# Chapter 1: Prologue

A servant named Shrug watered the rapidly withering Celestial Mayflower, caressing it with his soft whistle. But even after pouring a drop of Heaven’s Pure Water on it, its sharp purple petals turned dull gray, then withered into ashes. Twenty breaths later, only a stem remained, telling the story of one thousand deaths.

The east wind blew away the unpleasant smell the withered mayflower produced and set Shrug’s dark-green robe fluttering when it blew past.

Shrug frowned, making more creases than his tiny forehead could sustain.

This was the thousandth time he’d used Time Law to bring the Celestial Mayflower back to life, and a different method to grow it rapidly. His lord wouldn’t be pleased when he saw Shrug failing after just ten days. He had brought this flower from T3540, a world he had recently created to grow some celestial plants for his lady interest.

What should he do?

Unknowingly, Shrug floated over the garden, staring at the other gray mayflower that reeked of a thousand deaths as well. Listening to the sound of spring, he turned backward and looked at the floating palace where his lord spent time with lord’s current lady interest. She was his lord’s fifth one in the last one year, and he continuously created universes to grow more treasures, flowers, or fruits to please her.

Studying the large palace floating in the distance, he sighed. For once, he didn’t know when he would finally greet his new lord’s lady. It had been millennia since his lord’s wife went missing in one of his own creations, and since then his lord rarely looked at his creations and rarely created new experiments.

Considering his next action, Shrug floated into the Paramount God Palace where his lord hosted his inventions. If the Celestial Mayflower could grow on T3540, then there must be a low-level treasure formed there. That would help Shrug find out the properties of the treasure and borrow a similar one that could withstand the celestial energy roaming through the Paramount God Palace.

Yes, that seemed like a good idea. After spending millions of years with his lord, some intelligence had rubbed off on Shrug. Once he continued down this path, he would find a path to serve the lord in the best way.

While walking toward the T3540 status screen, Shrug’s gaze lingered on T120 status screen. The last time his lord had asked him to check on what was missing from here, he had used his celestial energy to create the item called as AI Chip in local language of T120 that had vanished with the soul he moved to T2460.

However, the original AI Chip was still growing on T2460 with that reincarnated soul.

That as an issue.

If his lord found out Shrug had messed up some things behind his back, his lord would be unhappy. And other than withering plants, Shrug hated it the most when his lord became unhappy.

Should he destroy the AI Chip by sending celestial energy? No, that might trigger an imbalance in the entire universe of T2460. But he couldn’t leave it wandering there, or else his lord would definitely find out about his mess, and that would make his lord unhappy.

A better option would be to use a native lifeform to destroy that object.

Enlarging the T2460, he vaguely discerned the place where the soul with AI Chip fell. The Mortal Realm. Picking a very low-level creature, Shrug sent a bout of celestial energy into the creature’s dark body and then commanded it to destroy the object that had been stolen away from T120.

“This should be enough.” He smiled, feeling freed up from the guilt that had weighed down his heart. Once the soul that stole the AI Chip from T120 died, it would follow the proper reincarnation path.

Yes, that would be the best outcome as he wouldn’t have to do anything else to solve the issue.

# Chapter 2: Two Girls One Man

In a lone courtyard built at the base of a lone mountain, a girl with long black hair stood alone, staring at a boy wrapped in white bandages and lying on a bedroll. Ki Fei’s heart shook, and tears flew when she looked at him. He was Li Wei, her young master.

Her small fingers curled in a fist as she looked upon his poor condition, and when she fumed inside, the atmosphere around her heated up and the life energy turned gloomy.

A woman with a high chin and a beautiful face walked in, holding a bucket of water and a bowl of soup filled with fragrant herbs. Ki Fei had tasted it earlier, and it would suit her young master’s taste buds. He liked sweet things.

“Fairy Fei, if you get angry, it will affect your cultivation,” the woman, Tang Sia, said. “I promised you, I’ll take care of him, but you can’t go back on your promise and ignore your cultivation.”

“Senior Tang, please don’t worry. I’ll keep my promise, but you must keep your promise too and not let my young master suffer even a little. He has gone through a lot for me, and I want to serve him wholeheartedly.”

Tang Sia’s eyes flashed with disgust for a moment before calming down.

Ki Fei sighed in her heart. These people didn’t understand what young master Wei meant to her. He was her world, and she would never let him suffer. These people were only asking her to cultivate and break through. What was difficult in that? All she needed to do was eat pills and cultivate, and she would break through the new layer. She had already reached layer eight in the Foundation Realm, and she had touched the layer nine boundary.

“Don’t worry Fairy Fei. Sect Master has already settled things with Destiny Mirror Sect, and he will be safe as long as he is in Divine Fragrance Palace,” Tang Sia replied in a calm voice. “You should head to the peak of the mountain and cultivate in Pure Lotus Water. You can’t come out before reaching Bone Baptization Realm. Do you understand?”

Ki Fei sighed, audibly this time. This was all because of her young master who had waged a war with Destiny Mirror Sect. But she was proud of him for killing someone much higher than his own cultivation level. Her young master was awesome. When he wore the clothes she sewed for him, he was invincible.

“Okay. Please give him this set of clothes I sewed for him. He loves my clothes.” She smiled and then turned away. If she was going to protect her young master, she had to be as powerful as him.

That was her drive for cultivation. To serve young master Wei.

For young master Wei.

