

Chapter 161 - 159: The Swift Aftermath

News traveled fast.

In the Myriad Monarch Sect; In the Myriad Monarch Planet; and even the Myriad Monarch Astral Territory, countless transmissions of this event were sent out and learned by numerous individuals! In this astral territory, Factions were widely spread and oftentimes included entire clans, sects, or various other forces. These clan leaders, sect masters, pavilion lords were often considered external disciples, bestowed such a rank and given that classification by the sect's elites.

Such as Wu Jiao.

Therefore, the targets weren't merely those disciples in the sect, on the planet, but inside the entire astral territory.

What's more, due to the hegemonic status of the Myriad Monarch Sect, as long as its foundation isn't damaged or threatened, its pillars such as Heavenly Kings, Commanders, or Prime Imperial Sages weren't targeted, they would essentially allow factions to act as they pleased, and even announce legitimate war.

They called this "tempering" but mostly its due to their status as a hegemonic force with merely one superior and three equals. These equals were too far away, and this superior merely wanted annual tributes and cared not for their matters. Because of this, there was a lack of true competition, so factions were inevitably born.

They allowed disciples and Imperial Sages to fight fiercely against each other for territory, resources, and training. Those who survived required leadership, strength, cunning to use the rules to their favor, and intelligence to outmaneuver their enemies.

It was brutal.

But it was effective.

The most recently promoted Grand Imperial Sage, Yao Zhen, a demon and leader of Extreme Demon Mountain, had been born due to these rules. This was an expert at the peak, equal to all other peak experts in the starfield besides two individuals. This showed its effectiveness, and this was merely the most recent example.

So, when the news that Wei Wuyin, as a Heavenly King of Extreme Creation Mountain, had placed a bounty on the livelihood of the Grand Axis Faction, three things happened in the course of two hours.

One: a mass exodus of disciples from the faction demanding their Faction Leader approve of their departure, and sending endless requests to the Prime Imperial Sages to approve as well, just in case.

Two: the mass hunting of disciples by everyone who was willing and strong. It didn't matter if they were disciples of the sect or not, the forces and territory beneath the Grand Axis Faction were targeted and many collapsed in the course of thirty minutes from the announcement.

Three: A Sky Noble of the Extreme Scarlet Mountain had claimed Ji Muzhao's head within an hour, using the rights of Imperial Combat. Before then, Ji Muzhao had fought and defeated two other Sky Nobles, claiming their lives, but his persistence and skills only lasted so far.

Upon his death, all disciples were immediately given the right to leave the Grand Axis Faction at will. The moment their status was removed, so was the target on their backs, and the wave of slaughter and crippling was narrowly dodged by those who were lucky enough to last.

In two hours, the Grand Axis Faction had completely and totally been wiped out of existence.

The word of a Heavenly King must be followed, so Wei Wuyin would soon receive piles and piles of proof and the subsequent requests for alchemical products. Fortunately, he didn't set a time-limit for these products to be redeemed, so he could take his time.

But there was a whisper born from this act, this fierce declaration, and it rolled endlessly into the hearts and ears of countless individuals. It was now that people once more realized the absolute danger of offending a skilled alchemist. They were absolutely terrifying, and their rallying power exceeded any other occupation in existence.

After washing up, Wei Wuyin used his Elemental Wood Qi to heal the pegasus of its wounds. Gu Hao's actions had essentially put it out of commission, but it had a silly smile on its face as it constantly rubbed its head against Wei Wuyin's palm. It, like everyone else, saw the ruthless, brutal, and nightmare-inducing consequence that Gu Hao suffered for harming it.

Its owner had gotten revenge and more, eliminating and making an example out of an entire faction because of its suffering. As a star-grade beast, it was exceptionally intelligent, but it still couldn't notice the truth behind the scene. Regardless, its happiness couldn't be diminished, especially serving such a tyrannical master that brought fear and reverence into the hearts of everyone.

Wei Wuyin quietly healed the pegasus as he thought about the previous events. *'I used the World Quietus Pellets to temporarily cause the world's mana to become still, and Astral Light Binding Pellets to seal spiritual energies, but these pellets have a range of effectiveness...if it wasn't for the sealed off area that Imperial Combat provided, I would still be weak to Astral Core Realm experts. After all, they could just leave that area. Furthermore, I can't use these when I'm in the Astral Core Realm cause they'll affect me too.'*

'Haaaa...even though alchemists have pellets for protection, it's not as thorough and certain as your own strength.'

Wei Wuyin's thoughts were clear and understood his weaknesses. While these seventh-grade pellets were useful in handling a lower-phase Astral Core Realm expert in an enclosed space, it was similarly limited. For example, the Astral Light Binding Pellet would be entirely unable to seal Third Stage experts at that realm due to their overwhelmingly abundant spiritual energies, or those with exceptional spiritual strength that rivaled the weakest at that stage.

He had taken the arm of a Second Stage Astral Core Realm expert and taken the life of another, but pellets were the core reasons behind these feats, and even then, the situation was optimally utilized to

be the most effective. He couldn't kill Wu Jiao, and if Gu Hao hadn't been sealed in with him, he would've definitely been a fish on the chopping block unless he had eighth-grade pellets at the ready.

In the end, he needed personal strength or strength he controlled. If it wasn't for his exceptionally strong body refined by his Draconic Heart and its Natal Soul, he would be unable to treat Gu Hao like an infant that can only passively receive a lethal beating.

At least this action of his should cause the monkeys to scatter and grow fearful, allowing him to develop as he pleased. As a Heavenly King, no one could challenge him or his subordinates without their agreement within the sect, so he had no fear of being attacked openly, and merely had to take precautions against hidden schemes.

But what Wei Wuyin didn't realize was that his actions had not only cowed the monkeys, but brought about a huge shift in opinion when people thought of him. The title 'Second King of Everlore' started floating around like elusive mist as everyone started to pay extra attention to his actions.

The King of Everlore of the past had caused the development and were the reason behind the subsequent towering statuses of the five hegemonic forces in the Tri-Vision Starfield today. This was a fact that everyone with an understanding of his history knew! Yet now there was a possibility of a second one being born, and in the Myriad Monarch Sect no less!

Would this be the start of an imperceptible shift in the current world order?

Chapter 162 - 160: Ascendants!

"So, it's really that easy, huh?" Wei Wuyin quietly left the Extreme Monarch Mountain on the pegasus. Just earlier, he had entered the Prime Monarch Office and submitted a request to form a faction of his own, and the process went smoothly without the slightest hitch.

After a brief series of forms signed which included a bit of information of himself, the name of his faction, and his type of faction, it was simply a matter of 100 Imperial Merits, and then an hour wait for processing.

While the overall process was rather swift and without inconvenience, he was shocked to discover that factions had varying types, and this also determined the freedom and actions they were allowed to take.

There were two main types of factions: Sectoral & Independent. Sectoral Factions were limited to operating within the sect, recruiting only sect members, but its members are protected from external conflicts and are given support in the case of any mishap.

Independent Factions offered more freedom but very little to no support. Those a part of an Independent Faction received zero help from the sect from conflict with other forces within the astral territory, but were capable of recruiting from all over. They were even allowed to accept disciples into the sect to a certain extent, mostly used for young talents. These factions could control contested land on planets and continental flat earths of their own.

Unless the other four hegemonic powers were to be involved, they were truly independent. Even if an Evil Cultivator group banded together to hunt and slaughter members of this faction, the sect will merely allow an official mission to be issued so that other Independent Factions can offer support. And, the rewards of this mission must be provided by the issuer.

While Sectoral Factions would bring about the hammer of hell to any force that dares overstep a single millimeter, even sending Prime Imperial Sages to eradicate entire countries if needed. It was that extreme.

The pendulum ends that was Sectoral and Independent did not have a middle-grounds, which was quite surprising.

Anyhow, he had decided to formulate an Independent Faction. This right would allow him to contest for territory, resources, and even enter conflict with other members of the sect that weren't considered Sectoral Factions. The vast, vast majority of Elders residing in the sect were a part of Sectoral Factions, and they donned multicolored robes such as Bo Kay and Xiang Ling.

As for elders that weren't, they typically were stationed as guardians within territories by Sky Nobles, Heavenly Kings, and Imperial Sages. They were the core strength of factions acting as sentries and guardians of their territory. There was likely no other sect that operated in this fashion, whether it was its practical application that forced leadership or unity, or its rules of authority, power, and brutal indifference to death.

He learned that while the other two planets and dozen continental flat earths were free territory, the Myriad Yore Continent and Myriad Monarch Planet were territories that couldn't be occupied or contested for.

The Myriad Yore Continent wasn't just protected by the Myriad Monarch Sect, but by all the hegemonic forces, especially the Elemental Heaven Pavilion. Their founder had been born from there as well. It was only by the grace of the King of Everlore that all these hegemonic powers were capable of reaching their current heights, so they gave it the appropriate respect.

Furthermore, the Myriad Monarch Sect isn't the only sect that has access to the continent, but it was their time to select a leader to unite the continent and ensure a period of prosperity and peace while propagating and ensuring that the King of Everlore and other important figures were remembered and respected. Their chosen champion was Wu Jiao, an external Mortal Common disciple.

"I need a base of operations," Wei Wuyin pondered this. As he had chosen an Independent Faction, he required territory. This depended on where he wished to settle, a planet or continental flat earth. Regardless, it would be the beginning of his reign as an independent power.

There were two planets within the Myriad Monarch Astral Territory: Wuyu & Junia. These planets were named after the Founder of the Myriad Monarch Sect, Wu Yu, and his wife, Junia.

He needed more information on the various networks, conflict levels, resources, and overall strength of the inhabiting forces. After gauging this, he'll make a decision. For now, he flew across the skies and shot upwards intending to penetrate into the Sky Layer. He still needed to cultivate, and he could send Su Mei to obtain alchemical materials.

Right now, staying beneath the Sky Layer offered him very little benefit. The environment above was definitely a hundred times better for his cultivation.

However, just as he reached the sixth level, a larger pegasus flew over. Its trajectory seemed intent to meet him, so he halted his own pegasus to hover within the air in wait. His eyes narrowed slightly, and then a slight smile emerged in his face.

Bo Kay was riding this pegasus.

"Brother Bo!" Wei Wuyin cheerfully greeted when Bo Kay arrived. The two circled each other, creating a rather brilliantly gorgeous display of jade light that emanated from both of their pegasus' wings.

"Heavenly King Wei!" Bo Kay said with a tinge of shock lingering in his tone.

Wei Wuyin shook his head, "You can call me Brother Wei as long as you consider me as one." Towards this amicable demon, he had nothing but good feelings. How could he pull rank or authority?

Bo Kay was sent into a stupor for a moment. He brightly smiled, lifting his tribal markings into an odd yet mystifying shape. "Brother Wei."

"How about we talk in my Sky Palace?" Wei Wuyin offered. He recalled Bo Kay had wanted to have freedom to enter and exit the seventh level at will. Now that he thought about this, he'll likely be moved shortly to the eighth level soon due to his promotion. He wondered how luxurious and majestic his sky palace there will be.

Bo Kay hurriedly shook his head, "I would love to, but I came for another matter."

"Oh? Do tell."

