

Chapter 171 - 169: Qi Essence Phase! Zenith Mortal State!

Wei Wuyin accompanied Tuo Bihan for quite a while after the departure of the Prime Imperial Sages. The old man's attitude was quite carefree, and Wei Wuyin learned a little more about this legendary leader of an entire Extreme Mountain. Not only was he an Alchemic Emperor, but he was a high-level Architect and a Forger. He was a Creationist through and through, but he was also an existence that was exceptionally long-lived.

While he didn't specify his exact age, Wei Wuyin felt hints of his life aura and it seemed to be nearing or about thirteen hundred years. That was exceptionally old! At that age, a person can learn and develop many skills.

After a little bit of chatting, Tuo Bihan left.

Wei Wuyin immediately retreated into his bedroom. The moment he arrived, he removed his clothes and jumped in his bed, covering himself with satin sheets and grabbing the feather-stuffed pillows. With a deep exclaim, he descended into sleep.

He was beyond tired currently, and that largely had to do with resisting the absolute monstrous pain that was being burnt alive until your eyelids melted into your skin. While it simply wasn't comparable to the experience when he was told about Hell, this was slightly different as it involved being scorched alive.

Furthermore, there was so much he still had to do. Before this incident, he spent the last three months preparing his trump cards, studying the Dao of Alchemy, concocting all sorts of products for experimentation, and learning about the astral territory.

Unfortunately, he still had things to do.

A few days later, in Wei Wuyin's Alchemy Room.

"So this is Mana, hm?" Wei Wuyin softly muttered. In his hands were nine bottles, each containing a portion each, nine fluid ounces, of white liquid that shone with a resplendent light. By using the Earthly Nine Concoction Method, he was capable of producing nine portions of the Mana Instillment Dao Elixirs in a single session.

His eyebrows were slightly furrowed as he inspected the bottles. Every portion was low quality. He had an eighty percent belief in his success, and his refinement time was merely a day or so. While this was exceptional, he was dissatisfied with the end product. Fortunately, this was his first time actually concocting the product, so it was a given to have made a few mistakes. These mistakes might be minor, but they heavily affected the elixir's end result.

Only now did he truly understand why it was difficult to not just succeed, but produce high or peak-quality products.

Despite that, the process had truly expanded his understanding of what mana was. Mana wasn't essence. It was more like the glue of the universe. It was everywhere, in everything, but the quality and

quantity of it varied greatly. It was a highly compatible material that could bond with all forms of energy, including mental and spiritual energy.

When one reached the Sixth Stage of the Qi Condensation Realm, the False Reality Phase, a cultivator needs to sense and connect with a mana for the first time, and extract a very, very, very small amount to facilitate the cohesive bonding of yin and yang energies. This tiny bit of refined mana not only helped generate yin-yang energies, but enabled creation.

Before that stage, one's Metaphysical Qi was truly leaning towards ethereal in terms of how it interacted with the world, and this was due to the concentration of mana within. Only when they've reached that stage could it interact with the world and be stabilized for long periods of time.

Unfortunately, mana that was refined by the spirit deteriorated overtime when not controlled. Well, it wouldn't necessarily deteriorate, but dissipates back into the world's ambient mana. Like a smaller body of water being absorbed into a larger body of water. The world's mana attracted foreign mana, absorbed it, like a glob of sticky clay that caused the Qi to lose its ability to interact with the world.

This was the very core reason as to why Qi or things generated by creation lacked permanence, and required consistent sustaining to maintain itself.

It was this understanding that made him realize the significance of Qi Essence, or personally refined Mana. Mana generated by one's Natal Soul was highly dependent on its strength and compatibility, and Qi Essence enhanced these two attributes greatly. The greater these attributes, the more powerful the refined mana, and its resilience to the attractive force of the world's ambient mana while increasing its interactive abilities.

These differences were defined as Mortal States, from 1st through 9th. Those at lower Mortal States had weaker Natal Soul's strength, and the mana refined was subsequently weaker. Without a strong enough compatibility, it seemed initiating the Astral Tribulation was impossible; hence, only those at the 4th Mortal State had sufficient ability to summon it forth.

These revelations solidified his understanding of cultivation, and how important one's compatibility and Natal Soul's refinement strength was. No wonder the Zenith Mortal State was such a legendary state, it's possible that at that state, one's Mana would be infinitely close to legitimate permanence.

If he created a wisp of fire, it would continue to exist unless exhausted. If he generated water qi, it would maintain its existence and slowly integrate with the natural cycle of the world, becoming vapor, rain, etc. His aura would remain forever.