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In a dark place behind the State of Zin’s royal palace, a girl wearing a black dress sat on a stone bench, studying the metal bars that separated her cell from the lunatics and frenzied criminals. The air was dark, and with the killing intent exuded by everyone, it was hard to breathe. But she sat cross-legged and revolved her qi as per the qi path mentioned in the Wood Monarch’s Embrace. It was difficult to move from spear to sword, but she would do it. She would undergo the baptization of sword.

“In this prison, my will, will be my sword and my heart will be my master.” Whispering, she got up and moved into a sword stance.

“Wood King’s Sword level one.”

Five hours later, sweat ran down her head and turned her lips salty, but she didn’t stop. If she’d been in her own chamber, maids would have rushed to wipe her forehead, but there was no one here. Other than the darkness and the horrific shouts from frenzied horny males, there was only her steadfastness.

Then again, she also had the treasure given to her by senior Xue Qi to accompany her, to guide her on this dark path.

When footsteps sounded from the entrance of the tunnel that connected to her prison cell, she stopped and went back to her stone bench. It was her chair, her bed, and her practice bench.

With the hem of her dress, she wiped her face and lay on the stone bench, appearing normal by the time the visitor arrived.

“Nuan, are you still not going to answer?” A sharp sound rang through the prison cell, followed by the clinking of golden jewelry. It was Sun Kiyari, the current queen of her father. She was a bitch, and as soon as Destiny Mirror Sect had raised a single complaint, she’d had Sun Nuan thrown in prison.

But knowing this would happen, Sun Nuan had sent her sister, Hua’er, away. Their mother had vanished too. However, thanks to the pill offered by senior Xue Qi, her mother had recovered from the strange illness that had plagued her and broke into the peak of Marrow Cleansing Realm. Once she recuperated, she would come free Sun Nuan from this prison.

Sun Nuan just had to put up with it until then. Thinking about her mother, she felt proud. Once, her mother was the queen, the strongest female warrior in the entire State of Zin, but a mysterious illness had changed her fate. That illness had changed everyone’s fate.

“If you don’t give me that bitch’s whereabouts, I’ll kill you like I killed your sister.” She threw a bloody pendant toward Sun Nuan.

Sun Nuan caught it, and her eyes shone with a strange light. This was Hua’er’s pendant, but how did it come to be in the queen’s hands? Whatever. She knew her sister was fine because they shared a deep connection that allowed her to peek into Hua’er’s life whenever needed. By giving this pendant to her, the queen had actually done her a favor. Unbeknownst to the queen, this pendant could let her save Hua’er once—and only once—but it could also act as a one-time escape card as well. With it, she could travel once to Hell’s Eye Bloodline Forbidden Ground. It was a last resort, but it was something.

She might not even need it. She had sent Hua’er to Divine Fragrance Palace, closer to big brother Wei. Without telling her about their mother, she had asked Hua’er to stay with big brother Wei. He would protect her. Sun Nuan believed in him. She had seen his fate with her own eyes, and it was magnificent. And after hearing about his heroic deeds in killing Destiny Mirror Sect’s elder Wen Shang, her trust in him deepened. If she didn’t have the treasure from senior Xue Qi, Sun Nuan would have followed him everywhere. In fact, she went to Old Martial City after she heard about the Devil Cicada Challenge, but before she entered the city, queen Sun Kiyari had captured her.

It was troublesome.

“Okay, I haven’t killed your sister yet. But let that bloody pendant be a warning to you. I’ve got people inside Divine Fragrance Palace,” the queen shouted. “Everyone is on my side, and soon you’ll hear about your little sister’s death. Brace yourself for it.”

Sun Nuan’s eyes flashed with a strange light. Queen Sun Kiyari’s words shook something inside her mind. Brace yourself.

This word triggered a new thought in her mind. It belonged the skill set name of Destiny Mirror Sect. Wood Monarch’s Embrace.

This was it. She had found the answer to her question. Suddenly, the shackles that bound her from reaching the peak of the Wood King’s Sword level one broke, and she saw the path in front of her.

If big brother Wei could defy all odds, why couldn’t she?

For her sister Hua’er. For big brother Wei.

# Chapter 3: Awful Things

A stone gate stood in front of Li Wei, practically reaching the sky. This was a marvel in the Mortal Realm, where cultivation boundaries were stuck at the Houtian Realm. Standing in front of the gate, he wondered who’d had so much free time to build this behemoth. Even with his divine sense sent out as a beam, he couldn’t reach the top of the gate. It was said that Divine Fragrance Palace’s first sect master had found this gate and built a sect behind it. But even after a thousand years’ inheritance, no one could open this gate anymore, so the sect had built two smaller gates in the stone walls connecting to the giant gate.

Many disciples bustled around the gate. A couple even tried to sell him minor healing pills that smelled like failed products. Seeing those pills, he couldn’t forget the bitter taste of the medicine Tang Sia had made him drink for the last five days so he could recover from his injuries quicker. It was torture, and if he could have, he would have relied solely on his physical body’s recovery attributes. But it had been a month since he’d fought in the Devil Cicada Challenge, and as per Tang Sia, he had to move his ass out of Fei’er’s courtyard. And then meeting that bastard Li Sua had added more to the bitter taste in his mouth. He was an asshole, as usual. But what was he doing at his grandfather’s grave?

Anyway.

Placing his hand on the giant black metal door with a cauldron engraved on it, Wei tried to probe it with his divine sense, but it couldn’t penetrate the door. It was same with the other door, a golden one with a huge five-leafed herb engraved on it. No one knew the meaning behind the symbols marked on the doors, but the sect had constructed their internal system based on these symbols.

