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Chapter 6: Change (1)

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6 - Change (1)

No. 17 was the best in the Cave of Latent Demons.

Woon Seong didn't think she was just the best in terms of talent, he also thought she was the best in how she carried herself among the other children

On top of that, every one of her behaviors had purpose and meaning behind them.

'Considering the actions and behaviors of the instructors, it's safe to say she has quite a background.'

Woon Seong also didn't exclude the possibility that she might have a relative that was a high-ranking member of the Cult.

He was sure it was one of the two.

Either she came to the Cave of Latent Demons to get stronger by her own choice, or she was forced by her family to come.

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However, none of this had anything to do with Woon Seong.

'How would she react if I showed my true talent?'

That was Woon Seong's only concern.

However, it was a little surprising that No. 17 actually came and visited him, who was ranked No. 900, out of her own volition.

"What do you want?"

Woon Seong stared at No. 17 beyond the wooden door with a slightly cold look.

At the words, No. 17 gazed slowly at Woon Seong and opened her mouth.

"You did it, didn't you?"

'What?'

At the mysterious words from No.17, Woon Seong stared at No. 17 silently.

Of course, the matter of No. 185 passed through Woon Seong's mind briefly.

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"No. 185."

'Ugh.'

At the words of No. 17, the Woon Seong clicked his tongue.

'Was she watching?'

His weak body and talent that was still making improvements, wasn't helping him right now, seeing that she must have been able to sneak by his senses.

It wasn't just the realm of Woon Seong that had lowered, but his senses were still slightly dull because of his body that still lacked a lot of things.

"Yeah, but it's not like I broke any of the rules here."

"So you've been hiding your power all along haven't you?"

Woon Seong glared coldly at No. 17.

"Why should I tell you even if I was, it's not like you're any different."

No. 17 despite being ranked so high, was actually also hiding a vast amount of her talent and power. Of course even though Woon Seong's senses might have dulled a little bit, it wasn't like he could blatantly miss

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that kind of thing, especially if the person in question was right in front of him.

When Woon Seong pointed out that fact, No. 17's eyes widened with surprise.

"You knew?"
"......"

When Woon Seong did not answer, No. 17 smiled faintly.

"You're interesting.. hehe!"

As Woon Seong predicted, No. 17 was one of the descendants of the high-ranking members of the Cult.

Thanks to this, her skills were already incredibly strong that it was hard to find an opponent among her peers.

Even the instructors couldn't underestimate her ability.

Ordinary children would not notice that No. 17 was hiding her power, which was normal.

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However, Woon Seong spoke of it as if it were an obvious fact right in front of her.

"It's because I have some pretty good eyes for that type of thing."

At the words of No. 17, Woon Seong replied brusquely.

She had already seen himself knock down No. 185 with incredible ease.

It didn't matter to Woon Seong that she was hiding her power; what concerned him, was her cleverness.

Furthermore, stating the fact that she was hiding her power, it was an indirect threat.

However, it seemed that the indirect threat from Woon Seong had gotten through to her.

She pressed her lips lightly with her fingertips.

"Well, then I guess I'll keep your secret for a while. By the way......"

It was a bit of a surprise that she did not just turn around and leave but rather, wanted to leave some words for Woon Seong.

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Woon Seong glared daggers at No. 17 preparing for any kind of counter-threats she might give.

"No. 185 was gnashing his teeth at you."

Woon Seong sighed at her words.

It seemed she was still a child by heart and in her sincerity.

Perhaps she had gained some confidence in thinking that No. 900, Woon Seong, had only just learned the basics of Qi cultivation that day.

She probably thought that he didn't really have that much power, but she still thought he was interesting.

Her line of thinking was a common mistake for those who had high praise from a young age and had little experience in the *true* world of Murim.

However, he already knew what he would do with No. 185 if he dared go again after he spared him and clearly told him that there would be no second chances with mercy......

'If he does I'll kill him.'

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By the time Woon Seong calmly wrapped up his thoughts, No. 17 spoke again with a cheery and innocent voice.

"Wow, you're so calm. You must be able to knock down No. 185 any time you want."

"I've told you this before, but don't talk about it as if you're any different.

You should know well that this Cave of Latent Demons is not a place you can slack around in"

"What? Hahaha....HAHAHAHAH!"

Woon Seong's words made No. 17 laugh loudly into laughter.

The eyes of the children who were outside still in the hall turned and all focused in the direction of where No. 17 and Woon Seong were talking.

"My name is Ah-Young. My last name is a secret. So it's just Ah-Young. What about you?

Woon Seong, clearing his throat hinting to No. 17 to get lost.

"No. 900. That's all you need to know."

Boom-

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At the end of the sentence, Woon Seong shut the door coldly on Ah-Young.

Ah-Young kept her smile though even after getting the door shut on her, her eyes twinkling in half-crescents as if she had just found something incredibly interesting.

"He's so interesting..hehe.. I'll guess I'll have to wait and see."-

Three days passed by.

During that time, Woon Seong tried to fuse the Dark Flower Red Spirit and the Orthodox Tempered Qi

Of course, it was incredibly difficult to try and fuse two completely different cultivation methods into one.

However, it wasn't impossible. Also, Woon Seong was incredibly well versed in the countless types of qi cultivation methods that were located within the Spearmaster Sect's library.

Despite the Spearmaster Sect only being a Sect that had a single successor, it had accumulated countless amounts of literature and qi cultivation methods.

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'There's nothing impossible in the world of martial arts. I just need to be meticulous and take it slowly.'

In fact, there had already been some tangible results.

To some extent, the two methods began to fuse already.

Of course, there were still certain pathways and flows that had not been fused yet.

But Woon Seong could go over each and every one of those and fuse them one by one.

At night, he practiced the Heavenward Soul Earthen Body.

Woon Seong also faithfully participated in daytime training.

First, on the third day, he raised his hand that signaled that he felt energy within him.

The instructors, who did not expect much from a talentless No. 900, were a little surprised.

It was much faster than expected for them.

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However, they did not believe that No. 900 at first, but when they confirmed it by feeling the pathways and flow of qi that Woon Seong had allowed them to see, they could not deny reality.

Shortly after revealing the fact he could feel energy within his body, the way he trained was slightly changed by the instructors.

On the fifth day-

There were two incredibly noticeable changes for him.

First of all, the weight of the iron ring on the arms and legs increased by half.

The total number of pathways he had opened with his new cultivation method was 10, and he had succeeded in successfully fusing 4 of them completely.

Another change was the fact that small balls were given to the children during their morning mountain climbing.

'Don't let go of the ball and also don't let it get taken away by others.'

If the ball was taken away, there was no breakfast even if the children were successful in bringing a flag down.

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On the other hand, even if you couldn't bring a flag down, you would be given breakfast if you somehow collected three balls.

