away.

Regardless of what, since Wei Wuyin had come infinitely close to killing He Yanglei, he had to give an explanation. In a way, he had failed in his duties to protect his life. With a faint sigh, he lifted his right hand. The movement was unfathomably slow, but Wei Wuyin felt as if it was all that existed in this world.

With a faint sigh within his heart, he decided to risk it all despite their extremely close distance. Those silver eyes of his became radiant.

Just as the skinny old man's hand was about to touch Wei Wuyin, to the point where Wei Wuyin hadn't even noticed how close the tip of his fingers were, he stopped. It was only then that Wei Wuyin realized that he hadn't registered the skinny old man's movements, that he wasn't even able to move or react.

How terrifying was this?!

"Who are you?" The skinny old man asked, inspecting Wei Wuyin with shock present within his eyes.

Unsure of what was happening, Wei Wuyin didn't hesitate to say, "It doesn't matter. If a senior such as yourself seeks to act against a junior like myself, why have so many considerations?" He faintly smiled, no longer deciding to risk it all.

The skinny old man frowned.

"What are you doing?! Just kill him!" He Yanglei demanded, but the skinny old man ignored him. The skinny old man reached out, grabbing Wei Wuyin's shoulder.

Wei Wuyin could only watch as he was grabbed, feeling a distinct sense of helplessness overwhelm him. What the hell was this? With all the power he had, all the trump cards he possessed, was the Mystic Ascendant Realm so vastly beyond his abilities that he couldn't even retaliate?

He felt a strange power integrate into his body, inspecting every trace of his body, but his heart and Sea of Consciousness faintly trembled. For some reason, he breathed a breath of relief. It seemed Kratos and Eden were still capable of evading this strange power's notice. They were his greatest secrets.

The skinny old man's eyes widened, looking at Wei Wuyin with a trace of terror and fear within. "Who are you?!" He asked again, this time causing He Yanglei's outrage to cease. The recently resurrected existence trembled with shock. Was Wei Wuyin someone special?

Wei Wuyin shook his head, not willing to answer. He simply watched the old man with a quiet gaze. It was as if he was accepting any fate that was left to him.

After a long moment, the skinny old man lifted his palm and frowned even deeper. When he inspected Wei Wuyin's body, bypassing the strange concealment he had, he learned about the truth! Wei Wuyin's cultivation foundation, level, age, quality of energies, and even his aspects were revealed.

To see innate energies so refined, he felt it unbelievable, but when he discovered the ten-rings that manifested around his Astral Souls within his dantian, his heart was shaken so thoroughly that he felt genuine fear. An emotion he hadn't felt in a long, long time.

Two Astral Souls! Thirty-two Centimeter Astral Cores! Ten-Ringed Soul Idols!

If someone said this young man didn't belong to a massive force or had extremely powerful backing, he would slap them dead for treating him like an ignorant fool. The thoughts of acting against Wei Wuyin dissipated like the wind. To add, Wei Wuyin was utterly fearless and even had the intention to fight him before.

Who had such a devastatingly powerful mentality? Only those who had absolute certainty that they wouldn't die!

"..." The skinny old man didn't say anything else, giving Wei Wuyin one last glance. He turned around, and both he and He Yanglei vanished as if they were never there. Only Wei Wuyin remained.

A divine beam surged down from the sky, carrying the eight tokens merged into one!

Chapter 506 - 502: Unknown Origins

A few hundred miles away, the skinny old man appeared with He Yanglei in tow. The young man of outstanding talent stumbled slightly. His hands were still trembling and a saber howl echoed in his mind. With a vicious expression, he aggressively questioned: "Why didn't you kill him?!"

The skinny old man gave He Yanglei a sidelong glance. There was a flicker of annoyance in his gaze, and it exerted a pressure that stifled the next upcoming words within He Yanglei's throat. Still, he was unable to accept this.

"Haha, we're not your thugs, little one—just your protectors." A sonorous laugh echoed as the old man that often accompanied the young woman arrived. He had a bright smile with lively eyes, snacking on something in his brown bag.