Lifting his feet, he walked toward the small open door on the right of the stone wall. Soon the marble-paved road turned black, like the cauldron on the door, and a rampant fiery aura washed over his face. A ten-foot-tall black cauldron welcomed anyone who walked through that door. An Undying Gladiator beast’s fire continuously fired the cauldron; the fire was one of the famous treasures of the Divine Fragrance Palace, and it helped a cultivator to ignite their qi fire. Beyond the other door, the one engraved with the five-leafed herb, lay a precious plant that had a mind-calming effect on the cultivators walking through that door.

Of course, those were replicas of the original treasures, and their effects were subpar at best. But each of those symbols, the cauldron and the leaf, marked one of the three internal factions that controlled the Divine Fragrance Palace. The third faction didn’t have a door, but it was the worst faction and he didn’t want to join it. Thanks to Tang Sia, he had learned more than enough information about the Divine Fragrance Palace in the last few days.

When he moved closer to the door, his heart thumped wildly. Even after two hundred years of life, he became anxious, the same way he’d felt when he joined the Heavenly Firmament Sect in his previous life. This anxiousness was all because of his dream of becoming an alchemist and living a lazy and comfortable life. Walking through this door was the first step he’d taken on the dao of laziness. That was also one of the reasons he’d decided to join the Black Cauldron Faction, which specialized in pill concocting. The other faction, the Five Leaf Faction, specialized in herb growing.

Walking toward the small door on the right, he wondered if he should redecorate his outer sect courtyard that sect would provide to him to match his own shabby room, or if he should wait until he was promoted to inner sect disciple. Damn that Destiny Mirror Sect. While he was passed out, the Divine Fragrance Palace had recruited him as a core disciple, but he was demoted because he’d killed one of the Destiny Mirror Sect’s elders.

Maybe he should remain in the outer sect, walk on his path of lazy dao, and redecorate his courtyard to match his shabby room from Old Martial City. That way, he could be as lazy as he wanted inside that room. When someone had nothing to protect, they could be lazy.

That was a new thought, and he noted it down in his Dao of Laziness Diary he had started with the help of the system while he recuperated for a month after his fight with the Du clan, Tiang Fu, and Wen Shang. The diary had two rules now.

1) Never cry. It takes you on the path of revenge, and you have to work hard to do that. Instead, eliminate anything that can make you cry.

2) Make everything shabby. Having nothing to protect means you can be as lazy as you want to be.

That was nice.

“Wei Lin, what are you doing here?” A soft voice struck him from behind, and when he turned, a short immature girl stared at him with two shiny brown eyes.

“Sun Hua, why are you here?” he asked the girl in the fiery red dress looking at him disdainfully.

A burly youth jumped forward. “Impudent fool, how dare you call a princess by her name. Are you tired of living?”

Wei frowned. Girls always brought trouble, and this burly youth was just that.

“You scoundrel!” Sun Hua said. “You bewitched my sister to fight the Destiny Mirror Sect, and now she is detained by the order of our lord father.” She stomped her foot and flared her nostrils like he had bullied her. “How are you going to compensate me?”

Wei frowned. “Compensate?”

“Princes Hua, who is this guy? Is he bothering you?” A huge smelly guy with a big mustache stepped forward and crossed his arms over his chest. He smelled like he had applied a thick medicinal paste to his body, overpowering the girly fragrance exuded by Sun Hua.

“Brother Xin, you have to help me seek justice.” Sun Hua shaded tears, but he knew they were fake. “This guy has wronged my sister, and she may not take a step out of her courtyard because of him.”

Wei gasped hard. What nonsense was this? Did she even think twice before spurting such nonsense? “Sun Hua, watch your words.”

Seeing her crying, many disciples crowded around them.

“What a beast. He did something to Princess Nuan,” someone from the crowd shouted and glared at Wei.

“You—what awful thing you did with Princess Nuan?” Xin pointed a finger at him.

Wei hated it when someone pointed a finger at him, so he grabbed it and twisted.

Xin cried in agony.

Suddenly a knife appeared at Wei’s neck, and he twisted at the waist to avoid it. A sword flashed in his hand, and it almost cut through the attacker’s throat. But seeing the fair skin below his sword, he paused. It was Sun Hua. She had sneak-attacked him. He drew his sword back. “If it wasn’t for Sun Nuan, you’d be dead now.”

Her face flashed with fear, and she dropped onto her ass, crying out loud.

“Look, he agreed to the accusation. He has done something to Princess Nuan. Now he wants to silence Princess Hua. We must not allow this,” someone shouted, and the crowd went into an uproar. Everyone looked at him as if they would attack him anytime.

His fingers wrapped around his sword hilt. If they dared to attack, he might be in a big trouble.

# Chapter 4: Growing Troubles

The situation got worse when Sun Hua dropped on the black-paved road, in tears. Numerous disciples roaming outside of the Divine Fragrance Palace entrance gathered around her, giving Li Wei murderous glares.

“You! What did you do to my sister?” Sun Hua slapped the ground, attracting more people that looked at him like they wanted to eat him alive. Her red dress fluttered, and many people gulped.

This wench. Was she trying to get him killed in broad daylight? And couldn’t she show some manners, for being a princess? If she wasn’t Sun Nuan’s sister, he would have slapped her already.

She suddenly started wailing like he had killed her husband.

“You! What did you do to her?” many people shouted.