There was a constant scramble among the children to take the flags and balls from each other.

As this change started to get fully implemented, the children naturally learned how to use their bodies properly through several scuffles and fights from the cutthroat addition to the morning training.

Of course, Woon Seong clicked his tongue when he saw the other kids starting fighting with each other.

"I can't believe you're using a simple capture the flag type of training like this."

It was an indirect way of training the children to know what desperation was, and what fighting for your life on the line meant.

'It doesn't matter to me though, because I will not bow to anyone if it comes to meeting my goals.'

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Of course, Woon Seong never lost his flag or ball. He clearly distinguished himself among the other kids by knocking them down mercilessly.

'It wouldn't be bad to show some of my skills if it means shaking off these annoying bastards.'

Woon Seong had started to become aware that the instructors had started to observe him more in secret, but they did that for all promising individuals so he knew it wasn't a bad thing.

Especially since he had openly shown incredible speed in regards to qi cultivation, their gazes had become more keen.

As Woon Seong steadily strengthened his position, No. 185, who had been stubborn and starting to plot revenge, did not dare to attack Woon Seong.

When Woon Seong had first felt the energy, he knew he had to start distinguishing himself from that point on. It was not a question anymore since the fork in the road was coming near. The fork in the road had two options. Become strong, or be the weak ones who were trampled on.

And so... another year in the Cave of Latent Demons had passed.

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* * *

A year was by no means a long time, nor was it a short time.

However, considering the children's ages, it was clear that a year was by no means .

No wonder, over the past year, the appearance of the children in the Cave of Latent Demons had changed remarkably.

It was only a year, but the boys began to develop their muscles, jaw lines and their respective masculine traits.

On the other hand, even the girls began to show a very small, but feminine appearance.

It wasn't just changes related to gender physiques however.

The children's gazes were sharpened and their mentalities had started to show qualitative changes.

The daily competition over meals was getting fiercer day by day.

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Of course, what was distinctively different in this past year, was that not a single child dared to provoke Woon Seong, otherwise known as No. 900 to them.

For the past year, the children were well aware of the fact that Woon Seong had been undefeated in combat, just like No. 17.

Sometimes, after several consecutive victories, there were some people who rushed to their confidence thinking that he might be exhausted, but they were ruthlessly crushed by Woon Seongs hands before they had even taken 5 steps near him..

What happened a month ago was also crucial in their decision to consciously avoid any kind of contact with Woon Seong.

When Woon Seong received his meal in the morning once again, without missing a single meal for over a year, some of the children who saw this with bitterness joined together into a large group and tried to attack Woon Seong.

For once, the other children observing this take place, thought that No. 900 had finally met his match.

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However, the result was one that not even the instructors observing Woon Seong from the shadows expected.

Woon Seong completely demolished and ruthlessly beat all 5 of them with complete and utter ease.

Since then, the other children had to make a conscious effort to even avoid eye contact with Woon Seong.

Even No. 185, which was looking for a chance to exploit and exact his revenge, completely avoided Woon Seong's gaze.

'Pft. Even I can't adjust to this change in treatment.'

Woon Seong smiled and laughed internally at the children who were clearly trying to avoid his eyes.

Over the past year, there had been many changes that Woon Seong had undergone..

First of all, the effect of the Heavenward Soul Earthen Body began to develop his body in earnest and was clearly making visible changes.

His bone and muscle density and even cognitive abilities had increased several fold. Even No. 185 who had been almost 2 heads taller than him

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just a year ago, was barely a few centimeters taller than Woon Seong recently.

On top of that, my shoulders began to broaden quite a bit.

Now it was hard for anyone to imagine that Woon Seong's current body belonged to the old No. 900.

'It's not fully completed, but if I can break through a few more meridians, I can exert more force than I currently can by several fold.'

At least that's what the Woon Seong thought.

Both his internal and external frame had been tempered by both the Heavenward Soul Earthen Body and his newly completed cultivation technique that he had been working on developing the past year. He had named this technique after much deliberation.

Tempered True Blossom (磨砂真花): The firm and unshaking roots will bloom a true flower.

It was the result of fusing the Dark Flower Red Spirit and Orthodox

Tempered Qi cultivation techniques. It was something even Woon Seong

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felt shocked from the strength this cultivation technique could possibly cultivate for him.

Chapter 7: Change (2)

Chapter 7: Change (2)

7 - Change (2)

"Starting today, you are all going to begin training with weapons!"

It was exactly a year ago when Woon Seong first showed any proficiency with pole-type weapons. A direct result of this, was beating on the other children with a flag-pole on the first day of the mountain climbing with them.

Over the past year, the surviving children had become stronger and the number of children dying had decreased significantly.

Therefore, the children that had made it this far, were somewhat confident in their abilities.

In addition, the weight of the iron bracers the children were given had increased to 45 kgs.

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Of course, it was no longer a weight that was possible to climb the mountain without using internal qi.

Woon Seong was also no exception to this even with his newly strengthened body from the Heavenward Soul Earthen Body, was no exception to this. However, this also gave him the opportunity to practice circulating his new cultivation technique.

Of course, Woon Seong did not stop at just circulating his new technique and internal qi. He began to penetrate the clogged veins and muscles that were strained or tightened within his body and cleansed his body of any impurities on a microscopic level.

'It's going to be a lot to learn for the other children, since learning about the basics of whatever weapon they choose on top of their already incredibly tight training schedule will be difficult.'

In any case, it wasn't much of a problem for Woon Seong since he knew exactly what weapon he would choose and already was incredibly well versed in the mastery of it.

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But for the other children, they were incredibly excited about finally learning about the types of weapons they wanted to choose, because it was a tell-tale sign of finally becoming a recognized martial artist.

In front of these excited children, the senior instructor and other instructors at the Shiwan Hall took out three carts.

"As you know, these are the weapons that are the staples of the martial arts societies today."

The instructors each took out a single-edged and heavy sword, a light double-edged sword, and the spear.

They were called the Dao, the Jian and the Spear

But what they put down was the most basic appearance of the three weapons.

"You will choose one of these weapons and learn it's corresponding martial arts. If each of you has a weapon you want, go and stand in front of it."

The children began to hesitate at the words of the senior instructor.

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It was evident that each of them were agonizing over which weapon would be the best for them.

But there were also children who were moving fast among them.

One was the No. 17 and the other was Woon Seong.

Ah-young walked without hesitation and stood before the Jian.

It was pretty much an absolute given fact that Woon Seong darted right over to the spear.

The next one to move was No. 185. No. 185 looked at Woon Seong and Ah-young, and stood before the Dao with an uncomfortable expression.

No. 17, No. 185 and No.900. The three strongest children in this hall had picked their weapons.

Only after this, did the other children begin to move hesitantly.

"Decide carefully! This weapon will be with you for the rest of your life!"