"It's about your status as a Heavenly King. Have your Alchemic King status been officiated?" Bo Kay asked, his eyes contained a trace of solemnness that seemed to originate from this question.

"Concerning this...a higher ranking member of the sect automatically promoted me when I earned ten thousand Imperial Merits and offered a few seventh-grade products. But, no, I haven't been officiated yet." When Bo Kay meant to be an official Alchemic King, it was taking the Alchemist Examination that was held by the Alchemist Association.

The Alchemist Association was an lofty and extraordinary organization devoted to the development of the Dao of Alchemy within the Tri-Vision Starfield. It was originally devised to officiate the status of an Alchemist by four of the five hegemonic powers, confirming their skill and ability while simultaneously allowing alchemists a platform to trade insights, sell products, learn new methods, leave their legacy, and various other matters. It was quite extensive in what they provided.

This later developed into its own neutral, independent entity that was only weaker than the five hegemonic powers, but they had the foremost authority in regards to alchemy.

"I see," Bo Kay frowned heavily. "You see, news has already spread of you becoming an official Alchemic King, but the Alchemist Association has denounced this thoroughly."

Wei Wuyin was stunned. News really traveled fast. The concept of transmission crystals was definitely abused here. Before he even finished healing the pegasus of its injuries, he had already heard the crowd discussing the eradication of the Grand Axis Faction. Even he was startled at how quickly that occurred.

Well, the longer it lasted, the more he owed. This was why he offered a favor for Ji Muzhao's head, to ensure a quick end. He just didn't expect it to be so highly valued that in a short few hours, the entire matter had been wrapped up. Guess this was the dangers of an independent faction.

He slowly rubbed his chin in thought. "The Alchemist Association? I don't really care about that right now." Indeed, he never had any plans to become an officially recognized Alchemic King at the moment. He wanted to first delve into the various high-level methods and tools to better his own skills. If it wasn't for that old man doing it without his permission, he much rather remain a Sky Noble and slowly build up his reputation step by step.

Right now, he had the foundation and a seed of reputation, so why concern himself with such matters like the Alchemist Association?

Bo Kay realized Wei Wuyin hadn't fully gauged the overall situation and explained, "The Alchemist Association doesn't allow those to falsely proclaim themselves as a King Alchemist. Those who do, they issue a writ of challenge. If you are unable to prove that you are an Alchemic King, they'll definitely act against you. But only by defeating them and proving your status can you operate as an Alchemic King."

"How tyrannical," Wei Wuyin pouted slightly. Act against him? How hilarious. They wanted to force him to seek them out, try to rope him in. It could even be a ploy by a rival hegemonic power attempting to lure him out and remove him. He could clearly see the hidden undercurrents that might be happening. Writ of Challenge?

Laughable.

Did they think they were the Heavenly Court? Deciding whose who. He shook his head, unwilling to bother with it all. They even sent Bo Kay as the mouthpiece to deliver this news to him so that he'll feel pressured to be recognized. Someone in the sect has ties to the Alchemist Association and were hasty in hoping he would obediently follow along. After all, the Writ of Challenge hadn't been issued yet.

"Tell them I've been seriously, nearly fatally injured by Gu Hao and will be unable to accept a challenge currently. In two hundred years, I'll accept their Writ of Challenge if they decide to issue it. Until then, I'm just an unranked alchemist. Okay?" He calmly smiled and said. If he wanted to sell products, there would always be buyers, officiated status or not.

Bo Kay stilled.

Wei Wuyin laughed at his shocked expression, "Brother Bo, come to my sky layer any time you want. I don't have many friends in the sect, so I could use the company." After that, he waved and patted the sky pegasus. With a huff, it shot upwards and pierced the Sky Layer.

Bo Kay remained in that stunned state for several moments before he looked upwards and sighed. "You shut all their plans down with a few words." After, a wry smile emerged on his face. Just as his eyes were brightly lit, a glow of his storage ring alerted him of a message.

He withdrew a transmission crystal and read the message. First he was intrigued, then he was incomparably shocked!

Wei Wuyin had created an independent faction! And, its name was: Ascendants!

Chapter 163 - 161: Celestial Eyes Of Spiritual Divinity

The events below and their resulting end allowed Wei Wuyin to grasp a higher degree of understanding of the complex net of the Myriad Monarch Sect, including a faint glimpse of the Alchemist Association.

With these things left to ponder, he returned back to his sky palace located above the sky layer. Upon returning, he received a message delivered personally by an elder that his Sky Palace within the eighth level needed time to be constructed before his relocation.

As a Heavenly King, it was his right to live above, and he didn't have any objection to this treatment. Not only would it afford him a greater sense of privacy, but the astral essence above was of a higher quality. Until it was finished, he'd have to settle for his current sky palace.

Within this sky palace, he rested in the lounge, sitting comfortably upon a rather comfortably burgundy couch. There were etchings on it that originate from spiritual formations that seemed to release a relaxing aura into the pores, like the feeling one received when they consume soup while sick or massaged after a long day.

He found that this piece of furniture had to be his favorite place in this entire sky palace that had thirty-six rooms, three floors, a garden, an indoor and outdoor pool, and various other accommodations. He even found a sauna.

There were so much, and he doubted whether they were designed for a single person or an ensemble of guests. Could the previous owner have had a harem and countless servants? If so, he was rather enviable.

If Wei Wuyin knew that he was correct, but the previous owner was a female, his thoughts might not carry much envy.

Resting on the couch, he lifted a journal that had various writings of his on it. Within each page of this journal was word from word details about the Celestial Eyes of Spiritual Divinity. He avoided adding the Records of Fuxi. There was something about that symbol and words that seemed to resonate with him. Whether it was due to his Bloodline of Sin, his Karmic Luck, or something else entirely, he had no desire to explore it at the moment.

'The Celestial Eyes of Spiritual Divinity...this technique seems to be filled with flaws.' This was Wei Wuyin's first thoughts when he read the Cultivation Method; it reminded him of the Haven Heart Qi Method. However, these flaws weren't in the technique itself, but the difficulty and dangers within it.

Firstly, to cultivate the Celestial Eyes, one needed an absurd amount of spiritual energies. This wasn't quantity-based, but quality. Spiritual energies originate from the spirit, which is a combination of one's physical and mental energies including the world's ambient essence refined by your meridians and a piece of the soul. To start cultivation, one needed to create this spirit.

With this spirit, its unique energies, it combines with the already present physical, mental energies, and essence produce a unique source of energy called Metaphysical Qi. This Metaphysical Qi is under the tight control of the spirit and manipulated by your will, communicated to the spirit.

This was the basis of cultivation.

But for one's base spiritual energies, they hardly change throughout cultivation. The spirit was a combination of four components, so to expand it, it needed all four in greater quantity. Cultivation merely enhances quality, but quantity remains constant throughout. The only event that he experienced a change in quantity was when he cultivated the 'Divine' Method for his spirits.

Therefore, normally, it was impossible to expand one's spiritual energy reserves. *'But the Dao of Alchemy goes against the convention of cultivation, and had a few products that can achieve just that.'*

The Dao of Alchemy broke cultivation limitations by using the very thing that cultivation required, heavenly resources. Perhaps this was one of the reasons the Heavenly Daos couldn't limit or reject it. Anyhow, there were products that can do so, but the amount of energy was still limited in the end, because physical and mental energies were also a part of the four components.

Few cultivators actively refine their physical energies, and that wasn't even a normal path of cultivation. Throughout his cultivation, his body had only been refined by the energies he'd refined and stored within his body.

'To enhance mental, physical, increase the soul component is quite a difficult feat indeed.' He sighed. If it was just this, the Dao of Alchemy might be able to overcome this, but there were two more difficulties.

The eyes. Yes. The eyes must be capable of withstanding an immense amount of raw, unrefined energies and then be refined by a unique source of power. It didn't describe the name of this power, but it said it was called down by a unique formation inscribed directly into the pupils of the eyes.

Yes! Inscribed directly INTO the pupils.

Not only did it sound immensely painful, but the eyes were quite fragile and naturally precious. If one was blinded, even his current achievements in the Dao of Alchemy couldn't remedy such a state. The chance of going blind from this act was incredibly, insidiously high, but that didn't even factor the need for the eyes to withstand a strand of foreign power called out from the world.

Was it mana? He wasn't sure.

Then the last bit. The possibility of insanity. Not only did one have to inscribe this formation into their pupils, but they had to 'simultaneously' inscribe it to a perfect match in their sea of consciousness and mind's eye. The sea of consciousness contained all the mental energies, memories, emotions, and thoughts of a person, while the mind's eyes contained their awareness, control of their memories, emotions, and thoughts. It was said the mind's eye was the doorway to the soul, and considering this was the method cultivators used to extract a portion of their souls, this was definitely the case.

To interact with it in such a violent way seemed highly inadvisable.

To first require spiritual energies that exceed the standard spirit's capacity by several times, then to simultaneously inscribe three markings on one's eyes, mind's eye, and sea of consciousness is far too dangerous, and there couldn't be a single flaw performed throughout. At first, he felt it was a little doable if one was extremely talented, courageous, and willing to take the risk, but then he saw the mark.

Well, fuck.

It incredibly complex, so complex that word 'complex' can't begin to describe it. There had to be three thousand independent lines that all interconnected and interlaced yet remained independent in the end. It formed a perfect circle and within this circle was lines that went every which way like some type of magic inscription.

His thoughts of cultivating this technique went through the window after he saw this. Regardless of what this technique was capable of, he had no intention of taking such risk.

Just as he was about to burn the book with elemental fire qi, he halted at the end pages of the book. There was a particular sentence that made him hesitate.

It read: "Magi."

Yes. It wasn't a sentence but a word, but this word wasn't just normal, and each letter had etchings on it that resembled his Inheritor of Sin tattoo, but there were some minor differences. He knew it detailed a sentence, but he couldn't grasp it.

The Inheritor of Sin tattoo was also something he couldn't read, but he 'knew' what it meant. This was likely due to a soul connection, but he didn't have one with these words.

But his heart couldn't help but frantically race at the word: "Magi".

After a long period of time, he gave a wry smile. "...You're going to do it aren't you? Hahaha, how ridiculous is this? Wei Wuyin, you know you can go blind, lose your mind, damage the pathway to your soul? You can take this risk and it all ends with nothing in the end, but failure.

"Fucking hell! You're serious!" Wei Wuyin gritted his teeth slightly as he realized that this technique wasn't one he could avoid. Whether it was its dangers, the risk involved, he had to do it. And it wasn't because of his possible clock on his life, but purely because of that single word.

How ridiculous was that?

This was so unlike him.

But a trace of desire to know entered his heart, a curiosity to seek answers, and merely to challenge himself. This might not help him with the future Calamities of Hell, this might not help him reach the Realm of Sages, or achieve any of his goals in the future, but he needed to know.

Know what? Shockingly, even he didn't know.

"Is this intuition?" As he thought this, he calmed his heart. He thought it through, "My mind's eye is far stronger than a hundred people, especially after devouring those nascent forms of 'me' and the Tree of Eden. The sea of consciousness as the support of my Natal Souls and the Eden Qi, a power originating from the Mind Dao. As for spiritual energies, I have two 'Divine' Natal Souls and two other ones.