“He is trying to silence her,” someone else from the old bunch of fools commented.

Li Wei sweated profusely even on the chilly winter day. This mess was getting out of control, and the intense medicinal smell coming from some people made him dizzy. He hadn’t even taken a step inside the sect, and trouble had come looking for him.

Wei glanced at the small open door and the black cauldron looming beyond it, lit with the Undying Gladiator beast’s fire, and then looked at the surrounding crowd. Although the door was only one hundred feet away, it seemed like an eternity away.

“You beast! What did you do to junior apprentice sister Hua?” A girl wearing the Divine Fragrance Palace’s black gown stepped forward and pointed at him. She had a round face and flat body, but she wore an overbearing scent that overpowered every nasty smell in the surrounding area. But her fragrance wasn’t pleasant to start with.

With all his might, Wei suppressed the urge to break her finger.

“Senior apprentice sister Yungun, please save us from this monster. He did something to the princess, and now she is locked up in the imperial dungeon,” Xin shouted, still crying, looking at his broken finger.

“Senior apprentice sister Yungun,” someone else said, “he also did something to Princess Hua. Look at her, crying her heart out. I bet he harassed her.”

“What a beast!” someone else shouted. “He’s got eyes on two sisters, and princesses at that. Does he even place heaven in his eyes?”

Wei almost rolled his eyes. What the hell? In just a few breaths, things had taken a 540-degree turn. He had turned from a normal guy into a wicked criminal. Was there any justice, heavens?

“Bastard! You are courting your death by harassing a disciple of the Divine Fragrance Palace,” Yungun shouted. “As a senior apprentice sister of my junior brothers and sisters, I ask everyone to beat this man black and blue and then take him to the Disciplinary Hall.”

In response, every disciple raised their hands and attacked him.

Wei’s eyes turned cold. If these people wanted to play hard ball, he wouldn’t stay his hands anymore. The girl Yungun had peak qi Foundation Realm cultivation, but that didn’t arouse any interest for him.

“Mad Elephant Stomp.” He lightly stomped his feet on the ground, and a physical force swept from his legs into the ground and then into everyone around him. People fell like cabbages, and soon the whole crowd around him was crying and wailing. With his layer one qi Foundation Realm and layer six body Foundation Realm, these were nothing but flies—except Sun Hua, who had jumped away and had a nasty smile plastered on her face. Everyone else was on the ground.

His face hardened as he glared at her, but she kept taunting him with her eyes, mocking him for falling into her trap so easily.

Compared to her sister, Sun Hua was a disaster ready to explode. He had to be careful around her unless he wanted to move out of his lazy path.

Ignoring her, Wei rushed toward the small door. Although he had recuperated for a month, his blood pearls hadn’t fully replenished yet, and he didn’t want to attract too much trouble. All he wanted was to concoct a few Foundation Expanding Pills and cultivate quietly.

“Senior, please direct me toward the Disciple Administration Hall.” He placed the light brown metal token he had received from Tang Sia on the counter built inside the wall attached to the gate where two disciples checked people going in and out of the sect.

“Junior.” A senior with a small cut on his left cheek took his brown token and handed him a jade slip. “Take this to the fourth building on the path that heads north. You’ll meet Elder Jun, and he will help you settle from there.” He coughed and looked around. “I’ll give you one piece of advice. Stay away from Miss Yungun. You’ll only bring trouble to yourself if you clash with her.”

“I’ll thank senior for your advice.” Wei nodded and grabbed the jade slip to head toward the Disciple Administrator Hall. As per Tang Sia, this hall took care of new disciples joining the sect.

Five minutes later, he reached the Disciple Administrator Hall. It was a large single-floor stone structure with a long counter occupying most of the front hall. A few disciples moved behind the counter, carrying various things, and a few disciples were lined up in front of various counters. There was one old man with a long beard who sat on a chair behind a counter. Eyes closed, he seemed to be in a deep dream.

“Elder Jun, disciple Li Wei is here to enroll in the outer sect.” He placed the jade slip he had obtained from the gate room on the brown wooden counter.

Elder Jun opened one large eye and glared at him and cursed. “You bastard, why did you wake me up?”

Wei was taken back by the sudden curse. Had this old fool gone mad? “Elder Jun, disciple Li Wei is here to enroll in the outer sect. Here is my entrance token.” He pushed the token forward, suppressing his anger.

Elder Jun got up on his feet and slapped his hand on the counter. “Are you nuts? Can’t you see so many disciples here doing the same, and you wake me from my seclusion? Do you know the punishment for disturbing someone else’s cultivation?”

Wei frowned and was about to reply when a commotion arose from the door. Yungun stormed in, pointing at Wei. “Elder Jun, please help me. This bastard harassed me outside of the sect door.”

# Chapter 5: Serious Accusation

“Sexual harassment?” Elder Jun glared at Li Wei before slamming his hand on the wooden counter. “Call Disciplinary Hall members here and arrest this lunatic,” he shouted at a disciple standing in a corner.

Li Wei turned to face the woman with the overbearing scent that irritated him. Even in the thousand-foot-wide Administrator Hall, her scent made him feel stuffy. Seeing her left a rotten taste in his mouth, and his palms turned sweaty. This was a trap. A trap bigger than he’d thought.

“Miss Yungun, don’t go overboard and sputter nonsense. When did I harass you? Do you have proof?” He shifted his weight on his other leg, and the girl stepped back with a twisted face, her gaze stuck on his legs.

