

Thief 61

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Chapter 61: Cultivation Arts

The inner region of the moon forest was extremely dangerous for any Qi Gates realm cultivators to travel alone. Even some groups can't cross this region safely if they don't have any Qi Foundation Building realm experts protecting them.

There was a waterfall in the boundary between the inner and outer regions of the moon forest.

Currently, a tall figure was bare-chested sitting on a stone under the waterfall cross-legged, and his eyes were closed. He was resembling a sculpture. It seems like he didn't feel any pressure from the heavily falling water. This bare-chested figure was obviously Ace.

It has been three months after Ace has sealed Eva.

Now he has turned thirteen years old and he has somewhat lost his childish look. He looked more matured and handsome especially his pale skin and hollow cheeks with a perfect jawline. With his dark blue eyes in the mix that gives him a lady-killer look.

He was taller than before nearly six feet tall, and his weak skinny body has long become tone. One could even see every muscle on his body clearly, it was as if some divine artist has carved those muscles with extreme care. However, those tone muscles were in no way delicate, on the contrary, they were filled with explosive power like an ancient beast.

Ace open his closed eyelids as he murmured, "Still not enough to build my foundation."

For three months he has been fighting with all the demonic beasts that came in his way and were trying to figure out the perfect time to break through into Heavenly Foundation Building Realm. He even fights with five early Qi foundation building realm demonic beasts but no matter how much he kills, he still has the same feeling as three months before.

Now Ace was trying different methods that were written in all the cultivation-related books that he found in Dulce's storage ring.

One thing that was worth noticing is that his knowledge has grown by leaps and bounds. Whether it was about low-level lands below royal-level or the cultivation realms up to Qi River Core realm, he has all the knowledge that only royalty of a top ten kingdom would possess.

It was all because of Dulce's habit of carrying these informative books in her storage ring. She was extremely talented and she likes to be well informed in any aspect. But now from her habit Ace has profited quite well and he was not ignorant anymore.

"Well if meditation is not enough should I try life and death battle again?" Mutter Ace seriously.

He was doing all this because he has read in one of the books that when a cultivator wasn't ready or his Qi Gates Realm was still shallow he would face situations like Ace. They called it a 'Realm Wall'.

One has to break this 'realm wall' to steps into the next realm and the more powerful one's foundation the more powerful the realm wall be. And clearly Ace has opened nine Heavenly Gates, so his realm wall was not something that any other cultivator has ever imagine before.

If Ace wanted he can still enter the Heavenly Foundation Building realm with EXP easily because his soul was equal to a Qi foundation realm cultivator this 'realm wall' doesn't exist for him at all.

But he didn't dare to do this because he can't put his finger on it but he knew if he enters this realm before he satisfied some kind of condition he would die. This feeling was coming from the Dark Void and he didn't dare to underestimate this Dark Void because it was a part of his body and all his meridians were connected with it.

After three months he was some idea about this Dark Void it was like a second heart but it didn't pump blood but the HD-Qi in his whole-body meridians and with this Dark Void he can control his HD-Qi like never before.

Simply put this 'Dark Void' was like the main heart of his martial cultivation, and Ace has a strange gut feeling that this void has more function than just converting Heavenly Qi in HD-Qi and absorbs other Qi to convert into his own. It was a mystery that he has to solve on his own.

The life and death method was extremely simple and very effective, one has to continuously put one's life in danger, and if the chance comes one could get his chance to break the realm wall in a life and death situation.

Ace was trying this method for three months but he was strong enough to overwhelm any early Qi Foundation demonic beast so he didn't get what he wanted.

Now he was trying mediation and wanted to enlighten himself like the article that was written in a famous book but it was also a lost cause.

So, he was quite annoyed about this situation and wanted to try that life and death method again. It was more effective than this because with this at least his skills kept improving.

Especially his Dual Shadow Sword technique he could feel that he was closer to breaking into the second realm.

He even creates a sword art 'Dual Swords Mirage' after combining all the sword skills that he has collected till now.

Cultivation arts were like skills they have the same levels as skills. But the difference between them was an 'Art' has more than a single move in it and a skill only has a single move. That's why to make it easy for all cultivators to understand a name 'Cultivation Art' was founded. As for who founded it no one knows as long as the cultivation exists 'Cultivation Arts' exist as well.

Besides, Ace possessed a cultivation art from the start and that was Treasure Opening Hands, which has five different variations!

Ace has a top technique related to swords but until now he didn't have any skills related to it so when he starts to read all those skills books he finds out that he can't learn them because of his special Qi. But he soon found out that he can use those stances and move in his own way.

After some difficulties and pondering over his life and death experiences, he creates 'Dual Swords Mirage Art'.

He named it because it was made on the foundation of a warrior-level skill 'Butterfly Mirage Blades' that he found in Dulce's ring. This was the same skill that she used in their fight against him in the start.

Ace was quite impressed by it at that time so he decided to try breaking this sword skill and build a new one with all the supplementary skills that he possessed. To his surprised, he thought that it will be an impossible task to create something like an art, but with his understanding of Dual Shadow Swords, he can easily understand these 'basic swords skills' like they were nothing.

Ace finally understand just how profound this sword technique truly was, with the only understanding of the first realm of this technique he has created a sword art equal to a Low Master Grade Skill, that was only be found in an empire.

The moment he creates this art his understanding of the dual shadow swords reached a new level and he finally found a way to cultivate this technique faster. That was to absorb more knowledge of swords technique or skills and apply that knowledge and used it with dual shadow swords.

If anyone knows that he has created a sword art not a skill then the whole cultivation world would be frightened silly by it because Ace is not even in the Qi foundation realm and he has already achieved a feat like this.

One has to know that all those skills and especially arts are made after many years of hard work and only geniuses among geniuses can create their own skills and arts. And here a thirteen years old has created a sword art in three months even those ancient sects would be willing to fight to the death with each other just to get Ace into their sects.

But alas no one knows and Ace would never reveal his potential or show his prowess carelessly after what has happened.

Ace stands upon the stone and with a high jump, he leaps in the air before landing on dry ground, after dressing up in casual black robes.

His eyes were shining like stars as he watches the inner region of the moon forest. He was hopeful of finding a way to break through there.

"I still have to complete my mission so I can't waste much time in here, Just that it's a real pity that I can't go into the core region of the forest with the time I have left. Maybe I might've found some rare opportunity there. Well, no worries like they say 'If fate is not agreeing what would a mortal do?', Heh" Ace smiled broadly all his worries vanished in thin air.

He was ready for the final junction of his journey, the inner region of the moon forest.

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Chapter 62: Core Region Of Moon Forest

Inside the inner region of the moon forest.

Ace was moving at a fast speed. It has been six months since he left the red mountain city and starts his journey towards New-Moon City the number one city of the land of cities.

He was still six or seven months away from reaching New-Moon City.

In his whole six months of journey, he improved by leaps and bounds. He fights with all kinds of demonic beasts and he was almost invincible here.

Ace felt freedom in this wildness because here he didn't have to guard against anyone, there are no schemes or malice here. He can do anything without worrying about the consequences. Most importantly he can cultivate and improve his skills at an astronomical rate.

He was at the Nine Gate of Qi Gates realm because he still couldn't find the 'special condition' that he needs to fulfill to enter the Qi Foundation Building realm. And he was quite depressed about it.

'cii cii'

Ace heard some movement in front but he didn't slow down at all. With a thought, Black Blade Swords Set appeared in his hands. In his right hand appeared a long black sword and in his left hand appeared a short black sword.

'First move of the 'Dual Swords Mirage Art' 'Hundred Shadows Mirage!' The moment Ace thought about this move HD-Qi starts to pour into both swords and from both of those blades, HD-Qi began to rise like smoke.

Ace both hands move in front of his chest and both swords connected in '/' shape. The HD-Qi starts to rise the moment both swords connected and Ace didn't delay either. He slashed both swords at the same time and suddenly a single '/' slash turn into a hundred '/' slashes and directly landed on the ground in front. Dirt started to raised because of this powerful attack.

This was the first move of his self-created Dual Swords Mirage Art hundred shadow mirage. Ace has designed this art especially for his dual swords and it was also quite compatible with his weapon technique Dual Shadow Swords.

On the ground when the dust settles there was the corpse of a big lizard demonic beast its whole frame has changed and it was already cut into many pieces because of his attack. It was hard to tell just what kind of species it was when it was alive. Just by the damage that Ace's attack has caused one could tell his sword art was not ordinary at all.

"[You have killed an Early Stage Qi Foundation Building Realm Demonic Beast. You have earned 500 EXP.]"

[EXP: 45,100/50.000]

'sigh'

Ace sighs deeply as he saw the system notification. Even that early-stage Qi foundation realm demonic beast was killed in one move.

