

Paragon Of Sin #Chapter 981: SCR Summit, After Many Years - Read Paragon Of Sin Chapter 981: SCR Summit, After Many Years

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The Main Hall instantly drowned in a wave of hushed silence, a result of formless, invisible, yet wildly aggressive pressure emanating from the wills of these great figures. Wu Yu's words and loyal gesture elicited their animosity, shock, and focus.

To the entire Main Hall, Wu Yu was declaring that despite having been publicly acknowledged as a Mortal Sovereign Alchemist, Wei Wuyin, a mere mortal, a junior, an unranked entity was superior to the Mortal Sovereign Alchemists, Earthly Saints, grand Forgers, and skilled Architects sitting on these thrones.

A twenty-percent increase in the size of this newly created throne compared to the Earthly Saints' reflected that without the slightest mistake! A direct, unmistakable, and vicious slap to these powerhouses' pride and worth!

Wei Wuyin, for the briefest of moments, stilled after seeing Wu Yu proudly present his creation. A smug, near-indistinguishable grin was hidden behind his calm, dutiful expression, fully aware of his actions and what they represented. Fortunately, after a heavy inward sigh, he relaxed.

"It should be bigger," Bai Lin commented with much disapproval in her tone. It was as if she wanted to see the world burn, but also that Wei Wuyin deserved a larger monument dedicated to his importance, enough to reflect how much he mattered in her heart.

Just as Wei Wuyin was about to decline, order Wu Yu to adjust the size of the throne to match those of the Mortal Sovereign Alchemists, a play to diffuse this highly offensive action, a scathing voice infused with the vicissitudes of age resounded.

"Outrageous! Do you truly treat the rest of us as inferior to you, little child?! Do you have no sense of self-awareness? Has your mind been muddled by minor successes and the protection of thugs?! Lost all its sense of respect?" This voice belonged to a male elder with white eyebrows, a ponytail of grey hair, and dressed in a violet-colored alchemist robe. With a round face and a harsh

pair of eyes, he criticized Wei Wuyin without holding anything back. Many felt satisfied by the scolding remarks, having similar thoughts after seeing the enlarged throne.

Wei Wuyin's silver eyes narrowed, the words he was about to speak were held back, and he turned his focus onto this elder. The man sat on a throne representing his status as a Mortal Sovereign Alchemist. Wei Wuyin recognized him from his studies of the stellar region's elite figures, many having publicly shared images of their visages.

The elder went by the name of Lavender Pill Alchemic Sovereign, also called Xun Yicao, and while his name and title lacked originality, he was regarded as a Grand-tier Mortal Sovereign Alchemist of the Imperial Clan; his status and reputation were not low at all, ranked in the top five Mortal Sovereign Alchemists throughout the entire stellar region.

His cultivation base was not low either, reaching the Demi-Mortal Lord Phase despite devoting the most of his life to the Alchemic Dao, an investment that requires centuries and millennia of studies, trial, and error, and often contributed to extremely low battle prowess and cultivation level.

Facing the berating of this elder, Wei Wuyin remained completely calm. Bai Lin, however, was on the brink of total flaring; even the temperature of the Main Hall began to rise as her golden eyes gradually increased in radiance. A wisp of her bestial aura leaked out, revealing the slightest insight into the depths of her newfound powers, and it caused the expressions of every Ascended to instantly change!

There was no exception. Even Wu Yu's expression shifted from a fierce glare at Xun Yicao's aged figure to a shaken one. The heat emanating from Bai Lin was causing his instincts to flare wildly with a sensation of danger. Xun Yicao was about to speak more, but he felt as if a monstrous beast had set its eyes upon him, and his scalp grew abnormally numb as sweat began to accumulate on his wrinkled back.

"The Fire Phoenix is stronger than before." Tian Muyang's eyes flickered intensely. There were countless reports of the Fire Phoenix's combat strength gained from the Tang Clan's battle with it, but they were all firmly assured that the Fire Phoenix's strength was at best at the Demi-Mortal Lord level! But the aura she was emitting felt dangerous to him!

Huoyan Liulan had silently arrived before Wei Wuyin's party arrived, floating beside her grandfather—Pope Huoyan, and occupying a throne that was once empty. When she felt Bai Lin's rising aura, her expression underwent a drastic shift. Was it because of the golden feather? Was this Fire Phoenix now at a strength rivaling an Earthly Saint? If so, the implications were massive!

The Tang Clan and its Matriarch were among the enormous crowd as well, and each of their Ascendeds' eyes glowed radiantly after sensing the distinct power from Bai Lin. Their bodies were growling with desire, seeking a solution to their deficiency—Fire Phoenix Essence Blood!

The Tang Clan Matriarch's eyes beneath her veil were glinting with dangerous, greedy, and frustrated light.

Tang Xingyun's countenance grew ashen, feeling an intense aura that resembled Earthly Saint's unfathomableness. Had the Fire Phoenix evolved?! If so, then wouldn't it be impossible for them to obtain its essence blood? After all, Fire Phoenixes were renowned for their ability to escape capture.

Wei Wuyin caressed her feathers to soothe her emotions, causing the growing radiance to diminish rapidly, and Bai Lin's aura to recede. It was a little frustrating that one of his trump cards was leaked here, but he didn't blame Bai Lin for it. She hadn't grown accustomed to her newfound strength yet, and her rage was on his behalf.

He could argue with this elder, give him a verbal slap to the face, or even threaten him, but he decided against it. Those feelings of this blunt elder were reflective of everyone else's, and if he acted out of frustration and short-sighted satisfaction, sitting on this throne, then he'd be disrespecting every last extraordinary figure here. While likely very satisfying, it would be a little childish.

"Alchemic Sovereign Xun, your words have given me clarity of mind. I do not need a throne; Wu Yu, it's yours. Of course, if anyone thinks you're unworthy of it, I'll let you decide how to handle it." Wei Wuyin cupped his fists towards Xun Yicao in a respectful manner before Bai Lin plunged downwards.

"..." The gazes of those seated on their thrones moved to Wu Yu who chuckled heartily without the slightest fear, before firmly placing his tushy on the throne. Sensing all the gazes on his body, he simply said: "Anyone with a problem, my hands are a little itchy today; I haven't claimed the life of another Earthly Saint in a while. Haha!"

Domineering!

Aggressive!

Yet extremely straightforward!

If you have any problems, fight! This was the way a former Grand Monarch of the Martial Dao acts! As for challenging Wu Yu? As an 8th Runic Ascendant, while newly ascended, he had trounced an Ever-Knight, an existence already amongst the middle of the peak in strength, and most were aware that they weren't his match. Mythical Oaths aside, challenging would be the same as 'courting death', so if Wu Yu killed them, he would be well within his rights.

As for Xun Yicao, his expression was distorted with anger. How could he accept being inferior in status to Wu Yu, a mere Alchemic Knight of a mortal? However, he wasn't idiotic enough to send his Alchemic Knights to their deaths. He remained silent but expressed his dissatisfaction in his pouted lips and frown.

There was a particularly vicious gaze that Wu Yu felt, noticing it belonged to an Earthly Saint with tangerine-colored eyes. He had a very basic dressing, not too opulent or too raggedy, simply a standard robe colored grey. Yet his eyes were particularly fierce, fixated on Wu Yu.

"Oh?" Wu Yu recognized this Earthly Saint's aura. It was the tangerine-eyed Earthly Saint that ignited their Mystic Soul! One of the Ever-Knights! Clearly, they were here to represent the strength of the Everlore Association in the Preliminary Discussions.

He replied to that glare with a smirk, dismissing this tangerine-eyed Earthly Saint. Instead, he found Lady Clearwind, who gave him a strange look bereft of anger or insult, simply wonder and amazement. How tyrannical was this? Her interest was instantly piqued—a truth as clear as day from the look in her eyes.

"Grand Secretariat San, begin preparations for the upcoming clash," Evergod's voice once again resounded as he left the task to San Luoyang to handle. San Luoyang's emotions were quite turbulent as he witnessed Wu Yu's arrogant actions, but he could only hold in his thoughts as he was given his orders. There was quite a lot to handle, so he immediately began.

Bai Lin flew towards the center platform, the same platform that contained all the successful challengers. When Wei Wuyin's eyes swept the area, warmth and delight surged through his beating heart, coursing through his veins, and entering into his brain. With a light jump, he leaped off Bai Lin and gracefully landed.

Before he could speak out a single word, a soft body landed in his embrace, hugging him tightly as if wanting to melt into his flesh and blood.

Ba-dum! Ba-dum! Ba-dum!

Wei Wuyin's dragon heart pounded intensely, and each throb was like an explosive roar of a dragon, yet this only made the figure whose head was pressed against his chest tighten their arms around him.

A near-weeping voice, muffled by his chest and clothes, came from this figure: "I missed you!"

Wei Wuyin looked down at the beautiful Xue Yifei in his embrace and hugged her slender, perfect waist. He pressed his mouth against her forehead, giving it the gentlest of kisses, and quietly whispered into her ear: "I missed you too."

Chapter 982: SCR Summit, A Happy Heart

It wasn't an exaggeration to say that Wei Wuyin had stolen the spotlight of the summit, and all gazes were firmly following his every action with rapt attention. The elusive, mysterious, and abnormally talented figure that could talk on equal standings with Earthly Saints as a mere mortal was incredible to witness—a scene of legend.

If someone told them that a cultivator like Wei Wuyin existed, the vast majority would've laughed in their face at the ridiculousness of it all. That there was a mortal cultivator that had an Earthly Saint as an Alchemic Knight? Loyal and obedient? Who rode on an ancient beast long thought extinct, having power and means that rivaled genuine Ascended cultivators? A Mortal Sovereign Alchemist beneath the age of a hundred? Hell, beneath the age of five hundred?!

Impossible! They would say.

Get your head out of the clouds! They would say.

Delusion idiot! They would say.

Yet standing before them, in the flesh, was an existence they had once thought was a conspiracy conjured by the Golden Life Pavilion, skepticism filled the air, hearts, and minds of everyone! Yet, reality was indisputable.

Wei Wuyin!

Additionally, his looks were downright heaven-rivaling, seemingly in contention against the conventional concept of handsomeness, threatening to break that too! Those on the Immortal Heroes Ranking could barely hold a candle to his visage, aura, and demeanor. Since he already brought forth the convention-breaking Neo-Dawn Eclipse Pill, it seemed only right that he broke others as well!

The hearts of many females and a few males swooned and swayed, desire and lust thrashing within their eyes. A few men even questioned their orientation, feeling quite confused, and those women who long thought they found every masculine sight of man as abhorrent and ugly found their beliefs changing instantly, similarly confused.

As such, when Xue Yifei ran into Wei Wuyin's arms that seemed to be able to hug the world, outlining the muscles of his forearms and biceps, and made it feel like the warmest and most comfortable location, pressing her head against that legendary broad pillow called his chest, the envy, jealousy, and rage borne from it was terrifying, to say the least!

With Xue Yifei's beauty, talent, and ability, one would generally think the scales would be tipped in her favor, placing all sorts of issues onto Wei Wuyin's plate as many would be struck with the lightning bolt of jealousy, believing Wei Wuyin wasn't worthy enough to hold such an astonishing gorgeous and exceptional woman, yet the reality was the exact opposite, and no one questioned it!

To most of these women, carrying a rage-filled and envy-carved heart, Xue Yifei simply wasn't worthy of Wei Wuyin! While she might be talented, they had greater statuses, and while she might be powerful, some had greater cultivation bases! They constantly compared themselves to her, finding it unfair that they weren't in her place.

If Wei Wuyin was aware of their thoughts, he wouldn't know whether to laugh or cry. Fortunately, the animosity slowly decreased as discussion broke out

and others were reminded that Xue Yifei was merely Wei Wuyin's concubine. This somehow reduced the jealousy considerably, and the eyes of many glinted brightly with an opportunistic light.

It was as if their chance was still there!

Na Xinyi watched all of this quietly, not moving to greet this fiancé of hers. When she felt the envious gazes consumed by desire, she was able to push away her disgruntled feelings of seeing Wei Wuyin hugging another woman, and relaxing considerably. The words Wei Wuyin said to her in his spiritual message, the decision to keep their engagement a secret so that her name can foster its own light, caused her to be endlessly grateful.