The instructor's warnings and instructions continued, as the children stopped and moved again as if to think again.

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Most children chose the Jian, of course. It was the most classic and commonly used weapon in Murim. It offered balance, strength and mobility in a proportionate manner.

Next, the number of children who chose Daos was the second highest, and the number of children who chose the spear was... the lowest.

It was a natural result because there was a certain amount of reverence for the spear due to its complex mastery compared to the other weapons.

Even the children that had not heard much about the spear or the respect masters of the spear received, they knew from a glance that using a spear was no easy feat.

'That has nothing to do with me.'

The instructors also looked over what each child chose and advised them if one weapon would be more suited to them or not.

The children were then given three books each on their individual weapon, leaving them with quite a bit to look at when learning the basics of their respective weapon.

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'Is it the Seven Stars of the spear?'

Two of the books were the basis of movement techniques involved and a manual for the weapon titled 'The Seven Stars of the Spear'.

Woon Seong recalled old memories when he saw the cover of it.

'I felt really excited when I first learned it.'

The other two books that were added to that were the Six Combinations of the Fist and the Cloud and Wind Movement technique.

The knowledge of all basic, intermediate and some advanced techniques were ingrained into Woon Seong's very soul.

After setting up the foundation of his body and mind with the Heavenward Soul Earthen Body, he had developed an incredibly high-level qi cultivation technique and now... he finally had the spear.

"From now on, you will have time to study and learn about the martial arts of your weapons on your own! The instructors will be waiting here, so if you have any questions or things you don't know, we will do our best to teach you!"

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The senior instructor spoke to the children in a more lenient manner compared to the first time he started here.

He wasn't acting generous without reason though.

'I'll help you learn, and in return learn about how many of you will survive in half a year. Hehe, if you don't learn how to do it properly, you'll probably have a hard time surviving. Even if you survive, you'll be half-dead.'

He was just having the same mentality as always since it provided him the opportunity to report more in detail to his superiors.

The instructors' eyes that were set on the children were shining with a rather frightening look.

Woon Seong took his booklets and went to the corner of the cave.

He looked through the booklet first.

He knew everything, but he read it one more time just in case there was anything new since he had died.

There was nothing new it seemed.

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He already knew every single thing in the book, so he only looked at the book as a cover to his skills from the instructors.

'The basics of spearmanship, the thrust, the strike and the cut.'Picking up the spear, Woon Seong smiled faintly and started to move.

The Cut, picking up the spear and letting it bounce and whip with sharp movements like a hummingbird.

Striking, winding the spear like the spiral of a conch shell and exploding it forward with force.

The Thrust, stab forwards with unwavering confidence and precision.

Those were just the three most basic movements of spearmanship.

Combine those with parrying, blocking, twirls and many other fundamentals, it created an infinite series of possibilities. There were 36 moves within the spearmanship manual. Putting those numbers and multiplying them by each other was just another reason why spearmanship was regarded as the most complex and yet the most revered weapon of choice.

Wrrring-Siik!

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The spear in the hands of Woon Seong moved with utmost elegance, precision and rampaging ferocity. He did this in a quiet corner of the cave to avoid others eyes. Yet... there were three sets of eyes that were secretly watching his every move with all 3 having different expressions on their faces.

The senior instructor, Ah-Young, and lastly No. 185.

* * *

No. 185 had been constantly looking for a chance at revenge on Woon Seong ever since his humiliating and embarrassing defeat to him.

Having lived in the world of Murim and seeing his Master get killed in front of his very eyes by people that plotted against him in the dark, Woon Seong knew very well what those people looked like.

Those with violent tendencies and not much brain to their brawn tend to die early on in life. Those who plot in the darkness and take their chances carefully and only act when absolutely needed to. No. 185 however, was not the smartest child in the Cave of Latent Demons.In fact, he didn't hesitate to fight with other children or start unnecessary arguments.

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In addition, he rarely lost to the other children.

It was because he was quite big compared to others his age, and he had been trying his hardest to get back at Woon Seong.

However, he couldn't even think about challenging Woon Seong yet.

'How the hell am I supposed to defeat that monster?'

He couldn't think of any method or scenario in his head where he could possibly win against No. 900.

In addition, the group attack by some of the other children not too long ago had failed miserably. Even trying to use numbers against No. 900 was useless.

Woon Seong had clearly set himself apart from the other children when he smashed apart the group attack the others had tried.

But what frightened him even more, was seeing Woon Seong wielding the spear in the corner of the hall.

It had only been one hour since Woon Seong had received the book on basic spearmanship and there was no way for anybody to read all of the

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contents within the book in under an hour. Yet, Woon Seong was shattering all sorts of common sense within No. 185's head right now.

The way he was wielding the spear was skilled. Too skilled.

No. 185 sighed deeply and grinded his teeth in anger.

'Fuck you, you bastard.'

No. 185 did not forget the humiliation of being thrashed and made a fool by Woon Seong.

Whenever he saw him, his broken arm from that time felt like it was still throbbing. His body trembled with anger when he remembered the day he was still in pain for weeks after, even though the instructors said there was nothing wrong with his body.

He was going to get revenge no matter what. He just had to play it safe and hide his ambition and anger until it was ripe.

Only stupid people would show their anger and pick a fight when they were clearly outmatched.

And the eyes of No. 185, which gritted its teeth, was the eerie and frighteningly talented No. 900.

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"I guess No. 900 really has changed."

Sang In-hyo nodded as he listened to the report from the senior instructor in charge of Shiwan Hall.

Surely as the report says, it was clear No. 900 had changed. It was so baffling and almost unexplainable how this child was deemed so low in terms of talent.

Now even Sang In-hyo was visibly interested in the changes from No. 900.

"It wouldn't be too difficult for him to pass the Gates of Life and Death in half a year."

Sang In-hyo nodded at the words of the senior instructor.

The Gates of Life and Death was the first gate of trials symbolizing the Cave of Latent Demons.

This event was an event so dangerous since almost half of the children would die from this trial alone, which was incomparable to the past trials they had been facing up till now.

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If they could cross this Gate, you could be officially recognized as a Demonic Soldier within the Cult of the Heavenly Demon.

A Demonic Soldier was the lowest of ranks within the Cult of the Heavenly Demon, as there were the Demonic Captains, then the Demonic Generals and even after that, the Great Demons which were ranked just below the 10 Demonic Masters and the Heavenly Demon himself.

In particular, the 10 Demonic Masters were almost never seen in public and directly served under the Great Heavenly Demon directly.

However, a Demonic Soldier was by no means an easy rank to achieve.

Fewer than 10,000 of the 100,000 members who made up the entire population of the Cult, were able to become recognized as Demonic Soldiers...

What made the Cave of Latent Demons so special as a training program, was the fact that kids under the age of 15 were able to become ranked as such.