“Elder Jun, he is threatening to kill me,” Yungun screamed and ran behind the other disciples standing nearby.

“You bastard!” Elder Jun turned on him in a frenzy. “You’re trying to kill a disciple in front of me. You’re courting death.” He raised his arm and sent a palm attack toward Wei, killing intent flashing through his big watermelon-shaped eyes. With his layer five Bone Baptization Realm cultivation, he had used a profound attack, and brown wood qi swirled around his palm.

Pulling a cold metallic sword out of his storage ring, Wei raised it in the air to defend himself. Simultaneously, he activated his Blood Force Earth shield, and a red aura radiated around his body, enveloping him completely.

Their attacks met in midair, and it blasted Wei toward the back wall. He crashed into the wall, and his body slid down it to the floor. The attack reopened a few old injuries that his body hadn’t fully healed yet, and it made his vision turn black for a moment.

No, he couldn’t pass out now. That would be troublesome.

When he focused his eyes, he saw everyone in a daze, staring at elder Jun whose hand was pierced. White bone was visible through a large cut.

“You dared to attack an elder in Administrator Hall? You are courting your death.” Elder Jun composed himself and conjured a red light behind his head. It was his Bone Manifestation, and the bone was illusory. Although it didn’t match the nearly real bone image Tiang Fu had cultivated, it was still substantial, and Wei knew he would have to go all out once again if he wanted to defeat this bastard. And if he went all out, he would kill this old bastard.

But was that a good choice? Well, he wanted to kill this old man and the bitch who continuously provoked him, but he wasn’t a fool to kill an elder within the sect itself. He wanted to be lazy, not a crazy person leaving trails of blood everywhere.

He wasn’t strong enough to go against the whole Divine Fragrance Palace. So, he crushed a signal talisman given to him by Tang Sia. This situation was beyond redemption, but he didn’t want to flee. Not that he was worried about getting trapped, but if he ran away the Li clan might end up in a predicament they wouldn’t be able to get out of.

A minute passed, yet everyone remained in their positions. No one dared to move.

Other than Yungun’s continuous sobbing, everything remained calm.

“Where is the rapist?” Two elders, old folks stormed in and looked around. They both had a black cauldron marked on their shoulders, and that meant they belonged to the Black Cauldron Faction.

Wei almost threw up blood. He had turned from an assaulter into a rapist in a mere few breaths within a mere few minutes of entering this sect. Was it the right decision to enter this sect?

Maybe not.

“Elders, he is there.” Yungun dropped to the ground and started crying. Looking at her pitiful condition, even Wei believed he did something to her for a moment.

“You bastard. You dared to force an external disciple of the Divine Fragrance Palace? Even death is not a harsh enough punishment for you.” One of the newly arrived elders raised his palm and attacked him. He had layer seven Bone Baptization Realm cultivation, and if Wei didn’t go all out, he might suffer a severe injury.

“Senior Tang, are you going to hide there and watch this happen?” Wei shouted, and a woman wearing a pure white dress appeared from a corner. She had arrived right after he had crushed the talisman, but she’d hidden in the corner watching everything. But with Wei’s divine sense, how could she hide from him?

“Elder Tang.” Everyone bowed, including the three elders who were trying to kill Wei.

Tang Sia stepped in front of Yungun and seized her for a moment. “Wang Yungun. When did he harass you?”

Wei’s eyes turned cold. Now he realized why this Yungun girl had accused him of this serious crime. She was part of the Wang family, and he had recently nearly annihilated Du clan that had relationship with Wang family. Someone had said it right. Enmity didn’t finish until you removed even the weeds around your enemy’s house.

The Du clan tribulations weren’t over yet. It had just shifted to the Wang clan tribulations.

He rubbed his face. This was stupid. All he wanted to do was cultivate peacefully, and trouble just kept arriving.

“Elder Tang, this guy assaulted me right outside of the gate. You can ask anyone.” Wang Yungun sobbed hard.

“Did he touch you inappropriately?”

Wang Yungun nodded and broke into a long cry.

“Do you have proof?” Wei asked in a stern voice.

A grim-faced Sun Hua walked in, followed by a bunch of guys, and that stupid fellow Xin was one of them. “I’ll vouch for her. I saw him assault elder apprentice sister Yungun.”

Other people vouched for her.

“Elder Tang, I apologize for interfering, but this matter is as clear as daylight.” One of the elder with a black cauldron on his shoulder spoke. “We must execute this guy and cleanse the sect.”

Tang Sia frowned and looked at Wei with complex emotions.

Wei chuckled in response. This was awesome. He hadn’t realized it at first, but this was a big plot against him. Everything grew clear in his eyes.

# Chapter 6: Waste Disposal Faction

Sun Hua sneered in her heart when everyone vouched against Li Wei. The bastard had finally been caught in their act, and now there was only one way out: his demise.

Seeing his listless expression, her heart rejoiced. He more than deserved this. How could he do what he’d done to her sister? He’d forced her to go against the Destiny Mirror Sect, and now she was trapped in the dungeon, left to rot for eternity by their imperial father. Of course, she didn’t dare say it out loud. Sun Nuan was a princess, so no one could know her true condition. Even their mother had been demoted to a palace maid position. Hua could only imagine how bad the other concubines were treating her. If it hadn’t been for a favor owed to her mother by the sect master of the Divine Fragrance Palace, Hua would be rotting in a dungeon too.