Regardless of how outstanding Xue Yifei becomes, she would forever be marred by her title as Wei Wuyin's concubine. That would be her identity, overshadowing all else. This wasn't something she could accept, and the gazes of others carrying that belief that she was unworthy of him would sunder her heart.

Xue Yifei had no issues with this. While they both were reluctant to serve as a foil for a man, this was where their ambitions and bottomline differed. Xue Yifei didn't wish to be drowned into irrelevancy, taken to unknown places against her will, having the will of others imposed on her due to her weakness or lack of talent, and forced to stay in a man's shadow to support them.

While Na Xinyi sought her own might, fame, and strength to stand upon the peak of the world, sit on the throne of authority, and be worshipped by countless cultivators.

Shockingly, she finally knew that Wei Wuyin knew her better than any man, especially more than Long Chen ever did, both physically and mentally. This caused her to subconsciously reveal a gorgeous smile that could cause the world to grow colorless, unbothered by the show of affection before her.

Meanwhile, Wu Baozhai's eyes contained a wisp of challenge and resolve.

Wei Wuyin gently rubbed Xue Yifei's dark hair, their heartbeats resonating as one. They were both cultivators of the True Dragon Transmutation Method, and their hearts were dragon hearts, larger and stronger than most. With their bloodline cultivated by the same source, they instantly formed a strong bond at contact.

The Yin Dragon Soul within her might have been why Wei Wuyin felt she was gorgeous enough to outshine the moon, special enough to change his plans and spare her on that fateful day, and take her in as his concubine.

"Y-you! YOU!" A loud shout broke the gentle, lovely atmosphere. Wei Wuyin looked in the direction of the disturbance to discover a familiar face with a familiar aura. Those eyes of his immediately lowered to that person's chest. It pounded violently out of fear. Wei Wuyin could hear the faintest of draconic roars from every vigorous throb.

It was He Yanglei; his expression was violently distorted as sweat dripped from his forehead and brow. He pointed at Wei Wuyin with a trembling index finger, inching back little by little, and the fear in his eyes was extremely apparent. That there was true terror, as if facing one's executioner!

Xue Yifei pouted after noticing that the moment of their long-awaited reunion was shattered by nonsensical shouts. A glint of killing intent flickered within her hazel eyes as she stared at He Yanglei.

Na Xinyi and Wu Baozhai were immersed in their feelings, but He Yanglei's actions had broken them out of it. Did this man with an aura similar to Lian Yu have a connection with Wei Wuyin?

Wei Wuyin inwardly sighed, remembering the preserved corpse within his Saint Ring. It was lacking a heart, and it seemed he found it. That being said, he had no intention of retrieving it for Lian Yu and making her whole. While he might have He Yanglei killed, he wouldn't do so himself, leaving it to those who should seek an explanation and vengeance on Lian Yu's behalf.

Instead, he openly said to He Yanglei: "Talent that does not belong to you will never be yours." After saying that, he felt a piercing aura from above observing him. It belonged to the He Clan's Earthly Saint, but Wei Wuyin was unbothered as Wu Yu and Bai Lin both gave him a forceful glance that forced him to recede his spiritual sense.

"Stolen talent?" The crowd was taken aback, but when they saw He Yanglei's expression pale several shades slihter, most immediately grasped an idea of what he meant. The once unassuming He Yanglei had stolen something that granted him the astonishing talent he now possessed, enough to become a Chosen of this generation! Unfortunately, it seemed to belong to Wei Wuyin and this was a statement threatening to reclaim it!

The way it was interpreted didn't matter to Wei Wuyin. He didn't owe Lian Yu anything. If Wu Baozhai, Qing Qiumu, or Na Xinyi wished to do so, that was their choice, and he would support it.

He Yanglei stayed at the furthest edge of the platform, far away from Wei Wuyin. From time to time, saber light would flash in the depths of his pupils as he recalled the moment his life was almost taken. If it wasn't for Wei Wuyin's current status and revealed strength, his chaotic mental state wouldn't have happened. But whether it was Wei Wuyin or Wu Yu, his clan couldn't protect him! And he had 'died' to Wei Wuyin once before...

Na Xinyi and Wu Baozhai looked at each other, and with their intellects and instincts, they immediately deduced that Lian Yu's aura emanating from He Yanglei wasn't a coincidence. He had likely taken Lian Yu's talent! Their eyes suffused with dark, vicious killing intent as they stared at He Yanglei's retreating figure.

At this moment, a short-haired figure with black hair and clear, black eyes walked over with an exceptionally steady gait. While she was approaching, Wei Wuyin's heart felt a warmth and emotions that he hadn't felt in almost a decade.

A single word summed up all his feelings without any flaws: "We." And he couldn't help but call out, "Su Mei." A name that provoked enough emotion to challenge the world, carrying as much importance as Bai Lin within his heart.

"Lord Wei." He's gone by many titles, from Alchemic Sovereign Wei, Ascendant Emperor, Young Lord, even Lass that one time, yet Su Mei was the only one that referred to him simply as 'Lord Wei' since they first met until now. There was only one moment when she called out his full name with heart-rending panic and concern in her voice.

She stopped a few meters away, bowing respectfully as a subordinate should. Wei Wuyin couldn't resist his smile growing larger, brighter, and more genuine. This action caused many heartbeats to skip in awe and wonder. Even Xue Yifei, Wu Baozhai, and Na Xinyi, who had grown relatively accustomed to Wei Wuyin's looks and demeanor, were stunned with wide-eyes.

However, Su Mei, who lifted herself up from bowing, was unaffected entirely by the sight. But the slightest of smiles hung on her face, while inwardly, her relieved heart was pounding excitedly.

"The competition thus known as Saint Cyclic Alchemic Clash will commence in seven days! Astral Mist will be sent throughout the various platforms, please do cultivate diligently! Do not let this opportunity slip, it'll only last for a few months.

"All Mortal Sovereign Alchemists participating, please use this time to select your future Chosen with care. After seven days, you will be able to choose your Mystic Star instructors, if you wish to have one. " San Luoyang announced.

Woosh!

Suddenly, multicolored mist resembling Utmost Purity Mist, but having a larger variety of colors, lesser density, and emanating a strong astral aura began to seep out of the stages, reaching ten feet high. Instantly, the crowd was immersed in Astral Mist, a mist form of peak-grade Astral Essence refined through special alchemical methods allowing an easier refinement process. Even those in the Qi Condensation Realm can refine this gentle mist, but the rate at which they can absorb it depends heavily on their innate talent.

Yet this type of environment could potentially allow for a greater benefit than the diluted Astralis Essence for some. This was a huge boon to the vast majority of cultivators present, especially youngsters at the Qi Condensation Realm.

The Everlore Association had kept their word!

Chapter 983: SCR Summit, Cultivation Galore

After a brief stint of absentmindedness, the mortal cultivators present, from the youths to the elders, from the Qi Condensation Realm to the Astral Core Realm, began to circulate their cultivation methods, absorbing the Astral Mist to cultivate!

This was a fortuitous opportunity that couldn't be missed! While some toddlers were confused by the field of mist, their accompanying guardians, be it parents, masters, or siblings, all carefully made sure they were cultivating diligently. A few snarky protests led to some berating and spankings.

Wei Wuyin stood at the highest platform in the Main Hall, only lower than the floating thrones, but the mist had not reached their level. Instead, the golden mats glowed with light indicating their primed status. Lin Ming had never left

the Astralis Essence diffusing mat, so he knew that this hadn't changed the ratio of release, but merely warned those standing to resume cultivating.

"It's best not to get distracted here; these Astralis Mats are extremely rare, designed for only top-tier the Alchemist Association's genius alchemists to ensure their cultivation bases don't suffer due to their studies of the Alchemic Dao. Every second shouldn't be wasted." The voice inside the Aegis of the Elements reminded Lin Ming, clearly knowledgeable regarding the Everlore Association's tools and treasures.

Lin Ming was deeply astonished. No wonder these mats felt as if they were cultivating for them! It's so that alchemists can study various concoction methods, alchemical methods, spells, arts, and formations while not having to spend energy circulating their cultivation method. It was exceptionally novel, perfect for the occupation.

If used for normal cultivators, they can study various methods, arts, and spells, and grasp insightful knowledge regarding their current or future cultivation stages. This was miraculous!

The benefits of the diluted Astralis Essence were also not minor, capable of improving every aspect of a cultivator's essential foundation of innate energies. The successful challengers swiftly grasped the shift in atmosphere. Right now, cultivation had become the central focus. They began to hastily return to their mats, some giving Wei Wuyin glances here and there, with a few containing openly flirtatious and explicit meanings within them.

Wei Wuyin ignored them all.

Kree!

Bai Lin waltzed over to Su Mei, excitement roaring in her eyes. Su Mei saw Bai Lin, and she too had her eyes brightened with surprise and happiness. Bai Lin had grown smaller, yet she was far more aesthetically beautiful and powerful than ever before. She went from a white crane instilled with phoenix blood to a genuine Fire Phoenix!

The two had an extremely close relationship, meeting Wei Wuyin on the same day, and both being in disastrous straits at the time. They would identify as sisters born on the same day if asked. Su Mei caressed Bai Lin's feathers as she smugly showed off her reborn body. The two communicated via a mental

link. It was clear from Bai Lin's animated movements and Su Mei's flickering eyes that they were exchanging stories and praise.

After Wei Wuyin had his fill of Xue Yifei's sweet scent and warm embrace, he brought her over to Bai Lin and properly introduced them.

"Bai Lin, this is Xue Yifei—my concubine."

"Xue Yifei, Bai Lin—my partner in the sky."

This was Xue Yifei's first time meeting Bai Lin in person, only having the pleasure to hear stories about the beloved white crane that accompanied Wei Wuyin. She was on the Bloodforge Continent when Bai Lin underwent her first Nirvanic Transformation that lasted nine full years.

Bai Lin scrutinized Xue Yifei, walking a perfect circle around her while eyeing her intensely. After finishing her inspection, she nodded in an aloof manner. "She's beautiful enough. Definitely not inferior to Yue Songli, except in the chest area. She has a strong presence and bright, intelligent eyes; she's acceptable." As if it were normal to give a rating, Bai Lin gave her honest thoughts through mental communication to Wei Wuyin.

Wei Wuyin couldn't resist smiling, surreptitiously glancing at Xue Yifei's bosom. She was quite impressive in that area, but Yue Songli was on a different level altogether. However, in terms of looks, strictly using Wei Wuyin's basis of facial attractiveness, Xue Yifei was on a whole other level.

Xue Yifei wasn't privy to this rating, but she could tell that Bai Lin approved of her, allowing her to experience a wave of sudden relief. She had learned from Su Mei that Bai Lin was a being of paramount importance to Wei Wuyin—as close as family, so if Bai Lin didn't like her, chances were her opportunities to elevate her status from concubine to wife in the future would swiftly become non-existent.

"..."

Bai Lin then went to Wu Baozhai, giving her the same inspective treatment, but avoided Na Xinyi. She knew about Wei Wuyin's intentions to not taint her reputation with rumors of their relationship, remaining consciously distant and attracting no attention. If Wei Wuyin even spoke to Na Xinyi, given her outstanding beauty, talent, and origins, rumors would spout wildly and investigations would come in droves.

All the lingering assumptions about their relationship would substantiate, but if he kept his distance, acting unfamiliar and unrelated, she would be able to forge her own legacy without being tainted by his shine.

Bai Lin finished her inspection of Wu Baozhai. This made Wu Baozhai a little uncomfortable, mostly because she too knew of Bai Lin's place in Wei Wuyin's heart. In the mortal world, if a man's dog or child didn't like you, chances were you had zero chance to form a strong lasting relationship, and this might be ten times worse.

She had little doubt that Wei Wuyin would isolate himself from her if Bai Lin indicated any dislike. And she would be right, her fears were reasonable, especially considering her heartfelt thoughts concerning their relationship had yet to be revealed yet.