"My eyes have been refined by my bloodline of a dragon, and it can no longer be considered containing human-type physical energies, but dragon-type physical energies. It should be enough." While others might struggle to reach the requirement of this technique, Wei Wuyin was confident in meeting them.

The only issue was the risk involved. His personality had never been one to take such risks that were permanent. He always enjoyed leisurely planning things out carefully, and acting accordingly. It was this way of living that allowed him to survive thus far.

"One chance. No mistakes. Tch." His silver eyes lifted to the ceiling, recalling the old man's words. Silver eyes...

'The old man implied that my eyes were a reason he recommended this technique. These eyes are unique features of myself and my mother...even my brother didn't have them. I wonder if this is indicative of something? Unfortunately, I can't ask them...' As the past flashed through his mind, he recalled the face of a violet-skinned girl, but her features weren't very clear.

"Would...it have..." His words were uttered so softly that even ghosts might not be able to hear him.

After a long moment of somber silence, he slowly closed his eyes and started to make mental preparations. This art didn't allow a single mistake, so he had to ensure that his mind was ready to its utmost.

Chapter 164 - 162: Light

A firm, stable figure was seated in a cultivation room with astral essence dense enough to lick and touch. Garbed in tight-fitting black-colored martial robes, Su Mei quietly cultivated.

Since arriving in the Myriad Monarch Sect, Su Mei had experienced benefits that could likely never be enjoyed with someone of her background. In truth, while she kept it silent, her heart was overwhelmed by the new scenery and lifestyle.

Leaving behind her home, millions of miles away, and entering this new sky, this new horizon. Who would've thought that she'd end up here?

She was born in a small village and raised as an upright and proper woman whose only hopes her parents had for her was to make a proper wife and find a good husband. She thrived for this, learning how to cook, clean, be silent when required, and act in the best interests of others. But this future was snatched away from her, and cultivators descended and snatched her away.

She was unable to control her fate, and her family was all the happy to send her off with smiles. It was what she was raised for, and while she wouldn't be a wife, at least she'll be able to service a strong man, right? Her family was proud of her, so shouldn't she be happy?

Her thoughts were that simple at the time as she followed along with a smile and hope in her heart

When she was in the Scarlet Solaris Sect, she was introduced to others like her, a part of something called a harem. She was merely a concubine of a lowly disciple, but she still tried to take pride in it. How many young women would fight or even kill for her treatment?

She didn't have any wants. Cultivators, even the lowest ones, had enough mortal currency and could earn vast amounts with utter ease. So, she had food on her table, clothes to wear, and even others to communicate with. Her 'sisters' that were with her treated her well, taught her things, and laughed with her.

Until she obtained attention, asked to constantly come to serve, and this caused friction amongst the group. They started to grow envious, ostracized her, jeer at her, make comments at her doing all sorts of tricks to please, and calling her all sorts of names under their breath, behind her back, and in their minds. She could see it when she saw their eyes.

Life went from decent to a living hell. She had to deal with abuse, and her complaints had merely caused them to apologize, and up to abuse in secret, even threatening her life if she dared to inform on them again. She saw the darkness of human hearts. She descended into the darkness of an abyss called depression and self-hatred.

It became even worse when the man himself didn't act, despite knowing their actions. She knew he knew, but she could only stay quiet. If she ran away, she'd be hunted down and killed, or worse...turned into a slave and forced to serve without an ounce of freedom.

She couldn't see a way out; she was too weak. Her tears that fell day and night within the corner that she sought solace from helped little to assuage her feelings, and only exacerbated her awareness of this unfortunate fate of hers. Unable to mitigate her worries, she was left with no choice but to hope that if her position in his eyes were higher, she would be more protected.

Yet, despite her frantic efforts, she received merely verbal praise and nothing else. There were times when she saw the look in his eyes, filled with self-satisfaction and desire, curiosity of how far she'd go and what she'd do. It was a game to him.

Days went, weeks passed, and then that fateful day descended.

He fell from the sky and with a single strike, performed an act that she could only dream of. He arrived with those resplendent silver eyes that could draw immortals in, and a handsome visage that was otherworldly. His presence overtook her senses as she froze.

His first sentence revealed the truth she tried to hide in her heart, and then he asked a question that felt nonsensical, out-of-place, and baffling: "You hungry?"

In her home village, she read all about prince charmings finding an unfortunate damsel and falling in love with her, saving her from her troubles and bringing her to a happy end. For a moment, she thought this was her fate; she wanted it to be her fate.

But he asked that question, and she couldn't help but answer oddly. She said maybe!

Then that smile. A smile that seemed to exceed the sun's brilliant, the ocean's beauty, and overtook her senses.

"Then let me bring you somewhere you can figure it out."

Those words were forever etched into the depths of her heart, and her fate changed. He taught her how to cultivate, how to fight, how to observe, how to react, and how to kill. She took every word and treated it like gold, and while he had similarly given others those words, those lessons, she used those words to hone herself.

She became a cultivator and fought for him. His word was her law, his word became her life. Her blade was his, her life was his to use. This wasn't forced upon her, but she was given a choice, a choice if she was hungry or not.

And she was.

She was so incredibly hungry!

She wanted to live!

Only the living earn the right for hunger, only the living earned the right of a choice, and he offered her this choice. She rose in the ranks and became a lieutenant, one of his most trusted. She handled his matters and followed his orders, watching him from afar as he rose step by step in those three years.

In the sky, there was a particular star that travelers used when they were lost. It was so bright and consistent in the night sky that it would never lead one astray, allowing them to always find their home; where they belonged. She didn't know what it meant to be lost, but when she saw his back, she saw light; that light that showed her where she belonged.

Then, he left.

Her heart was seized by fear and uncertainty. The cultivation world was cruel and he had many, many enemies. If something happened to him, where would her light be? What should she do from now on?

At night, she would look to the sky and always see that particular sky. When she saw its illuminating the night sky, she felt that he couldn't be dead. He was simply elsewhere. She would one day find him, definitely.

But five years passed, and no news of his appearance, no matter how far she searched or investigated. She didn't give up. She couldn't give up. Even when the news of his death was made 'official' by the sect as they replaced him, labeled him as deceased, and moved on, she didn't.

She waited.

The light in the sky was still lit, so he had to be alive. She would find him.

She delved into her cultivation with ten times the intensity as before, and fought countless battles, using what she learned from him to become someone who can find him. She rose up, gaining power and recognition, considered as a genius by many, but none of that mattered to her. She wasn't cultivating for fame, for power, or for recognition, but to find him.

She grew colder. She grew more ferocious.

Then, five years later...he found her.

He returned.

Her emotions were intense, but she restrained herself. She wanted to cry, but she didn't want to reveal such weakness. She wanted to hug him, but she didn't want to breach the boundaries of their relationship.

In the end, her wants didn't matter. She still cried. She still embraced him. He pulled her out of the abyss, showed her what it meant to desire to live, and changed her fate. He was her light!

So many things had happened since then, and every second that passed was exciting and satisfying, as they traveled the country and experienced all sorts of things. Her cold heart, her fierce intent, and her desire for strength had been dulled.

Then, she saw the true power of this world and how weak she was. Her battle with Na Xinyi and later Wei Wuyin's exceptional display of strength truly revealed their differences.

Would she one day be a burden? Would she never be able to give him any support? These thoughts constantly circulated in her heart, and she couldn't accept it. How could she? Her light was getting further and further away, while she could merely observe and be there. While he likely didn't mind, she did.

She didn't just want him to just be her light, that was selfish. Her heart wanted to offer more, to be of use. To be his sword, to be his shield, to be his spear, to be his flag, to be his eyes, to be his light...

To be his light...

Su Mei's eyes were incomparably calm. When she was born, she was raised to be of use to someone else, and this was expected. When she was taken, she was made to be of use for someone else, and this was expected. But when he arrived, he showed her what it meant to want for herself. He never asked for her loyalty, merely gave her a platform to find herself.

She did, and she found more. In the deepest depths of her heart, mind, and soul, she wanted to be his light. She wanted to be that thing that drove him to success, not to succeed. But she can't.

Wei Wuyin wasn't like her. He was phenomenal. He was brilliant and cunning. He was strong in will and cultivation. He didn't need a light to show him success, he paved his own road to success with every single step he made. This type of person didn't need anyone, and no one would be able to match him as he forged his path. He was unrivaled and in the future, he was destined for unfathomable greatness.

There was already ample evidence of this.

He was born in the Myriad Yore Continent, just like everyone else that ascended that day, yet his path was far, far greater than everyone by millions of miles. And he hadn't even learned the greater methods, legacies, and understood the sky yet. But when he did, could anyone match him?

His sword? His shield? His flag? Did she have this right? Did she even qualify to carry his shoes?

Her heart was pained to realize the truth, the irrevocable truth: she didn't.

In a few months, in a few years, in a decade, she'll be at his heel, following him like a dog following a shooting star while he rode upon that very star.

She didn't want that.

She couldn't accept that.

There was only one way to ensure that didn't happen, and that was to similarly forge her own path, a path that could run parallel to him, so that he wasn't her light, that star that she chased behind from afar, but a partner that traversed heaven and earth.

Those eyes of hers contained resolve and intent that boiled endlessly, reflecting the flames of her soul. Within the depths of her eyes, an unfathomable amount of consuming darkness overtook the light and fostered a strong, unbreakable will.

This was Intent!

An Intent thought to be lost since ancient times, created from an ethereal intent that could only be birthed from the mind, not from the world. It was like slaughter and battle intent, but it no longer had a name. In fact, it was better to say it was taboo to utter the name beneath the heavens!

Alongside this Intent, darkness and light intermingled into one, giving birth to a unique form of energy: Darklight Energy! She had effectively birthed and merged these energies, energies that exceeded even Elemental Energy!

Su Mei realized her advancements. She inspected her hands and observed the flickering traces of darklight energies that revolved around her fingers and palms.

Clench!

Her palms became two incomparably hard fist, and she could feel the surge of power within.

"I can't follow Lord Wei's path. I won't cultivate a Divine Spirit of Saber Qi, but a Divine Spirit of Darklight Qi. If I want to forge a path that can travel alongside his, it can't be the same." Upon making this decision, she started to diligently cultivate, not realizing that her 'Divine' Spirit had already transformed into something else...

Chapter 165 - 163: Adjusting

Three Months Later.

Wei Wuyin sat cross-legged, his eyes focused on the pages of a particular book. It was titled: "Transformative Theory of Essence & Energy." It was penned by the King of Everlore himself and described the various principles and theories applicable in the process of Alchemy. He had wrote eighty-one books, and seven of them centered around the theories and principles of the Seven Traits of Alchemy:

Extraction, Growth, Containment, Refinement, Creation, Transformation, and Fusion.

Each trait embodied how the materials of heaven and earth interacted with alchemical energies, and was broad, profound concepts that many could barely comprehend to a high-level. The difficulty of even understanding them to an elementary level was immense, and it was these profound theories, principles, and broad profound concepts that gated many Alchemists.

However, Wei Wuyin had never had any difficulty comprehending any of these concepts. When he first thought about it, he attributed it to the Alchemic Natal Soul that was attached to his sea of consciousness, where his mental energies were stored, but when he recalled his earlier days in the Alchemic Eden Sect, he realized how abnormal he really was.