That was the reason Ace was frustrated the most because he can't find any challengers at all now and because of this he can't do this life and death method as well.

He nearly killed almost fifty early-stage qi foundation and hundreds of peak Qi Gates realm demonic beasts but they were all easily killed. He didn't encounter any mid-level demonic beast in the past three months.

Once he thought that collecting the fifty thousand EXP without pills or medicinal herbs would be impossible but after coming here he found out that it was not the case at all. This forest was filled with EX... 'ahem' demonic beasts.

Now, just by looking at his EXP, he was wondering if he should stop hunting these demonic beasts because if his EXP reached the required EXP amount he would have to build his foundation at that time. But he didn't want this to happen at least not until he fulfilled the 'condition'.

He even tries asking the system about it but he gets nothing from it either.

"Should I go towards the core region?" Ace muttered under his breath.

To complete his mission, he got five years and he still got more than four years left. So, Ace beginning to have second thoughts.

After seeing the rough map of the moon forest, he guessed that if he goes directly towards the new moon city he will reach it in six months at his speed but if he goes towards the core region of the moon forest the whole trip would take approximately two years in his estimate.

Because the core region of the moon forest was not drawn on the map and only information of it was available and strangely no one has gone there for almost fifty years.

Kingdoms didn't pay much attention to this place and here no one was strong enough to dive deeper into the moon forest especially in the core region. It is said that there were only mid-stage or even peak level qi foundation realm demonic beasts exist there, but it was not a complete truth. Because for decades no one has ever returned alive from there no even a peak level qi foundation realm cultivator.

That's why Ace was still in a dilemma. 'To go or not go.'

As for returning in two years, it was the time that he has estimated after seeing an old map of the moon forest.

After pondering on it for some time determination flashed past Ace's eyes and he changes his direction towards the north of the moon forest. He was going straight towards the core region of the forest and the most dangerous part of the forest.

Ace made his decision based on his skills and needs. His skills were all at the perfection stage except his true and false eyes.

That skill was just too profound and he still didn't manage to take it to perfection.

Dual shadow swords technique was also on the verge of breakthrough it was just that something was missing he was stuck in it as well.

In Ace's view this forest was much safer than any city out there because he can always run without worrying about anything, but in those cities he life was even more in danger.

Ace needed power more than anything because he needed to protect himself no matter what. The reason for this was extremely simple because now Eva's life was tied with his and he can't afford to lose her and only by becoming powerful he can ensure it. That's why he decided to go into the core region to find a way for a breakthrough.

Four months later.

Ace was currently standing on a tree and looking at the thick white mist that was surrounding the depth of moon forest. This mist was like a line between the inner and core regions of the moon forest.

In four months, he didn't kill any more demonic beasts because he didn't want to take the risk and only practice his cultivation and skills. But his training didn't go in vain just a week ago he finally manages to Perfected all the five basic skills that he got from the system when he first started his cultivation journey.

Ace was very excited at that time.

However, all his excitement dies down after reaching here because that thick white mist was giving him chills in the spine.

Ace's soul cultivation was not for just show and if he was getting warning by his sharp soul sense that's mean this place is extremely dangerous.

But Ace didn't back down and with extreme caution, he active his stealth and merge with surrounding, now no one can detect him even in light.

Ace carefully utilizes his silent steps and without making any sounds he enters the white mist.

The more Ace goes deeper inside the mist the more his soul sense tingles in alarm. He even active his Heavenly Sense because with it he can 'see' around thirty meters clearly even in this thick mist. So, if something did come that thing can never sneak upon him.

Beads of sweat started to form on his forehead because he was using his Heavenly Soul Qi together with his HD-Qi and two skills and it was too exhausted on him even with his Nine Darkness Gates opened.

After fifteen minutes of walking, he finally saw the white mist started to become thin, and finally, he saw the end of the mist.

Ace carefully exited the white mist and become stunned after what he saw on exiting.

In front of him were tall towering grey trees forest, they were thousands of them and all of them were more than a hundred meters tall and tens of meters thick and there was not a single leaf on those grey trees.

The strangest thing was it was dark in here there was no sign of light like the inner region.

If not for Ace's excellent night vision that he gets after he opened four hidden gates of darkness he would be blind right now.

'This place is creepy.' That was the thought that comes to his mind seeing the core region of the moon forest.

Ace was on high alert after entering this place. He never felt this kind of sensation before that this place was giving him. It was cold and sinister at the same time.

He thinks of returning first but abruptly halted in his steps because he suddenly felt the dark void react to something in that grey tree's forest!

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Chapter 63: Grey Tree

Ace didn't dare to believe what he just felt so he hurriedly circulate his HD-Qi with the help of Dark Void to confirm what had just happened.

But to his disappointment, the Dark Void was tranquil and he didn't have any kind of strange feeling like before. It was like that feeling was just an illusion.

However, Ace's senses were never wrong before especially after he formed the Yellow Soul Core of the black wind soul. Therefore, the feeling he felt before was definitely real. But the question was just what happened and why isn't the Dark Void reacting anymore?

Ace finally made up his mind as he saw that gloomy grey trees forest. He's going for hook or crook this time.

Since there weren't any leaves on those grey trees the gaps between them seem like dark roads or mazes. No one knows where these roads lead to because there was not a single record about this kind of tree in the books that Ace possessed. But Ace was about to find out soon.

He rests for a while because using Soul Qi is more taxing than using HD-Qi because his body was still at the Heavenly Gates realm while his soul was equal to a Qi foundation realm. His body took quite a toll because of soul qi.

After resting for two hours he was finally at his peak state and ready for any danger that he would encounter in that forest.

This time Ace didn't use his heavenly sense because if he used it in the start he would be exhausted to face any danger. He was going to depend on his innate soul sense.

This core region of the moon forest was completely dark and because of the dark Ace's stealth here was very potent.

By only using silent steps and stealth he enters the forest of grey trees. He was extremely careful and was making sure not to touch those trees accidentally. He was only moving between them with extreme caution.

As he goes deeper and deeper the gloomy feeling begun to become stronger. If not for the Dark Void that was absorbing Heavenly Qi even in this kind of environment and providing him HD-Qi he would be long run out of Qi.

Ace was feeling cold all over his body as he goes deeper into the forest and couldn't help but think if there was some kind of ice lake here. But after walking for an hour he didn't find anything but these trees around him.

He even stops using his skills because he was only wasting his Qi and he didn't find any tangible danger here only his soul sense was giving him warnings continuously.

Another hour past but he was still between these trees and they were just no end to them. Suddenly Ace saw a strange marking on the dirt like an arrow and was shocked by it because this marking was left behind by him so he could come back if he gets lost.

However, now seeing that marking in front of him he guesses that he was already lost in this maze of grey trees. These damn trees were so weird that he can't even tell what was different between these trees because they all seem the same. It was like he was in a huge illusion maze.

Ace wasn't worried about his ration though, since he has killed so many demonic beasts and with huge thief's space and all those storage rings, he has stored plenty of meat to sustain himself for two to three years if he eats two times a day as for water he has found a small bottle in Dulce's storage ring that can only store tons of water.

He was quite astonished by this storage bottle and couldn't help but marvel at the strange things that he was coming in contact with because he has become a thief. Because if he wanted this kind of treasures he has to be a rich person and most importantly he has to have connections in empires to get these kinds of treasures.

This was the biggest advantage of being a thief you just have to steal from a rich prince or princess of any big power and you'll get everything you need for survival in this world of cultivation.

Presently, It has been a week since Ace was stuck in this dark maze of trees. He can't find a way forward and he can't find a way backward either.

Ace didn't lose his calmness even in this situation and didn't panic. He tries different methods like using his true and false eyes, try cutting those trees...

But his basic skills were ineffective here and when he tries cutting those grey trees he found out the instant he touched them they turned into grey ashes and scatter in wind. It was like they were made of ashes.

Ace even becomes numb to that gloomy feeling and cold. He finally understands why didn't anyone has ever come back from this place in years it was mostly because of this tree maze.

Since nothing was working he was simply sat there and watch those trees quietly.

'Is this some kind of formation like Dulcie's?' He couldn't help but think like this because he was trap here for a week and no matter what he tries he can't find a way out.

It was like a formation in his mind because he has read Dulce's books and there was a single book on formation as well. It didn't tell you how to make it, but it gave the basic introduction of what a formation was capable of and some legendary formations can even create illusions like reality and can trap someone for their lifetime.

Ace smile bitterly as he shook his head. How can someone create a formation of this magnitude in this place it was just in his head.

Since he was already trapped here he decided to stay calm and something might come up like that feeling that he once had with his dark void. But now even he began to think that it was an illusion shown by his mind to lessen his desperation of gaining power.