Tears rolled down her cheeks, and she reached instinctively for her neck. Someone had stolen the pendant her mother had given to her. Her sister was rotting in the dungeon, and when she was asleep, she could feel her sister’s loneliness inside her heart. From birth, she’d had this connection with Nuan’er that allowed her to sense her emotions and premonition even when they were hundreds of miles apart. Sun Nuan could even switch their consciousnesses, but their mother had warned them not to do it ever.

“Princess Hua. Please don’t cry. We will get justice for senior apprentice sister Yungun,” Xin Pu shouted from next to her, and everyone shouted their agreement.

Yes, Li Wei had destroyed their lives, and he would pay with his life. That bastard had even lied to them and told them a fake name. Only after hearing about the Li clan’s fight with the Du clan had she realized his real name was Li Wei.

But why was this bastard laughing suddenly? Had he gone mad with despair? That would be better, because that way he would experience what her mother and sister were facing right now.

Suddenly, she wanted to cry and run back to the imperial capital. But she was bound to this city’s boundaries. If she took a step out of Fragrance Herb City, she would be captured and put in a dungeon by royal guards. Going forward, she had to live inside the Divine Fragrance Palace’s compound while her mother and sister suffered calamity.

How could she?

It was all because of this bastard, so he had to die. But she couldn’t do it by herself. When Wang Yungun had approached her, she’d said yes without giving it another thought. Only when she saw him die would she feel satisfied. And only after being satisfied could she work on her alchemy to become a high-grade alchemist and change the destiny of her mother and sister.

“Elder Jun, please bring justice to senior apprentice sister Yungun and kill that blasphemer,” she cried, pointing at Li Wei.

“So, you all say that I assaulted her and touched her improperly, right?” Li Wei asked, his fierce eyes gazing over everyone present in the Disciple Administrator Hall.

A chill passed down her legs when his deep blue eyes stared at her before moving away. In that one glance, she felt like he had boiled her in thousand-degree hot oil and then skinned her alive. He was too terrifying. That’s why her sister had acted like a fool and fell into his trap.

But she was pulled out of her shock when everyone around her shouted at him. The Wang clan had offered a ton of benefits to all of them, so they had to nod and blame him for everything.

“Wang Yungun, do you also say that I assaulted you and touched you improperly outside of the sect gate half an hour back?” Li Wei pointed at Wang Yungun.

She nodded before breaking into another round of sobbing.

Sun Hua couldn’t help but appreciate Wang Yungun’s acting ability. Wang Yungun was the best at it. She herself was nowhere near her.

“Then let’s see my indecent actions again.” He pulled a small metal chip from his shoulder and threw it in the air. A water bubble appeared out of the metal chip that started displaying the events that took place right before Sun Hua appeared in front of Li Wei.

Wang Yungun’s face darkened, and she threw her shoe at the metal chip floating in the air. But her shoe passed through the water bubble and nothing happened. The bubble continued displaying images with sound.

Sun Hua gulped. This was a Water Image Storing Talisman used by elders to capture important lectures from higher realm cultivators, and only elder-level figures had access to them. How did Li Wei get his hands on one?

And seeing everything happening again, what would happen to her and Wang Yungun now?

This was bad. Very, very bad. Their whole plot had flipped upside down.

\* \* \*

Li Wei sneered inside his heart. Did these people take him for a fool? Even before stepping out of Fei’er’s courtyard, he’d known something like this would happen, so he’d a long chat with Tang Sia. The Wang clan was one of the integral clans in the Divine Fragrance Palace, so they were bound to clash. There was no other choice. Tang Sia had suggested joining another sect, but he’d declined. Other than the super-sects, the Mortal Realm only had a few good alchemy sects, and he wouldn’t go to the Destiny Mirror Sect at any cost. Joining any other sect would be a waste. In this life, he wanted to walk on the path of alchemy, and he wouldn’t steer away from that goal. No matter what.

Seeing his determination, Tang Sia had given him a Water Image Storing Talisman. Although there was an array that could do the same thing, he could not carve it with his current cultivation, so he’d borrowed the talisman from Tang Sia. In the future, he should keep a few of these always with him.

It had paid off on day one. Many people had fallen into his trap, and he realized his days in the sect would be lively. But considering the scale of the trap the Wang clan had set up for him, he was impressed. If he hadn’t had the talisman, he would soon be rotting in a dungeon or on his way to the yellow spring.

However, one thing had defied his expectations. Sun Hua. Why was she targeting him like they had a blood feud between them? Was Sun Nuan really in trouble?

He had an uneasy feeling about this. He ought to check on Sun Nuan. But, for now, he had bigger fish to fry.

His gaze fell on the dark faces of the elders and disciples. “Wang Yungun, do you have an answer for this?” Wei asked as the images replayed up to when he’d executed the Mad Elephant Stomp and rushed away from the crowd.

Wang Yungun shivered, and her face turned grimmer with every passing second.

“Elders, do you’ve anything to say?” he asked arrogantly. These bastards were trying to blame him for something awful, something he hadn’t done, and he would not let it go.

“This proves that you attacked Divine Fragrance Palace disciples in the open,” one of the elders with the black cauldron on his sleeves refuted, but he lacked any confidence in his voice.

“Yes, and that’s a grave crime,” the other elder said and looked at Tang Sia.

“The question is whether he sexually harassed her or not,” Tang Sia said calmly, but there was cold intent in her voice that sent a shiver across many people’s bodies.

“He attacked our disciples. Isn’t that enough proof?” This time it was elder Jun who tried to refute. “He dared to do so even before becoming a disciple of my Divine Fragrance Palace. This is a grave crime. We can’t let him walk away from this.”