While he had never focused on Alchemy in the Scarlet Solaris Sect, he dabbled in it, yet he never felt it was too difficult either. Only when he was exposed to greater levels of knowledge relating to these subjects, did he realize his relative ease in understanding them.

Was he intelligent?

A monstrous genius of the highest order?

He wasn't certain. It just never felt difficult to understand, like basic arithmetic—it just made sense.

These concepts and principles weren't difficult to understand, and they felt simple, like common sense. They were like things he 'should' know.

When he thought about his life thus far, he realized he never struggled to understand anything nor experienced a form of mental exhaustion when he did. This abnormality was originally attributed to his drive to improve, but now that he reached a grander sky, he felt it was seated into a more mysterious reason, a mystery he needed to delve deeper into.

He was currently in his study. It had four walls, spacious enough to fit several hundred people simultaneously in comfort. At the edges of the room, numerous bookshelves and pedestals. The bookshelves were filled to the brim in books of various sizes, while the pedestals contained spiritual jades that contained a variety of information. These spiritual jades were his own notes, and they numbered a hundred.

They contained his own theories and beliefs towards these principles, about what he felt was correct, incorrect, flawed, or could be expanded upon and improved. If anyone were to enter this room, understand what was in it, their hearts might leap out of their chest in fright.

In three months, he had achieved more than many in a thousand years.

As for the books, they were all the legacies of the King of Everlore, including his own journals, written books, and recipes. There were also countless other methods devised from other people's creativity, including their own journals.

After becoming a Heavenly King, he obtained unrestricted access to all the stored material of alchemists in the last several thousand years.

One of the things he discovered was the rarity of those who cultivated Alchemic Natal Souls. While it was greatly beneficial, it truly had flaws. Those who did take this route were limited to the Ninth Stage of Qi Condensation Realm for life, and their lifespan was limited to a few hundred years. While their success rate, concoction speed, and ease of manipulating alchemical energies were heightened, they didn't have enough time.

Yes. Time.

With their limited lifespans, they could never achieve greatness, so many settled for mass concocting lower-grade specialty products and devoting themselves to their family or clan. Those with an Alchemic Natal Soul might have exceptional benefits, but they were rather superficial, because skill and knowledge wasn't something an Alchemic Natal Soul could influence.

They were just normal people with training wheels to prevent their fall. In the end, their limited lifespans and their inability to possess strength led to their lives being filled with endless regret, unable to reach far in the race.

No wonder Xiang Ling was disgusted at the thought of Alchemic Natal Souls, and those who cultivated it. They were accepting their lives as tools unable to achieve greatness. It was this reason that the vast majority of alchemists of renown, besides the King of Everlore, were alchemists who had normal Natal Souls and assailed into the Astral Core Realm.

Moverover, Alchemic Astral Force offered the same benefits and advantages that an Alchemic Natal Soul's enhanced alchemical energies would provide, making it rather moot.

It was a depressing fact, but this didn't apply to him.

He had strange and unique advantages, such as his Alchemic Qi attached to his mental energies, which allowed him to clearly observe all aspects of the concoction process in the highest clarity imaginable, seeping the process into his memories and allowing him to freely think about ways to remedy errors or stick to correct actions. His own Alchemic Natal Soul had been refined by elemental, saber, draconic energies.

His abnormal state was why he originally decided to devote more time into the Dao of Alchemy rather than focus on cultivation, but his decision was similarly pointless. The Dao of Alchemy was cultivation. As he became more skilled in concoction, in theories and principles, so did his ability to support his cultivation base.

This was clear when all his Natal Souls had 99 Qi Essence Motes, merely requiring Mana Essence to reach the Zenith Mortal State, a legendary state and supposedly absolute limit of Natal Souls.

Through these recipes, he learned about an eighth-grade, high-tier elixir called the Mana Instillment Dao Elixir. It required very little wealth to concoct out a single portion, even less than the seventh-grade Astral Dipper Fountain Pill but it's rarity, availability, and difficulty to concoct was a thousand times greater.

This elixir could not only ensure the creation of Mana Essence, but the resulting Mana Essence was dozens of times or even hundreds of times stronger than any Mana Essence that could be naturally condensed. Furthermore, as an eighth-grade elixir, it could help those at the first to sixth stage of the Astral Core Realm enhance the states of their Astral Souls.

This shook him deeply, and made him realize that Wu Jiao's former words that only Mortal Sovereign Alchemists and no one else could change their Mortal States after the Qi Condensation was the prime example of ignorance and bullshit.

The fact it helps those at the Eighth Stage of the Qi Condensation Realm, the Infused Spirituality Phase, while being at the eighth-grade was quite interesting. It seemed shocking that the higher grade the product, the better it helped those of a lower cultivation base build a sturdy foundation. Unfortunately, it's unlikely others in the Tri-Vision Starfield could obtain this product without miraculous luck.

Moreover, this world had two crucial issues that still made him feel utterly shocked hearing and recalling it.

One, alchemists took far, far too long in their refinement and concoction. While he knew it was long, when he came to understand that most eighth-grade products took nearly a decade to concoct, he felt like fainting. Those seventh-grade products could similarly take years for the average alchemist. This factored in their failures and repeats.

Two, the amount of resources in the world was unfathomably, ridiculously high. It was absurdly high. It was heaven-shakingly high. It was stupid, dump-stupid high! It was hard to describe how many resources were available, but the Myriad Yore Continent could be used as an example.

The amount of resources born every decade in that lone continent could legitimately fill the cultivation needs for every living being to assail the Astral Core Realm, and that wasn't the Myriad Yore Continent. That was the entire Tri-Vision Starfield's—the tens of trillions of lives.

Of course, this was theoretically speaking, if they all had sufficient talent and lifespan.

Then when you consider the numerous planets, hundreds of continental flat earths, you realize the severity and absurdity of the issue. Despite this, resources that are deemed "usable" are rarer. These are those most effective, most gentle, most adaptable to certain races like demons, beastmen, humans, and elves.

These "usable" resources required less time to naturally refine with one's meridians and bring about their strength, so they were highly contested. After all, even normal essence stones required months for the average person to refine entirely, and that was just enough to reach the First Stage of the Qi Condensation Realm.

But Alchemists can turn volatile into gentle and gentle into volatile.

It was mind-boggling how many resources are seemingly available in this starfield, produced yearly, stored and kept, yet remained unused and overlooked. It was legitimately fucking frustrating!

Since growing up, he had always assumed resources were scarce and difficult to obtain, but that was so far from the truth that he felt like he wasted so many opportunities and his decades of life. Yet he could do nothing, but this fortunately meant he had endless materials to concoct whatever he wished, whenever he wished.

Since arriving here, learning these things, he had to adjust his mindset, new beliefs, and to his new status. As a Heavenly King, a genius of the Dao of Alchemy recognized by many, he had to network and develop connections. After the Grand Axis Faction incident, he had countless visitors, all of which were various Sky Nobles of the Extreme War and Origin Mountains and the other King Alchemists.

These King Alchemists were the friendly type, and some even brought their family and disciples along, trying to use those of similar ages to establish a relationship. There was one shameless old woman that 'heavily' implied that her granddaughter was his with but a single word.

He had to contain his laughter when he saw how forced her granddaughter's smile was. She seemed like she was holding in a stomach of grievances, and if he accepted, she might bite rather than yield. There

were even those within the Knights of Enforcement, the punishment and law division established within the sect. They handled matters, acted as the neutral judge, jury, and executioner.

However, they arrived without the slightest hint of arrogant air as they comfortably told him directly of their intentions. He had no objections having a few of them in his pocket, so with a little buttering up and gifts, a few well-said words, he had already bought off a few members, and used those few members to buy off even more high-level members.

In two months, he had a network of Knights of Enforcement on his payroll. It was actually quite inexplicable how things developed so swiftly and naturally. They came to him, after all.

Despite all this, they were all friendly and amicable, seeking to establish a friendship with him. After understanding a little about them, he didn't reject their intentions.

It wouldn't hurt to have these connections, and more influence on this mountain, so he acted accordingly. In these three months, he was close to being able to call the winds and rain with a single word. This was power and it felt comfortable to have.

Placing his book down, all these thoughts roamed in his mind as he mused about his current standing. *'I'm a Heavenly King because of my seventh-grade products...but if they knew that I feel eighty-percent confident in concocting a high-tier, eighth-grade product, essentially making me a high-level Alchemic Emperor, how would my status change?'*

Of course, he would never reveal this fact for now. He needed personal strength or external strength that could ensure his safety. The Alchemist Association had already attempted to lure him out of the Sect. Who knew the truth behind that incident, and how it might threaten or affect his life. It was best to be cautious, concealing this ability.

He lifted his body, placed the book back in its bookshelf, grabbed a spiritual jade and inscribed his newfound musings within, and left his study. He roamed the expansive halls of his sky palace. Everytime he walked these halls, he couldn't help but be awed by the sheer size, design, and magnificence of this palace.

The astral essence that flowed through it was thick and golden, giving off a hue reminiscent to an immortal's light in myth. There were countless formations and arrays inscribed within the sky palace, capable of not just keeping it afloat, but condensing and gathering astral essence and various pure energies.

It took him a few minutes to arrive in one of the thirty-six rooms, this one suitable and designed for alchemy. There were formations and arrays here as well. They amplified alchemical energies and helped facilitate the recovery of spiritual energies.

Withdrawing a multicolored cauldron, he placed it on the central table. It was about the size of a beach-ball. From its surface that was inscribed with various esoteric markings that emitted faint light that resembled the starry skies.

This was the Nine Element Eclipse Cauldron, a third-rank Astral Tool. In the art and classification of forging, armaments were divided into weapons, tools, armor, and talismans. There was Mortal, Qi, and Astral-types, and each embodied their respective realms and limitations.

Mortal Armaments coincided with the Foundation Establishment Realm; Qi Armaments coincided with the Qi Condensation Realm; Astral Armaments coincided with Astral Core Realm Realm.

They were further divided into three grades, low, mid, and high levels, and these rankings were defined by the upper limits of their abilities. For example, first-rank Astral Armaments had abilities, suitability, and a design for Astral Core Realm cultivators at the First Stage, World Sea Phase.

However, by wielding a higher rank weapon, one can access various abilities of higher phases.

As a third-rank astral tool, the Nine Element Eclipse Cauldron was suited for those at the Third Stage of the Astral Core Realm, and its formations and arrays can emulate those at that level with sufficient Qi or Astral Force.

Luckily, Wei Wuyin's Qi was abundant to an unnatural level, so he could cultivate and convert his Alchemic Qi into Alchemic Force, and while not as effective as true Alchemic Force at that level, it was sufficient to enhance his success rate and quality. While it had cost him a few low-tier, seventh-grade products to obtain, it was definitely worth it.

Thinking about this, he realized he still had a backlog of requests due to the Grand Axis Faction. After three months, all the evidence had long since been verified and requests submitted. He should simultaneously handle this.

While he was leisurely concocting, he hadn't realized that a certain someone was struggling with his life on the line.

Chapter 166 - 164: The Unassuming Ring, Long Chen's Struggle!