Reaching that level of martial arts in Murim was very difficult.

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'But it's the Cave of Latent Demons. We don't hold this program just to produce mere Demonic Soldiers. Reaching that rank should be the bare minimum of talent required.'

The Cave of Latent Demons was made as a special program to produce Demonic Captains.

Only 2,000 members of the Cult could be strong enough to be called Demonic Captains.

In addition, this Cave of Latent Demons was a little more special than the previous generations that came from the Cave.

'We have to produce a few Demonic Generals. It would be even better if we could somehow produce a Great Demon....'

In fact, Sang In-hyo knew expecting to raise a Great Demon was too much. He himself was barely ranked within the ranks of the 200 Great Demons in the Cult.

In any case, even if only one or two were able to reach the levels of Demonic Generals, it would be already considered an incredible success.

"How's the preparation going for the Gates of Life and Death?"

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"We sent out some of our own to buy and even train some of the beasts within the trial. By the time the Gates of Life and Death open, they will definitely not be normal beasts."

At the words of the senior instructor, Sang In-hyo nodded satisfactorily.

"Okay, let's reward those who pass the Gates of Life and Death with 3

Demonic Medicinal Pills of the Ayu Kalpa and also open the Divine

Treasury of the Demonic Sea. After all, it was the rewards the Heavenly

Demon himself personally ordered to give them."

At Sang In-hyo's words, the chief instructor shouted with his head down.

"Yes Sir!"

* * *

Half a year had passed within the Cave of Latent Demons.

In the meantime, the children had become accustomed to their respective weapons.

Of course, each of them had mastered the basics of those weapons.

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In addition, after learning martial arts, the weight of the iron bracers on their arms and legs no longer increased.

As a result, the children were moving much more freely than before, even though they wore 45 kg bracers on all 4 limbs at all times.

They were moving as if they weren't even wearing the iron bracers at all anymore.

The same was true for Woon Seong.

In addition, Woon Seong gained one more achievement unlike the other children.

'I have finally completed the True Tempered Blossom to it's finest form.'

He had successfully fused them before completely. But only now, did the two methods resonate in harmony!

Creating one's own qi cultivation technique was by no means an easy task. Completing in successfully creating a high-level technique? It was something only the greatest of legends within all of Murim could have been said to accomplish.

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It was proof. Proof that Woon Seong was making the strides and preparations necessary to exact his revenge!

What was very interesting about this cultivation technique was that it had a special form of energy that Woon Seong could now utilize in earnest.

Intimidation Qi was what he had used to mask his levels of cultivation before. Now he could finally materialize that specific energy outside of his body.

It was incredible.

Then one day, there was an unusual announcement made.

The senior instructor standing in front of the confident children, slowly opened his mouth.

"Half of you will die today."

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Chapter 8: The Gates of Life and Death (1)

Chapter 8: The Gates of Life and Death (1)

8 – The Gates of Life and Death (1)

There was a lot of dense and saturated demonic qi. The demonic qi that unique to the lower depths in the Cave of Latent Demons, oozed out in the area around them.

There were only two torches that were glowing in a tight space that could be used for visibility.

Even with the two sources of light, it was difficult to illuminate the entire cave.

Two gates stood at the very ends of the dark cave.

The entrance to the gates had long been blocked by a large rock in the past.

Woon Seong swallowed his saliva and repeated the name of the place.

"The Gates of Life and Death."

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If you somehow managed to cross the gate, you'll be able to live. If you don't, you'll die then and there.

What the senior instructor said earlier was echoing again in Woon Seong's head, as he recalled the name of the gate.

"When you enter the gate of life and death, you will surely face a certain crisis that will put you in a life or death situation. It is not simply a crisis that can survive even though you have been training hard so far. Struggle with all your might! If you fail, you will die knowing the pain of being eaten alive."

"If you can solidify your mentality as a warrior and the body of an adult, you will be stronger. Through this opportunity, you will have the opportunity to achieve even greater heights!"

"Keep in mind, The Cult of the Heavenly Demon is strong. There is no need for those who are weak. Be strong for the Cult, not only in your body but also in your heart. If you do, this Cult of the Heavenly Demon will give you a place to live!"

That's what the senior instructor said.

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There was not a single word in his speech that was useless, or hinting at something further.

'The pain of being eaten alive, limb by limb.'

Woon Seong noticed from the words, what the hidden hints were in this Gate of Life and Death.

It sounded like there was a good chance it was something to do with an animal of sorts.

In addition, the mentality desired from members of the Cult, was a mentality that did not take joy in killing, but rather was confident with it, if required.

They needed members that would not hesitate.

'It's not a problem for me.'

Woon Seong grabbed the spear in his hands.

This time, it wasn't the same wooden spear he received from the instructors before. It was an iron spear. It was much more durable and could be called a 'real weapon'.

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Woon Seong smiled pleasantly at the sensation of the cold and sharp iron on the tip of the spear. It felt nostalgic to hold a real spear for once, since after his death.

Woon Seong slowly started to arouse his internal qi.

His senses expanded and stretched throughout the cave. At the same time, he could sense the movement of a four-legged animal moving throughout the tunnel.

Crrrrr-

Out of the darkness of the cave, the beast started to emerge into the full range of Woon Seong's senses and was visible in plain sight.

Watching it closely, Woon Seong stared at the predatory amber eyes of the beast.

Woon Seong's eyes flashed. He had already noticed what it was.

It was a Grey Wolf from Mt. Tian Shan!

It was a little smaller in size than a normal wolf, but its movement could not be compared to the average wolf.

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On top of that, a tough hide and it's incredibly powerful legs that could destroy entire tree trunks on their own.

'At least I have a bit of luck here.'

What was rather lucky for Woon Seong was that it was only a single Grey Wolf. Grey wolves and even normal wolves for that matter, were ten times more dangerous when they were in packs.

However, just because it was by itself did not mean that the Grey Wolf was not dangerous.

'No wonder they gave me an iron spear.'

If it was a wooden spear, he wouldn't have been able to pierce his tough skin.

Woon Seong grabbed the spear and coated it roughly with a thin layer of qi.

The Grey Wolf started to circle around Woon Seong looking for an opening.

It observed Woon Seong's movement around his hips, arms and thighs keenly with it's glowing amber eyes.

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The kinds of actions the wolf was displaying was odd. It wasn't completely odd to most people, but to Woon Seong who had more than enough combat experience in Murim, he could see something off.

'It's been trained to deal with humans.'

To be exact, the wolf had been trained with martial artists, seeing how it reacted to Woon Seong's movement of internal qi.

Wasn't the survival rate of this Gate 50 percent like the instructor said earlier?

'Umm.'

As Woon Seong observed the wolf closely, he became more certain that the wolf had been trained to fight with martial artists to a proficient degree.