Bai Lin eventually returned to Wei Wuyin and said smugly: "I like her air, it's very aggressive, far better than how she was before. She now reminds me of myself. Hehe. And, she wants you. Another concubine?" It was as if she was submitting her expert opinion, stated with the utmost confidence.

Wei Wuyin lightly chuckled, causing Wu Baozhai's heart to grow abnormally tense. What did she say? Was it bad? Was it funny? Wu Baozhai felt so stressed that she could hear her sporadic heartbeats through her ears. Noticing how her mental fluctuations were growing turbulent, Wei Wuyin comforted Wu Baozhai by saying truthfully: "She likes you. She said you remind her a little of herself."p

Those words were more than enough to cause all the pent-up frustration to flow away from Wu Baozhai's chest and into the turbid world, feeling extremely light and satisfied. She brightly smiled, "I like her too." If she knew that Bai Lin had deemed her worthy of being a concubine, whether those words remained true or not might change.

The five of them soon found a corner of the platform. Wei Wuyin sent Wu Yu a message. The Grand Knight used his mystic power from above, causing it to descend like starlight to envelop the five. A sound-isolation and perception-restriction spell was cast allowing the five to talk undisturbed. It's been so long and they were all curious as to what Wei Wuyin had been up to, similarly excited to detail their own experiences thus far in the large world of the Grand Cyclic Stellar Region.

While the rest of the world cultivated like frenzied madmen, one man, one beast, and three women held a long conversation. Wei Wuyin allowed them to tell their stories first before telling his own. He learned some interesting things, such as Su Mei becoming a prospective Chosen almost immediately after setting foot in the Solitary Saber Sect.

Or how Wu Baozhai used the resources he left behind to perfectly develop their new planet, making it another home, and rebuilding the Myriad Monarch Sect as the Eternal Monarch Sect.

And about Xue Yifei, after she was taken by Ma Zheng, and how she was graciously treated, yet found their service a little underwhelming. She didn't hold back in expressing how inadequate they felt in terms of nurturing experts, having a severe lack of alchemical resources despite having supposedly 'substantial' wealth and resources.

When it came time for Wei Wuyin's time to explain his story, they were deeply shocked at how much he traveled during this short period, and how crazy his adventures were.

He left nothing out; they were already aware of the publicly known details, such as Bai Lin's fight with the Tang Clan, Wu Yu's Earthly Ascension and subsequent escape, and his arrival in the True Element Sect. But, they didn't know everything else.

When he told them about where he'd been these last years, with six of them spent in the shattered Neo-Dawn Starfield or Everlore Starfield, and how he traversed the Dark Void using Void Portals, arriving at the Grand Cyclic Stellar Region only recently, they were completely astonished, their jaws dropped to the floor in shock.

Chapter 984: SCR Summit, Rooting for You

They could scarcely believe he was so far away while the entire stellar region was in a frenzy over finding him. Then, he told them about the rogue planet containing ample resources, not detailing the exact contents of the Terra-Mystic Ore just in case there were stealthy eavesdroppers. He also learned that certain Heavenly Seers can pinpoint details of verbal conversations easier than determining facts from Wen Mingna.

Wu Yu and Ma Zheng were consciously ensuring no spiritual sense or strange power floated in Wei Wuyin's direction, but who knew about the unique and

esoteric means these Earthly Saints possessed? They might be able to listen in without them knowing.

Hence, Wei Wuyin kept most of the important details vague, yet he explained everything from beginning to end, eliciting awed exclamations from Xue Yifei, and an expression of amazement from Wu Baozhai. Su Mei kept her expression of total calm, entirely unreadable, but Wei Wuyin could hear her heartbeat race with excitement. Even if he didn't, he could tell just by looking, unlike others.

He didn't hide his journey to a strange space via an ancient formation or his capture by Trueborn and Bai Lin's subsequent destruction of a Shadow Egg, including informing them about Yue Songli, who he fearlessly told them he was actively courting. Unfortunately, he had to depart from the Ninestar Starfield before seeing her again.

Su Mei wasn't the slightest bit surprised by his open behavior, while Xue Yifei exhibited harmless curiosity outwardly but extremely high levels of vigilance in her heart. Yue Songli was yet another obstacle toward her chances of striving towards official wife status, having to deal with yet another competitor.

Wu Baozhai was aware of Yue Songli as the former number one Saintess before her disappearance or seclusion, a topic of much controversial discussion. It was incredible that she was kept captive for nearly five hundred years, and ascended to the Mystic Ascendant Realm during this period. It was clear to her that Trueborn wanted her for something, and this brought a cloud of concern over her heart, considering Wei Wuyin essentially declared war against this mysterious faction.

Knowing Wei Wuyin, this woman was bound to be his. After he freed her from five hundred years of captivity, he saved her once again from stronger, more terrifying captors, and openly declared her under his protection, yet Wei Wuyin didn't immediately claim her, allowing her to choose. The tactic was top-tier, and in a society of cultivation, it was checkmate.

Wu Baozhai discreetly bit her lower lips out of stress. Just like Xue Yifei, she was feeling the pressure of losing future opportunities. Despite already deciding in her heart what she wanted to do, she felt pressured by other girls. Shockingly, she never felt like this with Long Chen, but it was probably because she was forced to be his due to circumstances, and she was making this choice herself.

It took roughly twelve hours before they finished their conversation. The sound-isolating barrier erected by Wu Yu was brought down, and Wei Wuyin stretched a little. The barrier hadn't concealed their bodies, so there were no lewd assumptions. Still, seeing three beautiful women of outstanding strength and talent with Wei Wuyin left many sighing.

Why couldn't they take those women's spots?

Many men and women thought similarly, knowing that Wei Wuyin was a Mortal Sovereign Alchemist of exceptionally young age, so his Alchemic Knights were bound to be highly successful, capable of slowly growing alongside him, wanting for nothing.

Wu Baozhai looked at the misty world with a faint pout, sensing those piercing gazes, "Shall we cultivate?" The Saint Cyclic Alchemic Clash was bound to happen in six and a half days, lasting for over three years, but the opportunities here would only last for a few months. However, the diluted Astralis Essence was so generalized and consistent that it didn't take into account their talent.

She could cultivate faster with an eighth-grade alchemical product that has the same effects.

Su Mei was at the Star Core Phase, the ninth stage of the Astral Core Realm, bringing an acute shock to Wei Wuyin. The absurd speed of her cultivation growth was as overbearing as ever. In roughly twelve years, she jumped to the peak of the Astral Core Realm from the first stage. He couldn't help but think that almost two decades ago, she was merely at the middle-stages of the Qi Condensation Realm, and from what he could tell, her combat prowess was not suffering in the slightest—a fascinating development.

The benefits someone of Su Mei's innate talent would receive would be minor from the golden mats, simply not worth her time absorbing diluted Astralis Essence. She was still a long way from forging her Astral Physique, and longer to refine it to the maximum and manifest her Astral Idol.

Her talent in cultivation might be exceptionally fast, but physique refinement was still an arduous task consuming tremendous amounts of resources and time. Fortunately, Wei Wuyin had the correct pill for her!

Xue Yifei was aware of Wu Baozhai's thoughts as she glanced at all the hard-working cultivators below receiving the blessings of the Everlore Association.

She had the same thought, giving Wei Wuyin a bright look! Her hazel eyes radiated her wants quite clearly.

During her stay in the Golden Life Pavilion, Xue Yifei developed a disdain for the pavilion's nurturing practices and lack of available resources despite its grand reputation as the number one merchant association throughout the Aeternal Sky Starfield. Meanwhile, they experienced difficulties with multiple Mortal Sovereign Alchemists and tens of thousands of Emperor Alchemists to provide her products, but Wei Wuyin solely supplied nearly a dozen women for all their needs! Seeing as this was her husband, she didn't hide her thoughts in the slightest!

Bai Lin sneakily sent to Wei Wuyin, "All aboard the dragon's lap." Wei Wuyin had to hold back his laughter, remembering that chubby figure that would often say the idiom: "To rise, one can ride the lap of a dragon." It had many meanings, some explicit, some innocent, but mostly the same. A cultivator can rise in status and power by relying on a male cultivator, typically through dual cultivation or bestowal of resources.

Somehow this simple phrase became well-known, even to those in the Grand Cyclic Stellar Region. He couldn't fathom where that hungry fellow got this from, but he fully understood why it mustered momentum in this cultivation society.

Wu Baozhai sent Wei Wuyin a few glances. It was hard to not want the dedicated treatment of an alchemist after experiencing it! The Valkyrie were all given a taste, and what a taste it was! It was such a fresh, breathtaking, and exciting experience to see growth in yourself every day as a cultivator, given top-tier resources designed for every aspect of your cultivation, that it was extremely addictive.

Su Mei kept her serene expression, a pair of unreadable eyes staring unabashedly at Wei Wuyin. She was a Starlord within a Gold-rank sect, so it was unable to satisfy any of her cultivation needs. Almost all of her resources were claimed through her own effort, and that was extremely tiring and ineffective. The act of accumulating wealth to buy alchemical products consumed far too much time, requiring several steps. Not to mention waiting for them to be available.

Wei Wuyin felt defeated, lifting his hands helplessly before the onslaught of these female cultivators' desires. He grinned, waved his hand, and brought

out three spatial rings that danced around his fingers, seemingly already prepared beforehand.

"..."

Na Xinyi kept cultivating alone, treating Wei Wuyin as if he didn't exist, inducing a wave of speculation as many believed she had taken a Neo-Dawn Eclipse Pill, even sharing a close relationship with Wu Baozhai from their close seating, but the current situation suggested that she wasn't close to Wei Wuyin.

This gave many men promising hope for her availability. Since she was called the Extreme Yin Saintess and was a member of the Dark Yin Palace, Na Xinyi was definitely the most optimal dual cultivation partner, given her strength and talent.

There were those on the Immortal Heroes Ranking and Chosen of their respective forces that were already devising methods of approach to court this gorgeous existence.

However, while their thoughts were heavily on Na Xinyi, in Na Xinyi's mind, only a single man could be found—Wei Wuyin! She felt a tinge of bitterness after seeing how close Xue Yifei was with him, holding in her discontent. She was comforted by the fact that Xue Yifei's Primary Yin Source was untouched, meaning she was as virgin as a virgin could be.

She didn't know why this comforted her.

Suddenly, she felt the spatial ring that Wei Wuyin gave her begin to emit a strange spatial fluctuation. It was extremely indistinct, and unless one was focused on it or wore the ring, they wouldn't notice it. Curiously, she inspected her ring's contents and her eyes widened slightly!

She hastily calmed down, closed her eyes, and kept cultivating. Within her spatial ring were several bottles and vials containing pills, elixirs, and pastes of various types. Some felt unfathomable to her, clearly of transcendent-quality. Somehow, Wei Wuyin had delivered these products!

Her heart intensely warmed and a sweet smile formed on her lips, causing a few men who kept their gazes firmly on her to lose themselves in it.

'I must make full use of these products!' She swore to herself, remembering every last word Wei Wuyin left her in that message, recalling what he said on the Myriad Yore Continent on the day he accepted responsibility. Her will blazed as she discovered dozens of Absolute Yin-Creation Pills! These were the essential alchemical products she needed to push her Yin Physique to higher levels, having used them before to reach the Four-Point Yin Physique.

Moreover, they were all peak-quality pills! There was even a transcendent-quality version! Her excitement at the moment was indescribable on any scale. She inspected the transcendent Absolute Yin-Creation Pill and discovered a hand-written note with two lines beside the pill bottle. It read:

"Take ONLY after consuming all the others."

It was a warning.

Na Xinyi willed herself to calm down with several slow and deep breaths, opening her eyes to find a smiling Wei Wuyin who was teasing Xue Yifei. Her grey eyes grew unimaginably gentle.

The other line read:

"My wife, I'm rooting for you."

To have a partner that is willing to support you unconditionally, and constantly think about you, was what Na Xinyi wished for. Given all these products that were highly suitable for her, they were not concocted in a day, so she knew Wei Wuyin's feelings. She closed her eyes once again, her spirit roused to the limits.