Second Level of the Extreme War Mountain.

"Kill this trash poser! Overestimating yourself, ptooy!"

"Since he's arrived, he thinks he's invincible! Who does he think he is, Heavenly King Jin? Heavenly King Wei? Hahaha!"

"Ayo! Don't compare him to Heavenly Kings, he's barely worthy enough to carry my servants shoes."

The crowd was riled and filled with vigor, flinging insult after insult targeted at a single person on a wide combat platform. This location was called the War Fate Platform, and it was designed for low-level disciples of the Extreme War Mountain to fight according to the rules of Imperial Combat. After all, not every fight needed a high-level figure to establish a barrier and oversee the battle.

Typically, life and death battles weren't common within Imperial Combat. It usually involved wagers set by both parties, and these wagers were mostly harmless and done out of pride or contest. The extreme cases of death battles were few and far between.

Even Gu Hao hadn't killed Miao Yu, but wagered their temporary freedom. After all, if he went too far, he'd inevitably be targeted by her faction until his head was claimed. That would be too troublesome. In the end, she took her own life, so he wasn't at fault nor would anyone seek revenge.

A sore loser was treated as such, a loser.

There were numerous bodies surrounding this platform, mixed with all sorts of disciples, including Mortal Common and Earthly Elites. They were quietly observing this in idle interest, interest that was drummed up by the specific circumstances.

On the platform and the focus of all their gazes were a bloodied figure, drenched in blood. With sword in hand, he struck over and over, and each time, he'd be blasted away by a casual strike of his opponent. Despite each devastating blow dealt, he kept rising like a zombie, his aura of slaughter and sword was endless, but it served very little in this battle. With a cultivation base at the Eighth Stage of the Qi Condensation Realm, he faced an Astral Core Realm expert.

While some might consider this brave, most would believe this an act of a fool.

A young man arrived amongst the crowd, curious at the gathering, pushing his way until he found his friend. His bright eyes looked at the platform and winced a little after observing the bloodied figure slide across the platform after receiving a blast of astral force.

There were faint sounds of bones fracturing, likely even breaking. It was quite heart-shivering.

"What's happening here?" The young man's eyes floated to the opponent, a Mortal Common Disciple who seemed relatively unharmed. He stood upright with a smirk on his face. He effused an aura of ease and relaxation, as if a lion toying with a rat.

"Oh? You're finally here! You missed a good show. Now, it's almost over...haaa..." The young man's friend sighed.

"Hm?"

"Oh yeah. You see that figure up there, bloodied and beaten by Ji Yu? He's a Nascent Dust disciple that was recently inducted. Supposedly, Ji Yu took a liking towards a Nascent Dust female disciple, and wanted her to act as a dual cultivation partner. This was obviously to her benefit, but she refused."

"Just that? Ji Yu doesn't seem like the type to harp on a female of that low ranking, right?" The young man asked in confusion. Dual cultivation provided most of the long term benefits to her, not to Ji Yu. If she refused, why insist?

The friend agreed with a heavy nod, "He was not only willing to take her as a dual cultivation partner, but even compensate her after, or allow her to be one of his wives after. But she was quite fiery, and insulted him."

"Insulted him? What..."

"Yeah! She attacked his character, and so he used his power of authority on her, and then this man on the platform got into a heated dispute that ended in him challenging Ji Yu to a life or death challenge. It was quite wild, gotta say."

"Is that it? That seems very little to throw your life away. After all, Ji Yu can't do much to her because of the rules. If she complained with evidence, Ji Yu could be executed." The young man only became more confused, but since he wasn't here from the very beginning, he felt there were missing pieces to this puzzle. After all, his friend was merely speaking from his perspective. There was bound to be holes and inconsistency, as well as bias.

On the stage, Ji Yu kept his grin and said, "If you surrender, kowtow before me in forgiveness, I'd consider sparing your life. What do you say?" The wisp of laughter in his eyes was utterly undisguised.

However, the bloodied figure was unyielding and struck again with a wave of sword qi. Ji Yu shook his head, waving his palm casually causing a surging wave of astral force to shatter the qi and smash into the figure's body once more.

Woosh!

His body was like a ragdoll as he was sent to the edge of the stage with a horrific thud of flesh and concrete. It was sickening, nearly causing a few people to lose their lunch. It truly seemed that that blow had dealt a devastating strike that should've brought this event to its end, but the bloodied figure still trembled erratically signaling some traces of life remained.

"Let's end this," Ji Yi withdrew his spear, a first-rank astral weapon. Within those eyes flashed a hint of killing intent, and he slowly walked towards the figure, each step was like a resounding drum that called forth death in all its inevitable gloom.

Slowly, the figure lifted its beaten and battered body upwards, using its forearms and legs to do so. After barely rising, it lifted its head to reveal a set of eyes.

Shuu!

Ji Yu froze. His eyes abruptly flashed with fear and uncertainty. Those eyes were like a god of death, intent on killing everyone and everything at any cost. Despite the dripping blood, the distorted figure, the weakened aura, the intensity of that glare was beyond conceivable imagination.

A sudden sensation of deadly crisis suffused Ji Yu's mind and heart. His fear turned into anger which became irrevocable, irredeemable rage! He gripped his spear and dashed forward, its tip was thrust forth intent to puncture the figure's skull.

Shuu!

Ji Yu felt time seemingly stop. It wasn't an actual expression of temporal control, but it was as if everything had frozen in his mind. From the right hand of the bloodied figure, he saw a dim light flicker incessantly! He saw that dim light expand, expand endlessly stretching from horizon to horizon!

His mind, soul, and body was visibly shaken as he lost control of his ability to go awry. But he noticed none of this as a figure that seemed to embody the laws of heaven and earth, tyrannical, imperious occupied his every sense; a true hegemonic existence that seemed to be supreme across all creation!

Shiing!

This delay was but a moment, a single second, but Ji Yu was directly before the bloodied figure with his spear thrusting forward but it had noticeably slowed, losing its lethal might and momentum. This opportunity was grasped to its fullest! With his sword in hand, the bloodied figure slashed! A swing of his sword launched an exceptional sword qi that embodied the sword and slaughter!

Before the crowd could revel in the defeat and subsequent death of the figure, a head flew! It flew upwards and spun, twisting in the air, while its expression was filled with fear and shock!

Thud!

When it finally landed, the headless corpse dropped to its knees before the bloodied figure and blood gushed endlessly from its neck. It rained a sanguine shower that gave the atmosphere a bitter, vicious, and heart-shaking air!

"YAHHHH!" A roar of triumphant, a roar suffused with all the pent-up emotions of escaping death, of defeating the impossible, of overcoming the world!

The resulting silence was shocking! The crowd had eyes of disbelief, uncertainty, confusion, and awe! Did they just witness...

The young man who had just arrived dazedly said, "It seems that Nascent Dust disciple actually won. Wow, to be so careless." He had just arrived, so he felt like a true spectator, so he hadn't felt the impact of the entire scene. While it was an exceptional feat, he felt Ji Yu was being too careless not ending his enemy instantly.

But his friend's mouth was large enough to fit a baseball and then some! "He...did it?"

"Long Chen...actually did it?"

The crowd was still gathering its bearings when the bloodied figure fell to its knees, dropping its sword, breathing air as if it was the sweetest nectar in this world. However, underneath that visage of crimson, a warm and elated smile tugged on his lips! He softly muttered, "I will protect them all!"

Two women hastily arrived on stage after the end of the competition. They were beautiful, natural nation-toppling women that drew the attention and envy of everyone present. They were Wu Baozhai and Lin Ziyang!

They grabbed his figure, as if he might disappear if he let go. Lin Ziyang directly embraced Long Chen, placing his head comfortably between her bosom. Her face was filled with tears and they continued to fall. "You...idiot! You didn't need to do this for me." While those words were said, an indescribable happiness emerged in her heart that solidified her feelings.

Wu Baozhai held him too. "You're always acting without considering our opinions!" She softly chided with a half-hearted tone, her tears similarly flowing. However, she knew that Long Chen had proven something today. Not just to himself, but the entire world.

With this feat, he declared to the world that he was a man that could achieve the impossible! Soon, his name would resound within the entire sect; the entire planet; the entire astral territory; the entire starfield!

Chapter 167 - 165: Partners In The Sky

KREE!

A resounding cry, filled with majesty, pride, and arrogance echoed above the Sky Layer. The ambient astral essence quivered and surged, rolling about forming dense clouds that gathered and swirled around a particular entity.

This entity was an avian bird with white feathers, resplendent golden eyes, a tail of shimmering gold, and a beak that radiated rays of golden light. Its entire body was wreathed in white flames that released dense and unfathomable lifeforce. But within this white flame, a black, dark, gloomy aura bloomed.

It felt like death.

No, it was death.

Bai Lin! This exceptional creature soared within the skies as she gushed forth with endless white flame! She was undergoing her rebirth, a transformative process specific to those of the phoenix lineage!

Regardless of where, in the legends of this world, other worlds, dimensions, realities, planes of existences, their legend remained the same and true.

They thrived in flames, turned into ash, and were reborn from flames. They were existences that have brought about good fortune, wellness, and prosperity, but their rage were fierce and burning.

In this world, it was said that they were born from suns, and their rebirth was akin to a supernova eruption!

Bai Lin felt her blood boiling endlessly, its temperature rising ceaselessly, as if it was being burned by the sun itself! As if she was turning into a sun! Furthermore, her entire body was emitting blindly burning light that scorched the lower clouds and sent rays after rays of intense sunlight below.

Kree!

She felt it. The power residing in her blood, the power that originated from the Golden Phoenix Fruit. This fruit was absolutely miraculous, rare, and a product of thousands of years of nurturing. It ignited her bloodline potential and changed her state of existence from a normal crane to a fire crane!

While she hadn't become a true phoenix, she unlocked a few abilities and unlocked a potential path back to her ancestors. She could feel the raging wisps of flames that seeped into her ordinary bloodline, extracting and promoting her physique.

She soared!

She soared higher and higher. Her wings that spanned fifty meters caused torrential gusts and vicious currents, becoming stronger and stronger with each flap! Her speed was slowly rising as she tried to pierce through the second Sky Layer that led to the eighth layer!

She felt a call.

It was ephemeral yet clear as the rays of the sun. It invoked her innermost desire to breach the skies and enter the outside world! Her body burned and burned, racing towards the layer without hesitation!

Bam!

The Sky Layer was an odd existence. It was like solidified gas that had a semi-permeable layer that allowed the essence and light emitted from the sun to penetrate, benefiting the life below. But it also served as a natural cage for the living existences of this world.

It halted her dauntless and hasty advance. A crushing sound of flesh meeting sand resounded as a dent in the Sky Layer emerged, but it lasted shortly before Bai Lin was rebounded ferociously backwards.

Her body was sent spiraling downwards as she tried to regain her balance in the sky, but the momentum was too strong. She continued her descent until a booming crash into the bottom Sky Layer.

Laying flat on her back, a cry filled with pain and unwillingness echoed from her throat. It reached the clouds and her golden eyes blazed intensely with unyielding vigor. She slowly picked herself up, her wings acting as lifts. Her body trembled slightly, indicative of the immense pain her body felt, but through her eyes, there was no sign of defeat.