Ace takes out a black palm-sized pouch from his thief's space. This was the same pouch that Alina has left for him with ten ruby coins in it on her departure.

He always carries this pouch with him and sometimes takes it out and remembered that little beauty nostalgically.

Ace saw the black pouch and smiled, "I wonder what Lil Sis is doing right now. Maybe she's still a brat that likes to play pranks on me a lot, she would be doing the same with her parents now right?" Ace murmured to himself.

Ace store the black pouch inside his thief's space and take out a compass. It was golden colored and there was only a single point on it that was currently spinning on the glass-like metal of the compass.

"Even this thing didn't work, so much for the top treasure of Kelby family." Snorted Ace.

This was the exact compass that Rylan wants to find him with.

Ace finds out about it in a record book of the Kelby family that he steals with all these treasures since he has more free time in his hands.

Considering nothing was working he decided to practice cultivation again.

Before that he practices his skills one by one, it has become his habit.

Finally, in the end, Ace raised his finger, yellow threads begin to gush out from his finger like water in the fountain they were a total of ten threads these threads were soul threads.

Ace didn't practice this skill much since it has no use in wildness but today he wanted to see just how many threads can he make after his breakthrough.

Ace nodded in satisfaction and was about to retract them.

"Hmm?" When he notices something extremely unusual.

Normally these soul threads were made from soul Qi and aren't corporeal. They exist between reality and space. So, without Ace control, they were lifeless and the wind can't blow them, but strangely right now they were wavering like normal threads in the presence of wind.

Moreover, they all were flickering in the same direction not randomly!

Ace was astonished by this sudden development, He never would've dreamed that there was something that can move his soul threads without his will.

It was like he detects a bright light in dark and he quickly begins to follow the direction that these soul threads were flickering towards.

As he followed soul threads direction he found that the grey trees were growing in numbers like they were forming a wall to prevent him from going in that specific direction.

But Ace was determined to get out of here. If he stayed and remain cautious he would be trapped here forever and die eventually. He will fight his way out here no matter what.

Since these trees were only paper tigers Ace simply ignore them and pass through them as they turn into ashes right after. Finally, after walking for twenty minutes the number of these annoying trees started to decrease.

In the end, Ace finally crosses that maze and comes into a huge clear field.

He saw in the center of the field was a grey tree but they were thousands of leaves on it and they were glowing in white color and thousands of white glowing strings were attached to those glowing leaves.

Each leaf has a single white string attached with it and those strings scatter through the entire sky like a net, dyed the dark sky with a white glow.

That grey tree was like some central point of a spider nest with thousands of webs attached to it.

It was a shocking yet magnificent spectacle.

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Chapter 64: Elemental Orbs

Ace never would've imagined that the end of the tree maze was something this shocking. It was like he was witnessing some kind of a legend in reality because he was only from low-level lands and didn't have much knowledge of these kinds of wonders of the cultivation world.

Ace didn't dare to act recklessly anymore because he could tell that this grey tree was not like those 'ash tress'. It was clearly real.

He enters in stealth the moment he sees that huge tree and with extreme caution moves in the open field around the tree.

Since he didn't know what kind of being that tree is he would not act rashly. First, he would scout the area around it to see if there was any kind of trap or dangerous beast here.

After an hour, Ace has scouted the whole field and didn't find anything abnormal only that grey tree was the abnormality here.

However, he did notice something and that was after every ten minutes that huge labyrinth of those white strings glows brighter for an instant. It was like those white threads were alive and beating in a strange rhythm like a heart.

Slowly but surely the interval between those threads was getting faster and faster.

'Something is not right here!' Deemed Ace gravely. He has activated stealth to the fullest and didn't dare to move from his hiding spot anymore.

Ace was feeling that his soul sense was giving him a grave warning like never before. If he made even a little bit of mistake he would die here without a doubt.

Suddenly, the huge web of glowing strings started to dim and the glow in them started to fade until it vanished completely.

'Crak, crak, crrrrrk'

Cracks began to form in the grey tree surface like an eggshell. As if something was moving inside the wide tree and wanted to burst out.

'thhhllll'

All of sudden, a grey hand appeared from the cracks while it made a huge sound.

'ccrrllkkkk'

Finally, as if the tree surface can't hold the thing inside anymore it tore open the tree and a huge twenty-meter wet body emerged from inside.

Half of its body was humanoid; its upper half of the body was like any human and it was completely grey. But on its head were a single horn and its face has no nose or mouth but only eyes there were more than twenty beastly eyes on its face.

It has only two shoulders but there were four hands attached to its forearms. Its upper body was like any human, but there were four legs and a sharp spear-like tail from its torso. From its whole body was dripping some kind of white liquid substance like it has bathed into it not long ago.

Ace was currently hiding in the open field with his stealth and saw that hideous-looking creature creep out from the tree just like it has given birth to something.

He became horrified because that thing was giving him the chills like never before and the pressure that coming from its body made even him who was almost five hundred meters away from it hard to breathe.

Ace wanted to escape the moment he saw that thing and run as far away from it as he could. But his soul sense was warning him that if he moves even a muscle that creature would find him that instant.

Even he can run, he simply can't since he didn't know the way out of this damn place. If not for his soul threads he wouldn't be able to find his way here, to begin with.

'The only being that can detect me while I was still in the stealth has to be in Qi River realm!' Ace becomes ashen and cold sweat begins to flow on the side of his face the moment this thought surfaced in his mind.

Because even if he was as powerful as a middle stage qi foundation realm expert and with his perfected skills he can even compete against high stage qi foundation realm experts and escape with his life if things go south.

But in front of the Qi River realm, he was nothing but a child.

If that creature was really a Qi River-level demonic beast or something else, he was doomed!

That thing can easily toy with him and he can do nothing to protect himself.

If not for his stealth being boosted by the dark atmosphere, that creature would be able to spot him the moment it appeared.

Ace was still thinking about a way to escape this place when he felt the same kind of agitated feeling from his Dark Void when he enters this place!

Ace was alarmed because he felt that the Dark Void was reacting to something in that torn open grey tree.

For the first time, Ace finally shifted his gaze from the creature to the tree. He saw there was a white substance flowing from the open exterior of the tree. However, inside the empty tree space, there was a hovering white palm-sized orb.

The orb was still, and peaceful floating like there were nothing that can faze it.

Ace finally understand to whom the Dark Void was reacting, that white orb was the culprit!

Even his HD-Qi begun to spike the moment Ace laid his eyes on that floating orb.

'Just what is that thing? Even the feeling that I was getting of being stuck in the Qi Gates Realm has vanished for some reason because of that orb.' He thought in astonishment.

This was the most shocking thing that Ace found after coming to this place. Because he could feel from the depth of his soul that the moment he gets that orb is the moment he will enter the Foundation Building Realm!

'But why this thing is so important to build a foundation and without it, I'll die?' Ace even forgets about that creature after finding out about the way to enter the higher realm.

He was very perplexed right now because of all the shock he gets from this discovery when system sweet yet cold voice range in his mind,

"[System has detected [Nature's Light Elemental Orb] in the area around the host!]

[All the conditions have been completed. The information of hidden part of the [Heaven Stealer Technique Vol .1 Heavenly Crystal Body] has been revealed.]

[Hidden Part: Heavenly Crystal Body Technique method of breakthrough into higher realm required one who cultivates the technique to find, [Eight Elemental Orbs of Nature]. Those nature's elemental orbs are orb of [Fire, Water, Earth, Wind, Metal, Lightning, Light, Darkness]]

[How to use Elemental Orbs: When one finds any elemental orb, one has to consume them at the moment of breakthrough. One can consume elemental orbs at any random sequel. But remember this, one can only consume the orb of darkness at the very end of the Crystal Body technique final realm not before.]

[Elemental Orb: Formed in the extreme specific element environment. Only the orbs of light and darkness formed in the opposite element environments because the light is born in darkness and darkness exist within the light.]

[Warning: The place where these elemental orbs formed are filled with dangerous traps of nature because these orbs are formed after hundreds of thousands of years and possessed vague intelligence. The moment they sense sudden changed in their specific element environments or something break all the traps of nature, they will release their guardians the moment they sense danger.]

[Orb Guardians: They were born with the elemental orbs from the beginning of their birth. The older the elemental orbs are the more powerful their natural-born guardians will be. Every elemental orb has a different kind of guardian. The orb guardians have the same element as the elemental orb.]

[Note: Only a single elemental orb exists at a time and if someone else already has one then the next elemental orb will only form after the existing one was used or destroyed.]

Ace was flabbergasted by this long information and become extremely shocked. He nearly forgets to keep his calm and his skill active.

Ace was feeling extreme anger and disappointment; they were not towards the system that didn't give him this information before but he felt them for himself.