Just the thought had him salivating. This was the closest thing to immortality!

"If I'm going to use this Elixir to create a Mana Essence that can reach the Zenith Mortal State, it has to be the best. I'll only use four peak-quality elixirs. After all, I can't settle on my future." He continued the refinement process for several more days.

Fortunately, the sheer amount of materials he possessed was nearly limitless. In fact, even with his refinement speed, with the herbal techniques and cultivation methods used by the sect and world, he could theoretically be said to have an infinite amount. Therefore, he held nothing back.

In the end, he finally concocted four peak quality elixirs. It took a while, and even with his advantages, it was an incredibly difficult process. That being said, he had ninety-three other elixirs, most of which were high quality. In relation to quality, there were only three: low, high, and peak. These defined its lack of impurities and overall effectiveness.

The four elixirs were releasing luminous light. They were like four crystal oceans as their light enveloped the surroundings, changing the hue of the world. It was quite beautiful. He took a moment to appreciate this gorgeous display while simultaneously feeling a wisp of pride in his heart. This had officially solidified his ability as an Alchemic Emperor!

"Alright, time to-" just as he was about to refine the four elixirs one at a time, his three Natal Souls— Draconic Blood Spirit, Divine Elemental Spirit, and Divine Saber Spirit—left his body with a woosh!

He nearly lost consciousness at the speed of their departure which influenced his sea of consciousness. Luckily, Alchemic Eden Spirit remained behind, stabilizing his quaking sea of consciousness and disturbed dantian.

Before he could regain a semblance of self, his three spirits had already taken what they wanted and returned. He couldn't even blink before they were done!

The moment they re-entered his body, the impact sent him tumbling backwards and directly into the embrace of unconsciousness. They were like playful children finding treasure and returning home in haste, not caring about tracking in mud or damaging their home. Only the Alchemic Eden Spirit remained to safeguard Wei Wuyin as the three spirits devoured their portions like ravenous wolves.

Wei Wuyin remained unconscious for several hours. The forceful shock had thoroughly knocked him out. By the time he did awaken with a groggy moan, he felt completely different.

Slowly rising, he felt a forceful, foreign strength within his fleshy body, beyond anything he was familiar with.

"This...?!" He was dumbstruck as he inspected his physical state. He observed the four of his spirits' forms were now clearly defined, far more than ever before.

The Divine Elemental Spirit was like a spherical world of elements surrounded by a sky of pure white.

This world was true and vivid, as if he could enter it with a thought and be immersed in the fire, water, and wind or step upon the ice, wood, earth, or metal within. The lightning and magma seemed extremely dangerous as they seared and devastated anything they touched.

The Divine Saber Spirit looked exactly like Element in his mind's eye. It radiated a ferocious aura filled with peerless dominance and arrogance. He felt as if all things in the world were considered inferior beneath its edge!

The Alchemic Eden Spirit was a picture perfect copy of the Tree of Eden's original appearance. Its roots looked thick and lively as it was deeply embedded into his sea of consciousness. It was sending light into his sea of consciousness's foundation, suffusing it with various alchemical and mental energies.

While his flesh and blood heart had thoroughly transformed. It was enlarged by nearly two times and had a faint layer of fleshy scales that extended even throughout his arteries and veins. Each beat wasn't

a pound but a soft roar of a true dragon! The Divine Mark of Myth seemed to have changed as well, upgrading to another level!

It was previously at the Mortal Myth, Second Grade, but now it reached the third grade! He was rendered completely speechless for a moment.

So this was possible too?

According to the True Dragon Transmutation only the blood essence of a dragon and lifeforce could refine the mark, but it seemed there was another method as well. It was the upgrade of his Draconic Blood Spirit! Considering the Spirit was the Mark of Myth, this made some sense.

"This! Am I cultivating or are you guys?!" He felt a sense of helplessness as he regarded the four. They had each refined the Mana Instillment Dao Elixir and formulated a far stronger Mana Essence than normal. Afterward, they merged the Qi Essence with the Mana Essence, formulating a single Zenith Essence, and realizing it was their limit, they directly absorbed it!

This was the basis of assailing the Ninth Stage of the Qi Condensation Realm, the Qi Essence Phase!

Wei Wuyin's expression, however, wasn't one of elation, but vigilance. Ever since they've seemingly gained an abnormal degree of hyper awareness and sentience, including their ability to act on their own through externalizing, they've been cultivating themselves. This started from the time he was absorbing the Astral Dipper Foundation Pill to perhaps even his condensation of Elemental Qi. It was like he was merely their home.

He felt completely odd because he understood this wasn't the case for others. Their Natal Souls adhered to their will and desire and lacked any form of independence or intelligence.