He Yanglei started, staring at the new arrival with trepidation. "You're Ming Yuling's Dharma Protector?" He recognized the old man's appearance from when they first entered this World Realm, escorted by the Golden Life Pavilion.

The old man nodded, eating what seemed to be a salted peanut with a hearty crunch. "Our job is to ensure the overseer doesn't take hidden action against you or if something unexpected happens, little

one. And, to make sure you return alive. And I think my old friend here did an amazing job there, right?" With a sly smile, he offered the skinny old man whatever was in his brown bag.

Refusing with a hand gesture, the skinny old man asked with a frown: "Who is he?"

The old man halted his hand that was about to send another peanut into his mouth. He faintly sighed, glancing at He Yanglei. Sensing his actions, the skinny old man casually flicked his finger and He Yanglei vanished into thin air.

"That sensitive?"

The old man shook his head, "I don't know who he is. You might have a better idea than me, you inspected him. What did you find out?"

"You don't know?" The skinny old man frowned, "You sent me a message to be cautious, and you don't know?"

"What's wrong with being cautious? You don't want your entire clan eradicated, or worse, our starfield, because we killed the wrong person. I sure as hell don't want to die for these brats or those other idiots." The old man spoke frankly, scrunching his lips in dissatisfaction.

The skinny old man frowned and remained silent for a very long moment, scoffing soon afterwards. "He has two Ten-Ringed Soul Idols."

"Two?"

Nodding, the skinny old man continued: "Wherever his origins are, he has a Saint Alchemist behind him. Furthermore, his foundation is real. He has thirty-two centimeter Astral Cores, two of them. His innate energies are refined to their utmost limits, and his physical body is terrifyingly powerful. He seemed like a humanoid beast. There also wasn't a single iota of impurities from products in his body."

The old man's mouth widened in surprise, "Not a single bit?"

"Not a single bit."

"..." The two went silent, internally reeling from this discovery. This indicated that all of the products used to cultivate Wei Wuyin were low-grade, not a single impure-grade product!

They both exchanged looks, "Worldly Saint Alchemist?" They simultaneously asked each other.

"But why is he here?" The old man asked, whether to himself or the skinny old man, even he didn't know. He knew Wei Wuyin the longest but he refused to delve into befriending him with invasive questions, preferring the usage of a soft approach.

"There's more," the skinny old man plainly said.

"More?"

Nodding, "I inspected his spatial ring and the items on his body. He wears the Crescent Jade Key from the Void Voyage Sect, indicating his qualifications to participate as a Chosen Candidate in their trial. And, in his spatial ring, he has dozens, if not hundreds, of ninth-grade products of various types. None of them are impure."

"..." Another bout of silence permeated the air after those words were said. The tension in the air was thick, nigh tangible. The two basked in this silence, staring at each other, for several dozen seconds. What went on in their minds was anyone's guess.

After a while, the old man laughed. "I just saved your life; you owe me big-time."

The skinny old man didn't deny that, merely snorting with a hint of dissatisfaction. He merely said, "two Chosen Candidate trials of forces of our starfield, but he doesn't originate from our starfield. How?"

"Better question: Why?" The old man smilingly added. "But it doesn't matter. Whatever he's here for, it's his business. Our job is only to protect these brats, not delve into some plot that might exceed our strength or threaten our lives."

The skinny old man slightly nodded, agreeing with those words. He did not want to be pulled into some strange plot or get killed because of this specific job. He's lived for too long and didn't cultivate to his current height to have such a shitty assignment be the reason for his end.

That would be woefully depressing.

Back at the Sky Zephyr City, Wei Wuyin only felt relief at having survived that encounter. He was baffled by the aspects of mystical power that Mystic Ascendants Cultivators wielded, and he was even more certain that that wasn't a normal Mystic Ascendant. At the very least, he was definitely far, far stronger than Wu Yu had been, exceeding the first stage.

What he didn't understand was why they were here. Was this place so dangerous that they needed these powerful existences that reached unfathomable levels of power? After all, Divine King Han Xei was considered weaker than Wu Yu at the time this World Realm was likely created, so how could he create things that required experts of their level to defend against?