Because he first thinks that he can enter the upper realms with just enough EXP and after gaining insights into that realm. With this, he can become strong extremely quickly.

However. Reality struck him hard and now he found that it was not the entire case and easy as he thinks. Because even after having the EXP and insight almost for a whole year he didn't dare to enter the upper realm.

He was finding it hard to believe first but every time he wanted to do it and made up his mind, his soul would always begin to shake in fear and he was finally sure after that it was a death sentence to him if he does not complete a 'special condition'.

Now he finds out the exact 'special condition' he felt like he has fallen from the high sky straight into the lowest abyss!

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Chapter 65: Element Qi

'The way to power is never easy. Huh.' Ace finally calm himself because it was not the time to blame himself for his ignorance.

"System didn't you say before that I was supposed to get Dark Void in heavenly punishment? Didn't that mean I was able to breakthrough into the Foundation Building realm without even opening hidden gates? Then where did these elemental orbs came from?" Transmitted Ace.

Now he was having doubts about the system as well.

No matter how much ignorant Ace was, he was by no means an idiot. Things were not going on the same way that he has imagined, most of the part was his fault but there were still things that he had no control over like the system.

Ace finally starts to pick up loopholes in the system's previous explanation.

"[System did say that before the host was deemed to get the Dark Void when he faced the heavenly turbulence. But the host has surpassed the system's expectation and get the Dark Void and open the hidden gates of darkness on his own.]

[If the host gets the Dark Void between heavenly punishment like the system has predicted then you were supposed to collect five elemental orbs of [Fire, Wind, Water, Earth, Darkness] after entering the

Heavenly River Realm and open the normal or half-hidden part of the heavenly crystal body. With that host would've been able to form a Heavenly Crystal Body.]

[However, the host was able to get the Dark Void before he reached Foundation Building Realm and open the true hidden part of Heavenly Crystal Body. Now, the Host has to collect eight elemental orbs at every realm because of your outstanding performance. With eight elemental orbs host can now form a Perfect Heavenly Crystal Body.]"

System's cold voice buzzed in his mind.

Ace was speechless first and smiled bitterly. He was flattered after hearing the system calling him outstanding, but it didn't lift his sour mood because this sudden achievement was as much of a calamity as a blessing. Before he was supposed to collect five elemental orbs but now he needed eight how can he not be depressed?

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'Well with danger comes benefits as well. I wonder what is different in perfect and imperfect Crystal Body.' Ace wonder as his fighting spirit raised after thinking about the benefits he will get.

Ace has a sigh of relief. His doubts towards the system vanished and he finally understands the system has always given him true information it was just that he was not sharp enough to connect the dots on his own. But what can he do system is not something he can understand or predict that easily.

Ace was now, even more, determined to become powerful and complete this 'Perfect Heavenly Crystal Body'.

So, what if he had to found three more elemental orbs, and so what if he has to be stuck in a realm because of this? He will become strong enough to search any place in this world and he will steal these elemental orbs one way or another. This was his new resolved and resolution.

Ace's mental fortitude has raised another level after going through all this ordeal.

All the big revel and talk with the system in mind only take ten seconds in the real world.

Ace was calm and collective like never before.

He saw that guardian was still standing at its spot with its many eyes were still closed as if it was waiting for something.

Suddenly, the floating orb of light that was still just a moment ago starts to spin slowly while emitting a white mist, and that open gape in that grey tree begun to close as if it was healing.

Ace nearly cursed out loud after seeing this, 'I should've expected this much from it or it won't be worthy of being the treasure that was so important to complete heavenly crystal body.'

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He reflected in frustration, 'How can a treasure that was so important for heaven stealer technique this easy obtain?'

He can do nothing to watch this helplessly since that guardian was standing there like a statue, if he even moves a bit that Qi River realm guardian would instantly be able to lock on to his position.

This is the true terror of Qi River realm experts they can easily sense the flection of Qi in the atmosphere fifty meters around them. It's like a degraded version of Ace's soul sense. It was not easy to sneak up on an expert of the Qi River realm.

Ace was five hundred meters away from the guardian but he was still in Qi Gates's realm the disturbance he made in Qi by using his skills was like a bell ring in absolute silence. That's why he was helpless and only used his stealth since it was a hiding skill it didn't make any disturbance in Qi around the atmosphere.

The gape of the tree was quite big since the guardian was almost thirty meters tall but it was still filling at fast face it would be completely closed in a single minute. After that, the Elemental Orb will be extremely hard to get.

Ace was racking his brain for a solution to his problem. If he waits here and lets that orb to raised its 'shield' then that guardian would be free to search for him and at that time he would be in big trouble. He simply can't beat that thing even if he tries everything he had.

'Hmm? Wait a moment! This will work!' 'Ace nearly jumped in joy as a thought came to his mind.

The next moment a grey bead appears in his hand.

Yes, this was the invisible bead that can help him become invisible for one minute. After using this bead to escape from Dulce. He has three left. Since Eva didn't use her she gives it back to him because she knew this bead was miraculous and it can save Ace's life in a difficult situation.

Ace knew that this invisible bead can help him escape any expert below royal level lands because it's a 1-Grade Treasure, and if not for its limited number of time he would be invincible in these low-level lands. At least that is what he imagined.

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But alas he has already used two to them once and he only has three so he will have to save them in a life and death situation where his enemy was as strong as that guardian.

'I only have one minute. I have to make it quick.' Thought Ace while he crushed the invisible bead in his hand.

All the trace of Ace's existence vanished. Even that powerful guardian can't tell where Ace was even if Ace sneaks on him.

But Ace won't do that because he was not sure if he can kill this thing in one hit so he won't be too greedy and only take what was 'his'.

Ace quickly activates silent steps as he shoots towards the healing grey tree, like an arrow. Now the disturbance in the Qi was neglected to him because of the invisible bead but as he got closed to the guardian the pressure coming from it become stronger.

That guardian's eyes were closed but he was releasing the full pressure of his cultivation base. The moment someone's made a move he would crush them with everything it had.

Ace's movement was becoming slower as he was going closer and closer to the elemental orb.

A hundred meters away from the guardian it has only ten seconds but Ace was gasping. 'To damn strong!' this was the thought that came to his mind after reaching this point.

But he didn't stop since the time was not on his side. If that gap was completely closed he would be doomed.

After thirty seconds Ace was ten meters away from the guardian and twenty meters away from the grey tree that was getting closer to its final phase of healing.

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Only half the time left.

However, something unexpected happens, the guardian whose eyes were closed just a moment ago snapped open. They were completely white, they were nothing but white eyeballs.

A white Qi emerges from the guardian the moment he opened his eyes and pressure around him increased tenfold. It was as if the guardian has sense something amiss and his safety instinct kick in.

The guardians only live to protect the elemental orbs and they have many supernatural abilities. It was not easy to fool them even with a treasure like an invisible bead.

Ace was horrified after seeing that thing white eyes and white Qi. The pressure on him increased so much that he felt he was under a mountain it was getting harder to breathe.

'So, this is the 'Element Qi' that was only Qi River cultivation possessed after entering this realm.' Ace thought weakly his body was on verge of collapsing.

Every cultivator possessed a special element attribute and this attribute becomes obvious in the Qi River realm. They called it 'Element Qi'.

Element Qi is a hundred times more powerful than normal Qi.

Ace Qi of Darkness has also a Dark Element in it and it was far, far more powerful than any normal element. However, he was not using it at its full potential.

He was only using its power to one percent and even that was because the dark element was mix in his HD-Qi from the start.

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Ace didn't know how to utilize the element Qi at all it was only possible after he reached the Heavenly River Realm.

[Eternal Thief](#)

Chapter 66: Spotted In The End!

Ace's complex was ashen because of this sudden change in the area around the guardian. If not for his strong willpower he would've collapsed by now.

The light element Qi was oozing out from the orb guardian like smoke. Its aura and pressure were skyrocketed because of it and Ace was no longer able to move forward.

The only relief was that the guardian didn't seem to find Ace's position even after using his unique element Qi of light. Moreover, the guardian was still standing in its position but his aura was not getting weaker because it seems to be on high alert and waiting for his aura to react to something.

This is how powerful and alert the guardians of the elemental orbs were. The moment they even sense a sliver of threat to the elemental orb even if that were just their institution they would react instantly.

Right now, this guardian was feeling something wrong with the current situation and that feeling was coming straight from the vague consciousness of the light elemental orb.

Because the light elemental orb first sense that something has broken into its core area after overcoming the natural traps and that is why it released its guardian to deal with that intruder.

It could sense the intruder's existence because this whole area was filled with the roots of the grey tree and the light orb was connected to the grey tree, it was like the light orb fortress.