Chapter 985: SCR Summit, Selections Begin

Three days passed since San Luoyang made his announcement, and all the Mystic Star Phase experts had been taken out of the crowd, brought into the skies, and placed on the same level as the Earthly Saints. They stood on a circular disk, surrounded by floating thrones, and many of their expressions were quite tense.

The unfathomable aura of multiple Earthly Saints was exceedingly difficult to bear for these Mystic Star Phase experts, even if they did nothing but gaze their way, exerting the slightest traces of their will. The psychological pressure

for some was so unbearable that some had to conjure spiritual wards to alleviate the impact.

There were 12,427 cultivators on this disk, all at the Mystic Star Phase. Some were Sect Leaders, Pavilion Masters, Association Masters, Patriarchs, Matriarchs, or vagabonds at the end of their rope, finding a talented youth to pass on their legacies in the hopes of living vicariously through their success.

The so-called 'failures' of the Mystic Ascendant Realm were now gathered and given value as they now had an opportunity to exchange their life's accumulated experience, knowledge, and know-how for a price. These prices were inscribed on jet-black tablets forged from obsidian, etched on by cyan characters illuminating their price, expertise, age, feats, and general summary of their cultivation method.

The bits of information were given to a matching tablet that was of white jade in the hands of all those on the thrones, be it Earthly Saints or Creationists. It was clear that while Mortal Sovereign Alchemists were the participants in this competition, they were all equally invested in the outcome.

The clash would determine a King of Everlore surrogate, highlighting the abilities of these Mortal Sovereign Alchemists, and establishing a defined limit for the next era. Furthermore, they didn't have to worry about the Ever-Domain Pill or Neo-Dawn Eclipse Pill in this competition. The likelihood of a cultivator reaching the Soul Idol Phase from the False Reality Phase in three and a half years was inconceivable.

Fortunately, the purpose of this clash wasn't to determine the standards outright, but to decide which amongst these Mortal Sovereign Alchemists had the 'right' to determine the initial standards going forward, emulating the King of Everlore!

Wu Yu sat comfortably on his enlarged throne, standing out considerably from everyone else. Shockingly, no one, not even the Imperial Clan, decided to involve themselves in this matter. While dissatisfaction was clear, it simply wasn't worth it to antagonize Wu Yu over throne size. As for those truly petty individuals, they didn't have the strength to teach Wu Yu a humble lesson.

Just from this, it was abundantly clear that in a neutral setting away from their homelands and geographically superior arrays, they simply lacked the confidence to be overbearing. Wu Yu felt genuine disdain for all these Earthly Saints who declared themselves 'hegemons' of their starfields or forces.

It was utterly pathetic.

At this point, Wu Yu held a perpetual sneer inside his heart toward the Grand Cyclic Stellar Region's powerhouses.

"Do remember this: while they might not act now, that doesn't mean they won't act in the future." Ma Zheng advised through spiritual transmission to Wu Yu, trying to warn him that while individualistically, they might be inferior and lack confidence, this didn't mean they wouldn't spend the next thousand years plotting a decisive trap to end kill as a united group.

It hasn't happened often amongst Earthly Saints, but this type of situation of 'ants' grouping together to slaughter the anteater wasn't uncommon, especially among mortal cultivators. Despite being Earthly Saints, at their hearts, these cultivators were all experienced fighters that had to bite and claw their way to their top, each with a more brutal story than the last.

The Grand Cyclic Stellar Region was by no means peaceful. For example, Xue Yifei led her dragons to dominate an entire planet, slaughtering the opposing forces without mercy. Not a single individual here denounced her actions, simply accepting it as a way of the world. The darkness beneath the surface was inky and turbid.

However, Wu Yu only felt more contempt hearing this. This wasn't foolish confidence, but with the strange Mystic Rune in his heart, he already felt that his path to the Worldly Saint Phase, the Fifth Stage of the Mystic Ascendant Realm, was already present. A thousand years? Who knows if they'll still be alive then?

A glint of vicious killing intent flickered in his eyes, purely fueled by his imperialistic heart.

Ma Zheng could almost read Wu Yu's thoughts, and he looked toward Wei Wuyin subconsciously. The means this young man displayed far exceeded his expectations, and with the existence of that Mystic Rune that can incite the opportunity to ascend beyond the Earthly Saint Phase, it was clear that this world was destined to be his.

The commencement of instructor selections started with San Luoyang reiterating the rules of the selection. While meaningless to these Earthly Saints, it served to remind those deep within their cultivation state to awaken and spectate should they wish to.

The hype grew as hundreds of thousands awakened from their immersive states excitedly, experiencing monumental growth in their cultivation bases in three days. All cultivators that were at the first stage of the Qi Condensation Realm, the Qi Creation Phase, elevated to the second stage, the External Flow Phase, without any difficulty.

While the cultivation standards of the Grand Cyclic Stellar Region were far greater than the 'desolate' environment of the Desolate Dragnet Region, those at this stage still took time to strengthen their qi to externalize. Most were youths that were brought along by their parents, roughly five or seven years old. As for those in the Astral Core Realm cultivators experienced growth of their Astral Core by a small yet meaningful size.

This was a heaven-gifted environment that many felt euphoric within. The Everlore Association's reputation had massively risen in their hearts alongside the creation of countless reverent gazes.

San Luoyang finished repeating the rules and conditions of this instructor segment, including stressing the next stage will likely include these legendary figures deciding who to invest the next three years and a half of their time and energy into.

"..." Yet, one of the most important participants was beneath the disk, unable to properly view the Mystic Star instructors. It was none other than Wei Wuyin! He was sleeping on a slumbering Bai Lin. It was as if this entire summit didn't exist as man and beast relaxed to the utmost. Beside him were numerous domes of mystic power concealing the cultivation efforts of Su Mei, Wu Baozhai, Xue Yifei, Na Xinyi, and the various other Chosen on the platforms. It became commonplace to conceal cultivation efforts, a trend introduced by Wei Wuyin.

"How lowly. Peasant youth behavior," Xun Yaoci spat. From the beginning, the Grand Mortal Sovereign Alchemist of the Imperial Clan disliked Wei Wuyin's conduct, feeling that he was unworthy of his status as a Mortal Sovereign Alchemist. Now, Wei Wuyin wasn't cultivating nor caring about proper matters.

Wu Yu grinned, "My Young Lord feels no need to participate in this selection—proceed onwards." Wu Yu's tone was domineering and forceful, entirely different from the typical passive Alchemic Knights that served their Alchemists like indentured servants.

Xun Yicao snorted, "Establishing the foundation for his inevitable loss?" The derision was as apparent as an icy breath in winter.

"..." Quite a few throne-sitting figures couldn't help but feel that this was true. In their minds, Wei Wuyin might have achieved the Mortal Sovereign tier but he lacked experience in concoction and proper mixture knowledge to nurture peak subordinates. After all, Wu Yu simply couldn't have been nurtured by Wei Wuyin who was younger than a hundred, and most were aware of his past as the King of Everlore's lackey.

As for these 188 Mortal Sovereign Alchemists, they have been nurturing Alchemic Knights for hundreds of years, if not thousands, and he was considerably lacking in this regard. While Alchemic Talent could support an alchemist's rise, experience was essential to properly apply their abilities. They were all beings at the Mystic Ascendant Realm, while Wei Wuyin lacked an Alchemic Soul and was at the Astral Core Realm, further supporting the discrepancy in concoction speed and stamina.

"Hahahaha!" Wu Yu uproariously laughed as if he heard the funniest joke in the world, bringing all eyes to him. He gave Xun Yicao an amused look. "No. He wants YOU," Wu Yu pointed at Xun Yicao, "to choose the instructor. Anyone you want amongst this crowd. Your choice. Of course, if you think it's too much for you, then that's fine too. I'll find a little child in the crowd to find a suitable instructor, who might be more competent than you in my honest opinion."

"In fact," Wu Yu chuckled with a derisive sneer, "A toddler could be a better alternative than you in my eyes. After all, old dogs have bad eyes, but at least babies can see Mount Tai. "

"..."

Chapter 986: SCR Summit, Insulted & Humiliated

"You!" Xun Yicao's wrinkles trembled as his eyes widened, revealing bursts of unhindered rage spewing vehemently. He explosively stood up, directly exerting his Mystic Aura, revealing his Demi-Mortal Lord cultivation base to the world, whipping up a torrential storm reflecting his tumultuous anger. His movements were not that of an aged cultivator, but spry and vigorous, filled with innate authority built by years of worship and respect.

While his exclamation was inherent, this unsightly expression conveyed to the world his thoughts. To kill! To destroy! When has he, Xun Yicao, Grand Mortal Sovereign Monarch, and the Imperial Alchemist of the Tian Clan, ever received such blatant disrespect and insults?

Given his advanced age, he's experienced countless setbacks and offenses, yet Xun Yicao couldn't recall ever being so humiliated before an audience as grand as the entire stellar region's true leaders. It was easy to understand why his reaction was so extreme.

Even Ma Zheng felt that Wu Yu was pushing Xun Yicao too far, but words spoken were the hardest to take back. It was out there, and Wu Yu's cold, sharply narrowed eyes revealed that he had no intention of taking a single syllable back!

The Imperial Clan had twelve Earthly Saints present, and they had dismissively watched Wu Yu act imperiously like a misguided dog, not treating him with the slightest bit of seriousness. His so-called 'Young Lord' was in the spotlight, the creator of the Neo-Dawn Eclipse Pill, a main trigger for the summit, so they afforded Wei Wuyin some respect as instructed prior, but this was the definition of 'giving an inch and taking a mile'.

Without needing any orders, all the Sky Monarchs and Imperial Monarchs present, excluding Empress Xiaocheng, exerted their Mystic Will in Wu Yu's direction in unison. It was a miraculous display of unification and cohesion that caused a thunderous explosion to resound as Wu Yu's throne shook. Suddenly, cracks spread across his throne and released bursts of mystic light, seemingly on the verge of collapse.

As for Wu Yu, his eyes became exceptionally cold, resisting the combined pressure using his Awakened Mystic Intent. The eight core Mystic Runes inside his Mystic Soul emitted vast mystic lights in a show of defiance. However, Wu Yu felt as if a gigantic hand was crushing his entire body.

For the first time since becoming an Earthly Saint, Wu Yu felt himself losing. However, confusion grew in his eyes as he was uncertain why these members of the Imperial Clan could freely attack him in such a direct manner. Even if it was merely using their Awakened Mystic Intent manifested as formless, crushing pressure, it still should breach the Mythical Oaths.

After two seconds, Wu Yu found himself sweating bullets, his throne had shrunk by half its size, and his Mystic Soul's Mystic Runes began to release a strange vibrating sound. They were nearing their breaking point!

Shaken to his core, Wu Yu was about to defend himself fully—Mythical Oaths be damned!

Right at that moment, Empress Xiaocheng expressionlessly waved her exquisitely hand that seemed to have been sculptured by immortal fairies. All the pressure crushing against Wu Yu melted away as if it didn't exist, receding to their owners.

Wu Yu heavily inhaled and exhaled repeatedly, his eyes unmoving from the Imperial Clan's section—specifically Empress Xiaocheng. Those eyes of his exceptionally icy, multicolored stars bloomed with rich radiance, and his Mystic Soul began priming itself for a full-blown fight.

"Grand Knight Wu Yu, I'll remind you that verbal insults can be construed as direct attempts at courting death, as it challenges character and honor, allowing the organization targeted to defend themselves—should they deem it necessary." Empress Xiaocheng reminded Wu Yu, adding: "You should study the Mythical Oaths before continuing your verbal crusade; overconfidence is the killer of men."

"..." A wave of dreadful silence followed. Empress Xiaocheng had just pointed out that, according to the rules, they could kill Wu Yu at any time! Furthermore, with the Mythical Oaths in place, it was unlikely that anyone would help him. But she was showing mercy, a sign of her grand magnanimous behavior.

However, Wu Yu's eyes brightened intensely, revealing a dark, violent grin that showed no signs of backing down. "In that case, I can kill that old guy, huh?" When he said that, his Mystic Aura flared strongly, unleashing a torrent of power that was blocked from the observing crowd and young elites by a thin, yet oddly solid barrier.