In the end, he could only sigh. Fortunately, they couldn't externalize for long, or else they might just leave on their own. He couldn't help but feel a wisp of uncertainty.

'Why are these Natal Souls of mines like this? Is it because of the Externalize Heart Method I devised?' His thoughts were a storm of questions and confusion, and he couldn't pinpoint the change. Could it be due to his Bloodline of Sin? While that seemed like the most likely reason, in his heart, he felt it wasn't the right one. As for why he felt that? He wasn't really sure.

Regardless, he ascended to the Qi Essence Phase was Zenith Mortal State Natal Souls.

After settling his thoughts, he decided to check and see how many days he was unconscious for, but when he discovered the answer, his eyes bulged in disbelief!

Chapter 172 - 170: Permanence! Power Of Gods?

"TWENTY DAYS?!" He nearly jumped so high that he touched the ceiling. He fumed with anger and discontent. Gnashing his teeth, he demanded an answer from these unruly Natal Souls of his! Yet they remained mum, as if they were unified in acting blameless! He felt a sudden urge to spank them! Spank them like the ill-minded children they were!

Wait.

How did they even keep him unconscious for that long? He inspected his physical body and realized it was perfectly healthy. There was no sign of malnutrition. While his cultivation was high, he still required sustenance to thrive and survive, and food created solid and liquid waste and a need to expel. After inspecting himself, he realized his stomach contained recently consumed food, and his bladder was mostly empty.

Did they bring him food? Did they...

He decided to stop thinking about this as he inspected his surroundings. He was still within his Alchemy Room. After a while, his emotions calmed down. While this likely meant he needed to set-up more defenses for the unexpected, this was evidence of a grand truth:

They were self-cultivating.

In fact, they might have placed him in that long coma-like state for his own benefit. When he thought about his abnormal Natal Soul that was his literal fleshy heart, the Natal Soul within his sea of consciousness, and their subsequent transformations, perhaps that would've been a very painful or difficult to handle process.

Perhaps being unconscious helped them facilitate their transformation without his detrimental influence. While that was likely the case, he still realized that his second mind was still independent.

For now, his Natal Souls could not live without him acting as their host. Since they likely wouldn't act against him for now, he could only accept their uniqueness and move forward. In the world of cultivation, being able to adapt was a trait that only survivors could possess. And, he was a survivor.

With a thought, he lifted his hand and exerted a little bit of his will. His qi started to rapidly gather at the center of his hand and soon constructed a cube with an inch in height, width, and length. It floated calmly within his palm.

Frowning, he felt as if there was a slight difference in this cube of qi.

'*Wait...is it?*' He started to enlarge the cube until it was a meter in height, length, and width. His eyes never left the cube and this continued for three full hours! Only then did he dare confirm the situation, and came to an absolutely exceptional understanding!

The cube of qi didn't need him to infuse more qi into it. In fact, it was interacting with the ambient energies of the world perfectly and sustained itself! This...this was...

PERMANENCE!

This was the power that gods and immortals were said to possess, true creation! If he created a river, that river would forever influence the world, entering into the world's natural cycle. If he created a mountain, that mountain would forever exist until eroded or destroyed! It would be no different than a real mountain!!

Normally, the cube would slowly dissipate overtime as the refined mana was taken away, losing its ability to maintain the connected yin-yang energies within, but now it was no longer an issue! There was no sign of dissipation.

'Is this...the legendary Zenith Mortal State?! Zenith Essence?!' With mouth agape, he pondered the implications. As long as his qi did not dissipate, he could actively control it! Usually, when two attacks collided that didn't nullify each other, they would scatter into the surroundings with chaos, the inherent mana within dissipating until it scattered.

Now, if he were to send out a saber light of qi and it was dodged, he could still control it! If it collided with another attack or defense and remained, he could send it to attack again in full strength!

This also meant he didn't need to funnel energy into his defenses or attacks to maintain peak power. After creating a ward, all he needed to do was manipulate it with his thoughts.

The advantage was clear! It was absolute!

Excited, he hurriedly tested his theories. Just as he assumed, he truly had these advantages. As he looked around, a hundred strands of saber qi lingered in the air. They were all connected to his thoughts and awareness. With a thought, they merged into one and then split back into a hundred!

"Perfect! This is the Zenith Mortal State! Incredible, incredible! Those at this level, while they may not be gods, they are certainly close!" As he announced his thoughts, he nodded to himself. While his qi could be whittled down until it dissipated, unlike true matter that can only be destroyed or broken down, it still meant he could create!