However, the trace of the intruder suddenly vanished in thin air like he never exists before just a couple of seconds ago. That's why it gives a strong signal to the guardian to be on high alert.

Ace was having a hard time breathing with all this pressure of light Qi and he can't even move a muscle.

'I only have twenty seconds lefts!' Thought Ace gravely.

However, nothing seems to work right now he was stuck here on this spot. If he didn't complete the task or escape in time he would be dead at the moment his invisible bead effect ware offs.

The pressure was like a mountain and the Light Qi was as if it has life and wanted to enter his body through its pores so it could destroy him from inside. This was the terror of element Qi and Qi River realm cultivator.

Even if you didn't saw your opponent you can simply release your element Qi and if the opponent is weaker than you it will lock on the target.

'My Qi is running out as well and without it, I can't withstand this pressure and fight this troublesome Element Qi. What to do...' Ace was at his wit's end when suddenly something came to his mind.

He quickly stops fighting the light qi and lets it enters his body. Before the Light Qi could do anything, Dark Void starts to devour it like it was its meal.

Ace has made a huge gamble this time. He remembered the experience with Mathies Qi and thought that if the Dark Void can devour his Qi then it should be able to do the same with this element Qi as well.

Ace wouldn't normally do this but right now he didn't have any choice in the matter because if he didn't do this he would be dead anyway, and if he takes a risk and it paid off then he would have a fighting chance at least.

If dark void won't able to devour that element qi his position would be instantly locked on by that guardian. Moreover, his meridians would be destroyed because of the power of the element qi.

However, his gamble has paid off and the dark void didn't let him down.

Ace felt the pressure on him has almost vanished after the dark void starts to devour the light qi and convert it into his HD-Qi.

'Worthy of being a gift from the system.' Ace was delighted after this since the pressure was now neglected he can move smoothly again.

Only ten seconds lefts.

Ace moves at his full speed towards the fast healing grey tree. The gap was almost completely healed and the elemental orb was hazily visible. He has to move fast.

Ace finally crossed the guardian that was standing there like a tower. He didn't dare to breathe loudly what if he alerts it?

No matter what. that thing was still in Qi River Realm and if he was found out by it no matter what he does, nothing will work in the face of absolute power.

The elemental orb felt the gap of the tree has finally been closed and it stop releasing the white color mist. The intruder didn't come close to it but it was still unable to find its presence. This was the first time that something like this has happened in its hundred thousand years of existence.

Throughout the years If anyone came here, it could easily deal with them in that illusion tree maze. They would die after running out there supplies or commit suicide because of liveness. But this time someone has managed to come this far and that's why it was so alert and released it, guardian,

immediately. However, in its process of 'healing its 'fortress', the enemy has vanished in thin air. It was very strange.

Right at this moment when the elemental orb stop spinning, like an arrow a hand enters the tree space through the tiny bit hole that was about to get closed and grab it.

Before the elemental orb could signal its guardian, it felt that its connection with the grey tree and the guardian was cut off for some strange reason and that hand was also nowhere to be seen anymore.

It was still floating peacefully in darkness like it always has but this place was even darker than the tree space. It keeps on trying to contact the guardian but nothing seems to work. It tries to release its white mist again but it didn't work either it was as if it has trapped in an isolated cage where it could do nothing but stay put and wait for the slaughter to come.

Ace has finally made it in time and before the tree gap is closed completely he throws caution to the wind and grabs the elemental orb. The moment he touched it with a thought he sends it inside his thief's space.

Ace was finally thanking his decision to open the living storage space before. If he didn't have this space he can't store this orb in normal storage space treasure. Since it has a conscious it considers a living being.

After sending it inside his thief's space he finally relaxed he knew that the orb can do nothing after he sends it inside his thief's space because the system is too powerful so this little orb was doom to become his stepping stone.

"[System has detected Light Elemental Orb in host thief's space.]

[All the condition has been completed.]

[Do want to start the process of absorbing it into the Dark Void and start the first [Heavenly Thunder Punishment of Body and Soul]?]"

System cold voice sounded in Ace's mind.

'shhhhhhhhhhhhhssssseeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeekkkkkkkkkkk'

But before Ace could reply, a piercing howl rang in the area that nearly turns his soul to dust.

The guardian has sensed his connection with the elemental orb got cut off just now and used its most powerful long-range attack to fish out the culprit behind the disappearance of the light orb.

Because, if the elemental orb got consumed or destroyed the guardian of the orb will be parish as well. It is like a lifeline of the guardian and the moment you cut the lifeline it would be the same as taking its life.

The effect of the invisible bead also ends at this moment but Ace can do nothing because his soul was currently dismayed since he was so close to the guardian. Because of it, his mind is completely blank. He was like a sitting duck there.

Ace yellow soul core inside his mind senses immense danger and begins to spine on its own. It released a huge amount of yellow color soul Qi. Soul Qi circulates inside his body and he finally starts to regain his consciousness.

The first thing he saw a grey claw was coming straight towards his head. If it connected his head would explode like a watermelon.

Ace was spotted by the guardian the moment his invisible bead effect wore off.

Ace didn't even have time to activate his skills. With a thought, a silver shield came between his head and the incoming claw.

'boommmmm'

The impact cause ripples in the air and Ace was sent flying like a broken kite and crashed against the grey tree. The silver shield turns into pieces. It was a 3-star treasure.

On the other hand, Ace was not in optimal condition either.

'pppuppii'

Ace vomits a lot of blood it forms a small puddle on the ground there was his teethes mix in it. His face was almost unrecognizable because that attack nearly crushed his head.

If not for the thief's space effect and he could summon weapons one foot around his body he would be dead right now.

That silver shield has taken almost ninety percent attack for him!

[Eternal Thief](#)

Chapter 67: Desperate Situation Call For Desperate Measures!

Ace didn't have time to check his condition because that guardian was getting ready for another attack and by the look of it this time that thing is going to use its Element Qi.

Ace quickly takes his dual swords out and with some difficulty, he stands up straight. Since the damage was done to his soul as well he was not in the condition to face even a Qi Foundation realm expert much less such a monster.

But he would not be going down without a fight even if its means facing this monster.

However, Ace has a strange thought at this moment, 'This thing didn't have a mouth then how did it scream? And how the hell a scream causes my soul to shock such a degree?'

Ace was very confused about this because even if he was closed to the guardian this shouldn't affect his soul so why does he take direct damage to the soul?

If not for his soul cultivation being at the same level as a foundation-building realm cultivator he would still be in that blank state and died long ago.

'Could this thing be a Soul Qi user just like me?' A scary thought surfaces in this mind.

Ace has never encountered any cultivator or demonic beast that used Soul Qi so he has no idea how a soul cultivator fight or their attack method. But if his conjunction was true then he was in more danger right now.

Because he didn't know how to defend against a soul cultivator and by the looks of it his dark void can't devour soul Qi either. Because if the dark void can really absorb the soul Qi his yellow wind core wouldn't have to react on its own. And he would not fell into a blank state this easily.

Before Ace could analyze the situation any further he saw the guardian who was gathering its white element Qi in its hand suddenly white strings starts to rise from it and those white strings directly penetrate all its eyeballs.

The moment this happened Ace's entire mind space shocked and this time on his yellow wind core a little crack appeared. His mind space nearly split in half. If not for his wind core he would've died by this unfamiliar and sudden attack.

Ace 'Mind Space' was actually his 'True Soul'. It was just that because of the Heaven Stealer special effect his soul has turned into Mind Space that can contain Soul Qi and the soul core of the black wind soul technique.

So, the damage that he just sustains was directed on his true soul, and to protect it the yellow wind core directly takes the attack for his true soul. That's how he manages to survive this vicious attack.

This is the true marvel of the Black Wind Soul Technique it will protect the soul of Heaven's Stealer until something shatter this soul core first that was formed from the technique.

He knows this because this mind space was directly connected to his life.

Since his body contains the Heavenly Qi, just like this his mind-space contains the Soul Qi. Didn't this mean this 'Mind Space' was actually his True Soul that contains his soul cultivation? He figures it out after his mind-space expands like his Qi of the body because of hidden gates of darkness.

'puuppp'

He vomits more blood and now his eyes were barely open anymore. His face was covered in blood and his nose was almost torn off.

'This is unmistakably a soul attack!' Ace judged weakly.

He never would've imagined that a soul qi user would be this powerful that it just needs to stand still and the target wouldn't even know how to block its sudden attacks.

Ace didn't know that the light element has a natural affinity with soul Qi and light element user even if they didn't cultivate in soul their Light Qi has a natural ability to harm souls. But it was not as scary as a real soul cultivator. However, it can still decide the course of any deathly battle between cultivators.