The members of the Cult had been training it behind closed doors for over half a year, just for this trial.

It was only natural that after several beatings and fights, the grey wolf had learned to adapt to the movements of martial arts practitioners.

'It's not exactly an easy trial.'

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But there was nothing Woon Seong couldn't do if he truly put his mind to it.

In addition, Woon Seong was now able to use all of his abilities in earnest, since nobody was spectating the trials individually. They were only told to meet at the end of the tunnel past the gate. If they didn't, then they were assumed dead. *Wuuuongg*

Suddenly a fearsome aura started to emit from Woon Seong's body.

It was something that frightened any being regardless of their origin if they were weak.

The dark currents of aura started to coat around Woon Seong's body.

Whoosh-

It was the first time he was going to use it in battle since developing the new technique.Intimidation Qi

Whoo-whoo-whoo-whoo-

The spear in Woon Seong's hands, started to be coated once more in another layer of the fearsome Intimidation Qi, started to resonate fiercely as if in synchronization with Woon Seong's very soul.

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'I'll kill you, beast.'

.....and as he lept forwards, Woon Seong's eyes started to glow with a golden hue.

* * *

"By now, all the children must have been killed or arrived at the Saengsa Temple."

It was the space provided for those who passed their trials of life and death to rest and eat.

Thus, the trials of Saengsa Temple were divided into two groups.

"Yes, I am. I'm sure they've met their opponents by now."

Sang In-hyo nodded at the words.

The senior instructor took it as a sign of permission to speak further and continued to report.

"As you said, the top 30 children who have been showing better results than the rest have been paired with the alpha wolves instead of the regular grey wolves."

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They were quick to react to human movements, react to qi and were much stronger than other wolves.

In order to kill the grey wolves, it was necessary to press them with a formidable force from the very start, because they had the tendency of learning how to adapt to their opponents incredibly quickly and getting stronger due to their endless stamina.

"Will the other children survive?"

"For children who are descendants of direct cult members, or children who have known some degree of martial arts prior to coming here; they are probably quite likely to survive."

"Otherwise, more than half will die."

In fact, Sang In-hyo was expecting about half of the children to die through the Trials of Life and Death.

It was no exception even for the children who stood out, since they had been paired with the alpha wolves of the grey wolves.

"But if they survive, they'll be more than just a regular old member of the Cult!'

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It was a strong gamble. High risk for high rewards

Only the strong would survive and enjoy the benefits of passing.

For those who didn't?'It was just the necessary sacrifice, since they can't be a help to the Cult.'

In the process, this Trial created a new kind of mentality within those that might be still soft-hearted. Kill or be killed.

The children who survived, were likely to become strong figures for the cult.

'The future of the Cult is looking better and better.'

Sang In-Hyo smiled at the thought of it.

The most important results were for the thirty people who would face the alphas of the grey wolves.

No. 1, No. 17 and No. 109 would pass easily.

Among the others, the ones who were originally learning martial arts prior to coming here would pass somehow.

But, there would be some children who didn't.

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Most of them were children who stood out due to their initial talent, but got lazy and complacent with their training.

Then suddenly, one particular child came to Sang In-hyo's mind.

No. 900 who was at the bottom of all standards, and most outsiders would think it was a miracle that such a low numbered child had survived this long in the Cave of Latent Demons.

In addition, he was showing incredible achievements that even No. 1 wasn't able to pull off.

Last time, a senior instructor he had managed had said, "If it were him, it would be easy to pass the trial."

But, that would have been the situation if he were in a regular trial.

No. 900 was placed in the same temple as the strongest 30 individuals.

The lowest number to survive till now, even when compared to past generations, was placing in the top 30 of children.

"I'm ooking forward to it, No. 900."

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Would he be able to pass it easily? Or would he pass with difficulty? Sang In-Hyo for some reason just felt that there was no way No 900 would not pass. This thought even intrigued him since he wasn't sure why he was so confident in such an abnormal child. But regardless, he just needed to see the results soon.

* * *

Krrrr-

The grey wolf in front of Woon Seong was bleeding just a little bit.

The distance between the two was about 5 meters.

The two didn't dare take their eyes off each other, just staring at the other with wary eyes from that distance.

The Intimidation Qi that Woon Seong had planned to use for the first strike, was nowhere to be seen.

'I was thinking of killing it in one attack using the intimidation qi, but it would be a waste to not use this opportunity to practice my martial arts away from prying eyes.'

He changed his mind.

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He really had been feeling restrained having to hide his true talent, even while standing out.

Therefore, he really wanted to try and see what he was currently capable of without any special techniques.

He didn't even circulate his internal qi.If he did that, he would have slaughtered the alpha wolf a long time ago.

He wanted to find out how much stronger he had become in this body with just his 5 senses and nothing else but his spear.

The body of the Woon Seong, who finished his thoughts, moved like lightning. By kicking the floor with a sharp movement, he moved the spear with intensity and unfolded his advanced techniques he had learned within the Spearmaster Sect. Not the basic moves they were taught with the manuals within the Cult.

Whirl-

Woon Seong twirled the spear as it got close, using the centripetal force to slash at the wolf with greater strength.

Kkkkkkkkkkkkkkkk!

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The alpha wolf felt that something was different and retreated from Woon Seong immediately.

Leaping on all fours it jumped back and started to run around Woon Seong at high speeds in a circular motion in an attempt to confuse his senses.

Yet Woon Seong knew where it was.

'Left!'

As soon as Woon Seong felt the direction of the air change, he tilted his waist and body backwards but felt a slight sting on his left cheek.

The air was pushed out and a terrible tension was imminent.

Woon Seong felt angered that it had managed to wound him since it had become desperate and made moves that weren't easy for him to practice with. Coming back at Woon Seong for another attack, Woon Seong lowered the tip of the spear and stabbed upwards.

Puck-

"Kang-!"

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He stabbed the eye of the wolf that dared to injure him.

Using his internal qi at this point, since he was pissed that it was time to finish this, he rushed forwards and followed the wolf trying to retreat.

He could see the movements of the wolf in the complete pitch black ends of the passage. No to be fair, it would be that he could 'feel' where it was intuitively.

The Grey wolf had stopped a little bit ahead seeing that the exit was blocked off for it. Woon Seong creeping up on it with devilish eyes, started to envelop the entire space with a surge of Intimidation Qi, sparing no bit of his full strength now. Woon Seong's shoulders twitched suddenly and then his figure completely disappeared from his spot. He reappeared right before the wolf's snout and a flurry of dark and eerie stabs exploded from his speartip as Woon Seong grinned.

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Chapter 9: The Gates of Life and Death (2)

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9 – The Gates of Life and Death (2)

The sound of the spear slashing through the air sounded like an onslaught of arrows being shot out from a legion of archers.

How many times did he stab in that one moment?