“Who said he isn’t a disciple already?”

Smirking, Wei pulled a dark brown emblem out of his storage ring and displayed it to everyone. He had obtained after he opened his eyes in Fei’er’s courtyard. Tang Sia had personally delivered it.

One of the black cauldron elders clenched his fist and roared. “So, you colluded with a disciple to strike against my Wang clan?”

“Do I need to collude with a disciple to take action against your Wang clan?” Tang Sia roared, her face flashing red. “If I want, I can annihilate your clan in one go.”

Everyone went silent. Deathly silent. The elder supporting the Wang clan grew pale.

“Wang Mang, don’t provoke me unnecessarily. I wanted to see how brazenly the Disciple Administrator Hall and Disciplinary Hall would act to deal with a little fellow in the Foundation Realm. Elder Jun, as you dared to attack a new disciple without even listening to his side, you’re stripped of your position at the Disciple Administrator Hall. Go to Ten Deathly Winds Valley to receive your punishment immediately.” She then turned to face two elders from the Disciplinary Hall. “You are relieved from your posts for three months. You can meditate on the wrong thing you did today.”

Wei sneered inside his mind. Having an elder as backup always proved useful. The Divine Fragrance Palace had multiple elders. Those below the Marrow Cleansing Realm were called elders, while those in Marrow Cleansing Realm were called great elders. Then Boiling Blood Realm cultivators were grand elders and then came overseer and sect master who were in Heart Blood Realm. This was a layer weaker than Heavenly Firmament Sect.

Tang Sia turned to Wang Yungun.

Wang Yungun dropped on her knees, and then bowed her head to the ground. “Great elder Tang, please show mercy and spare me.”

Wei was shocked by her words. Great elder? When did Tang Sia become a great elder? He had been calling her senior Tang for the last month. He had a feeling he was in trouble.

“You’re expelled from the Divine Fragrance Palace along with all others that colluded with you.” Tang Sia moved her gaze to the bunch of people who had followed Wang Yungun. Then her gaze stopped on Sun Hua.

Wang Yungun suddenly spoke, her eyes shining with a resolute expression. “Great elder Tang, I swear on my life that Princess Hua has nothing to do with this. I manipulated her to do this task. Please don’t punish her.”

What had gotten into her? Why was she saving Sun Hua?

“Sun Hua.” Tang Sia sighed. “Given the conditions, I can’t let you go unpunished. You’ll work in the Waste Disposal Faction going forward.” She then looked at Wei. “Li Wei, you’ve attacked fellow disciples in the open, and you’ll work in the Waste Disposal Faction as well.”

Wait what?

Before Wei could get the question out, Tang Sia was gone, leaving everyone dumbfounded.

What was that? Why had she just thrown him into the worst faction of the Divine Fragrance Palace? Was this revenge?

Joining this sect was a mistake. A real mistake.

# Chapter 7: Heavenly Wind Cloud Beast Array

A small, dark courtyard welcomed Li Wei. No, calling it a courtyard would be an insult to the word itself. It was a single room attached to a small backyard that opened to a black river overflowing with stink. That was all it was. Even labor disciples in the Heavenly Firmament Sect, his previous life’s sect, had a better place than this. If there hadn’t been fragrant incense burning inside the room when he stepped in, he might have died of the stuffiness already.

“Li Wei, I’m going to kill you!” A scream echoed from the next courtyard over. Sun Hua had been assigned an adjacent courtyard by the Waste Disposal Faction, apparently.

Rubbing his forehead, he cast a glance at the next courtyard, bathed in moonlight, and sighed hard. This was a sigh of regret. Regret for joining this sect, and regret for having Sun Hua as his neighbor.

He scanned the ten-by-twenty room with wary eyes. A thick layer of dust covered the small table in the corner, and when he sneezed, he noticed there was a blue or gray—he couldn’t decide—prayer mat placed on the table. It must have been around for at least a thousand years. It wasn’t in good shape, and some holes exposed the dust-laden wooden table’s uneven surface.

Even his shabby room at the Li compound was better than this, and the surroundings left a bitter taste in his mouth. On top of that, Sun Hua lived next door. Soon, he would be facing assassination attempts in the night. But considering the dark and gloomy atmosphere, he wondered if he could sleep peacefully inside this room at all.

He ran his fingers along the stone wall, removing a thick layer of dust. It seemed that no one had lived here for years.

“Li Wei, I’m going to kill you!” White moonlight illuminated Sun Hua with her hands on her tiny waist. Black patches covered her face and her messed hair. If someone saw her, they might think she had rolled in a pool of mud on the way here.

“You already said that,” Wei replied calmly.

“Did I?” She scratched her neck, then looked at her dirty hands in horror.

Screaming, she ran toward her courtyard, but then she suddenly stopped and came back. “Li Wei, come and kill that thing in my courtyard.” Her small body shivered a little.

“Why would I help you?” Although he didn’t beat this girl for her role in getting him here, he hated her in his bones. For her sister, he maintained some sanity or else he would have slapped her until her teeth were knocked out of her mouth. “Don’t you want to kill me? Then why are you asking for my help?”

Stomping her feet, she turned away. However, when she gazed at her courtyard, she turned back again. “You have to help me kill that thing. I took you inside the Alchemy Comprehension Tower, and you haven’t repaid your debt to me.”