Typically, the light element cultivators are extremely rare and they are all treated like gems even in ancient sects. Because a normal element cultivator is hard to nurture into a soul cultivator however a light element user is easy to nurture into soul cultivators.

Soul Cultivators were treated like gems because they are unpredictable and they can attack anyone from long range and even if they were not powerful enough they can easily create an opening by simply attack someone who was in its life and death fight.

That's why if some power manages to nurture a strong soul cultivator they can easily turn the tides of important battles. Besides the soul cultivator has many more abilities.

But they have an obvious weakness and that is their weak bodies because the more they cultivate their soul their bodies would remain the same and only made ant-like progress. A Qi River realm soul cultivator body would be as strong as a First Gate Cultivator of Qi Gates Realm.

However, this guardian didn't have this weakness because it was born with the elemental orb and the orb has nurtured its body for a hundred thousand years. Its body was as strong as a mid-foundation building realm body cultivator.

Ace's yellow wind core was damaged because of the guardian's two soul attacks and it was very hard for him to even keep his awareness right now.

It seems he was doomed to die here but what can he do? If he used invisible bead that beast can simply use that strange howl again and since he didn't know how to defend against soul attack he would still take damage.

Ace suddenly has a grave idea to escape this situation, but this would also put him into an even more dangerous situation.

He was in a desperate situation anyway and to get a single chance to live he collect his resolution.

"I would take you to hell with me if this is the last thing I do!" Cursed Ace at the guardian that was looking at him with deep killing intent in its white eyes.

"System start the heavenly punishment for ME!" Ace roar as he looks at the dark sky. There was unwillingness in his eyes but also a strong resolve to live.

This is his last resort and he knew by doing this he was closing the final door to life. Because even if he never faces the heavenly thunder punishment before he has some idea just how powerful that is, after hearing that this punishment was supposed to help him felt the law of [Despair].

But what can he do if he not takes this final risk he would be dead anyway so he was not willing to die alone he would take this thing with him.

Moreover, If was all because of this thing that he was pushed this far to even made this kind of choice.

"[Process of absorbing the Nature's Light Elemental Orb has begun.]

[Warning: The Heavenly Thunder Turbulence will descend during the process of absorbing the elemental orb.]

[System recommends finding an isolated place or the Thunder Turbulence would take the living five hundred meters around host as an enemy as well and will do anything to destroy them!]

[The first form of Thunder Turbulence of Body and Soul 'White Despair Thunder' will descend in two seconds!]"

Ace sighed heavily as he muttered after hearing system notifications, "It's finally time to face my first heavenly punishment and its name is so gloomy I wonder if it's really is the thunder of despair."

But soon that heavy expression changes into a cold smile as he shifted his focus towards the guardian who was getting ready for another soul attack.

"Enjoy the show bitch! Heh," Ace mocked weakly.

The guardian was currently feeling quite confused because that little ant in its eyes has survived its two strongest soul attacks and one direct attack. And that ant is currently smiling at it. This greatly infuriates it and it was about attack again when it felt an extreme change in the atmosphere.

The guardians were extremely sensitive to the change in the elements around them and that's how they will find the intruders who wanted to take the orbs. So, this sudden change in the dark element causes the guardian to stop in its tracks because it could feel this change was very dangerous.

But before it could find what has happened the guardian felt his life was started to slip away from its huge body. It immediately knew that the ant has somehow begun to absorb the elemental orb.

It didn't have time to find the hidden danger because if the orb absorption were to complete he would be dead anyway. So, it ignored the warning coming from its instincts and at high speed, leaps towards Ace.

Just a moment ago, Ace felt that a strange Qi entering the pores of his body at high speed and directly enters the dark void. He felt like this Qi was extremely comfortable and his damaged soul core began to heal at a breakneck pace because of this particular Qi.

One has to know that the injuries on the souls were extremely hard to heal. And Ace's soul was filled with the Heavenly Soul Qi, consequently to heal his soul was even more difficult.

It was the Light Elemental Orb 'Element Essential Qi' that was currently healing his damaged yellow wind soul core.

[Eternal Thief](#)

Chapter 68: White Despair Heavenly Thunder!

Ace felt his soul was recovering rapidly because of the absorbance of the orb's element-essential qi and recover some of his strength.

Ace HD-Qi started to boil in his meridians and he instantly active silent steps to evade the upcoming guardian who has leaps towards him and it was like it was flying at high speed all its sharp hands combined in front, it looks like a spearhead with monstrous power behind it.

Last time Ace was caught off-guard because of the soul attack and hit by the guardian sudden attack when he was in a muddled state. However, this time Ace was completely sober and he can still evade physical attacks, especially since this guardian body was not as powerful as a Qi River realm cultivator.

Besides, it seems like this thing has panic about something and was in hurry to end him so it didn't use its soul attack and directly used physical attack to end him quickly. Further, it seemed that powerful soul attack took some time to activate or the last two soul attack was already its limits.

'shhhuuuu'

By a hair, he evades the attack of the guardian and quickly runs to the opposite direction Ace was striving to make some distance between them.

That guardian seems to be a little surprised by how Ace who was looking lifeless just a moment ago was able to move like this now. But it didn't care because it could sense that the 'element essential Qi' of the elemental orb was depleting at a fast pace.

It was just about to turn around to used a soul attack this time when the empty and silent sky of the moon forest's core region started to become noisy. All of a sudden temperature started to drop.

The guardian felt extreme danger and immediately after that, a huge pressure descend on it like a huge mountain and because of this huge pressure, it can't move its body anymore. It struggles but it was all in vain. This pressure has locked it into its place.

Ace's condition was the same or even worse than the guardian's because he was wounded and his soul was still in a healing process when this huge pressure lock on him.

However, Ace stand strong and didn't fall on the ground because of the mountain-like pressure. 'Is this pressure coming from heavenly punishment?'

'This pressure is much stronger than that thing, but my body is resisting it to some degree. Is it because of the Heavenly Qi?' Thought Ace intensely.

He felt like his unique Qi was helping him resist this pressure and that was how he still standing right now or he would be fell on the ground long ago and can't even move a finger.

If Ace know that no one can move in heavenly punishment before he would instantly choose to go through it first without hesitation. So, it could lock that monster in one place and let the heavenly punishment deal with it and he will somehow cross this punishment because he has heavenly qi.

Ace now thinks that some random lightning would strike after seeing he can move a little bit and guardian can't, but very soon he will find out just how naïve his thoughts were.

Suddenly, the dark sky of the core region seems real but it has no stars and moon one could tell it was not real and some kind of natural phenomenon.

'Errr, crrakk,'

Cracks began to appear in the 'sky' and suddenly it shatters like glass!

It was like something has hammered it and shatter the dark dome of the core region.

Rays of light enter the dark core region of the moon forest for the first time in thousands of years.

Ace was startled by this, 'It seems like outside is still daytime.' He thinks because he didn't see any light here from the moment he entered. He has no idea about how time was moving outside.

It was like he was in a huge dark cage and someone has tear opened it with force.

'So, this is how strong can a nature trap be. It is like the entire core region of the moon forest was this elemental orb domain and nobody can find their way out once come inside.' Ace thought gravely.

If this was true then he was in huge trouble because he still needs to find seven more orbs and just this first one has given him the deadliest time of his life. And he was still not out of danger yet.

However, Ace's focus quickly shifted towards his body because the Dark Void has started to greedily absorb Heavenly Qi at a high scale and pumping it to Ace's meridians and entire body. It was like he was in a deep ocean of Heavenly Qi. Even his injuries begun to heal because of it.

Even space started to tremble as all the Heavenly Qi within hundreds of miles began to gather towards Ace, his surrounding Qi becomes practically Heavenly Qi. It was so dense that it could be seen with the physical eye like a black mist.

The strangest thing was the dark void wasn't converting the Heavenly Qi into HD-Qi it was devouring the heavenly qi like a bottomless hole. All the heavenly qi was entering inside and no one knows where this huge amount of heavenly qi was going.

'RUBLE!'

Before the dark void could absorb anymore Heavenly Qi it supplies was cut off by something unknown and Ace hear a huge rumble above his head as he snapped open his eyes to see the source of this rumbling.

However, the moment he saw above his head his face turns ashen and became horrified.

Because the originally sunny and cloudless sky moment ago has now turned dark, with pitch-black inky clouds. Thunder rumbled and white lightning flashed in them.

Everything within hundreds of miles went completely dark.

It was like Ace has returned into the core region again but it was now darker.

"Is this the Heavenly Punishment?! How the hell I'm supposed to endure punishment from this thing??!" Ace was completely horrified and couldn't help but curse out loud, "System are you sending me to my death even that monster was cuter in front of that huge forming thunder cloud???!!"