Could it be Wang Yutian?

When he recalled that old ghost, the cultivator turned Spiritform, he knew his abilities might exceed his original estimation, and not by a little.

'This world truly is too vast and I'm far too ignorant. While I was capable of killing that Holy Son, I didn't think he could be saved with such ease. I even split his Sea of Consciousness and Astral Soul, but it was all undone in the matter of a few seconds. What terrifying god-like power.' Wei Wuyin's thoughts were immersed in a sea of awe by the possibilities enabled by cultivation, astonished by the abilities of cultivators!

While he had saved Zuhei's life from a fatal injury, and even resurrected Hong Ru, all of those feats were through the mixture of worldly materials brought together by the Alchemic Dao. The difference between relying on external means and your own internal power to accomplish these tasks was a far, far more terrifying achievement.

He was unable to dwell for long, however. As the newly merged token descended, he reached out and accepted it. With a faint smile, he was one step closer to his goal.

There was only one token left.

Those who were observing the events weren't certain what happened. After the platform of light shattered in a blinding explosion, the entire area that Wei Wuyin and He Yanglei occupied was covered in a hazy and translucent mist. So when the beam of light descended from the sky soon after, they waited with bated breaths for the outcome.

When Wei Wuyin's figure was revealed alone, holding the token created from eight Badges of Divinity, the crowd knew who the final victor was. As for that He Yanglei, he might've been killed just as Wei Wuyin declared.

Ignoring their speculative thoughts, Wei Wuyin swept his gaze towards the rampaging Dragons of Origin, causing them to obediently quiet down. They soared around him, and the Metal-Origin Dragon once more allowed Wei Wuyin to take his favorite spot on its head.

They all turned their eyes towards the last remaining Voidship. A faint pressure emanated from their joint actions.

Wei Wuyin smilingly said, "I hope we can negotiate, not spout lies to create disadvantages towards each other. What do you think?"

Tang Xingyun, who was just as clueless as the others, felt her heart quake at Wei Wuyin's smile.

Chapter 507 - 503: Forced To Agree

Was He Yanglei dead?

'But that shouldn't be possible!' Tang Xingyun resolutely denied the possibility in her heart. Their families had hired cultivators to act as their Dharma Protectors, so it's absolutely impossible for them to die! Especially in the training grounds of all places.

Yet, Wei Wuyin currently held a nearly complete Token of Elementus, lacking only hers. She didn't know what to think.

As for handing the token to Wei Wuyin? She wasn't willing to do so. It was Lin Ming's only chance at becoming a Chosen, gaining a superb status from nothing, and rising to levels beyond his birthright. If he didn't obtain that title, he would be relegated to a normal cultivator without any backing, forced to grind his way to the top with very limited opportunities.

Unaware of Tang Xingyun's thoughts, Wei Wuyin couldn't help but wonder why she was so reluctant. They had never met before, yet she contained a hostility and icy-chill towards him. He had never acted against her before, nor had he been to the Scorched Skies.

The Metal-Origin Dragon moved closer, bringing Wei Wuyin directly before the voidship. "Can we talk?" He asked. Tang Xingyun likely had another guardian, and he didn't feel the need to test his luck twice. Having already survived an existence beyond his current understanding, he didn't want to face one again.

Tang Xingyun coldly looked at Wei Wuyin. She too was fearless, just like He Yanglei. This meant she knew there was absolutely no danger to her life.

"What happened to He Yanglei?" She asked, her tone still containing that signature chill.

"He Yanglei? Is that his name?" Wei Wuyin curiously said, thinking for a moment. He openly answered, "I killed him, but someone brought him back to life and took him away. I don't know where they went."

"What!" Not expecting Wei Wuyin's words, Tang Xingyun was unable to process this in a short period of time. "You killed him?"

Wei Wuyin nodded. There was absolutely no reason to keep this a secret. In fact, it might improve his chances of avoiding offending whichever force this ordinary-looking girl belonged to. "If you're unwilling to negotiate, we can decide with a Holy Challenge."