The stubbornness originated from her beating heart and burning blood! It was incessantly flaring, surging with her emotions of the sky.

Her eyes saw only the sun, no obstacle or layer of restraint.

Kree!

Boosh!

She blasted off, her wings swung downwards as she shot upwards like a spear, her golden beak was the sharp tip! Behind her was a trail of golden light and white flames. Her beak met the Sky Layer and penetrated an inch! Yet, as her wings tried to gain momentum, she couldn't push any further!

Woosh!

She descended downwards like a flaming comet! Her attempt was a failure, yet her flames never faltered. Her body crashed into the lower Sky Layer, causing several of her bones to fracture and her feathers to flutter away from the impact.

Shockingly, she didn't utter a single sound of pain and merely lifted her body. The quivering of her feathers and the faint drippings of golden and crimson blood was apparent. Her gaze never left the sky that housed the sun.

Kree!

She let loose a roaring cry! From her tone and her gaze, it was as if she was telling the sun: "Wait for me!" This desire to see it, undisguised by the layers of this planet, remained unshattered and true.

But this desire stemmed from a greater want. This was the desire to experience an awakening, and she knew that while she had prepared her body and mind for three months to handle the boiling force, she couldn't experience a true nirvanic transformation!

Because her blood was not hot enough, her heart was not flame like the phoenixes of old, and her soul lacked a quintessential quality. If she underwent her transformation here, the effects will be incomplete! In the future, her awakenings would be impeded!

This was like the accumulation of a cultivator. She was bestowed her strength, and to rise beyond this limit, she had to consolidate, enrich, and develop her own cultivation base! If she didn't, her limit would be that bestowed strength.

A heart-tearing feeling emerged in her heart, but her mind remained clear. If she did not see the sun today, she would never be a true phoenix! This was the whispers of her ancestors!

She didn't let up. With a creaking sound that originated from her bones, she shot upwards like a missile, lancing towards the Sky Layer without hesitation!

Within her thoughts, an image of a figure emerged in her heart. He had silver eyes, black hair, chiseled looks, a strong set of shoulders, and a gentle smile.

Thirteen Years Ago.

Kree...

The fresh sound of a newborn crane echoed out, seeking its mother and father. It chirped and cried as it adjusted into the new world. Before she could gather her bearings, receive the love of her parents, or enjoy this new world, a group of individuals stormed in and brought her away.

As she looked back, she found two unhatched eggs and one broken shell. Did she originate from there? This thought was her most prominent because it was her first one in life.

She was brought away, infused with all sorts of strange liquids and fed berries and seeds. They didn't taste 'right' but they were enough to survive. She was hungry, so she ate.

These strange foods caused her body to grow, and she was slightly uncomfortable. Before she knew it, time passed, and she was larger than the people who fed her. She towered them, but they were unafraid.

Later, they tied her up and gagged her. She felt scared, as these people didn't respond to her action. They forced her to fly, even when she couldn't. They continued until she could, and when she did, they mounted her and forced her to fly according to their will.

They made her their slave. Her terror remained, no, intensified. She didn't know what she wanted in life, but this was not it. To be forced to do the bidding of others, to not be able to fly when she wanted to soar, to not be able to eat when she wanted to eat. They fed her enough to survive, but nothing else.

She remembered the whips that lashed forth when she was disobedient. When she grumbled, when she was too scared to act. The pain and burning of her skin as it tore at her!

Then, he came.

He arrived with a slight frown and an impassive glance. It was somewhat cold, frightening even, and she couldn't help but feel fear when he approached. When he reached out his hand, she winced. Was this man like the others? Would he whip her, gag her, tie her up, bind her to the ground?

But his touch wasn't accompanied by pain. In fact, he didn't touch her. Instead, he pulled his hand back and said words she didn't expect. While she didn't truly understand those words before, she understood his intent.

"Can I touch you?"

Permission. He was asking this foreign and elusive thing from her, and she couldn't understand.

However, her confusion and shock wasn't accompanied by the whips of discontent, but a gentle smile.

"Are you hungry?" Those three words were words she definitely knew. But she didn't answer. She shied away from him, backing away.

One of the skinny men who 'tended and taught' her grumbled and lifted his arm. Her eyes widened and she knew it was coming! She closed her eyes and trembled, but it didn't come!

Pow!

A bone-crushing sound resounded before a wail of agony and pain pierced into her ears. When she opened her eyes in curiosity, she found the skinny man holding his arm that had been twisted in an unnatural direction, blood spurted from his arm endlessly and he cried in pain without end. It was exceptionally loud.

To her, however, that sound was heavenly hymns to the ears. A feeling of excitement surged through her bones, blood, and feathers!

When the young man with silver eyes arrived before her, he ignored the screams and said, "Can I become your partner? We'll travel the skies, fight all sorts of enemies, and overcome every obstacle...together. What do you say?" This time, the young man sent a wave of surging energies that calmly entered her body. She clearly understood his intent!

She was but a nameless crane, but this young man offered her another path. So without hesitation, she agreed!

She was no longer gagged, placed with all sorts restraints, or forced to stay grounded. She could eat when she wanted, fly when she wished, and fight! She learned to battle, to kill, and she saw a grander world beyond her stable pen and those men!

Her name was Bai Lin!

It was given to her by him, and she was unwilling to fall behind. As her intelligence grew, so did her awareness. Wei Wuyin's rise kept occurring, his strength and enemies growing stronger, and even now, her weakness made it so she couldn't penetrate the Sky Layer!

Her heart was frustrated beyond imagination! Could she still be his partner if she couldn't join him in the sky? If she couldn't keep up?!

Kree!

She was unwilling!

Her body smashed again and again against the Sky Layer, and her white flames continued to burn, quietly healing her broken bones, her bruised and pounded flesh, and those featherless areas grew anew!

The powers of her nirvanic flames were constantly working, but it proved fruitless as her strength never rose!

Would she have to undergo her awakening in this Sky Layer? No! She had to make it to the sun!

Swoosh!

Just as she was about to lift up her beaten and broken yet repairing body once more, a figure flashed before her. Her eyes moved and were met with those resplendent silver eyes. They peered into her golden gaze and she froze.

The figure lifted his head upwards, a faint smile on his face. "I don't know why you want to go beyond the Sky Layer, but if you want to travel the skies, you can't just leave me, right?"

"..." Bai Lin's heart trembled intensely!

This figure was exactly Wei Wuyin! "Let's go together, okay?" Those words were gentle, but the warmth was endless.

kree...

Bai Lin softly cried out. Then, her eyes became firm. She lifted her beak, and her wings opened! Wei Wuyin nodded, he flashed atop her back and held onto her long, graceful neck.

"Let's do this," Wei Wuyin smilingly said.

Chapter 168 - 166: Rising To The Suns!

KREE!

BOOOSH!

This lift-off was filled with endless power, and she exploded upwards even greater than a normal rocket. They, both she and Wei Wuyin, were covered in white flames and they were like a peerless comet as they moved!

Wei Wuyin didn't hold back, withdrawing several seventh-grade pellets! They weren't just one or two, but several dozen!

As one goes higher and higher through the Sky Layers of this planet, the layer was more difficult to penetrate, but similarly it was shorter in height between the two. Without hesitation or understanding why, Wei Wuyin brought out his strongest tools!

With a flick, the pellets became a beam of fiery energies that shot forward into a concentrated beam and penetrated the Sky Layer! It lasted a single second before the layer was penetrated through!

Bai Lin was swift. She shot into this created tunnel and flapped with all her might! The wind caused Wei Wuyin's clothing to flap wildly! But a laugh left his lips.

This was daring!

Let's see what's beyond!

He brought out hundreds of seventh-grade pellets!

"There's another one! This one is said to have toughness that causes even those at the Fourth Stage of the Astral Core Realm to be helpless! Let's see how tough it was!" Wei Wuyin warned, and he was met with a fearless action! Bai Lin sped up!

"Hahaha! I really want to see what's above!" Wei Wuyin might have to deal with all sorts of trouble, but he was unwilling to let Bai Lin fail!

In fact, the last Sky Layer was said to only be able to be breached by Realmlords, and they exceeded the limit of all cultivators at the Myriad Monarch Planet! There were only two people in the entire starfield who could naturally penetrate!

In ancient times, these layers were cages, but after the King of Everlore Era, cultivators flourished and were born anew. They left their cages, built Void Gates, allowed for free access and growth amongst cultivators. It created trade, exchange of 'usable' resources and subsequent growth of most cultivators, including the interactions between races and all sorts of complex networks formed.

Woosh!

They exited the seventh-level Sky Layer, and Wei Wuyin was shocked by the Eighth Level. There were nine Sky Palaces here, and it was very, very spread out. He couldn't sense them with his spiritual sense, but felt the nine streams of flowing astral essence that was dense like mist.

He felt several spiritual senses descend instantly upon them, but he could do nothing about this.

"Go!" Wei Wuyin reassured Bai Lin. Even if he had to suffer a little in the future for this disturbance, he'll accept all these issues without a single complaint. Because this was something Bai Lin wanted to do. A pair of silver and golden eyes grew simultaneously sharper as they ignored these powerful senses and shot forward with unprecedented speed!

Wei Wuyin gathered all the pellets and threw them forward. They became melded together and concentrated. Without hesitation, they became a beam of fiery energies once more, concentrated to the extreme, and caused the air and oxygen to incinerate instantly, but man and crane was relentless!

Boom!

The two penetrated the eighth level Sky Layer! They entered through a gaping hole that seared with fire energies! Its edges burned continuously, and the temperature started to rapidly increase! Furthermore, the Sky Palaces' foundations were obviously disturbed as numerous formations and arrays were activated!

Wei Wuyin felt the force from the exploding impact. It caused his bones to shatter instantly! It was merely a shockwave, but his strong and enhanced body was shattered!

He gripped Bai Lin with his qi to its utmost, afraid of falling. Bai Lin's feathers were all blown off! Her beak cracked, her wings distorted, and her bones broke! But she still shot forward!

But the Nirvanic Flame wrapped them both, rapidly healing their injuries and protecting their lives!

Wei Wuyin didn't know, but him bringing Bai Lin forward was immensely beneficial. Those of phoenix kind required a forged will to penetrate forward, and every phoenix who was brought to the sun without a challenge was a phoenix destined for failure!

If Wei Wuyin had known Bai Lin required the sun, he could've easily made a request to use a Void Gate and arrive outside, but that'll forever limit her potential!

Wei Wuyin calmly breathed as his bones rapidly mended together. *'The Heavenly Daos gave me a feeling that Bai Lin needed this...but is it worth it?'* If they both died here, it would truly be unfortunate!

However, this inkling of sensation was merely a whisper that felt like it said: "She needs to be higher." It was vague, unclear, and made him uncertain. He had to make do with his own understanding and belief, and seeing her heartfelt desire to penetrate the Sky Layer, he would achieve her goal!

And she wasn't stopping!

By the time they exited the eighth level, the astral essence here was incomparably pure. But shockingly, there was a single palace here. And this governed the entirety of the five mountains!