'He's right!' Everyone glanced towards the sleeping Wei Wuyin, knowing that Xun Yicao had openly insulted Wei Wuyin by calling him a peasant youth, damaging his character and honor! If Wu Yu acted, he would be well within the limits of the Mythical Oaths!

Xun Yicao grew ashen-faced.

"You can try," Empress Xiaocheng said dismissively. She had no idea how someone who cultivated the Imperial Heaven Qi Method could have such an aggressively reckless personality or was this on orders of Wei Wuyin? His organization? It baffled her.

The eleven Earthly Saints, Tian Muyang and Tian Liying included, directed their entire focus onto Wu Yu, who merely kept staring at Empress Xiaocheng fearlessly. To those observing, it felt as if he was going to attack without any consideration, trading a life for a life.

Xun Yicao, however, was still enraged. He didn't think Wu Yu could or would try to take his life, and if he tried, he wanted to see him die a wretched death, so he looked at the sleeping Wei Wuyin and coldly shouted: "Wei Wuyin, get your dog on a leash lest you lose it."

This shook EVERYONE!

Xun Yicao was relentless, fearless, and believed himself protected and completely safe. He called Wei Wuyin by his direct name, with no title or ounce of respect in his tone. Every inch of Wu Yu's body, from his pores to his eyes, billowed with grimly thick murderous intent, sufficient to wipe out entire mortal civilizations with simply a gaze, and its entire intensity was focused solely on Xun Yicao. However, the Imperial Clan diffused that killing intent before it could impact Xun Yicao in any way, allowing him to remain cool and refreshed.

At this exact moment, Wei Wuyin's silver eyes opened. There was an extremely indifferent light emanating from them, almost nihilistic, yet hidden beneath was a churning emotion that was exceptionally rare for him. With a soft sigh of resignation, Wei Wuyin lifted himself from his resting position, casually dusted himself off, and looked directly at this wrinkled bag of bones sitting on his inflated ego of a throne.

Despite originating from a mere mortal, Xun Yicao felt a icy tingle slither down his spine. He felt unbelievably uncomfortable.

Wei Wuyin said absolutely nothing in response to Xun Yicao's words, but it was as if that conveyed everything that needed to be said in a single gaze. Ma Zheng looked at those silver eyes and felt his heart involuntarily tremble. This was an entirely different side of Wei Wuyin that he'd never seen before. For a moment, he felt as if he was going to order Wu Yu to slay Xun Yicao without

caring of the consequences. An urge to speak out against it swelled within him, yet as the words reached his throat, they refused to come out.

Then, Wei Wuyin revealed a smile yet it did not feel remotely close to a smile. Wu Yu's raging aura receded even faster than the Imperial Clan's united will. He sat down, using his mystic power to silently repair his damaged throne. He seemed to no longer care about Xun Yicao or the Imperial Clan.

"Alchemic Sovereign Xun, my Grand Knight's words remain true; you can pick any instructor for me if you feel you're up for it." Wei Wuyin finally spoke and the feeling of overwhelming discomfort dissipated from Xun Yicao's body. It took a few seconds before he could fully regain himself.

Xun Yicao coldly snorted, "Anyone?"

"Anyone," Wei Wuyin reassured.

The other Mortal Sovereign Alchemists were brazen by Wei Wuyin's willingness to forfeit his right to choose. However, this move did indeed get him some momentum, causing Xun Yicao to either choose or prove Wu Yu's earlier words true. But they all knew that Xun Yicao would likely choose the worst Mystic Star Phase cultivator present.

Xun Yicao knew he wasn't given a choice, so he didn't hesitate to pick. He pointed towards a direction, and a ray of light shot out of his finger and crashed against a female Mystic Star Phase cultivator. She was extremely old, wrinkles littering her face, a hunched back, and an air of encroaching death. Aside from her deathly aura, she emitted a faint alchemical aura from her pores.

"Luo Ning."

Wei Wuyin glanced at this elderly woman; his eyes remained entirely unchanged, and he nodded without the slightest hesitation. "I'll pay a thousand times her set price for her," Wei Wuyin stated, shocking every Ascended cultivator observing, especially the Earthly Saints and Mortal Sovereign Alchemists.

Why?

Because Luo Ning was a Mystic Star Phase cultivator with an Alchemic Soul!

Chapter 987: SCR Summit, Luo Ning's Stubbornness

"Luo Ning."

Her asking price for her services was minuscule in comparison to others, a mere thousand astral stones, amongst the lowest throughout the twelve thousand Mystic Star Phase experts present, yet it was entirely justified! Why? Because she was a 'failed' Ascended being who was unable to change her Alchemic Astral Soul into an Alchemic Mystic Soul!

She wasn't entirely uncommon as many pursued the fantastical glory of the King of Everlore and the Sky Zenith Alchemic Saint! One of the critical reasons why those who were unable to reach the Soul of Mysticism Phase were considered failures was because their Spirit of Cultivation remained Astral Souls enveloped by a Mystic Core.

Luo Ning had only listed her price due to San Luoyang's decision to have every Mystic Star Phase cultivator participate. She was originally merely a formality. In truth, she wouldn't have even listed thousand astral stones for her price if she was honest about her worth in competitions like this.

The few Mortal Sovereign Alchemists originating from the Imperial Clan formed a slight smile tainted by subdued mirth. While there were those from the Everlore Association, such as Mu Yura, who carried frowns on their expressions.

Luo Ning! She was a character for sure. She was a legend amongst alchemists—a disastrous legend. There were very few that were ignorant of her 'extraordinary' journey.

San Luoyang's brows furrowed slightly; he directed a question toward Wei Wuyin in a deep, confirming tone: "Are you certain of your selection? I will say this once, the rules only allow you to choose a single instructor, no other."

Wei Wuyin said with a clear nod, "I am." There wasn't the slightest regret in his eyes as he observed Luo Ning. The old woman looked downwards, finding the enchanting silver eyes of this youth extremely bewitching, as if he could see through the truths of this world and carried the essence of limitless imagination.

"Come, Alchemic Emperor Luo." Wei Wuyin respectfully gestured with a faint smile, seemingly far more approachable and amicable than his earlier

indifferent self. She hesitated for a second, glancing at the smirking Xun Yicao before moving slowly to the edge of the disk, flying downwards.

When she left, and Wu Yu remained silent, the selection continued as San Luoyang resumed the selection process through typical rules, allowing those at the Official tier of the Mortal Sovereign Alchemist priority, then Prime-tier, and finally Grand-tier for the sake of fairness.

The average listing of legitimate instructors roughly reached a million astral essence stones or a single mystic stone. These Mystic Star Phase experts weren't selling themselves short, with some with higher fame and notable combat prowess shamelessly asking for three up to five mystic stones. An outrageous price, yet this didn't sway any of these Mortal Sovereign Alchemists away from selecting them.

It didn't take long before the 244 Mortal Sovereign Alchemists chose their instructors. Surprisingly, Su Mei's Sect Master, the Solitary Saber Sect's Sect Master Dao Yuwen, was selected by Mu Yura, the Twilight Alchemic Sovereign, for three Mystic Stones and two hundred thousand astral stones.

While that was happening, Wei Wuyin sat on, leaning against Bai Lin's furled right wing. She was always the most comfortable pillow and given her large size, she was capable of covering his entire body with her wing if he sought any warmth.

Luo Ning stood before him, exuding the distinct aura of an Alchemic Soul. Her energies were pure, yet she hadn't touched upon a greater source of stable mystic-graded alchemical energies. There was a clear imbalance due to her Alchemic Astral Soul and Mystic Core. The former was entirely unable to control the full strength of the latter.

She was nothing more than a glorified Starlord at this point. However, she didn't carry herself poorly or with disgrace, instead emanating a bone-deep pride and unyielding will.

Wei Wuyin took his time as the Mortal Sovereign Alchemists began their next segment of selections—choosing a promising Chosen candidate. They used various methods in their arsenal to determine those of the greatest innate talent, even establishing miniature trials to test comprehension and potential at grasping insights.

They didn't hold back at all, seeking help from Ascended beings of their factions to conduct the tests. There were no limitations to external usage of resources for these selections. This was the main reason why instructor selections went by fast, as all these Mortal Sovereign Alchemists used their various sources to grasp detailed histories and cultivation methods of each Mystic Star Phase expert.

"Alchemic Emperor Luo, here." Wei Wuyin took out a mystic stone and handed it over. Luo Ning hesitated for a brief moment before grabbing the stone cautiously and placing it within her robe. She, however, gave Wei Wuyin a confused look.

How did this youth contain this mystic stone? She didn't sense it on his person before. How curious.

"I won't be able to help you," Luo Ning flatly stated.

"Oh? Tell me why." Wei Wuyin waved his hand, bringing out a wooden chair with a cotton-padded cushion and armrest that slowly moved behind Luo Ning. It wasn't large, just enough for a single person to comfortably rest on. Luo Ning didn't stand on ceremony, laying her aged tushy on the chair and relaxed. She had no qualms about letting Wei Wuyin use her to insult Xun Yicao—she never liked him.

After getting into a comfy position, she said: "I've devoted my entire life to the Alchemic Dao, the last nine hundred and forty-four years of my life since I was three years old. I have no deep comprehension into other methods, spells, or arts that don't relate towards the Alchemic Dao."

Wei Wuyin wasn't surprised by her age. She was definitely nearing death, not via soulspan, but lifespan. She had exhausted her life force in her failure to ascend, using 800 years, yet as an alchemist, it wasn't difficult to concoct some life-extension, life-infusion, or life-replenishing products. But considering the fragile state of her innate energies, it was clear her body's degradation might very well prevent her from concocting with any tangible success.

She was likely here to spectate the central ignition of change for the next era or to bring along a descendant, Alchemic Knight, or Chosen of hers.

There were many alchemists like Luo Ning that sought to take the King of Everlore's path, cultivating an Alchemic Soul and reaching the heights of the

Alchemic Dao through a puritan status. Unfortunately, the difficulties in cultivating were unimaginable.

She faced the same issue that most alchemists who fully devoted their lifetime to the Alchemic Dao came across—time. The Alchemic Dao was separate from the typical realms of cultivation, supplementing yet independent. It was equally, if not more, complex than the Mortal Dao and Mystic Dao.

Despite using various methods to bypass the lethal tribulations of the Realm World Phase, Temporal Eye Phase, and Star Core Phase, Luo Ning was faced with an insurmountable challenge—comprehending the Mystic Dao. She had exhausted her time focused on the Alchemic Dao and muddling her way through the Mortal Dao, yet as an Emperor Alchemist, her comprehension of the Mystic Dao was horrendous, and the time she had to grasp insights by comprehending the profundities in the Mystic Rune Seeds was horrifically low.

She failed.

Although she gained the qualifications to challenge the Mystic Ascendant Realm, refining eighty-one Mystic Rune Seeds, she grasped little to nothing with the limited time she had. However, if she wanted to take the path of the Sky Zenith Alchemic Saint and King of Everlore, she must reach the Mystic Ascendant Realm.

Unfortunately...

Wei Wuyin nodded, not spouting out unnecessary words. He only asked her to tell him about her past. The various expressions from the Everlore Association and Imperial Clan hadn't escaped his Celestial Eyes. She thought Wei Wuyin wanted to waste time, not giving this competition any genuine seriousness due to his lack of experience, so she obliged.

She was born in the Everlore Domain. During her younger years, she was obsessed with the Alchemic Dao, deemed to have enough Alchemic Talent to cultivate an Alchemic Soul, and so she did. Her beginnings were laced with bouts of brilliance, yet she was extremely arrogant. While she trounced those of the Everlore Association, she felt they weren't worthy enough for her.

She was merely a teenager at the time, barely a King Alchemist. However, her attitude effectively got her blacklisted by a powerful figure of the Everlore Association. Despite later growing up and becoming more mature, her entry into the association was blocked continuously.

So she did what any enraged youth would do: she kept challenging the Everlore Association geniuses to Alchemic Clashes. And she won each of them.

She became renowned in her generation as the top King Alchemist in the last thousand years. How brilliant was she then? How much of a slap was it to them? It was harsh that reality was often cruel, smashing one from the clouds to the dirty, filthy earth.