The members of the Endless Ash Temple were alarmed by all these sudden developments. They were unable to determine the best course of action. Should they fight to protect their Holy Child? But if the Noxious Seas Holy Child was any indication, the likelihood of them all dying and unable to protect their Holy Child was far too high.

Should they allow their Holy Child to be challenged, dealing with the fallout later? If she won, they might receive some punishment, but if she lost...

Well, they could submit to the true Holy Child who gained the Divine Recognition of all Divinities. It was this possibility that caused them pause, unable to decide. After all, maybe this was all to decide which of them was the true Holy Child?

Tang Xingyun was brought out of her thoughts by Wei Wuyin's words. While she didn't fear death, she was simultaneously unwilling to hand this token over to Wei Wuyin. She thought for a moment, "I can hand it to you, but..."

Wei Wuyin was elated at the first half of her sentence, but hearing that 'but' caused him to narrow his eyes slightly.

Tang Xingyun continued, "You have to defeat the Holy Son of Grandgale."

"Hm?" Confused, Wei Wuyin asked, "You mean the one I've already defeated?" Why did this woman want him to claim it from Lin Ming? Someone he defeated with absolute ease just a few minutes prior. What was the meaning of that?

"A year. In a year, if you can defeat him again, I'll give you the badge without any extra cost," Tang Xingyun declared. She knew that Lin Ming wasn't to be underestimated, and he was terrifyingly talented. He just needed time. As for Wei Wuyin, he was an entire stage above him, and seemed to be using some self-damaging methods to amplify his strength.

If Lin Ming was given more time, if this Wei Wuyin was brought to normal, she felt that Lin Ming had a high chance of becoming victorious.

Wei Wuyin was silent for a short while. In the end, he shook his head. "I can't agree to that."

Tang Xingyun sneered, "Scared?" She was clearly trying to prod Wei Wuyin's ego.

"...Why do everyone keep thinking I'm afraid? Do I look scared? Whatever," Wei Wuyin mumbled to himself. "No, it's because I don't have time to waste on your childish hope. You have two choices, you can set a price, hopefully a reasonable one, or we'll decide by Holy Challenge."

If he waited for Lin Ming to grow, he would truly be a fool. Not because he was terrified, but he didn't have time to waste. But this did reveal why Tang Xingyun was reluctant. If he obtained the last token, he would complete the trial and obtain access to the core of this World Realm. There would be no way for Lin Ming to make a comeback.

"..."

Tang Xingyun didn't respond.

Wei Wuyin sighed, "Then a Holy Challenge it is. If you don't surrender, I'll have to kill you too." Just as he said those words, his Nine Dragons of Origins simultaneously roared in excitement, wanting to delve back into the slaughter once more. Their World Pressure was exuded at full force!

The Metal-Origin Dragon shot towards the voidship with an open maw, intending to take a fierce bite out of its hull. But before it got a chance, a barrier of air condensed around the voidship and halted its advance. With a harsh thud, the Metal-Origin Dragon's body heavily slammed into this air wall.

Wei Wuyin was thrown back, the tail of the Metal-Origin Dragon whipped and absorbed him into its body, absorbing the rebounding force and enshrouding him in elemental origin force that comprised its body. With a sharp twist, it scaled the air wall and regained a sense of stability.

Wei Wuyin was shuttled through its white body and brought back to its head. Startled, he inspected the air wall and noted it was established by powers that his Celestial Eyes couldn't observe.

Mystic Ascendant Powers!

With a heavy sigh, he was left helpless.

The other eight dragons tried to break into the air wall that engulfed the entire shield like an impregnable sphere. They breathed out various elemental breaths but achieved nothing of any note. Their sharp claws scratched at it, but not even a single distortion was left on its surface.

With this sphere of air protecting the voidship, he could only peer inside with a frustrated light in his silver eyes. He had thought that those guardians were only supposed to act if they were in fatal danger, not interfere at will. How was this a training exercise?