If he wanted, he could create his own palace that'd be made entirely of his qi and lasts forever!

Creation!!

His excitement got the better of him as he slowly indulged in his fantasies. The limitless possibilities made it a limitless fantasy!

He had to take a very long time before he calmed down. It was quite difficult to do after this discovery. Not only did his Mark of Myth evolve, his cultivation base advanced, but he had achieved something many thought was impossible! Not even Astral Core Realm cultivators had the ability to make their astral force permanent.

If, in the future, his cultivation base skyrocketed, could he create his own continent? His own planet? His own star? Did all these things exist because cultivators created them? If so, what was the limit of this world?! He felt a sudden urge to see the peak, explore it fully, and excavate its secrets.

Luckily, he was not a rash person. *'That is a far-off goal. Even if I can reach it, thinking about it will only distract me from seeing what's before me. I still have to overcome the Second Calamity of Hell and then its subsequent calamities. I can't even be certain I'll be able to over the Astral Tribulation. I need to take one step at a time.'* This cooled his emotions greatly, and he realized the detriment of being overly excited.

He sent a message to Su Mei. Afterward, he lifted himself upwards and started to contemplate what other eighth-grade products he should attempt to concoct.

In a few moments, Su Mei arrived. Her black eyes were bright and pure, and her presence was becoming more exceptional. This startled Wei Wuyin as he felt that she was undergoing unfathomable changes, yet he felt that her thoughts towards him remained the same.

"Have you compiled the reports?" He asked. Before the incident with Bai Lin, he wanted to find members for his faction—Ascendants, and he had a set of specific parameters that needed to be reached. Su Mei had the pegasus and could gather information from his neighbors or below, and she was always diligent.

She gave a brief nod, and brought over a spiritual jade that contained information regarding various candidates. After taking, it gave it a brief read and was somewhat shocked.

"So few?" There were merely seventeen candidates listed.

Su Mei nodded.

Giving a soft sigh, he realized his parameters were a little too stringent. While he wanted quality over quantity, he still didn't think it would be so little, considering there were trillions of people on all three planets and the various continental flat earths.

"Well, make preparations to meet number three."

Su Mei nodded and left.

Wei Wuyin realized that he didn't want to gather a bunch of nobodies, but highly skilled elites that could be useful to him. If he found some capable lieutenants, he could allow them to manage the lower members, and create an army.

However, that's for the future. For now, it would be best to concoct some more products for the future. With his improved cultivation base, the effects of his Alchemic Qi should be multiplied. His excitement was tangible!

Chapter 173 - 171: Hell Layer Of War

The events from several weeks ago spurred quite a commotion. From below the Sky Layer, it was as if three storms of blazing infernos erupted mercilessly above. The entire sky was dyed a hue of burning red and temperatures throughout had increased to nearly unbearable levels. Those with low cultivations at the sixth, fifth, and fourth levels of the Extreme Creation Mountain had to descend due to the overwhelming heat emissions.

While this was only temporary, the gaping holes in the second, third, and final Sky Layers that could be observed by those of high cultivation from below was exceptionally mind-shaking!

Unverified rumors were widely spreading with all sorts of assumptions and many individuals investigated this matter. There were even whispers of an impending attack from the San Clan, the peak hegemonic power of the entire Tri-Vision Starfield! They were widely known for their fire cultivators, so this gave credence to such rumors.

The fear, uncertainty, and shock ceaselessly circulated until an official announcement was made that shook the entire sect, planet, and even astral territory:

"There was no attack. There is no incoming danger. The newly appointed Heavenly King Wei was responsible for this incident regarding the Sky Layers, but it was committed under the supervision and approval of the Prime Imperial Sages and Grand Imperial Sage."

This statement of information caused the already exploding commotion to ignite to an even greater level. The upper-echelon of the Extreme Creation Mountain gave permission for Heavenly King Wei to blow a hole in the sky?! To rise ambient temperatures to unbearable levels?! All of this was approved?!

What the f...

The smarter ones could only roll their eyes in disbelief at a cover-up, others could only pout in discontent, and quite a few had eyes filled with reverence and passion. Heavenly King Wei's title of being the Second Coming of the King of Everlore or the Prince of Everlore was already being spread like a flame through a dry forest throughout the world, and now he was responsible for a world-shaking event?

He had merely arrived less than four months ago! First, he became a Sky Noble directly off the rip while at the Qi Condensation Realm. After, he orchestrated the eradication of the Grand Axis Faction and brutally killed an Astral Core Realm expert at the Second Stage. Before then, his abilities were seemingly verified as a King Alchemist and subsequently received a promotion to a Heavenly King within a week of entry!