'All the Grand Imperial Sages stay in a single palace?' It was exceptionally small, about two stories and not very wide. *'Could it be like the spatial gateways that led to the Myriad Dao Palaces?'* When he recalled this, he felt more certain.

Kree!

Bai Lin hadn't stopped. She continued upwards, and the last Sky Layer remained. Wei Wuyin calmly looked ahead and felt shaken. This was dangerous, and this layer was said to be unable to be breached besides by Realmlords!

His heart started to race.

Kree!

Wei Wuyin's gaze descended to Bai Lin. She turned her head and it revealed an unshakable desire and unyielding will! She had to penetrate this last Sky Layer!

Wei Wuyin deeply inhaled and exhaled. With a nod, he no longer held back.

Swish!

His sleeves flapped intensely as hundreds, no, thousands, no, tens of thousands of seventh-grade pellets emerged. This was his final trump card of mutual destruction. It was with the intent to protect his life from all unexpected threats! He concocted as many as he could! In total, there were 2349 fire-type pellets!

Without a single word or wisp of regret, he sent every last pellet upwards. When they touched the last sky layer, they melded together like before, but the power was immense, devastating with an earth-shattering rebounding force! He could only send it forward, release its power, direct it before the resulting pressure from merely doing so caused him to be blown off Bai Lin!!

He was sent flying downwards at an unprecedented speed! He was like a meteorite descending to the earth, and his flesh was burned black and scarred by heat!

Bai Lin cried in shock as she looked back. Her bones and body becoming flames! She was engulfed, her feathers no longer existed, her blood was boiling, and her bones were incinerated! But she didn't die! She seemed to have merged with the mysterious laws of fire to undergo an exceptional state!

"Go!" Wei Wuyin screamed with his entire might as he plummeted, his body was like a burning blaze of flames.

Bai Lin heard this and her heart shivered! But, she lifted her gaze upwards towards the maelstrom of flames and blazing hell above that seemingly penetrated the skies and revealed an open starry sky! She batted her wings of flames and flew forward! She trusted him, and he trusted her.

As he fell, he saw Bai Lin become fire itself as she entered the raging flames that blew open the last layer of the sky. *'She's...quite beautiful, huh?'* He lightly chuckled as he fell, going out of the ninth level into the eighth.

In the ninth level, Bai Lin exited the storm of energies and entered the dark void! When she did, her body was no longer just flesh, no longer bone, and was merely blood and flames. She looked like the embodiment of fire itself, a divinity born amidst the most beautiful of flames!

Kree!!

She saw it.

The sun.

The suns!

There were three and they were all brightly sending their rays of burning light towards her. She felt their strongest power and then...

She burned until only ash remained!

Chapter 169 - 167: Scorched

Woosh!

Wei Wuyin's body was like scorched earth, black as night and burnt beyond recognition. As he plummeted to the eighth level, the intense heat and blazing fire energies turned his enhanced flesh into barbecue. His eyes were shut, and sealed, melted at their ends to his face. His hair was incinerated, and his clothing was vaporized.

The damage was extensive, and his consciousness only lasted for a few seconds after his devastating gamble to open up a pathway to the dark void beyond the sky. Completely unconscious, he fell powerlessly and his body started to burn even greater from the increasing velocity of his fall.

Cultivators were oftentimes far, far heavier than their average, and Wei Wuyin's body could not only be considered as heavier, but denser, and more sturdy as well. He fell like a meteor becoming a shooting

star, streaking through the atmospheric layers of the planet, and he picked up a shocking amount of speed on his descent.

At the moment, those below might see a tiny meteor that resembled burning fire approaching. They might gawk, stare, or believe it could grant them a wish, but it was merely Wei Wuyin!

"..." While Wei Wuyin remained unconscious, he was unable to use his qi to help stabilize his body, heal, or take any sort of action. But a shocking event occurred! From his glabella, a surge of rainbow-colored light erupted in its brilliance. It started to send itself throughout his body, reaching his heart, and then his dantian.

As it touched his heart, an ancient roar resounded that dispersed the fire that wreathed across Wei Wuyin's body, like an instant fire extinguisher. In a single blink of an eye, Wei Wuyin's body that was burnt to the point that even his mother might not recognize him was fully revealed! He was truly like burnt, overly crusted toast. His skin had been seared and blackened to its limits, and his flesh had a hard texture, flaked and jagged.

The light reached his dantian, and saber energies exploded! The faint image of a saber encapsulated his entire body and controlled his body, causing its descent to slow down considerably despite the terrifying momentum. Then, wind, water, and ice energies started to gather and intrude into the saber image, and entered his body.

While he wasn't healed, his body's temperature cooled down considerably and so did the surroundings. If Wei Wuyin was awake, he would be startled! His Natal Souls were acting on their own! While they had done so before, such as to snag an alchemical product, he didn't think they had such levels of autonomy! They controlled their innate energies and acted with their own will!

This was not the standard ability of a Natal Soul. In fact, if this was told to others, they might not even believe it. Natal Souls were like secondary limbs that acted as controllers for one's energies, but it was only driven forth by their mental commands. They could not take action themselves, and weren't sentient existences that could communicate or interact of their own free will.

Upon his heart, the Mark of Eden flashed with resplendent green light! In a blink of an eye, Wei Wuyin's entire body, every orifice and every cell was integrated with green light! This light was wood energies, unfathomably pure and refined wood energies that originated from the Tree of Eden himself!

In Wei Wuyin's sea of consciousness, his Alchemic Natal Soul trembled in shock and surprise. It peered into the mark and it released a faint sound of realization and satisfaction. It was as if it was praising and saying: "At least he isn't an idiot."

Indeed.

Wei Wuyin never took action without two, three, maybe even four contingencies in place to ensure his survival. He had long since set-up plans to ensure his survival, not particularly for this event, and these plans took effect the moment his charred body returned to the seventh level!

His body was engulfed in endless wood energies provided by the Mark of Eden, activated remotely by a strand of spiritual sense he left within it, to be triggered when he reached the seventh level.

The area above his sky palace started to brim endlessly with various elemental and spiritual energies! This was Wei Wuyin's remote activation Spiritual Formation! The elemental energies turned into a river of multicolored energy as it sped towards Wei Wuyin's falling body, wrapped it, and started to act as a moving bridge to bring him into the Sky Palace.

However, the Alchemic Natal Soul was deeply startled. It was a part of Wei Wuyin's sea of consciousness and aware of every one of his actions, even thoughts. When did he take this action and how come it wasn't aware of it? When it tried to investigate this matter, he was shocked to realize that Wei Wuyin's mind was split into two pieces, and one was completely sealed off.

It had no access to this secondary mind!

Did Wei Wuyin seal off the mind connected to it and...

As this thought rumbled through the Alchemic Natal Soul, it realized why. It quivered with a tinge of pride and a little fear. After all, it realized that there were things it was unaware of!

Wei Wuyin wasn't a fool who simply accepted the unknown as a benefit. His Natal Souls were abnormal. This was an easily deduced fact from the moment they acted out before. Moreover, he had one that resided in his sea of consciousness and located closely to his Mind's Eye. He never liked having someone privy to his every thought and devised a method using his second mind that had been created during the Haven Heart Qi Method and sealed it personally, including its memories after the Alchemic Natal Soul externalized for a brief period.

While this contingency had been revealed to the party he was wary of to begin with, he wouldn't mind. Bai Lin was a priority, and he would never simply have one card to play regarding any possibility that could threaten his life.

The Mark of Eden's wood energies were the most purest tonic of restoration and regrowth, causing his cells and flesh to rapidly restore and regrow. Before he even re-entered his Sky Palace, his nude form was completely recovered in all its well-endowed glory, including his black hair to its original state. This likely didn't even consume a millionth of the innate wood energies stored in Mark of Eden. It was truly a monstrous amount!

A spark reignited his consciousness!

His eyes shot open as he calmly inspected his surroundings. At this point, his four Natal Souls had already gone into a dormant state of complete inactivity, but Wei Wuyin's eyes flashed as he glanced at his physical body. He felt saber energies roaming across his body and within the air.

He took a deep breath and lifted his head upwards towards the sky. According to the records in the Beast-Taming Sect regarding the little of what they knew of the Awakening of a Phoenix, it took nine years to complete. He exhaled his held breath and relaxed his heart.

With a wave, his three-layered ring, which was one of the two items that remained undamaged on his body, was used to bring out a set of clothing and he properly refitted himself in another set of Extreme Creation Mountain's black robes.

Woosh!

A valiant figure garbed in black flashed over, and directly kneeled before Wei Wuyin. "Lord Wei..."

It was Su Mei. Wei Wuyin was somewhat taken aback by the kneel. He couldn't even react, but he didn't admonish or order her to do otherwise. He had always allowed her to act according to her own will, and if she decided to call him 'Lord Wei' or kneel with that will, he would never interfere. He respected her enough to not manage her mannerisms towards him. However, he felt something different about her, a nearly imperceptible change.

He couldn't quite put his finger on it...

"Bai Lin won't return for nine years, likely. As for this..." Wei Wuyin's eyes once more lifted towards the Sky Layer and saw three gaping holes. While they were healing, it wasn't instantly and will likely take quite a while to do so naturally.

The last hole, the one at the ninth level, was over thirty kilometers wide! He could still see the starry sky as if night had descended specifically in that area. The sunlight and unrefined astral essence would likely cause exceptional damage to the ninth level, eighth level, and seventh level if they seeped through.

He could already feel a cold aura that even eclipsed the burning heat he felt the moment he launched his last attack and penetrated it!

"We're likely going to have some trouble, so prepare for some guests." Wei Wuyin helplessly chuckled.

Su Mei didn't bother asking about the details, simply glanced at the sky above, her eyes shimmering with exceptional brightness, before she flashed away and started to make preparations for guests.

A few seconds after she left, several powerful spiritual senses descended!

Chapter 170 - 168: Trouble? Title?

Those spiritual senses felt boundless, supremely powerful, and borderline omniscient. He had no protections strong enough to prevent their inspective desires, and he was thoroughly inspected! They likely not just saw his cultivation standard, but even his nude form was completely exposed!

Wei Wuyin helplessly smiled. He felt violated somewhat, but what could he do? The only solace was that his Alchemic Natal Soul and Draconic Natal Soul remained hidden within the depths of his sea of consciousness and fleshy heart. They couldn't, no, they wouldn't inspect those areas.

If they did, there was a very high chance that his entire body would explode from their spiritual energies and strength contained within their spiritual sense. Unfortunately, this was just the sheer difference from their cultivation realms.

He was a measly Eighth Stage Qi Condensation cultivator while they were all at the middle-phases of the Astral Core Realm. He could only accept their will and intent, and hoped for the best.

After all, his trump card against them had just been thoroughly expended. All that preparation went towards supporting Bai Lin, and thus he was vulnerable. While this made him feel even more naked than he likely was beneath their senses, his heart was confident and true.

He stepped out of his Sky Palace, and twenty-eight figures arrived! They floated amongst the sky while their appearances were concealed by various colored mists condensed from their spiritual energies. This

prevented them from being inspected by others, and gave them an elusive, grand, and mysterious feeling.

But Wei Wuyin merely smiled, he stepped forward and directly cupped his fists and bowed towards a single person. "It's a pleasure to see you again, Grand Sage Tuo." The title Grand Sage was shortened for Grand Imperial Sage, and it denoted their ranking within the sect.