She entered the Astral Core Realm through an Everlore Ascension Pill gained by her grandfather. She forged an Alchemic Astral Soul! With excitement, she began to practice the Astral Core Realm-level of Alchemic Dao, or the later stages of the Mortal Dao, but found herself increasingly puzzled.

She met roadblock after roadblock, suffering repeated failures. It was obscenely difficult! Her previous glory was ripped from her hands as those non-Alchemic Soul alchemists of the Everlore Association began destroying her in Alchemic Clashes. It was one-sided.

Luo Ning instantly realized the issue! She was alone! Unlike the Desolate Dagnet Region, the Alchemic Legacy of the King of Everlore was highly restricted, protected by various Mythical Oaths of secrecy and various protective spells. While the various associations gathered their accumulated knowledge of the Alchemic Dao through trial and error, keeping their secrets extremely secure.

She attempted to rectify this issue by finding an association, but she found herself continuously blacklisted. They rejected her without reason! But she knew the reason—the Everlore Association! Even when she tried to conceal herself, they instantly discovered who she was, swiftly kicking her out, and leaving her hapless without guidance.

She was left without another option but to join the Imperial Clan, the one organization throughout the entire Aeternal Sky Starfield that wouldn't copulate to the Everlore Association's domineering ways. With a little luck and diligent effort, she successfully passed their examination!

When she was younger, she was an exceptional beauty that could easily rival some Saintesses. Her status as an Alchemic Soul alchemist was one of her greatest protections, with an unwritten rule by most cultivators to avoid killing or harming these cultivators without a justified reason. The Golden Gate Pavilion had an agreement with the Everlore Association to inform them if any

Alchemic Soul cultivator was killed prematurely, captured against their will, or forcefully violated.

This was the utmost sign of dutiful respect towards those who dared brave the King of Everlore's difficult path. To those found breaking this rule, their entire family was slaughtered to the last.

It's been a long, long time since an Alchemic Soul cultivator was murdered by the hands of another cultivator knowingly, except through unintentional casualty—a consequence of behemoths of extreme power clashing. At most, they would be captured and ransomed off back to the Everlore Association with evidence as to why to ensure that the alchemist swore an oath to not seek revenge on their captors.

Luo Ning's beautiful appearance became an issue in the Imperial Clan. Long story short, Xun Yicao wanted Luo Ning to be his concubine. For male alchemists, those virgins with Alchemic Souls were extremely beneficial to their cultivation. Xun Yicao used this method of enhancing his alchemical energies to increase his success rates, refinement speed, etc.

Yet Luo Ning refused. She was obstinate and direct, refusing to become the concubine of someone. However, she had no issues with being a wife, but that wasn't on the table. Her fiery personality in her youth and unyielding stubbornness caused her to insult Xun Yicao, later getting kicked out of the Imperial Clan, and swearing multiple oaths to never use or spread methods, spells, and arts learned during her time in the Imperial Clan.

She was essentially brought back to step one after wasting decades of her life. Yet she remained stubborn, refusing to beg Xun Yicao to accept her as his concubine to continue her cultivation into the Alchemic Dao, so she strove to cultivate alone without a strong, stable legacy to guide her. She became a rare vagabond alchemist with an Alchemic Soul, the first...

Wei Wuyin listened to every detail of her story. At the end of it all, his silver eyes looked upwards and found Xun Yicao's throne.

"Satisfied?" Luo Ning felt her throat was dry, desiring some tea. It's been a while since she told anyone of her story, been a while since anyone was willing to listen.

Wei Wuyin lowered his gaze and looked at Luo Ning, faintly smiling: "Not yet."

"Oh? Do you want to know more? Maybe how I looked when I was younger? I wasn't that inferior to you, y'know. I mean, inferior to your three little women over there. A genuine smoke show, I swear." She realized comparing herself to a man was a little inappropriate, hurriedly changing the target of comparison.

Wei Wuyin chuckled, "I don't doubt it."

"You know, I still am pure," Luo Ning jokingly winked, her wrinkles twisting in an unsightly manner that might induce a little vomit. Wei Wuyin wasn't the slightest bit creeped out, realizing that a woman as stubborn as her was unlikely to surrender to any man in her lifetime. She bravely went at it alone until the bitter end and still reached her current cultivation and alchemist rank. It was nothing short of amazing.

"The good ol' days..." Luo Ning nostalgically lost herself in those memories. How it felt to be young and proud, completely different than old and proud for sure. 'Who knows, maybe I could've been the next Sky Zenith Alchemic Saint if I wasn't so stubborn.'

Wei Wuyin closed his eyes. After a long, long while, he opened them and called out to Luo Ning. She awoke from her daydreams with a start.

"What is it, young prince? Don't tell me you've taken a liking to this old woman's untouched body." Luo Ning had an unapologetic sense of humor, freely capable of joking around, but her genuine desires were leaking.

Wei Wuyin couldn't help but be reminded of that mysterious woman in the Nexus Battlefield. She was at the end of her ropes, and all she wanted to do was experience how it felt to be a woman before she decided to end it. He inwardly shook his head.

"Alchemic Emperor Luo, I've decided: I'm going to make you a Mortal Sovereign Alchemist," Wei Wuyin declared.

"A what now?" Luo Ning jolted.

Chapter 988: SCR Summit, A Hungry Man

"A what now?" Luo Ning felt as if she had misheard Wei Wuyin's words. They must've been a figment of her age-laden imagination, a far-away consequence of her nostalgia-filled daydream, an illusion of the heart and-

"I've decided to make you a Mortal Sovereign Alchemist," Wei Wuyin firmly repeated his intent. Luo Ning was stunned; Wei Wuyin's eyes contained an unswerving seriousness that lacked any indication of this being what it felt like—a joke.

She was unable to speak, strictly confused as to how someone can casually decide to 'make' someone an Alchemic Sovereign of the Mortal Dao! It was ludicrous to say, and anyone within the grand profession of alchemists would surely laugh themselves into an early grave hearing it.

"Don't be too stunned; this is an experiment. I will not be taking you as my disciple, and while I'll be your teacher and you, my student, I will not be responsible for you after. Do you understand?" Wei Wuyin's words left Luo Ning as shell-shocked as one could imagine.

After taking a long while to process it all, staring intently at the silver eyes of this exceptionally handsome young man, she finally eked out a single word: "Why?" This was a question that should've come later after a series of disbelieving rebukes to remind Wei Wuyin to know his limits, yet it was the first thing that came out of her mouth.

She couldn't find it in her heart to sustain the slightest doubt, and whenever doubt emerged, she was reminded time and time again by her innermost instincts that this was one of the youngest Mortal Sovereign Alchemists in the stellar region's known history, saddled right next to the King of Everlore, her idol.

Wei Wuyin didn't hesitate to give her a direct answer. Glancing at the thrones floating above, he indifferently spat: "To settle a debt." Four words that carried an exceptionally sharp edge, and they caused Luo Ning to shiver, knowing in her heart and soul that there was a sinister, lethal scheme brewing within them.

"How?" Luo Ning's expression grew abnormally dark and solemn, putting aside her humorous self and revealing a downright serious side.

Wei Wuyin faintly smiled, "With effort. How else?" After saying this, he swept his gaze across the platform, noticing that He Yanglei had sealed himself off by a thick astral ward preventing inspection. Wei Wuyin's Celestial Eyes pierced through this obstruction, finding an ashen-faced, sweaty, and fearful He Yanglei that couldn't stop trembling. From time to time, he would grimace in pain as saber light flitted within his eyes.

Wei Wuyin knew that if it wasn't for the golden mats passively infusing He Yanglei with diluted Astralis Essence, he would not be in any type of state to cultivate. He was slightly startled by the self-inflicted harm He Yanglei was committing against himself. After all, the saber light was not his but a byproduct of trauma that He Yanglei's mind was conjuring. His Saber had left a heavy imprint on his soul and mind despite being reversed.

If he could overcome this trauma, he might be able to escape his calamity and gain insight into Saber Intent.

Right now, the alchemists were discussing with their instructors the intricacies of their cultivation methods, specific alchemical products suitable for their stages of development, and the type of disciple they would find easier to mold—this enveloped age, cultivation base, gender, previous cultivation method, etc.

An idea emerged in Wei Wuyin's mind. He turned to a calm, sitting, and ruminating Luo Ning with a spark of interest. "I think I have the perfect use for your ability, Alchemic Emperor Luo."

"What?" Luo Ning was confused.

Wei Wuyin nodded to himself with approval, "Three birds with one stone; you'll be concocting the products for my future Chosen." Ignoring the wide-mouthed Luo Ning, Wei Wuyin took to the air, looking at the massive crowd of over a million cultivators. There actually weren't that many candidates to choose from at present, but his actions of inviting everyone into the Main Hall had certainly made this type of clash possible.

There were a lot of parents, masters, and organizations that brought along their young to observe this event. However, there were fewer eligible candidates than Mystic Star instructors, barely exceeding eight thousand. This greatly limited the field of choice. Moreover, the majority of them were citizens or inhabitants of the Everlore Domain.

Wei Wuyin's eyes found a specific person amongst the crowd; his eyes brightened as his emotions stirred. Vivid memories of the past flowed into his Sea of Consciousness from when he was just a kid with an adventurous spirit and a willful spirit. It felt as if it was so long ago, yet not at the same time.

Those silver eyes of his glazed over with nostalgia. But after a while, his smile faded, his eyes dimmed, and his mood dampened considerably. Not all

memories felt good to remember. The good, peaceful, and exciting memories were often accompanied by the bad, chaotic, and depressing ones.

Wei Wuyin drank in those memories, reminding him of his sense of self and life's principles, never allowing them to be repressed as they defined him. Eventually, Wei Wuyin landed as he settled on his choice. San Luoyang was already taking action, removing all the non-instructors from the disk and bringing over every cultivator that met the requirements to be selected.

They simply needed to be beneath the age of five hundred; specifically, they couldn't be older than 496 and a half, and they had to be at or beneath the Sixth Stage of the Qi Condensation Realm, the False Reality Phase. There weren't many that fit, with most being minor servants of various forces or children. The vast majority of crewmates that operated Voidships were at the Astral Core Realm, and those that weren't were beyond the False Reality Phase.

During all this, Wu Yu was abnormally silent. To the outside, it seemed as if he was thoroughly tamed by the Imperial Clan's united front. But inside, Wu Yu was greatly amused, not bothered in the slightest by the suppression. That said, he couldn't help but glance at Tian Lingyu, Tian Muyang, Yang Chaoyue, and the two other Sky Monarchs that were aware of Wei Wuyin's status as a Saintmaker, trying to slide into his favor.

Given the seat prepared for Ma Zheng, with the exact specifications of an Earthly Saint, this was likely leaked somehow through them or divined by the Golden Gate Pavilion. He wasn't too shocked that they acted in a concerted effort with their Empress' desire, that was an act of loyalty, but he was taken aback by their willingness to allow Xun Yicao to speak so viciously towards Wei Wuyin without warning him.

If Tian Muyang and the others knew of Wu Yu's thoughts, they would have the bitterest of smiles, especially Tian Muyang. He had repeatedly hinted to Xun Yicao that Wei Wuyin was unordinary and to form a relationship with him, but it only caused Xun Yicao to develop animosity and distaste for Wei Wuyin. And it was all due to jealousy that was as clear as day, and possibly feeling threatened considering Wei Wuyin was currently unaffiliated and touted as a 'Grand' Mortal Sovereign Alchemist.

If Wei Wuyin sought to ally himself with the Imperial Clan, this would threaten his position and relevance within the clan. As such, he was deliberately antagonizing Wei Wuyin to avoid that possibility.

Even Empress Xiaocheng felt helpless towards this. While her position was lofty, it was difficult to rein Xun Yicao in, especially given the legitimacy of his paranoid thoughts and unquestionably high merits performed for the Imperial Clan for the last ten thousand years.

As for the Sky Monarchs, such as Yang Chaoyue, they simply didn't have the status to discuss that topic with the Imperial Alchemist of the Tian Clan, head of their Alchemist Division. At this very moment, Yang Chaoyue's mind was swirling with plans to appease Wei Wuyin.