Woon Seong, who had been emitting his intimidation qi relentlessly, quickly stepped back.

Then he slowly moved around and observed the trapped wolf that was still on its feet.

The alpha wolf did not move properly as it was thoroughly made a fool by Woon Seong and carefully observed back at Woon Seong.

'The wounds are shallow.'

Woon Seong looked over at the small wounds inflicted on the hide of the grey wolf.

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The attack was a dangerous one, yes. But, was rather shallow compared to the intended result that Woon Seong had hoped for.

There was no fatal wound.

The evidence was displayed through the wolf's fierce gaze despite gasping for breath.

'It's gonna take a while to get past it with a battle of endurance.'

His other option was to risk it with his life as collateral.

However, Woon Seong did not intend to risk his life on some mere animal.

Besides, this wouldn't even take that long if Woon Seong took it seriously.

Grrrr-

Did the wolf notice that Woon Seong was observing it, or did it think that Woon Seong was looking down on itself?

It cried as if it were offended and bared its teeth while showing its hostility.

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However, Woon Seong responded to the gesture with a snort as if the wolf were being cute.

"Haht. pft-"

'What a joke, let's just finish this.'

Whoooooooooh-

There was an aura of qi that started to permeate itself around Woon Seong's body.

Soon, a dark fog began to flow out, and the eyes on Woon Seong slowly turned gold.

His internal qi started to circulate and churn within his dantian.

Criiing- Criiiing-

Maybe it was because of the new and unfamiliar aura around Woon Seong that scared the wolf.

The wolf let out a wary cry as for the first time in the battle, it intuitively sensed its own death.

Then the attitude and cry changed once again into a low growl.

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grrrrrrr-

It was similar to before as it sounded threatening but, fundamentally different as it sounded a bit desperate.

However, that kind of measly threat would not work on Woon Seong.

Woon Seong saw the change of mentality in the wolf as he gripped his spear.

'That works. At least now, this seems worthy enough of a fight.'

The wolf was standing tall even in its final moments, as if to prove that it was worth fighting for even if the chance of survival was minimal.

Woon Seong slowly approached it, circulating his internal qi.

As Woon Seong approached he could examine the wolf's features.

In fact, it was very surprising to Woon Seong that it seemed somewhat similar to himself in his own final moments of his last life, although Woon Seong did not die with fear in mind.

This wolf had never known fear throughout its entire life, but was definitely starting to feel it as Woon Seong circled around it.

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In fact, it was not intimidated even when the instructors trained it to fight against other martial artists.

But right now, that very wolf was tucking its tail in front of Woon Seong.

It was a scene that clearly showed the effectiveness of the derivative technique Woon Seong was developing with the Intimidation Qi.

An ordinary person would most likely faint on the spot if they were exposed to this technique.

'If there was a standout problem, it would probably be the fact that it takes up way too much internal qi to maintain.'

The form of the intimidation qi was wrapped around Woon Seong like a blanket.

It spread out in all directions, like a fog, with the thickest source of it being Woon Seong.

Therefore, the internal qi consumption was huge.

If he could gather his internal qi and channel it into his weapons he could get rid of this wolf with ease.

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However, Woon Seong had yet to get to that level yet with the body of No. 900.

'With time, we can get there within a year.'

Right now, he needed to focus his thoughts on the wolf as his internal qi was being consumed at a rapid pace.

If he dropped his focus on the beast in front of him, it was certain that the beast was no fool and would try to attack him in that moment he would show a gap.

'I have to end it now.'

Crack-

The moment the fog lifted from the beast's eyes, was the moment it saw its death.

Crrrrrrrrrrrrrr!

The wolf saw Woon Seong approaching it midair with his spear raised in hand.

It was a blow utilizing all of Woon Seong's energy at one point.

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Puck-!

The speartip of Woon Seong's spear pierced through the skull of the Grey Wolf and it's head burst like a watermelon.

* * *

Grrroooo-

When the wolf had finally died, the huge rock that was tightly holding off Woon Seong and the wolf from the exit, began to move slowly.

It was the door exactly opposite to the direction of the entrance Woon Seong had gone through.

'If I were dead, that door would have never opened.'

That's just how the trial itself was set up.

In any case Woon Seong had survived. He also had measured out everything he wanted to test.

He was able to truly check the progress of his internal qi levels, high-level spear techniques he learned when he was in the spearmaster sect as

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well as check the overall progress of the Heavenward Soul Earthen Body technique and his derivative version of Intimidation Qi.

Woon Seong smeared the blood of the dead wolf on his clothes and spear.

He applied the blood around the areas his shirt had ripped.

He thought it would be a good idea if he made it seem like he had a tougher time than he really did, just in case the results were too out of the ordinary.

It wasn't long before the door finally fully opened.

As Woon Seong stepped outside, he noticed those who had exited before him in their own trials.

'Twenty or so.'

Some of them were quite severely injured and others were fine.

Ah-Young was the latter.

She was dressed as if she hadn't gone through a fight at all.

But the iron sword in her hand was dripping with blood.

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The blood of the Grey Wolf was evident.

'Did she kill it in one blow?'

If she did, that would mean she was truly hiding more power than he initially thought.

Or course, Woon Seong could have killed the wolf in the very beginning with one blow as well if he did not want to hide his true strength and test out his body's full and current capabilities.

However as great as that would be, it would only be possible since Woon Seong had the iron spear in hand and his previous life's memories.

Withthat much taken into account, it was clear Ah-Young had already surpassed any child their age's talent. Her strength had probably already reached the second-rate level.

'No, maybe they're already first-rate.'

While Woon Seong was evaluating her from a distance, Ah-Young also found Woon Seong and waved her hand with a silly-looking smile.

"It must have been a pretty fierce battle."

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It was a judgment based on the amount of blood from the Grey Wolf that was smeared purposefully around Woon Seong's clothes.

"It's not as easy for everyone else as it is for you."

Ah-Young nodded with a smile at Woon Seong's words.

"That's right. I almost died, too."

'What a lie.'

Woon Seong knew she was lying, but paid no more attention to her and sat down against the stone wall in the cave around him..

Then he adjusted his breath to make it fit his appearance that it was a tough battle.

"Whoo... whoo...."

Then he looked around.

Among the children who came out before him, there were quite a few who he thought to be weaker than himself.

'But they somehow came out before me?'

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In fact, it was quite fast of a time to slay a Grey Wolf in the amount of time Woon Seong had done it in, but for children weaker than him to finish faster, it made no sense at all.

However, Woon Seong had predicted there might be a case like this, and the reasoning for it seemed plausible in his head.

'Maybe not all the trials were done fairly.'

He thought it might be the case, but he couldn't be absolutely sure before the actual trial happened earlier.

But as Woon Seong had entered the finishing area for the children who passed and examined the results, his earlier conjecture turned into that of one with conviction.