He could only stay a few hundred meters away from Tang Xingyun, unable to approach for a Holy Challenge. He didn't dare try to Spatial Shift inside and activate the token's challenge function. If the Mystic Ascendant wanted him to stay outside, he could only oblige with his current strength.

"If you want to obtain the token, you'll have to wait one year." A domineering female voice was sent directly into Wei Wuyin's mind. It sent his Sea of Consciousness into a violent rumble, nearly causing him to lose consciousness! How terrifying was this?!

Unable to resist, he could only accept such unreasonable conditions. But that's how the cultivation world functioned, the strongest fist set whatever arbitrary rules they desired. He was forced to accept.

"One year. I hope you keep your word," is what Wei Wuyin replied with, but his mind was still trembling from the woman's voice. This was one of the situations he wanted to avoid the most.

After a year, the Season of Regression will have ended, and his advantage over Realmlords and Timelords will diminish by a considerable degree. He wouldn't be able to kill them as easily as he has now, and they would be far more formidable.

With a fierce glint in his eyes, he turned towards the Sky Zephyr Temple. He couldn't be certain if they would stay loyal to Lin Ming after hearing he had another shot, becoming obstacles to his objective. With a burst of killing intent, his Nine Dragons of Origin roared, twisting their bodies towards the temple floating in the sky.

BOOM!

But another wall of air emerged around the temple, preventing entry once more. With clenched fists, Wei Wuyin didn't even speak. With a wave of his hand, the nine dragons departed the scene before everyone's eyes.

He wasn't able to act any longer, so what's the point in staying?

Back on the voidship, Tang Xingyun's eyes became soft and gentle. "Thank you." She didn't believe she could achieve victory against Wei Wuyin, and even if she did, it wouldn't accomplish anything. She would be the legitimate Chosen, not Lin Ming. Her family would never allow such a thing, so she didn't dare do so.

"..." The voice of that woman did not reply to her words.

Chapter 508 - 504: Reassuring

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This brought both excitement and trepidation into the hearts of these experts, both humans and elves alike. Especially since Wei Wuyin, this devastating force that no one could underestimate, had claimed eight of nine. If it wasn't for that strange defensive barrier that erected to halt Wei Wuyin's movements, delaying his ascension for a year, this entire event might've had a conclusion.

At the time, Wei Wuyin soared through the skies alongside Grand Priestess Si De, Ai Yin, the other Grey Sands Elves, and the temple members. They were silent as they followed Wei Wuyin, even Ai Yin and Si De were quietly flying behind him. The nine Dragons of Origins had already been dispersed, their remaining astral force returning to Wei Wuyin's Astral Core.

After what seemed like an eternity, as they returned to the Desolate Lands borders, Wei Wuyin heaved a soft sigh of relief. He was quite stressed by everything that had happened, especially by this timed

restriction of one year. Unfortunately, he had no alternative avenue to pursue. Whoever that woman was, her cultivation base exceeded the Mortal Limits to the point she could condense air particles into a solid structure, imbuing them with such power that his dragons couldn't even leave a tiny dent on its surface.

The level of power far exceeded his comprehension and abilities, forcing him to accept any and every condition under the threat of death. Considering the other old man had spared him in the end, for whatever reason, Wei Wuyin didn't wish to push his luck any further.

'Taking the aggressive route in my actions had to have changed any possible futures known by the Temporal Reincarnator in the Four Extreme Continent. If only I knew who this person was, I could take further measures.'

Since that day, the day the world stood still, Wei Wuyin had been constantly considering the influence and impact this Temporal Reincarnator might have on his life and future fortuitous encounters. Every decision he'd made since was made with caution and uncertainty, seeking the best way to disrupt anything and everything.

Even his decisions to establish Valkyrie, invest heavier into the Ascendants, and seek after the absolute apex of his cultivation path was heavily contributed by this unknown existence. This unseen, unknowable variable that was like a hidden dagger waiting to strike at his heart carried untold levels of stress within his mind. It robbed him of his sense of safety that he'd once had.