Soon, the selections of Chosen Knights, a hybrid between prospective Chosen and Alchemic Knights, of the 188 Mortal Sovereign Alchemist were finished. All that was left was a single alchemist: Wei Wuyin.

"Alchemic Sovereign Wei," San Luoyang called out. Since Wei Wuyin was revealed to be a genuine Mortal Sovereign Alchemist, San Luoyang's tone carried undisguised respect, including a bit of timidity. Whenever he looked at Wei Wuyin, especially those gorgeous silver eyes of his, he kept being subconsciously reminded of the King of Everlore. It was hard not to see his image.

The only thing that brought him back to reality was that Wei Wuyin wasn't an alchemist with an Alchemic Soul. This meant his achievements, according to the King of Everlore, would be forever gated, never sufficient to truly step foot on the genuine path of the Alchemic Dao. At best, he could make do with exceptional talent and fortune, but it would reach its limits soon.

After all, the King of Everlore had invented and concocted a ninth-grade product—the Everlore Ascension Pill—becoming a Mortal Sovereign Alchemist at the Qi Condensation Realm. While beings here, with mystic-graded alchemical energies, were unable to become Earthly Saint Alchemists after spending twenty or thirty thousand years studying the Alchemic Dao, a tragedy of this hellish reality.

Wei Wuyin flew upwards after being called out, arriving above the disk and the crowd of nearly eight thousand Qi Condensation Realm cultivators. When he saw those selected, standing beside the thrones of those Mortal Sovereign Alchemists, he inwardly shook his head. They were all youths, not a single one over twenty. Those selected had reverential and excited expressions.

They had become Chosen Knights! Given this chance, they might experience a meteoric rise in power and status! The original course of their lives was about to change.

Not a single of these youths came from outside the Everlore Domain. So when Wei Wuyin turned his gaze back to the disk, seeing that familiar, chubby face with a silly smile, tearful eyes, and quivering lips despite holding his little boy, clearly resembling him, Wei Wuyin couldn't resist the urge to grin.

Wei Wuyin slowly floated downwards and landed amongst the crowd. As he descended, those nearby subconsciously took several steps back. He walked forward for a short while until he stood directly before an unmoving chubby man wearing an opulent outfit typically worn by mortal nobles. It's style was extremely similar to the ones worn in Wu Country, with a dazzle of the Everlore Domain's cultural touch, bringing Wei Wuyin a flood of memories once more. In his arms was a young child with big, bright, and curious eyes that embodied innocence and fearlessness.

The young boy in his arms tugged at his father's clothes, leaning in and whispered into his ear: "Daddy, daddy. He's here." The young boy pointed out the obvious, an unmissable truth, yet his father was already too emotional to react, tears slithering down his face in two clear streams.

This scene caught everyone off-guard. Did this chubby man with a turbid and weak cultivation base know Wei Wuyin? How? Why?

With a sniffling, tearful, and stuttering voice, the chubby man sniveled out: "M-m-master!"

It's been so long.

Too long.

Wei Wuyin joyfully chuckled, bringing out a fresh red apple. The apple seemed as if it was freshly picked, looking as delicious as could be. The chubby man's tearful sniffles hiccuped to an abrupt halt, and his eyes widened uncontrollably, glossing over with indescribable emotions and unforgettable, life-changing memories.

"I'm innocent! I'M INNOCENT!"

"I did nothing wrong! Nothing wrong!"

"Do you have any last words?"

"I..."

"I'm hungry."

"Hungry?! Have fun eating dirt in hell!"

"Did he really just say that? Well, he's about to get a blade full of metal, so at least he'll be full! Haha!"

"No, no. Perhaps, haha, that won't fill him up so he'll regrow a head to get a second helping! Haha!"

"Wait!"

"Haha! You're pretty funny and unlike any criminal I know."

"Uh...thanks?"

"You hungry?"

"Then, Du Ling, let's get you something else to eat."

Wei Wuyin lifted the apple and pushed it towards the little boy. Subconsciously, the young boy reached out and took the apple with both of his little hands, giving it a once-over, before biting into it without hesitation. Since it was given, it was capable of being eaten—the innocence of a child.

"Just as hungry as your father was, haha!"

Bam!

"Uh." Wei Wuyin was shocked as he was tightly hugged by the chubby man. The observers were similarly taken aback by the man's actions, even bringing his son into the hug, slightly squashing the little boy between the two.

"Master! Master!" He cried.

Wei Wuyin could only warmly smile as he hugged back. "Du Ling, it's great to see you again too."

Chapter 989: SCR Summit, Saint Cyclic Alchemic Clash Begins

A sudden emotionally-stirring scene had unfolded before them, leaving almost everyone watching with many, many questions. Besides Su Mei and Bai Lin, there was practically no one here that was aware of who the man named 'Du Ling' was nor how important he was to Wei Wuyin.

After leaving for the Myriad Monarch Sect, as Wei Wuyin began to slowly establish his power base as a Lord Alchemist, one of the first things he did was to deploy dharma guardians to the Myriad Yore Continent solely to watch over a select few individuals on the continent, and Du Ling was the single most important of those on that shortlist.

Since then, Wei Wuyin regularly received updates on Du Ling's status, ensuring that difficulties he faced would be swept clean and obstacles towards his life's ambitions were handled, including leaving a stable fortune for him and his offspring. There were countless times Wei Wuyin was tempted to bring Du Ling over to the Myriad Monarch Sect and reunite with him, but the San Clan and Alchemist Association's intentions were unclear at the time, and danger was ever-present.

Wei Wuyin forcefully convinced himself to let Du Ling have his blissful happiness with his wives, concubines, children, grandchildren, and a luxurious lifestyle with little to no danger. It was selfish of him not to give Du Ling the choice. He knew that. And every day, he agonized over it, wondering if his decision was incorrect.

Seeing Du Ling, who was still at the Qi Condensation Realm's fifth stage, the Yang Growth Phase, Wei Wuyin inwardly heaved a sigh of relief, feeling that his decision back then was perfectly fine. After staying in the Grand Cyclic Stellar Region's higher-graded environment for over seven years, he hadn't made that leap.

Cultivation was difficult; Wang Yutian once said he spent thirty years on a single stage in the Qi Condensation Realm despite reaching the Worldly Saint Phase in his lifetime. When Wei Wuyin received his last update on Du Ling, shortly before entering the War Devil Realm's Four Extreme Continent, Du Ling was at the fifth stage of the Qi Condensation Realm.

It's been over a decade since.

Wei Wuyin's robes became stained with tears. Du Ling's arm was unwilling to let the Young Master that saved his life on that fateful day go, not again. While he never believed that Wei Wuyin had died despite the news during his decade-long disappearance, he had to accept that he might not see Wei Wuyin again.

Later on, he eventually learned that Wei Wuyin wasn't just alive, but he had arrived at the Scarlet Solaris Sect and departed shortly after, taking the Captain of the Aerial Guardians, Su Mei, with him.

He didn't even say hello...or goodbye.

But from how those in power reacted, it was clear that Wei Wuyin's arrival and departure weren't on good terms. Du Ling took his family and left the sect, forging his own path. When he was transported with the trillions of the Everlore Starfield, he decisively chose Planet Everlore. There, he started astral-graded plantations where he cultivated a variety of materials that established his wealth.

He was even endorsed by the Eternal Monarch Sect, given a firm foundation to establish his business and accumulate wealth. Despite his low cultivation base and talent, he was capable of hiring powerful Astral Core Realm cultivators and outsourced a Voidship to travel here. He brought along all his sons, leaving his daughters and women behind.

Du Ling knew from the moment that Wei Wuyin became a household name, the future 'era-definer' of the starfield, that he wasn't forgotten this entire time. Considering how smooth every project was and how powerful cultivators were actively ensuring his safety, his success, and assisting his children in their cultivation, Wei Wuyin's involvement was easily noticeable.

After a long while of 'manly' crying, Du Ling finally let go of Wei Wuyin with an extremely reluctant heart. Du Ling was stunned to find Wei Wuyin holding his youngest son, Du Ping. The young boy was chewing on the apple while poking Wei Wuyin's cheeks with his little index fingers, staring intently at every depression he caused.

"Is there something on my face?" Wei Wuyin curiously asked as he hefted Du Ping into a more comfortable carrying position.

"Mn hm. Daddy was right." Du Ling retrieved his finger and blinked innocently. For a boy no older than three years old, his eyes were illuminated with intelligence.

Wei Wuyin gave Du Ling a look, smiling amusingly, "Oh? Daddy was right about what?"

"She is a little inferior," Du Ping said with a crisp nod, another adorable bite, and a neutral, accepting-of-the-truth type of expression.

"She?" Wei Wuyin was intrigued, eyeing Du Ling's stunned face that swiftly grew red with embarrassment. Was Du Ling comparing him to a woman now? The gumption! But seeing the panic in Du Ling's eyes swim as he resisted the urge to close Du Ping's mouth with a hand, not that Wei Wuyin would give him the opportunity, was beyond amusing. He asked, "Whose she?"

It should be known that besides this interaction, it was as if time had stopped for the entire Main Hall. They took center stage, and all ears were firmly placed on Wei Wuyin, Du Ling, Du Ping, and his other sons that were gathered around him. The pace and spotlight were solely dependent on them.

So when Du Ping accurately pointed at the air with his little finger, the eyes of everyone moved along with it, finding themselves staring at a woman that was widely considered the number ONE beauty of the Aeternal Sky Starfield—Empress Xiaocheng!

Wei Wuyin turned around; his eyes flickered slightly, turning back to Du Ling with barely concealed mirth in his eyes. "Inferior?"

Yet the entire crowd reacted similarly. How can a mere Qi Condensation Realm cultivator, a chubby little man, dare give such an opinion to his children no less? But as their eyes flickered from the exquisitely sculpted features of Empress Xiaocheng, enough to instigate all sorts of feelings, and Wei Wuyin, the comparison seeded into their minds, and they felt themselves...subconsciously agreeing?

While in terms of womanly charms and manly aesthetics, they both were unrivaled in their respective categories, strictly comparing pure attractive features objectively, Wei Wuyin was shockingly a little better. It was those silver eyes that pushed him as the superior, seemingly containing endless truths, boundless creation, and limitless imagination.

"Yes," Du Ling fearlessly admitted! Why wouldn't he? It was the truth!

"..." Empress Xiaocheng remained silent through it all, her enchanting eyes emanated a distinct distance and disassociation from the conversation.

Wei Wuyin could only inwardly shake his head, giving the adorable Du Ping a closer look. Despite being only three years old, his cultivation was not low, at the third stage of the Qi Condensation Realm, Elemental Birth Phase, and his still-developing eyes contained a unique force. It was strange that a child this young could peer into such a vast distance and accurately perceive Empress Xiaocheng from up high, despite being on the disk. It was easy to miss, and even Wei Wuyin's Celestial Eyes hadn't noticed it at first glance until he looked closer.

"This little one's quite talented, huh?" Those words brought the crowd back to reality, reminding that Wei Wuyin was here to select his Chosen Knight, not have a reunion. Du Ling's eyes glinted with emotion. It would be his dream for his son to receive treatment from Wei Wuyin!

However, Wei Wuyin looked at Du Ling and said unexpectedly: "You ready to shake the world, Du Ling?"

"...Me?" Du Ling pointed to himself, blinking a few times, a little confused. But seeing Wei Wuyin nod, hoisting Du Ping up and pushing him to his oldest son, Du Ming, who was barely in his twenties, born shortly after Wei Wuyin's departure, he realized that Wei Wuyin was indeed referring to him.

"Let's go," Wei Wuyin rubbed Du Ping's head with a warm smile, reaching out and grabbing Du Ling's robe. "I'm going to take your daddy for a while. Don't worry; we'll come back every month to check up on everyone. So be good and cultivate."

Du Ling felt his surroundings change as he found himself off the disk and next to an old woman sitting on a cushioned chair. This was the instructor that was chosen for Wei Wuyin! Was this for real? Was Wei Wuyin truly going to choose him for such an important competition?