Grrroooo-

"Wow, I did it!"

It was the noise of No. 185 cheering like an idiot as he exited his trial.

His clothes were relatively normal with slight injuries, Woon Seong thought.

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His skills weren't bad, but he was still lacking in skill when compared to the Grey Wolf that Woon Seong faced.

'Then there's only one conclusion to be made. Either he somehow learned some new skills, or he didn't face the same kind of wolf that I did.'

Woon Seong, who finished collecting his thoughts, closed his eyes.

There was no reason for him to ponder on it any longer. In any case, he had passed the trial of Life and Death and that was all that mattered.

As Woon Seong closed his eyes, No. 185 picked up on Woon Seong's presence as he shut his mouth and glared fiercely at Woon Seong from a distance.

Woon Seong felt a gaze rest on him, and he opened his eyes suddenly to see No. 185 glaring at him as he glared back right back at No. 185 with a smirk.

Then, Woon Seong paid no more attention once No. 185 averted his eyes quickly.

Woon Seong knew that No.185 still felt hostile towards him.

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Nevertheless, the reason why Woon Seong had yet to kill him No. 185 was because No. 185 had still not openly shown his hostility yet.

"Well, it doesn't matter even if he openly bared his hostility at me."

Woon Seong could toy with No. 185 at any time.

Woon Seong thought to himself and gave up any lingering thoughts on the case with No. 185 as he closed his eyes once more.

He had something more important to do right now.

When Woon Seong closed his eyes, he recalled the fight he had with the Grey Wolf and the full extent of the derivative technique of Intimidation Qi he had created.

The effects of the technique were excellent, but there were still many shortcomings in retrospect.

It was simply because of just how fast it depleted his internal qi reserves inside his dantian.

'Is it because this body is still too weak, or is it just a matter of efficiency?'

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Whether it was the former or the latter, it seemed that Woon Seong would have to train further to obtain favorable results.

Numerous martial arts came to mind when he thought of how to improve the technique itself.

There were a number of different processes within the different martial arts that came to mind and Woon Seong collected and took tiny bits of information from them of how to implement their processes into improving his intimidation qi.

However, no matter how many calculations in his head that he made, he still was stumped..

The blanket of intimidation qi would still be troublesome for him to deal with expenditure-wise.

At least that's what Woon Seong thought.

"If I continue to improve this body's very talent with the Heavenward Soul Earthen Body technique, I can guarantee it will have a positive effect above all other options."

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With all the achievements he had made in his previous life and knowledge he collected in his time living as the disciple of the spearmaster sect, he would most definitely improve and break through all of his past limits.

Woon Seong did not have a doubt in his conviction. He couldn't afford to when it came to his revenge.

* * *

Gooooglllleee-The remaining doors from the other children's trials had finally opened or closed. Woon Seong counted the amount of children who had survived in total. It's about... seventy or so. Woon Seong recalled the belief of the cult that the senior instructor had mentioned several times during their training at that moment. The weak had no place in the Cult of the Heavenly Demon, however if one persevered and blossomed their strength, they would become pillars that would never be broken down.

The other children looked around and examined each other as well with nervous looks. Suddenly a large presence started to emerge from the stage in the center of the dome shaped room. The senior instructor along

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with the other assistant instructors came forwards and opened his mouth to speak."Well done, you all here have survived beautifully."

Chapter 10: The Divine Demonic Vault (1)

Chapter 10: The Divine Demonic Vault (1)

As the 3 pills of the Demonic Medicine Ayu Kalpa were passed out and Woon Seong sat down in meditation from his rewards of clearing his First Trial, he felt a surge of qi that was compressed within the pills.

Woon Seong roused his internal qi and opened up his pathways in vigor, in order to accept the mass of internal qi being supplemented into his body.

The Demonic Qi supplemented by the 3 Pills of the Ayu Kalpa surged violently and aggressively in nature, through Woon Seong's dantian and pathways.

However!

Whooooooooooo!

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A golden and blue qi that was originating from his Tempered True Blossom Technique offset the violent energy of the Demonic Qi and brought it under control.

His completely new technique that he had made by himself, was something so high-level, that even Woon Seong could not fathom just how incredible it's true worth was. But it was definitely something that would not struggle to rein in the demonic qi from the 3 pills of Ayu Kalpa.

The Tempered Qi surged and mixed in with the demonic qi, melting the unrefined parts of the qi down, to become stable and suitable for Woon Seong's body.

Swirling together with Woon Seong's collected internal qi he had been cultivating ever since he gained the body of No.900, the Ayu Kalpa medicine's qi was mixed into it and added efficiently to his already existing internal qi.

Woon Seong couldn't help but struggle though.

Once again, he led the newfound internal qi throughout his body, restricting the rampant and undiluted demonic qi with the rest of his tempered qi.

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Inside his body, Woon Seong's internal circuitry was being forcibly expanded, along with the number of pathways being forced open, in order to adjust to the newly consumed qi.

As Woon Seong thought, this large surplus of Qi right now, would serve as the best foundation for his power to build in the future.

The meridians within Woon Seong's body were pushed and stretched apart as they expanded to support his joints and flow of energy.

Once, twice and then a third time around.

Woon Seong started to memorize the new pathways and circulated the finished expansion of his internal circuit with his accumulated qi.

How long had it been?

"Huuu..."

Woon Seon opened his eyes, as he slowly took a breath in.

A slight amber gold sheen of color remained in Woon Seong's eyes and then disappeared.

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It was the last bit of unrefined qi within his body that had surfaced to his irises and then returned back down to his dantian.

Soon the eyes of Woon Seong regained their original color. It was too short of a time, that no one had seen the amber glow within his eyes.

It was about 20 years worth of qi.

It was safe to say that Woon Seong had been incredibly efficient with absorbing the maximum amount of qi possible within the Ayu Kalpa pills.

It was a waste that was about a year's worth or so had been lost, but it was an inevitable loss for anybody who was intaking medicine to forcibly increase their qi reserves. Most children had probably lost about 5-6 years worth through this process.

So if anything, it could still be considered a large boon for Woon Seong that he had been so successful.

However, if his talent had been much higher in his current body through the Heavenward Soul Earthen Body technique, he wouldn't have even lost that 1 year's worth.

'It's a shame, but I can't help it.'

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Woon Seong let go of his lingering attachment and looked around his surroundings. When he looked around to see the other kids, Woon Seong's gaze lingered on Ah-Young.

Just as she had passed the Trial before him, she proved her talent once more, she had finished absorbing the full effect of the Ayu Kalpa Pills before Woon Seong.

This just proved even further to Woon Seong, that a genius was indeed a genius.

Ah-Young mouthed her words with her lips to avoid the eyes of the instructors when she made eye contact with Woon Seong.

'Did you do a good job?', she mouthed to him.