"Holy Son..." A voice resounded from behind Wei Wuyin, snapping him out of his thoughts. It belonged to Ai Yin. Her beautiful countenance carried a slight frown as she looked his way. Those eyes of hers revealed a trace of wariness and fear.

"Will you be okay?" She sent a spiritual transmission, unable to hold in her worries any longer. She had watched Wei Wuyin fight, suppress, and kill Realm Lords with relative ease, revealing a thirty-two centimeter Astral Core, and unleash a Multi-Link Spiritual Astral Array that was unfathomable to imagine.

Ai Yin had also heard Lin Ming's words, accusing Wei Wuyin of using a self-harming method to evoke a greater power, likely taking advantage of the Season of Regression to sweep the world unchallenged. She was afraid that Wei Wuyin would suffer a tremendous backlash for such explosive, devastating power.

When he turned to see the soft, warm, and genuine concern reflected in the eyes of Ai Yin, Wei Wuyin felt his tense mind relax. He halted his flight, causing the other nine to stop with solemn concern on their faces. Grand Priestess Si De readied her astral force, to assist if necessary.

It wasn't just Ai Yin that believed he would suffer a tremendous backlash, but everyone else as well. It was impossible to them that a Light Reflection Phase Cultivator could unleash such carnage with ease.

"I understand your fear, so I won't lie to any of you. There is no backlash; there is no self-harming method. It was all made-up by a desperate mind seeking consolation for its weakness, and tagged on by those unwilling to believe in the certain truths. The unfathomable truth that there is someone stronger than them, younger than them, far outside of their reach." Wei Wuyin slowly explained via mental transmissions, ensuring this wasn't exposed to anyone else.

"What?! But two thirty-two centimeters!" A Grey Sands Elf was the first to echo their disbelief at his words. How could he have reached such limits, broken the standard of cultivation, without using some forbidden method? It was inconceivable!

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At least for now, unless it was shown otherwise, she would believe in Wei Wuyin. The members of True Desolate Temple were conditioned to listen to their Holy Son, to believe in their every word, to suppress any and all doubts they had towards them, so they didn't question it. The words of the Holy Son were almost the same as the words of their Divinity, it was inviolable and sacred.

This was why Grand Priestess Si De didn't need any further convincing, her heart had decided the truth the moment Wei Wuyin had spoken.

In the Sky Zephyr Temple, a figure was in deep meditation while in the lotus position. From time to time, bursts of spiritual strength would emit from every pore of that figure. Surrounding him were a few Sky Zephyr Temple members who had awkward expressions, and Grand Priest Zi Gu who was frowning heavily.

The figure was Lin Ming, their former Holy Son of Grandgale!

The bursts of spiritual strength was the result of an intense circulation of spiritual energy unleashed by Lin Ming. He was currently trying to undo Wei Wuyin's spiritual restrictions imposed on his body, and had been doing so for several hours.

Grand Priest Zi Gu's eyes suffused with a dark and impatient glow. The Holy Summit was Lin Ming's idea, and not only did he lose in a Holy Challenge, losing his rights as a Holy Son, but this decision led to the deaths of several Realm Lords and the utter devastation of Sky Zephyr City.

He hated the fact they were harboring such a prolific and useless sinner of their beliefs. In fact, they should have shifted their loyalties instantly, becoming followers of Wei Wuyin, yet the existence of that mysterious woman held them back.

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If he had acted immediately after Lin Ming lost, expressing his loyalties to the new Holy Son, Wei Wuyin wouldn't have had thoughts of wiping them out because of their uncertain allegiances. Because of that delay, anyone would believe they had sentimental affection towards Lin Ming, even protecting him in their Sky Zephyr Temple.

But Grand Priest Zi Gu knew the truth. The Divinities did not move Lin Ming inside the temple, but that mysterious young woman. He intended to tell Wei Wuyin everything at the first chance. As for killing those temple members? They were irrelevant; their lives belonged to the Holy Son of Grandgale regardless.