This person didn't stand out. In fact, his spiritual mist that shrouded his body was even faintly weaker than the others. Almost immediately, a few of the others exclaimed softly, obviously turning their gazes towards that particular mist.

"Hahaha! How frighteningly acute. Those eyes of yours are so extraordinary, yet you haven't even cultivated that technique yet." A familiar voice resounded as the mist took the initiative to disperse, revealing an old man in dull grey robes. He stepped forward and flashed in front of Wei Wuyin.

Wei Wuyin merely smiled in reply. He hadn't noticed the old man based on his eyes, but his ears. The spiritual mist directly stopped various smells as they were affected by the spiritual energies, and he obviously didn't have a strong enough spiritual sense to penetrate the mist, but there was something a person couldn't change, and that's the unique sound of their breathing.

Not their cadence or their volume, but the sound made when air was pushed out from the nose and inhaled. It might be a strange and odd thing to recognize, but it was like air exiting a specific windpipe. It was so unique when one could notice.

The old man's breathing was insanely distinct. The moment he arrived, Wei Wuyin noticed him upon that first breath. His senses have been endlessly empowered by his True Dragon Bloodline to superhuman levels, beyond most cultivators. In truth, when he first found out the acute and powerful hearing of his, he was quite disturbed.

This was especially so in the Royal Palace. Imagine the heaving and pounding sounds of those next door. It was quite excruciating and disturbing to notice this. He could even discern false and real sounds, and that had to do with the sound released, unintentional and intentional was just as distinct as footsteps.

The old man was named Tuo Bihan. He was the renowned Grand Imperial Sage and only Emperor-class Alchemist within the Myriad Monarch Sect. The other two were within the Myriad Monarch Astral Territory, but their loyalties weren't fixed to the sect and developed elsewhere. Furthermore, their cultivation bases were nowhere near as high as Tuo Bihan.

"Alright, there's no need to conceal yourselves. Aren't you all here to see this young man who has caused quite a commotion?" Tuo Bihan smilingly said, his eyes calm and gentle like water. Wei Wuyin knew that this old man had no ill-feelings, and even though he acted and nearly devastated the sky layer, the old man cared very little.

Of course, this could be pragmatically looked upon as ignored due to one thing: Value. It was an elusive concept but it meant that Wei Wuyin's worth far outweighed this matter, likely by hundreds of times, perhaps even more.

Wei Wuyin understood this, but he didn't directly start acting arrogant and unruly after understanding this fact. He had never been one to act against his nature or rely on something as ephemeral as other people's expectations.

The other twenty-seven figures were hesitant, but in the end, they dropped their concealments and revealed themselves to Wei Wuyin entirely. They were all quite young, beautiful, handsome, and exceptional figures.

He was startled to realize that, besides Tuo Bihan, everyone else looked to be in their early to mid-twenties. Even the males kept their appearances youthful, and as an Alchemist, he could easily see evidence of seventh-grade pastes. Pastes were quite a unique category for the Dao of Alchemy and usually related to the physical body, or applying the seven traits of alchemy to the physical body. This included transformation!

Pastes included all sorts of healing, medicinal, relaxation, age-reducing, hygienic, and more abilities. Most cultivators kept their youthful looks through applying these constantly, clearing away wrinkles and damage to their skin from oxygen and solar damage. Their bright white teeth were similarly the result of pastes.

He knew that pastes were the most commonly concocted product, and the easiest of the four types to do. These twenty-seven were all alchemists, architects, or forgers, and he didn't recognize any of them, but he knew of them all! They were not just King Alchemists, Architects, or Forgers of the Extreme Creation Mountain, but they had exceptionally high cultivation bases, and were more talented than standard elders.

They were all Prime Imperial Sages! The twenty-seven Prime Imperial Sages that resided within the Extreme Creation Mountain!

Those other Alchemists, Architects, and Forgers he met were those of a lower cultivation base, talent, success rate, refinement speed, and overall the bottom of their ranking! They were promising and deep within the folds of the Myriad Monarch Sect, but they didn't have absolute power like these people!

A young-looking, sharp-nosed man dressed in pure white, his outfit was scholarly and filled with an endearing air, spoke with a hint of wariness. "Grand Sage Tuo, this isn't just a little bit of commotion, but an entire incident that threatens our livelihood." It seemed his status was quite high as he immediately pointed out and corrected Grand Sage Tuo's words.

"I agree," a thin woman with a willowy figure and barely any feminine assets said. Her words were said half a beat after the young man. It was clear that she would agree regardless of what he said.

Wei Wuyin was very sensitive to various heavenly influences, and he had the distinct feeling that these two were Dao Companions. Just as he thought that Grand Sage Tuo was going to rebuke the two, he instead just quietly nodded.

"The commotion is a commotion. I didn't say it was minor or major. I'll let you all decide that after hearing what the young man here has to say." Instead, he stepped aside and directly gave Wei Wuyin the platform.

Oh?

Wei Wuyin was briefly startled but didn't halt for more than half a second as he stepped forward. There was no spiritual communication between the two and he acted absolutely naturally.

"Greetings Prime Imperial Sages. It's truly unfortunate that I've caused you all to awaken from your cultivation, but in truth there's a legitimate and completely sane reason as to why I did what I did." Wei Wuyin's words caused them all to pay extra attention, and he could tell the two couples had discontent in their eyes already.

"..."

He went silent as he swept his gaze over each and every one of them. This silence caused one of the Prime Imperial Sage, a black-skinned demon with white eyes and flames for hair, to urge: "Hurry and explain."

Wei Wuyin's smile widened into an exceptionally bright grin, "It's simple really. When I was born in the Myriad Yore Continent, I loved gazing at the night sky and the stars within, but due to the Myriad Monarch Sect's three suns, it was too rare. I grew frustrated and could no longer hold back. I just wanted to see the stars, so I used over twenty thousand seventh-grade Volcanic Eruption Pellets to see it again."

"..."

"..."

"..."

The demon nodded. He withdrew a transmission crystal and sent it towards Wei Wuyin. "If you need any help seeing the stars again, don't make such a mess. Simply ask. I can easily bring you to see them."

"..."

Wei Wuyin nodded, "Of course."

"My name's Fyuu Hu. You can send me a message anytime." Without hesitation, he turned into a comet of light that broke through the gaping hole that led to the eighth level.

"Ah, kids these days. You didn't need to be so impulsive," a motherly sounding voice filled with nurturing and care echoed. A brown-skinned woman with a buxom figure and exceptional curves. Despite her tone that made her feel very warm, her figure could ignite even the most frigid of men. She similarly withdrew a crystal and sent it over.

"Don't cause too much trouble, okay?" She warmly smiled before she flashed off.

The companions were startled, because these two were merely the beginning of those who simply said a few words and left after expressing their intent.

"The stars. Ah, I remember I broke a sky palace in my young days due to desire. Oh, how grand the times. I don't blame..."

"...Here. I'm located in the eighth level, the pink sky palace. If you want to visit, you can do so anytime. ANY. TIME."

After a while, some weren't even talking about stars, and directly invited Wei Wuyin to their Sky Palace, and some of these old women that neared a thousand years old were shameless beyond imagination!

"I have quite a nice collection of fine wine that I used to brew when I was younger. It's worth an astral stone a cup, beyond delicious and an experience you shouldn't deprive your youthful years of. While drinking it and gazing at the sky, you'll truly enjoy an unforgettable moment!"

Before long, twenty-five sent their invitations and Wei Wuyin stored all twenty-five stones with a casual air and smile. The only three to remain were the Dao Companions with unsightly expressions on their faces and Tuo Bihan.

Wei Wuyin said, "Prime Sages, thank you for your concern. I hope that you won't fault me for acting wilfully this one time. If it happens again, I'll be sure to be mindful not to make such a mess."

Their expressions became even more unsightly after hearing that, even faintly becoming ugly. They were both Creationists, so how could they not understand what happened? These Prime Imperial Sages had obviously decided to avoid offending this little monster!

Twenty thousand seventh-grade pellets?

This little silver-eyed devil elevated his status to unsurpassed levels with a few words, causing them all to decide that it simply wasn't worth offending him or even expressing their discontent!

The young man's left eyelids twitched. He blew a fucking hole through three sky layers! He scorched tens of miles in each layer without care! In fact, his heart was even more pissed cause his Sky Palace was directly beside the explosion and caused it to be blown to smithereens! How could he not be unhappy?

But his female counterpart was smarter, calmer, and understood the implications. This young man just revealed an unnatural fact and achieved a feat they couldn't accomplish. He penetrated the last layer of the sky! Only Realm Lords should be able to do so, yet he did it, and with twenty thousand pellets!

If someone said he found these pellets stored somewhere, they would all call utter bullshit. How could they not sense his spiritual aura in each wisp of fire energy?! He personally concocted this!

She smiled, changing faces quickly, and said: "Heavenly King Wei, it's not best to cause such a commotion over a little matter like this. If you want to see the night sky, we have free access to Void Gates and can go anywhere we please. I even know of a unique spot that has a great angle to view the stars. If you want me to take you there, simply send us a message."

She said 'us' deliberately as she withdrew two crystals and sent them forward. Leaving one more beautiful smile, she grabbed the scholarly man and directly left.

Only Wei Wuyin and Tuo Bihan remained. They looked towards each other, and their eyes were shining but with different thoughts, yet almost simultaneously they both let loose odd laughter.

"Here I thought you wouldn't be able to handle it. Not only did you handle this matter, you thoroughly sent them packing, currying favor and leaving to avoid you having a negative opinion of them." Tuo Bihan walked forward and pat Wei Wuyin on the shoulder, his gaze locked onto Wei Wuyin's silver eyes.

"Your actions this time were quite risky. But don't worry, we know why you did what you did since the beginning." Tuo Bihan directly admitted and Wei Wuyin felt that was the case. Their senses directly descended when he arrived on the eighth level yet none of them took action.

It seemed his thoughts were too complicated, and that trouble was reduced to a soft wad of air with utter ease.

"That crane of yours just experienced her first awakening. I'm shocked you actually got her through the Sky Layer. If you had taken the Void Gate, her awakening would've not been this thorough. I'm actually really, really shocked you accomplished this. Others have tried to do what you've done, especially those Beastmen with that bloodline, yet they all fail. And those who've taken the easy path are never reborn." Tuo Bihan explained as he gave Wei Wuyin a thumbs up. It seemed those words leaked secrets of the phoenix bloodline!

Wei Wuyin had already felt that was the case, so hearing its confirmation made him happy.

With a sigh, he looked at the gaping holes.

Tuo Bihan shook his head, "Don't worry. Our Myriad Monarch Planet isn't so weak. In the event of war, the upper Sky Layer is the first line of defense. We have substitute layers made by astral arrays. They could last for hundreds of years, but this will likely fix itself in two or three days."

"Regardless, you were quite impressive. It seems the circulating title below the Sky Layer has some truth in it."

Wei Wuyin's frowned slightly. Title below? What title? Saber Ascendant? A light of hope emerged in his eyes. Was it catching on?

But alas, the title was not that.

It was the Prince of Everlore!