This was an absolute whirlwind of legendary events, and it still hadn't stopped!

At the moment, Wei Wuyin's name was the talk of the town, and many were fiercely watching his every move in hopes of seeing what he did next.

While they did so, from the Sky Layer, a pegasus carrying two figures descended with purpose.

"Lord Wei, our first target is?" Su Mei quietly probed as the wind coursed through her hair, her black robes fluttering intensely due to the intense flight. Wei Wuyin sat next to her, his silver eyes examining the Extreme War Mountain.

She knew all seventeen candidates. They fit the strict parameters of Wei Wuyin's designation, but they were all problematic. Some of them weren't even a part of the sect. Instead, they were rogue cultivators, wanted criminals, or even prisoners. She was startled how only two of the seventeen actually fit his desires, but she understood his intentions.

Wei Wuyin calmly looked ahead, his gaze clear and unobstructed by confusion or hesitation. After a moment, he responded: "Zuhei." He spoke only a single word yet Su Mei shook slightly. This name was one of the few one's she personally dreaded.

Zuhei.

It was a single name, but in the sect, it was like a word of blood, slaughter, and death. It was taboo. The story went like this:

One hundred and sixty years ago.

Myriad Monarch Sect, Extreme War Mountain.

There was a young male beastman with the bloodline of the Silver Wolf. He wasn't particularly strong; in fact, he was merely average amongst his race with a weak bloodline lineage, but he was a legacy. His family was born and bred members of the Myriad Monarch Sect from the beginning. While they weren't heavily invested, connected, or high-ranked, they continuously produced top-tier Mortal Captain Elders.

This young beastman was similarly of that caliber, and his future path seemed to be predetermined. This was what everyone expected, likely even himself. Until a single day changed it all...

His mother was coveted; his father was challenged; his little brother was executed. His entire life was flipped upside down due to one event, but that single event birthed a monster.

It was because on that day...he birthed Slaughter Intent amidst the blood of his enemies and killed his way through the world, and he couldn't be stopped. Despite his lackluster cultivation base, he plowed through countless members until he made his way to his sworn enemy's doorstep.

But he failed.

He was captured and imprisoned, crippled, and sentenced to death by old age. A cruel punishment for those beastmen who have natural lifespans that could rival beasts.

The important aspect was that he had given birth to Slaughter Intent. Even amongst Astral Core Realm experts, giving birth to Intent was exceptionally difficult, especially ethereal intent. After all, while one's cultivation base could change, one's comprehension was mostly set.

To better understand the rarity of Intent, one needs to understand what Intent was. It was a strange power that could change the fundamental characteristics of the Metaphysical, Mind, Body, Spirit, and Essence. It heightened every aspect of cultivation, including the purity of specific energy.

An example of this was Wei Wuyin's five advanced elements—Steel Metal, Violet Lightning, Life Meadow Wood, Blazing Inferno Magma, and Absolute Zero Ice. These were all Intents birthed alongside the elements, but compared to Ethereal Intents, they were thousands of times easier, yet they were still exceptionally difficult to do so. Even the basic characteristics of these elements could be classified as Intent Seeds.

While resources were more readily available in this world, comprehension couldn't be forced, so there were still high-level, thousand year old Astral Core Realm experts with merely the four basic elements—Fire, Earth, Wind, and Water—birthed.

These Intents were manifested by the Spirit, capable of influencing Metaphysical Qi, and refining essence into energy.

There were those like Na Xinyi and Qing Qiumu with unique physiques that automatically allowed them to give birth to these Intents, allowing them to cultivate Wood Qi and Yin Qi with utter ease.

This young beastman had given birth to this exceptionally difficult and monstrous Intent. But, Intent wasn't everything in cultivation, nor did it define potential on the path of cultivation, merely combat prowess. If it did, then Long Chen, a wielder of Slaughter and Sword Intent, would've been automatically classified as a Heavenly King upon entry.

Unfortunately, Intent was often overlooked because it didn't help orthodox cultivation. In the Astral Core Realm, one had to comprehend the specific aspects of that phase and then challenge the subsequent Astral Tribulation. However, just because a person was skilled in learning math did not mean they were talented in composing poetry. In a sense, they were two different things and barely helped each other in terms of understanding.

This was the general belief of the world.

Su Mei understood this as well. She had thoroughly comprehended the truths and standards of this grander world, and knew their underappreciated belief towards Intent. While it provided one with exceptional combat prowess, it would only be given a glance when paired with cultivation talent. Yet these two things were exceptionally difficult to obtain in life.