Du Ling's heart shivered; he recalled all of his miserable mistakes learning to serve Wei Wuyin, even once allowing his lust to grant his enemies an opportunity to kill him. Was he really suitable for this?

San Luoyang confirmed it with his latest announcement: "All Chosen Knights have been selected, and all instructors are finalized! For the next forty-two months, the Saint Cyclic Alchemic Clash's first of three stages, the Development Stage, shall begin!"

"To ensure fairness, all products must be inspected before consumption by the Chosen Knights. Furthermore, only materials given by the Everlore Association will be allowed to be used for concoction. To request resources, simply send me a spiritual transmission, and you'll receive them within three days at the latest." San Luoyang briefly went over the rules, reminding the Mortal Sovereign Alchemists that the Everlore Association would be providing all resources for concoctions and only fresh, unaltered products could be used. There was no need to remind others not to cheat. All these Mortal Sovereign Alchemists cared about reputation a much more than their slim chance of victory, and cheating was extremely easy to discover.

The various Mortal Sovereign Alchemists manifested Sky Palaces with their mystic power, bringing their instructors and Chosen Knights with them inside. The entire sky was covered by Sky Palaces of various designs and sizes, a gorgeous sight to see.

Wei Wuyin didn't feel the need for all that. Wu Yu acted; a dome of mystic power covered the three, concealing their figures entirely. The dome wasn't very large but had enough space for typical cultivation.

The Saint Cyclic Alchemic Clash was officially starting!

Chapter 990: SCR Summit, Alchemic Direction

It began; the clash between 245 Mortal Sovereign Alchemists, all tasked with taking a nascent seed and cultivating it to their greatest potential. This clash would determine who amongst these alchemists had the most right to claim the strongest voice in deciding the next era's standards for Chosen.

With the low level of those Chosen Knights, at or beneath the Sixth Stage of the Qi Condensation Realm, the False Reality Phase, and the limited timeframe given, there was no apparent advantage between Official, Prime, or Grand-tier Mortal Sovereign Alchemists. The critical products that'll firmly set these Chosen Knights apart will be peak-quality and amongst the fifth, sixth, and seventh-grade products.

Lin Ming was silently observing this from his corner, listening to the voice in the Aegis of the Elements. "Crafted regiments tailored and ease of refinement—these will be the differences between alchemists, and strength of discernment will be crucial here."

"Discernment?" Lin Ming was a little envious of these cultivators which spurred his curiosity. He wasn't the only one. There were countless eyes gleaming with jealousy and despondency, not chosen to be a part of this era-defining clash. It wasn't wrong to say that these Chosen Knights will receive the best possible nurturing in these three years and a half.

The voice replied, "Yes. The strength of discernment will greatly affect how those selected will advance. A complete regiment of alchemical products involves pills, elixirs, and pastes. Determining the affinity of a cultivator and their body's ability to process different materials will greatly impact their speed of development and direction of cultivation."

"Speed of development? Are you saying that cultivators can refine various types of alchemical products with different efficacies?" Lin Ming was stunned. He hadn't known about this before, learning something new.

"Not only that, but a cultivator's ability to refine certain types of energies is oftentimes greater than others. You've heard of the three aspects of innate talent, right?" The voice asked.

"Three aspects of innate talent?" Lin Ming recalled the various unique 'innate' talents of cultivators. "Do you mean physique, psyche, and meridians?"

"Indeed—physical, mental, and essence. They coincide with the constitution of cells, the Sea of Consciousness, and metabolic strength towards foreign material. These three types of innate talents are absolutely essential to determining a cultivator's future potential, and everyone has these three at varying levels and qualities—regardless of race or gender. They define what we call 'talent'.

"The saying that the Alchemic Dao can reforge talent isn't incorrect at all; Alchemists are renowned for their ability to strengthen these three aspects. There are some cultivators with extremely rare physiques, meridians, and psyches. There was a young woman you met before with three special wood-attributed innate talents, all at an extremely high level." The voice explained.

Lin Ming's breadth of knowledge expanded in a few exchanges, greatly astonishing him as he realized the Alchemic Dao was likely more profound than he initially thought. Moreover, he instantly recalled that sword-manipulating Wood Cultivator by the name of Qing Qiumu at the Grand Spirit Trials. He also realized that this voice had been watching him for a long time, even before Lin Xianxue had given him the real Aegis of the Elements.

"The three main nurturing product types for alchemy are pills, paste, and elixirs, and they all come in different states, all consumed in various ways. The body responds by consuming these at different rates and efficiency based on what they target and how they're administered. This is essential knowledge that all alchemists must fully understand before attempting to develop Alchemic Knights.

"The method of selection greatly disadvantages every alchemist here, and by doing so, it evens the playing field." The voice displayed a high level of knowledge regarding the Alchemic Dao and Alchemic Knights. "After discerning the level of these three talents, the first move of these alchemists will involve either choosing to neglect those weaknesses and focus solely on their innately born strengths, or..."

"Or?" Lin Ming found himself heavily invested.

"Or, they will focus on strengthening the weaker aspects of talent to better lay a foundation for the future. This will inevitably consume a lot of time and resources, delaying an Alchemic Knight's cultivation base and comprehension of cultivation due to their refinement efforts. Thus, ease of refinement will be absolutely essential here, especially for those who decide on the foundation path." The voice simply stated that the alchemists would either work with what's there or reforge the innate talents of these Chosen Knights and then proceed to lay the strongest foundation, delaying progression on refinements.

"So the best option is to focus on innate strengths and cultivation base rather than layering a better foundation?" Lin Ming asked. Considering the time-sensitive nature of the clash, including the time needed to develop one's combat prowess, with the limited time given for the Saint Cyclic Alchemic Clash, it was obvious that strengthening one's innate talents and foundations was significantly less important than overall cultivation level and comprehension of arts and spells.

"..." The voice remained oddly silent.

Lin Ming had grasped this detail. Given the limited timeframe, wasn't it better to go with the first choice? Yet the abrupt silence from the voice left him feeling unsure.

"So what would you have me do? I'm down for anything, as long as it's not running. These bones of mine just aren't as spry as they once were." Luo Ning rose from her seat with a readied expression. She decided to trust Wei Wuyin. Why? It was better to grasp at the slightest chance of reaching a higher stage in the Alchemic Dao than to settle in obscurity, dying after a pathetic existence defined by failure and rejection.

Also, why the hell not? The light at the end of the tunnel didn't seem so appealing to her unless her name was etched on the surface of the walls for others to see in the future.

Du Ling, however, was a little nervous and jittery. He wasn't a fighter or a talented cultivator by any stretch of the imagination. It was more reasonable to say that his best qualities befitted a steward or butler, fiercely loyal and capable of handling minor tasks decently well. He didn't even expect that his Master would give him this opportunity instead of one of his vastly more talented children because of their relationship.

While Du Ming, his oldest son, was unqualified to participate due to his cultivation level, already at the Eighth Stage of the Qi Condensation Realm, Du Ping, his youngest, had the highest potential and innate talent out of all his children. He simply felt that he was out of his depth, only resisting the urge to step down merely out of wholehearted trust for Wei Wuyin.

Wei Wuyin held a contemplative expression, ruminating over various details concerning this newly structured clash and its nuances. He had three goals here:

- 1) Maintaining the secrecy of his Alchemic Soul; he realized that revealing this, including his absurd cultivation strength early, would have an unimaginable unpredictable effect on the stellar region. It was best to keep this a hidden trump card that greatly benefited him, causing his enemies to underestimate his potential and alchemical abilities.

- 2) Experiment with the mental properties of Alchemic Eden Force; when Wei Wuyin was young, he had tested various mental transferences of knowledge

to Su Mei, but he had since avoided using it due to his own lacking knowledge and cultivation base. Additionally, he didn't know the limits or disadvantages of using this method. It was pointless to instill his knowledge when it was severely lacking or reveal his abilities to others without establishing his power base first.

3) Nurture Du Ling to claim victory in the clash; the least important yet most challenging among the three goals he had. Why? Because he wasn't going to do so himself, but would have Luo Ning act as his proxy. He didn't know if she'll able to bring Du Ling to the level where he can refine a Neo-Dawn Eclipse Pill.

After a long while, facing the focused stares of these two vital pieces of his future plans, Wei Wuyin finally said: "I'll have you both shake the entire world."

"Without a proper instructor, how will this... Chosen Knight of yours be able to rival others?" Luo Ning remained skeptical. She was confident that she could use her skills to nurture Du Ling into having an exceptional cultivation foundation, but a Chosen wasn't defined just by their cultivation foundation but by comprehensive combat strength as well. She had no combat ability to speak of if one excluded talismans and pellets, so what could she possibly teach him?

"We have no need for a proper instructor. I, Wei Wuyin, will teach Du Ling." Wei Wuyin declared, eliciting a spark of surprise within the aged eyes of Luo Ning. Du Ling was transfixed but also strangely relieved. Since young, Wei Wuyin has always been equal parts outstanding and hard working. If or when he sets his mind to something, very rarely will he ever fail in the task.

"Alchemic Sovereign Wei, you must be joking. You've yet to reach the peak of your realm, and every Mystic Star instructor here, failures or not, have a higher understanding of the lesser realms. You're still grasping insights," Luo Ning pointed out. The crucial reason why cultivation was profoundly difficult was the unseen chasm of understanding that stifled the minds of those in that realm of cultivation.

While Wei Wuyin was at the Astral Core Realm, capable of instilling the profoundness of the Qi Condensation Realm upon Du Ling in its entirety, when it came to the application of the powers within the Mortal Dao, namely the first three realms of cultivation: The Foundation Establishment, Qi Condensation, and Astral Core Realms, it was those at the Mystic Ascendant Realm that had a much higher comprehension.

These instructors had reached their perceived 'ends' and still possessed Astral Souls, but as such, their invented arts, spells, and various cultivation methods were capable of being used by mortals, yet they've touched upon the borders of the Mystic Dao. It wasn't a lie to say what they could teach would exceed whatever Wei Wuyin could impart by ten times over. Wei Wuyin wouldn't argue the validity of that statement, knowing that Luo Ning certainly had a higher understanding of using of mortal-graded energies and forces in a generalized sense than himself.

However, Wei Wuyin was unfazed. He turned to Du Ling and asked: "What path do you wish to cultivate?" He walked over, reached out his right hand, and directed Du Ling's focus to his open palm.

Woosh! Woosh! Woosh!

Several sounds rang out as nine different spheres the size of children's marbles manifested, circulating above his palm in an eye-catching orbit. They reflected the nine elements: Earth, Water, Wind, Fire, Metal, Lightning, Wood, Magma, and Ice. They glowed enchantingly as Wei Wuyin continued, "The Elemental Path?"

He lifted his left hand.

Shiing!

A sharp light was conjured at the center of his palm, twisting and spiraling with an indomitable edge threatening to cut the world. It settled into the images of a sword, a saber, a spear, an axe, and other weapons of war, totaling over twenty different bladed weapons. They were tainted by slaughter, battle, and blood.

"The War Path?"

Luo Ning's expression drastically changed as surprise pounded her mind. Du Ling's eyes were transfixed on Wei Wuyin's two hands, his left eye reflecting the image of breathtakingly animated elemental spheres and his right eye reflecting the scenes of endless war, battle, and weapons.

Then, from Wei Wuyin's chest, a thunderously dull roar rang out. The sound sent a sweeping wave of physical pressure that caused Luo Ning's breathing to cease and Du Ling's hands to tremble uncontrollably. It carried the essence

of physical might originating from bone, blood, and flesh—the energies inherent in every cell in one's body.

"The Martial Path? Or..." Wei Wuyin pointed. He wasn't done, about to demonstrate another path, when Du Ling's mouth moved, releasing a hoarse voice, his eyes seemingly in a trance.

"Magma."

A single word, yet it originated from his innermost mind and soul. With a bright smile, Wei Wuyin abruptly clapped his hands, and Du Ling stumbled out of his stupor, confusion flashing in his eyes incessantly.

"Perfect." Wei Wuyin proudly exclaimed, "We have direction. And with direction, we have a goal." Since Du Ling's affinity towards cultivation was elemental, then the most difficult goal to achieve had just become ten times easier.