Lin Ming's expression contorted as his eyes opened, revealing a dimly lit pair of grey irises. A flash of discomfort flitted through his expression alongside frustration. Wei Wuyin's restrictions were terrifyingly powerful, locking down every ounce of his cultivation base.

Lin Ming turned to Grand Priest Zi Gu helplessly, "Do you have any way to lift these spiritual restrictions?" In each of his acupuncture points and meridians were spiritual spell formations that sealed the flow of his innate energies, his World Sea, and the higher functions of his Sea of Consciousness. He could only use some spiritual strength, nothing more.

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"What type of Spiritual Restriction Spell is that?! How could it have such terrifying spiritual strength?!" In utter disbelief, he exclaimed with fear! While it wasn't massive, each spell formation was like an impregnable fortress! Not even him, a Timelord, could even handle the small retaliatory reaction from a portion of those spell formations.

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Lin Ming couldn't spare any thoughts towards Grand Priest Zi Gu's condition as he kept using his internal spiritual strength to slowly whittle away at these restrictive spell formations. If he couldn't remove these bindings, how could he cultivate in the future?!

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Chapter 510 - 506: Apex-Level Intents

The first time he'd heard of Origin Essence didn't originate from Wang Yutian, but Eden! During his Sky Ruler Astral Tribulation, the Sky-World Lightning Tribulation, Eden had said two things before immediately descending into slumber: "Origin Essence! Zenith Origin State!"

He had almost entirely forgotten about the first two words, purely focusing on the Zenith Origin State. It was only after sensing a thicker version of it coalescing within the tokens was he brought back to that memory.

"So the Sky-World Lightning that was condensed by their joint effort was Origin Essence? Did Origin Essence fuse with their Mortal States, inducing their transformations?" He quietly mumbled out these questions, feeling intrigued at the prospects of what this meant.

With a thought, he lifted his hand and started to extract a portion of his internalized, personalized mana. It was a glowing glob without substance. It was invisible to the naked eye, and the glow was the only indication of its existence. This was deliberately done by Wei Wuyin.

As it was brought out, he felt the ambient mana that was sealed by the unique means of the Season of Regression encroach towards him in a slow but excited manner. He observed for an hour, using his Celestial Eyes to take note of the changes and interactions that his mana had with the unrefined, unfiltered mana of the world.

As the worldly mana integrated into the glob, the glob didn't expand or grow, it merged with his own seamlessly with no noticeable effects. It was as if it had returned to its origins.

After watching this for a full hour, noticing no change, Wei Wuyin used his other hand to bring out a white glowing orb of light. It was a perfect sphere and gave off an elemental aura. This was a strand of his Elemental Origin Intent, manifested in the image that best expresses its existence. The sphere was like a perfect world of acceptance, transformations, and endless permutations.

He started to gather the ambient elemental energies that were similarly restrained. Shockingly, he couldn't shatter the restrictions with just his Elemental Origin Intent. "It's because its incomplete," Wei Wuyin deduced with a faint frown.

When he ascended the Astral Core Realm, underwent the Mortal Star Formation Tribulation, it was accompanied by Saber Heart Intent and Elemental Heart Intent blueprints, guiding him onto the path of cultivation. Unfortunately, he fell short of Elemental Heart Intent, lacking nine high-level Intents, only possessing five at the time. Still, his Saber Heart Intent manifested.

The Elemental Origin Intent could be considered a Lesser Intent, just like Saber Intent in comparison to Heart of the World, World of the Saber Intent.

His Saber Heart Intent can shatter these bindings with ease, bringing all ambient energies and essences under his control, infecting and converting them all into Saber Energies.

He observed the Elemental Origin Intent's manifestation for an hour as well, slowly seeing how the ambient elemental energies reacted. He discovered that their reactions were extremely similar, except Elemental Origin Intent lacked the means to break the bindings and merge with it.

Suddenly, he had an idea. He tested it on desolate power, since he has Desolate Earth Intent, and attracted that ambient source. And it reacted just like the ambient mana had, mixing with and merging with the Elemental Origin Intent manifestation with no outward changes.