He arched his brows. “Didn’t I pay you with Two Colored Poison Repelling Flower? We traded fairly, and your s—” He bit his lip. There was something wrong with Sun Nuan, and he didn’t want to trigger that subject right away. First, he had to gather some information about her. “Just get lost. I don’t have time to talk with a stupid girl.”

Her nostrils flared, and even in the dim light, he could see her ears turning red. Tomato red. “You—” She pointed her finger at him, and he fought the urge to break it. If she wasn’t Sun Nuan’s sister, he would have broken that finger already.

When he didn’t react, she grabbed the only chair in the room, blew the dust away, and sat on it. “I’m not going back until you kill that thing in my courtyard.”

Wei sneered and ignored her. He didn’t have time for a little girl like her. He had so many things to do, and one of them was to practice the Five Elemental Weapon Art he’d gained access to after waking up. It was strange. Technically, he should have gotten access to it when he reached the qi Foundation Realm in the Five Elemental Way Qi Cultivation Art, but he hadn’t. It might be related to him reaching layer zero of the qi Foundation Realm by using the Essence Burning Art, a forbidden technique, to fight Tiang Fu. Yes, it had to be that.

Anyway, first thing first, he had to make this room habitable.

Reaching the middle of the room, he cleaned a small circular portion before taking out a bottle of beast blood and a bristle brush he had bought from old man Wu’s store back in Old Martial City. Observing their weathered state, he made a mental note to buy the best brush and beast ink available in Fragrance Herb City. Although he could carve arrays with this trash, he might fail because of the quality. Even the quality of his arrays would diminish once he began carving Gold Grade arrays. From Gold Grade onwards, arrays would have grade, tier, and rank, and every tier would have five ranks starting from first rank and going up to fifth rank. Also, the efficiency of two similar arrays would be measured by their ranks. A common brush could downgrade his array ranks by two.

Anyway, this was what he had right now, so he had to go ahead with them.

When the floor became clean enough that his beast blood marking could be carved, he drew two circles first.

“What are you doing?” Sun Hua asked after a while. “Is that an array?” She moved closer and peeked over his shoulder.

Ignoring her, he first drew a small diagram of a cloud beast. It was a Heavenly Wind Cloud Beast. Found only in the Martial Realm, it was famous for its wind-based attacks, and it always lived in clouds. This array used it as an inspiration to connect with heaven and earth to generate wind attacks. Arrays were mysteries of heaven and earth and many of them were inspired by different elements of nature to do wonders for the users.

“It’s so simple. Can I try it?” She pulled the chair next to him and kept peeking at his process.

In the dim moonlight, he wondered how she could see what he was doing, but then he remembered her hereditary power was related to eyes.

“Shut up and let me focus. And you’d better get out of my courtyard if you don’t want to die.” Scolding her once, he focused on his strokes.

“But I want to draw arrays too. They look so easy.”

Wei rolled his eyes and continued with his strokes. This stupid girl was acting like a new array school student. The uninitiated always thought arrays would be easier to draw because they were based on some natural entity or a tangible object. But that thought was far, far away from reality. People only saw the end product. They never thought about intricate complexities working under the hood. Every single line of an array was formed by numerous tiny lines arranged in a specific way. Even a low-tier Bronze Grade array was comprised of hundreds of different tiny lines arranged in a sequence. All the intricacies were impossible to grasp before one reached the Foundation Realm, and one could only grasp the basics then. Real array cultivation started after one reached the Houtian Realm and got their hands on the Earth Grade array. Before the Houtian Realm, one wouldn’t have the divine sense, qi, and comprehension to draw thousands of tiny lines in a particular sequence. Although Wei had a strong divine sense and heaven-defying comprehension due to reincarnation, he still lacked enough qi to draw anything beyond high-tier Silver Grade arrays.

“What’s the difference between arrays and talismans? I’d seen one talisman with nearly the same symbol carved on it,” Sun Hua said.

“I’m warning you again. Get out before you regret it.” Saying this, he focused back on his array. For this array, he was using his abundant wood qi, and he could feel the easiness of drawing with wood qi.

“You’re a jerk. Talismans are much better than these shitty arrays,” Sun Hua complained.

Wei chuckled inside his mind. Talisman creation was another branch of the Mystic Arts of Heaven and Earth, and it too required one to draw diagrams on talisman papers, but they differed a lot from arrays. Compared to arrays, talismans were much simpler. But their might couldn’t be underestimated. Many times, they overpowered the same grade arrays by a large margin, and they were easy to use. One could use talismans with a single strand of qi, and they were used in many battles. The Wood Shield Talisman used by Tiang Fu was one good example. Anyone from the Foundation Realm to the Houtian Realm could use one.

Arrays were complex, and they had a wide variety of applications. Another difference between them was that arrays had source points and power points. For example, the part between the inner and outer circles might have twenty power points. These points would release the might of the array outside. This was only a mid-tier Silver Grade array, so it only had ten power points and five source points located in the beast’s eye.

It was called a Heavenly Wind Cloud Beast Array, and its sole purpose was raising strong winds.

After half an hour, Wei finished drawing the full array, emptying half of his wood qi reserve. If he didn’t have an abundant amount of wood qi, he would have failed to carve this array. After lifting his brush and putting it back inside his storage ring, he raised his head to look into Sun Hua’s shiny eyes. “I’m warning you again. Get lost.” Her eyes reminded him of Sun Nuan. He hoped she was okay.

When Sun Hua didn’t move, he pulled a Qi Stone out of his storage ring and tapped it on a source point before jumping backward. This was going to be fun.