This may be an easily dismissed trait for others, but not Wei Wuyin.

He wanted those with Intent. He needed those with Intent.

This was why there were merely seventeen qualified candidates out of trillions of people! This was how rare Intent outside of the elements were, especially Ethereal Intent!

As an Alchemist, how could he put any importance on cultivation talent? With the Dao of Alchemy, changing someone's talent was a matter of if he desired not if he could.

Woosh!

They flew until they reached the Extreme War Mountain. In all the mountains, there was a well-known yet unspoken series of levels to each of them, and they were underground levels that stored prisoners and the core areas of various grand-sized astral arrays. In fact, it was rumored that each of the Extreme Mountains were array flags to a planetary astral array that could obliterate an entire continental flat earth!

This area which housed prisoners in the Extreme War Mountain was called the Hell Layer of War. It was gloomy and dark, buried and guarded. Wei Wuyin and Su Mei arrived at the first level's entrance to the Hell Layer of War.

As his pegasus landed, there were two figures awaiting with calm gazes. One of them was a chubby human male with a bald head and sunken eyes, while the other was a demon with a scarred face and skinny body. He didn't have any eyes, but there were eye sockets that seemed to resemble the depths of an abyss.

Wei Wuyin and Su Mei leapt off, and the two figures hurried forward with swift steps and bowed.

"Greetings, Heavenly King Wei." They were both in synchronized fashion, yet it didn't seem practiced. Wei Wuyin calmly smiled as he regarded these two men. They were members of the Knights of Enforcement and they guarded the Hell Layer of War's entrance, and their cultivation bases were impressive.

Wei Wuyin calmly swept his gaze on these two, "He's still alive?"

The two felt a shiver. Despite Wei Wuyin's weak cultivation, they felt an instinctive fear in their hearts in his presence. While they were normally tasked with handling criminals, the news that had circulated thus far had deeply shook their hearts. Furthermore, it seemed that in a mere few months, his connections and influence had reached unheard of levels.

They were given orders to await his arrival for several days now, and said to follow all his orders. Now that they could personally see and observe Wei Wuyin, their hearts were unable to stop quaking in shock.

For a human, Wei Wuyin had looks that could bring an Immortal's to shame, and he lacked a hint of femininity that most handsome men possessed. His features were defined, symmetric, and honed by an unseen force. When they felt his subdued aura, their spirits felt inferior to him! This affected their mental states immediately, and cold sweat rolled down their backs and forehead.

Wei Wuyin's every breath was accompanied by a faint, world-shaking draconic roar that was inaudible to normal ears, but easily picked up by the spiritual sense. His silver eyes glistened with pure mental energies that destabilized the mind's of others. It was as if he could read their minds.

It was frightening.

This was the boundless, unintended benefits brought about by the transformation of his Natal Souls when they achieved the Zenith Mortal State, birthed Zenith Essence, and gained the ability of permanence. He felt like a Mortal God!

Shockingly, while others felt this in a clear manner, Su Mei felt entirely undisturbed by his newfound aura from the beginning. Her heartbeat and reaction was leveled, and nothing seemed to affect her spirit and state of mind.

Wei Wuyin glanced at Su Mei who acted completely indifferent and calm, her spiritual sense quietly spread as if on guard against the unknown. Despite that, she was entirely unaffected.

After a brief thought, he turned his gaze back to the two knights.

Only then did they snap out of their daze and hurriedly answered with a slight skip in speech, "Y-yes! He's still alive." The demon answered, his eyeless holes were tilted and seemingly staring at Wei Wuyin's feet.

Wei Wuyin shook his head and walked forward. The entrance to the Hell Layer of War was deep underground, and it was a steel door etched with various esoteric markings that led to a narrowly descending staircase. Its dim lightning and dark passage made it seem as if one was truly visiting Hell.

"Let's go. It's time to meet Zuhei."

Chapter 174 - 172: Ascendant - Zuhei

Step. Step. Step.

The staircase that led to the lower levels of the Extreme War Mountain was truly dim, gloomy, and filled with a path of uncertain darkness.

"I wonder how prisoners feel being brought through here?" He thought as he followed behind the skinny demon with eyeless holes. He walked with a lit torch that illuminated the path slightly. Supposedly, using Qi or Astral Force would automatically activate the formations and arrays of this location and obliterate the culprit instant.

That was quite frightening.

Wei Wuyin noticed the faint trace of astral force and spiritual energies that lingered softly across the walls of this narrow corridor. Each strand of astral force and spiritual energy cause him to feel threatened. It was quite terrifying.