Before Ace has some idea but now it was finally confirmed just where the hell that huge pressure and what has stopped the heavenly qi around the area, it was all happening exactly because of those inky clouds or descending of the 'Heavenly Punishment'.

He saw that all those black clouds were like a huge whirlpool, and the whirlpool's center was right above himself!

That whirlpool looked like nothing more than a huge black eye focusing expressionlessly on him. At the same time, a terrifying destructive will pushed down upon him and it was way more powerful than before's pressure. The previous pressure seems like a child in front of this will.

Ace immediately realized that he was now unable to move even an inch. He was unable to even blink.

'I'm doomed!' This was the only wild thought in his mind right now.

Ace saw more and more inky clouds gather in the sky. The white lightning within the sky gradually converged at the center of the black clouds like it was concentrating at a single point.

"Is that collection of lightning going to strike me?!" Even if Ace was naïve, he didn't dare to take that strike head-on. He madly struggled to somehow free himself.

But it was as if his whole body was being pressed by a huge mountain. Despite his best efforts, his body merely trembled continuously. The ground beneath his foot started to crack.

Ace couldn't help but tremble in fear. He tried shifting his body but he felt as if a whole mountain was crushing him from every direction. Even after using his heavenly qi he was only able to make very small movements and was simply unable to dodge anything.

The inky clouds in the sky were becoming increasingly thick, and the lightning was becoming more and more concentrated in the center.

Suddenly, the rumbling sky became completely silent. A white bolt of lightning several feet wide, it was no longer lightning it was pure 'Destructive Thunder' and it shot straight down from the center of the black clouds.

However, this thunderbolt target was not Ace it shot towards the orb guardian who was standing still in its place helplessly like Ace. Its Qi was not heavenly qi like Ace so he can't even move a single finger. The white thunderbolt power seeming to want to destroy and exterminate every living being in its path.

Ace watched as that terrifying white thunderbolt descended. He felt an endless destructive will and despair coming from it.

The white despair thunder finally strikes straight into the guardian's head full of eyes.

"BOOOOMMMMMMMM!!!"

A huge booming sound rang in the vacancy and hundreds of meters of ground crumbled as that one thunderbolt created a huge crater.

Ace has made quite some distance from the guardian before he was locked on his current spot, but even after that he was caught in after-shock by the thunderbolt and he vomited two consecutive mouthfuls of blood.

Ace was horrified after seeing this and finally understood the true terror of angry Heaven.

Before he didn't pay much attention to the risk of using the heaven stealer technique and stole from heaven. He thought that the benefits were just too great and enduring the heavenly punishment now and then would be worth it.

However, now he finally knows that the prize of using the heaven stealer technique was this deadly.

Ace saw the towering-like guardian body in the center of the crater, its body was charred all over, and he could even see grey fluid coming from its eye sockets that have turned into meat pasta now.

The mighty guardian of the Qi River realm has died in a single thunder strike of Heaven.

'Rumbllllleeeee'

Ace snapped out his dazzled state after he hears a huge rumble even stronger than before.

He trembly look above and saw even more lighting was concentrating in the center of the whirlpool.

It seems like the last bolt was to clear any obstacle between Ace and Heaven.

Now that the 'hindrance' was out of the way, it was finally time to punish Heaven's Stealer!

Eternal Thief

Chapter 69: Heavenly Punishment!

Ace was completely horrified and alarm seeing just how powerful that first thunderbolt was. It even killed that monster like an ant. And by the looks of it, the next condensing thunderbolt appears even more powerful than the last one.

'If I knew this was about to happen I would've made some kind of preparation or find some treasures that can block thunder. Well even if I know the treasure that can block heavenly punishment are not easy to find.' Ace thought bitterly.

Ace quickly calms himself because now is not the time to fret over his past mistakes. He has to somehow succeed in this deathly trial.

The inky clouds were even more lit in the center than last time and it was ready to destroy Ace with every ounce of its might.

Ace quickly shouts in his mind, "System give me five... NO! Ten basic healing pills and Ten basic Qi recovering pills now!"

"[Basic Healing Pill: 25 TP for each pill]

[10 Pills = 250]

[Basic Heavenly Qi Pill: 10 TP for each pill]

[10 Pills = 100]

[[Total: 350 TP]]

[Host has a sufficient amount of TP.]

[The purchase has been successful!]

[The pills are delivered into host thief's space.]"

[Thief Points (TP): 595]

Ace didn't think that he would be using these pills in this kind of situation.

He clearly knew that system pills were not ordinary at all, even these basic pills are more precious than any pill in high-level lands.¹

However, Ace can only use these system's pills, ordinary pills can only give him EXP or SP they have no other effect on him.

More importantly, except for 'Heaven Stealer Pill' other pills didn't have any limit on their quantity. So, he didn't buy them in bulk as he did with the weapons.

Besides, 'Heaven Stealer Pills' were expensive. Ace thinks he didn't need them for the moment so he was saving them for the perfect time because of their limitation.

That's why for the first time he bought these basic pills because he knows without them he would be dead without any doubt.

With a thought, two green pills appeared in his hand from the thief's space.

One has golden circles it was the healing pill and the other have black circles on it this is the Heavenly Qi Pill. They were mysteriously glowing and a light mist was oozing from them. This glow means golden grade alchemy pill and mist only appeared on quasi-first grade pill!

Only the alchemist who was about to break into the first-grade alchemist rank can create these kinds of pills.

Ace didn't have time to admire these priceless pills and he throws them in his mouth but he didn't swallow them. It was for the exact moment when he would be in grave danger then he would consume them, and he hopes they could help him in this situation.

After doing this he looked above and the thunder was going strike any moment.

Ace still didn't feel assure so he took out all the weapons in his thief's space. They were not any used to him and he was thinking about disposing of them after he reached higher level lands.

However now, they can be his meat shield. They can't block the attack fully but at least they can weaker it to some extent, right?

Ace knows he has no time to waste and quickly pours HD-Qi into his dual swords. A huge amount of Qi darts out from those two black blades.

That huge amount of Qi begun to turn into a huge crude cauldron shape as it devours those thousands of qi weapons. After that qi cauldron was filled with weapons, it starts to hover above Ace's head. It was like a multilayer shield, that was made of swords, spears, halberds, war hammers, shields, sabers...

Ace finds this method to manifest his Qi in his year of training. Since he can't manifest his qi out his body at this moment, Ace found he can do it with his first-grade weapon.

Ace can easily create shapes with Qi and control them with his mind with this method. However, since he was not in the foundation building realm this was quite taxing on his body and mind.

"crrrrcrrrrcccccc!"

A thundering boom rang and a thick white thunderbolt blast down straight at Ace like an arrow.

Ace has just created his 'shield' when the thunderbolt falls. He saw this bolt was wider than the last one and apparently more powerful as well.

He holds his sword hilts firmly and channels all qi into his swords.

"Boooooommm!"

The thunderbolt landed straight on the 'shield' but like paper that 'shield' turn into ashes. They were probably more than a thousand 2-star and hundreds of 3-start weapons in that cauldron and even some 4-star weapons.

Ace has put all his 'weaponry wealth' into this 'shield' and it was turned into ashes like it was nothing.

Ace's heart would definitely bleed if he was not occupying right at this moment.

Since the 'shield' was broken or turn into ashes the white despair thunder's next target was obviously Ace.

'chechhhhhhee'

This time, however, his dual swords clashed with the thunderbolt but after some time Ace simply can't take a huge pressure and destructive forces of the white despair thunder.

The thunderbolt manages to break his last defense and landed in his chest.

It starts to wreak havoc in Ace's body. Ace felt like he was in the pits of hell right at this moment. His whole body and organs were burning inside out and all he could feel was piercing pain and despair, nothing else.

'This is the end I guess!' This was the thought in his heart before he finally gave up.

At this moment when Ace lost all hope to live, the dark void that was stopped devouring the heavenly Qi because of the heavenly punishment awakens and begun to operate again and this time its target of devouring was white despair thunder!

Ace felt the ghastly pain began to lessen bit by bit and he regain his senses.

But his condition was not so good. He quickly takes out two more pills from his thief's space and swallows them. The last two pills were used and without them and dark void he would be dead by now.

After regaining his senses Ace saw his body was charred all over, and he could even smell his own flesh roasting. He was unable to shake that bolt in the slightest. He had been essentially powerless.

This made him feel completely dispirited. In front of that thunderbolt, he felt that he was completely insignificant.

Ace didn't settle on it for too long because he could feel that dark void has again stopped. After all, it seems the whit despair thunder was finished. But he still didn't get any HD-Qi. If not for the Heavenly Qi Pill he would be run out of Qi long ago.

"Just why is it not working like normal? And that elemental orb was also being absorbed in it even now. Just what the hell is the system doing?!!!" Ace swore weakly.