Feeling no need to answer the question, Woon Seong snorted and turned his head away.(T/N: what a tsundere Woon Seong hehe)

It was needless to say that Ah-Young made an ambiguous expression.

How long had it been?

As time went by, the children began to wake up one by one.

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There may have been individual differences between them, but everyone seemed to have achieved some results with the pills.

The senior instructor noticed that all the children were awake and stomped his foot to gather their attention once more.

Boom-

Each of the children focused their attention on the instructor as they heard the sound of foot stomping, echo throughout the chamber.

The same went for Woon Seong.

"Everyone seems to have absorbed the energy of the Demonic Medicine. Congratulations on becoming stronger."

The senior instructor said so and gave a fishy smile. The smile felt as if he were really saying, that this was only the beginning.

Obviously, there were still several years in the 10 years required for the Cave of Latent Demons to graduate.

"Lucky thing is, this is not the only gift that the Lord has decided to gift you."

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The words shook the eyes of Woon Seong.

It was already a huge gift to receive those 3 medicinal pills. Most kids on average had absorbed 6 years worth of internal qi through those pills alone. For Woon Seong, he had gained about 20, which was a gift he already hadn't expected.

'But this isn't everything...?!'

Woon Seong could not hide his surprise.

There were a number of children who were also surprised by this, but there was one who ooked as if they had already expected the next gift.

That one, was the calm facial expression of No. 17, Ah-Young.

'You know something.'

Woon Seong soon stopped his useless thoughts and focused on the instructor's next words.

"You can start learning proper martial arts finally... And these martial arts are the best martial arts known even across the entire world."

'In the world?'

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Just what kind of martial arts were the instructors planning on giving them, Woon Seong wondered.

However, before Woon Seong could even formulate an idea about it, the instructor turned around and spoke.

"Follow me."

It was a narrow road that the instructor led the children down within a large canyon. A canyon between the peaks of the mountain ranges within the territory of the Cult.

The children from the Cave of Latent Demons, walked along the narrow road through the canyon, following the instructor.

It was such a narrow path that it could only fit 3 people in width as a time.

As they walked along the road, Woon Seong examined the scenery with indifferent eyes.

The end of the canyon began to be seen.

The one at the end was a huge cliff. It was a high cliff along one of the peaks of the Cheonsan Mountains.

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Underneath this cliff were two large iron doors.

And right above the iron gate, there were a series of characters engraved with brush strokes.

'The Divine Demonic Vault!'

The eyes of Woon Seong who read the letters, trembled.

It was a library that was famously known all throughout Murim, that contained the martial arts of the Heavenly Demons and several Demonic practitioners of incredible legends.

It was one of the 3 largest libraries, within the cult, but this one was the most secretive of the three

The name of this vault was frequently mentioned amongst the several political factions beyond the regions of the Cult. It was that secretive and highly valued.

"Some of you might have heard of it. This is the Divine Demonic Vault."

The senior instructor's shout rang around.

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These three demonic vaults could not be entered by anyone unless they had permission from the Lord of the Cult, himself.

Perhaps even at that moment, there were masters ready to ambush any unauthorized intruders.

"Give thanks to the Lord for his kind grace. Because of the Lord's grace, who watched your achievements, has granted you the right to enter the Divine Demonic Vault!"

And right now, this very secretive vault, that several masters across

Murim had heard of, and had envied the knowledge within it, was being
opened to mere demonic soldiers from the Cave of Latent Demons.

'What the hell is the Cult of the Heavenly Demon truly up to?'

This was definitely not like any past records Woon Seong had heard of, when it came to Cave of Latent Demons.

Woon Seong closed his eyes and thought. Young children that were supplemented and given massive rewards for massive growth. They were not simply just training the next generation.

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This was the very basic of standards when trying to develop a Peak Realm martial artist.

Though Peak Realm Martial Artists were very few in number across the whole landscape of Murim, the Cult of Heavenly Demon was giving the basic support to produce several of these, and probably were aiming to cultivate Transcendent Realm Martial Artists, or even martial artists stronger than that!

Woon Seong's eyebrows trembled slightly.

'Is the Cult of the Heavenly Demon preparing for a war?'

It was a low probability, but incredibly dangerous possibility that could not be ruled out.

The Cult of the Heavenly Demon had always hoped to return their Cult's practices to become the State Religion.

'If so, it wouldn't hurt to use them for my growth like they are trying to use me.'

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The goals of the Cult, if they were truly for war, would be incredibly beneficial for Woon Seong to grow from and establish his strength to an unbelievable degree to achieve his revenge.

There was no need to think about loyalty to the Cult.

They were the ones who were trying to use him first. So it was only natural Woon Seong would use them as well for his own benefit.

Besides, The Cult's practices were strictly a religious group.

In the history of Murim, it was incredibly rare for the Cult of the Heavenly Demon to ever start or initiate large-scale violence, let alone a war.

There were cases of them even doing their best to support the public welfare to expand their influence through non-violent means, which was rare for any unorthodox organization.

But if it was through war, Woon Seong would have great opportunities to prove himself to the cult and rise in political power. His goal was to become much much stronger than a simple Peak Realm Martial Artist or even Transcendent Realm Martial Artist, so it aligned with his goals if he could move his own power within the cult for his own goals.

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'It's the last resort of options to gain power through the cult, but war won't hurt me in terms of growing in strength.'

As Woon Seong thought so, the senior instructor continued to talk.

"But keep this in mind. You can enter this place only once in your time here, and only for one day! In addition, we limit the number of books that can be brought out of here to one book."

Only one day.

It was impossible to go back inside once he came out.

And all he could bring back, was one book.

Woon Seong engraved the message from the senior instructor, in his mind.

One day may be considered a long time to some people, but for the children in the Cave of Latent Demons, it was not long at all.

'I need to exploit as much knowledge as I can out of this opportunity.'

Woon Seong's eyes glistened as he looked at the Divine Demonic Vault.

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For the spearmaster sect's disciple, Woon Seong, who had copious amounts of literary knowledge, this was a one-of-a-kind chance of a lifetime.

"So choose carefully. I hope you can choose the right martial arts for you."

The senior instructor smiled politely.

And finally, the opening of the Divine Demonic Vault began to take place.

Grindddd- Grindddd-

* * *

"Did the children in the Cave of Latent Demons enter the vault?"

Sang In-hyo asked the senior instructor about the details of the event.

The senior instructor had just returned to report the amount of children who had survived the Trial of Life and Death.

"Yes, 72 surviving children, all entered the Divine Demonic Vault"

Sang In-hyo nodded at the words.

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"Some average martial artists find opportune luck, and some talents become prodigies, but it all depends on their luck when picking the best martial art for themselves."

Choice, knowledge and even luck was something these children needed if they wanted to succeed. But.... it would be rather interesting for Woon Seong.