"The Hell Layer of War is divided into three levels, with the first level housing all prisoners of the sect." The demon named Eyles explained as he led the way. Eyles was a Knight of Enforcement with a cultivation base at the Third Stage of the Astral Core Realm, and had guarded the entrance of the Hell Layer of War for over three hundred years.

This could be considered a fourth of his lifespan. Therefore, he was quite knowledgeable about the prisoners within, various areas in the three levels, and the inner workings of the sect. He proceeded to explain various things to occupy that long walk downwards.

"The first level has prisoners of all types, but are here for a limited period of time for insubordination as a form of punishment. Those prisoners stay here for a few years, decades, depending on the severity of their insubordination." In the sect, the Power of Authority ruled all. While there were exceptions, there were many incidents of higher-ranking members giving orders or tasks their lower-ranking refuse to do.

Therefore, after a complaint has been filed on either side, the matter is investigated and punishment is then dealt to the party in the wrong. For those who abused their power, their sentences are quite longer than those who were insubordinate. While this overall depended on the situation, the sect truly gave immense power yet restricted it to reasonable limits.

If not, only chaos would exist. But due to these limits, order and understanding was born. This allowed the birth of various factions to grow and develop. It was quite an intriguing concept, both giving power to protect and punish to those of a high ranking.

"Of course, there are those who commit murder due to emotions or assault one with the intent to kill in an unofficial capacity. These individuals have been crippled and brought here to be imprisoned until a certain point or directly executed."

The Power of Authority protected as much as it could be abused. For example, Gu Hao, the Earthly Elite Disciple, could decline any and all Imperial Combat challenges of other Earthly Elites because he was the subordinate of a Sky Noble, unless someone like Wei Wuyin, a Heavenly King, forced a deathmatch through the usage of Imperial Merits.

At that point, they were royally and fully fucked.

However, to offend a Heavenly King was an unlikely situation to begin with, so most would never land in such a situation.

This meant that those Earthly Elites could offend yet no one could get revenge. This type of restricted rule caused quite a few people to act with passion and kill their sworn enemy without caring for the consequences...or try. It was very hard to kill an expert of equal cultivation swiftly, and the Knights of Enforcement will typically descend after a very short period of time.

Truthfully, about 90% of passion related murder attempts ended in absolute failure. This kept deaths down quite a lot in the sect, but there were exceptions, and these were those of higher combat prowess than normal, such as Zuhei, an Intent user!

Wei Wuyin calmly listened to Eyles explanations as they descended. It took an entire hour of walking until they arrived at a leveled room. When he entered it, there were torches lit that dimly brightened

the room. It was completely empty, but there were three wide corridors that led to three different directions.

Each one seemed to lead to a different location. He turned to Eyles, and Eyles didn't pause. He directly chose the center pathway and walked through it. Wei Wuyin followed along as he curiously glanced at the other two corridors.

"The other two corridors lead to staircases that go to the second level and third level." After explaining this, Eyles no longer spoke and his aura became gloomy and dark. They no longer exchanged a single word as they walked forward.

Wei Wuyin quietly inspected the scenery and was quite intrigued. The further he went, the sturdier the walls seemed, and there was a densely packed sequence of esoteric markings that repeated continuously and consistently. After a few minutes, the walls became steel bars with square cells within.

His eyes swept these shadowy cells and found bodies of various sizes and genders laying in the floor. There were a few that seemed like corpses, listlessly staring at the ceiling with utter helplessness and hopelessness. They seemed to have given up on life.

There weren't just one or two people per cell, but dozens. They were all shackled by the ankles and wrists, all leading to the center of the cell that limited their movements. Even if they tried to move away to their furthest shackle limit, they could only reach about five meters away from the bars.

There was an eerie silence and a smell of death in the air. Wei Wuyin could sense all sorts of dusky gazes sweep his body, but he was undisturbed. These individuals committed crimes against the sect, and they understood the rules. While some might've been unjustly sentenced, this was still something they knew could happen.

Since he was young, Wei Wuyin had a cautious mind when it came to his fate. He never acted impulsively and took everything step by step, using the world's rules to his favor and never allowing it to shroud his desires. These individuals were born under a grander sky, and their choices led them to this fate. They could only blame themselves.

A flicker of a memory flashed within his mind and a light of gloom suffused those silver irises of his.

"We're here," Eyles announced.

Wei Wuyin lifted his eyes and caught sight of a prison cell, but this cell was different than the others because it had a single person in it, and this person was shackled by his four limbs and strung up like a frog ready to be dissected.

It was a nude male with exceptionally long and dense silver hair that easily reached ten feet in length. If it was given volume, perhaps it could cover his entire body. He couldn't see the facial features of this man, but he saw the emaciated body and bloody aura he emitted.