He was feeling extremely frustrated right now nothing seems to work the proper way. But the news that the dark void can devour that lightning was very good for him. However, the pain was not something that he can handle for long.

Just he was in mulling over his grave situation, the heaven seems to sense that the previous bolt was not enough to take this ant down and it didn't give any chance to Ace for recuperating.

With a thunderous roar, two white thunderbolts descend this time.

Ace wanted to curse heaven for being this ruthless to send two bolts this time. But he didn't have time because the bolts were already reaching him.

This time Ace didn't do anything and the thunderbolt descends on him.

'Boooooommm'

Ace felt even worse than before however he grinds his teeth and endure.

This time, however, he felt the feeling of despair was even stronger than before. It was like this strange 'will' wanted him to lose his own will to fight and surrender himself to heaven.

It wanted him to rest for eternity and pay the price for opposing heaven with his soul being shattered and his existence been erased forever.

Ace finally understands just what true despair is but he didn't give in he keeps himself remembered that his life was bond with Eva's and he still needs to find his little sister. After that, he still didn't solve the mystery of his parents so he remains strong in the face of despair and that strange 'will'.

It was as if his determination has fueled the dark void, it starts devouring the thunderbolt even faster.

Ace finally felt the pain lessen and he quickly throws two more pills in his mouth. These pills were truly marvelous the healing pill was healing his internal and external wounds by the heavenly thunderbolt and the qi pill was providing him with a large amount of heavenly qi.

"Hahaha! You can do nothing to me now I will endure to the last moment but I will never surrender to you! Not even in my grave!" Ace roared while laughing as he looked at the inky clouds fiercely.

He was angry right now because he was pushed around all day, first by that monster and now by heaven as well.

How could he not curse at this moment? If not for his dark void he would be dead after receiving the first strike.

It was as if heaven has heard him and it was infuriated by his disrespectful words and the inky clouds began to gather a huge amount of lightning.

"Crap! Me and my big mouth!" Ace wanted to cry right now.

[Eternal Thief](#)

Chapter 70: Light Element Qi

Ace can now endure the heavenly thunder because of the dark void however, he can't bear the intense pain any longer.

He was mentally exhausted and his physical condition was also not optimal anymore. The system's pills can help him recover but they can't recover his mental sluggishness.

But Ace can't back down right now, because Ace knew if he loses his will to fight then even the dark void can't save him.

The power of despair was just too great. If you lose your will in the face of despair then nobody can save you to fall into despair!

Ace take a deep breath and looked at the inky clouds above and grunt, "You think I'm afraid of you? Then bring it on I'll show you just how powerful this ant in your eyes truly is!"

It was as if heaven has heard him and thunderous booms rang in the sky of the moon forest. One could hear them even in the outer region of the moon forest.

Some passing by cultivators startled and think that some powerful demonic beast was roaring in anger they quickly sprang to run.

Ace saw three thunderbolts shoot toward him this time and they almost looked like thunder swords. However, there was something different about them and that was they were half translucent.

'Heavenly Soul Punishment!' Ace immediately guess and felt that now he was doomed.

Because dark void can absorb heavenly thunder that was harmful towards his body and meridians it can't absorb soul qi. Now he was on his own.

"Boooooommmmm"

The swords like thunderbolts landed on him and Ace felt his body was melting in lava and that was not the end even his 'True Soul' (Mind Space) was rock like a boat in the middle of a storm.

The translucent heavenly thunder infiltrates his mind space and started to wreak havoc.

His soul core started to protect his mind-space by fighting with heavenly thunder. It was still damaged because of the guardian.

The heavenly thunder attacks his soul core as it keeps resisting it.

Ace felt this time his life was truly going to end because he simply can't take this soul attack. He didn't have any means to protect his soul from others much less from heaven itself.

He finally understands just how dreadful soul attacks truly were.

It was like a blessing he never encounters any human with soul cultivation but this blessing comes to an end today.

After a moment cracks begin to appear on the soul core and for the first time, his mind-space begins to crack.

Ace could still endure all this pain but the damage on 'true soul' was not something he could sustain at his level. The moment a crack appears on his 'true soul' he felt something broken in him.

'Thud'

Ace fell on the charred ground his eyes were rolled upside and his body was roasted black. He was unrecognizable. Blood was coming from his mouth, ears, nose, and eyes sockets.

There was no sign of breath and pulse coming from him.

The last thing Ace remember before losing his consciousness was a foreign voice that was telling him to stop his futile resistance, and surrender his soul and the pain will over.

However, he only gives one reply before he fell and that was, "NEVER!"

Ace didn't know he heard the voice of that 'strange will' that he felt before in his moment of despair. He was able to hear it because he was between the border of life and death.

Moreover, the owner of this voice will be his biggest nemesis in the future.

After Ace fell on the ground lifeless the inky cloud started to scatter and moments after it completely vanished and the sunny sky restore as well as if nothing has happened.

Because of the heavenly punishment pressure, the dome of the core region that was made by nature to protect the elemental orb was now shattered.

It will never be restored because the elemental orb was taken by Ace. However, that fog remains and in ten to twenty years it will also disappear, this core region of the moon forest will be restored to its original condition like before the orb was born.

But that black craters will remain the same because they were made by heavenly thunder and thunder holds only power of destruction, no life will ever form in this area.

After many years someone will see these craters and think they were a legendary beast reside here and a legend will be born. Moon Forest then will be known as the first forbidden area of land of cities.

The core region was now empty and silent, the maze of trees also vanished after the orb was taken and no demonic beast was here because they dread that fog in the entrance and never enters the core region so only Ace charred body was laying there in the center of the black pit.

The peace has returned to the core region again.

At this moment, System's voice rang in Ace nearly dead mind,

"[Congratulation Host for successfully crossing the first form of Heavenly Punishment!]

[Nature's Light Elemental Orb 'Element Qi' absorption has also been complete.]

[Special Reward: Light Element Qi]

[Process of building the Foundation of Heavenly Darkness is commencing!]"

The silent air surrounding the core region began to vibrate and a huge amount of black qi rushed towards Ace's body.

The dark void was begun to revolve at high speed and create a huge suction force.

All the Heavenly Qi began to enter Ace's abdominal and dark void swallow all this Qi greedily at an extraordinary pace.

It was like a bottomless abyss and that seemingly can devour all the Qi of this world and still won't be satisfied by it.

Suddenly, a cracked orb appeared from Ace thief's space it was the elemental orb that was now looking like a marble that will be shattered with just a gust of wind. It was not radiant like before.

The orb floats on Ace's forehead and suddenly as if a mysterious power emits a little pressure the floating orb shattered into millions of white particles.

But those white particles didn't blow by the wind as if something was controlling them and were directly landed on Ace's forehead between his eyebrows and get absorbed in Ace's skin. Not a single particle escapes this absorption and all these 'light element particles' enter his mind-space directly.

Ace's mind space was currently at a shattering point and his yellow wind soul core was barely in one piece. The heavenly thunder was still attacking the soul-core to shatter it and with it, Ace's True Soul would also be shattered.

This will be his true death of body and soul.

However, the moment those white particles appeared they begin to explode like little firecrackers and turn into huge light elemental soul Qi.

Suddenly his mind space that was turned black after he opened the gate of mind started to turn white and the cracks also began to close with light soul qi.

These white particles that were left after the elemental orb was sucked dry were the 'Light Soul Qi Particles'.

Originally these soul particles were supposed to be scattered around the world and after one of these particles would give birth to another Light Elemental Orb.

However, the system has directly sent them into his mind space. Here they can only be part of his 'true soul' and he will have light soul Qi. Meaning the light elemental orb will never appear in Golden Sky World after today.

The white despaired thunder (Heavenly Thunder) sense this sudden change and leave the soul-core and directly charged to attack the white soul qi particles. But the light soul particles simply explode and all the light soul qi began to merge with his mind space.

The soul core also received the light soul qi and it rapidly turns into its former complete form. But it was even bigger than before and they were a white hue around its yellowish core.

The explosion of these particles didn't harm Ace's soul but the heavenly thunder began to scatter and it also turned into thunder particles in the explosions. Since the heavenly thunder can't replenish itself it was doomed to turn supplement for Ace's true soul as well.

Slowly the heavenly thunder last bit of will perished and with all the white particles it gets absorbed into Ace's true soul.

Before Ace's mind space was fifty cubic meters large however after merging with light soul particles it was now hundred cubic meters and his yellow wind core was also gotten bigger and sturdier. The mind space has turned into grey as well from its previous black appearance.

Now Ace's heavenly sense and soul sense could cover fifty meters area around him and his Heavenly Soul Qi limit has also been raised to the next level. But most importantly he will be able to use Light Element Qi.

Ace will find out in the future just how much of a blessing this truly was!