"They're the same!" But this only served to confuse him. He obtained Origin Essence after his Elemental Origin Intent was formed. It took a while before he breathed out a faint breath of turbid air, "I'm overthinking this. There is no need for Origin Essence to form Elemental Origin Intent. Instead, Origin Essence can emulate certain Elemental Origin Intent's effects, and that comes from an elevated type of Mana."

After coming to this conclusion, not getting lost in which came first, the chicken or egg puzzle, Wei Wuyin relaxed, reabsorbing his mana and strand of intent.

"The possibility still remains that my Zenith Origin State Astral Soul's Refined Mana has qualities of Origin Essence, and might even be able to create it. I wonder if this contributes heavily to my concoction success rate, that ability to merge essences, energies, and various forms of powers together." He was well-aware that his talent in Alchemy was secondary to the aspects of his cultivation and the benefits they provided.

The Alchemic Soul was the first benefit that allowed him to produce a higher form of alchemical energies than his cultivation, making concocting products easier.

His vast Sea of Consciousness allowed the expenditure of mental energies and exhaustion that usually occurred a non-factor.

The Celestial Eyes of Spiritual Divinity allowed him to view the flow of energies and essence without injecting his spiritual sense, which leads to dilution and even spiritual exhaustion.

The physical senses and attributes that his bloodline provided allowed him to accurately pinpoint issues and withstand powerful surges of energies that might backfire on him during the concoction process.

These four aspects of his cultivation allowed him to ignore the vast majority of issues that alchemists came across. This coupled with his talent in controlling, producing, and infusing alchemical energies defined the totality of his potential as an alchemist.

But now, there might be a fifth aspect he was ignoring. "The Origin Essence must've allowed the attraction of the strange force that produced the transcendent-quality Refraction World-Light Elixir!" He had his unverified suspicions before, but he was more than ninety-percent certain of this now.

"I wonder if these will help me during the Mystic-Rank of the Alchemic Dao. Will I be able to retain my success rate? My outstanding concoction time? The lack of impure-grade products? Yet, I feel all the more driven to explore that limit." With Mystic-Rank Alchemical Products, he didn't know what limits he might reach. In fact, a single product might total all of his effort thus far. It was his most reliable path to power, and ensured that he never underestimated this world or its geniuses.

With this settled in his mind, he directed his attention back to the incomplete nonagon token. There were eight auras within.

Ori's voice resounded as she playfully named them each, "Transformative Water! Grand Earth! Grandgale Wind Intent! Omni-Alloy Metal! Dark Lightning! Nine Meadow Intent! Scorching Ash Magma Intent! Absolute Zero Ice Intent!" As she named them off, she left out the final Intent, Absolute Hot Fire Intent that Tang Xingyun still possessed.

Wei Wuyin was shocked by the reveal of all eight Apex-level Intents! The most shocking of which was the Nine Meadow Intent! That was the exact same intent imbued naturally within Qing Qiumu's meridians! From birth, she had the nurturing of the highest level of Wood Intent.

An arc lifted from the corner of his lip, "You truly are the most impressive Wood Cultivator in this generation. You're more blessed than Blessed in some ways." But then again, every last one of Long Chen's companions was outstanding. Wu Baozhai was the incubator for the Imperial Heaven Essence.

Lin Ziyang's bloodline contained the aspects of the Haven Heart Qi Method, allowing multiple Spirits of Cultivation. Lian Yu, rest her soul, had an Aquatic Dragon Bloodline. Even Na Xinyi possessed a Yin Physique that, in theory, could reach untold potential.

She was, by far, the best dual cultivation partner in the entire starfield, even better than Jiang Feilang's Yin Renewal Physique.

All of them had endless talent and potential, shocking even him.

"Time to eat!" Wei Wuyin said, causing Ori to explode out of his Dantian with an excited tremor.

"Yes! Yes! Yes!" Ori's excitement was truly boundless, infectious, and lovely. With a toss, Wei Wuyin gave the white sphere the token that contained the auras of eight apex-level Intents! It was time to reach the Elemental Heart Intent!