"Zuheji, the Silver Wolf of Slaughter." Eyles slowly said as he regarded the figure that was strung up. Even he felt shocked sixteen years ago when that incident happened, and his heart couldn't shake the bloody rivers that were made that day.

He couldn't help but glance at Wei Wuyin, unsure why he felt that this beast that killed everything in its path would be useful. Even to the point where he was willing to go through such sacrifices to meet him.

Wei Wuyin's eyes lit with a brilliance as he felt the ferocious and bloody aura emitted from this figure. He felt this aura before, and it belonged to Long Chen, but it was far, far more honed and developed. This was bodafide killing intent nourished from profound levels of hatred and loss.

"Open the door, then leave." Wei Wuyin said to Eyles as he walked forward. Eyles did as he was told, with a formation key, he unlocked the cell and the bars lifted vertically upwards and vanished entirely.

Wei Wuyin walked through with ease while Su Mei stayed behind.

"I'll be waiting for you above," Eyles said before leaving.

When Wei Wuyin entered the cell, the smell of dense blood and death lingered endlessly about, but it was different from the despondent smell from others that originated from one's shattered hopes and beliefs, but one honed by killing intent.

"Zuhei." Wei Wuyin called out.

"..."

"|-"

"Fuck off." Zuhei's dry, wild, and cold voice resounded.

Wei Wuyin was completely undisturbed, nodded, and smiled. "From henceforth, you'll be my claws and fangs."

Zuhei's body shook slightly. He lifted his head enough that the silver hair that covered his facial features was pushed aside to reveal a set of scarlet eyes that seemed to be a river of blood housing a black moon.

"I said...fuck off."

Wei Wuyin walked forward until he was mere inches away from the strung up Zuhei, his silver eyes locked onto those scarlet eyes. Both their eyes glimmered with boundless light, one was sharp enough to sever worlds and all life while the other was drenched in fresh blood and endless murder. They clashed yet didn't repel each other!

Wei Wuyin's smile grew even brighter. It seemed that he made the right choice, he felt this in his heart.

"Are you hungry?"

"..."

Chapter 175 - 173: Perfect Claws, Perfect Fangs

"..." Within Zuhei's cell, a dark, cold, gloomy world filled with only endless agony and desperate despair, Wei Wuyin stayed within for an entire hour. There was not a minute more or less stayed within, but the events that transpired caused Su Mei, who stayed silently outside, to feel her heart to shiver endlessly with turbulent, sporadic emotions.

At the end, her head and eyes lowered to the floor, and a peculiar glint flickered in her eyes.

Clank! Clank! Clank!

The sounds of Zuhei's restraints opening resounded, followed by a light thud of his fragile, malnourished, and emaciated body. His silver hair scattered across the floor in a spiraling pattern, and while it lacked luster, each strand released an innate beauty that could not be denied.

From the gaps of his hair, his scarlet eyes gleamed brightly in the desolate darkness.

"If you believe you don't need me, if you're content on walking alone, then walk out of here yourself. If you do, then I'll make sure you're given your freedom." Wei Wuyin's words seemed icy cold, demanding, yet Zuhei didn't complain nor react. With a quivering body, he moved his fragile body.

Thud!

He tried to lift his body with his arms, but failed to muster any strength, helplessly falling down. Wei Wuyin walked out of the cell, gazing at Su Mei. "We all have our own path to walk. We all have a moment that will define us for the rest of our lives," he spoke as if he was speaking to himself.

Su Mei was deeply shaken as she lifted her gaze to see Wei Wuyin's silver eyes calmly staring at the exit of this prison forged by man. She softly nodded.

Thud!

The soft sounds of Zuhei's failing attempts continued. The moment he was captured, his cultivation base was thoroughly crippled, and this affected his mental and bodily functions. If it wasn't for his resilience and luck, he could've been rendered with full physical and mental retardation from the act. This was a consequence of the destruction of one's Natal Soul.

The body, mind, and soul was no longer complete. The meridians of one's body and acupoints would collapse and no longer be able to execute cultivation, and they were fated to be weaker than mortals. The one thing cultivators dreaded the most was the crippling of their spirit, because it could lead to a state worse than death.

While the experience of losing qualifications to become a cultivator again was horrific to think about, it paled in comparison to no longer being an able-bodied individual in mind or body. And Zuhei experienced this deeply.

He couldn't control his legs. His arms were like lead, and his breathing was difficult to control. The thoughts he sent to his body were oftentimes incomplete, interrupted, or abruptly vanished. He would forget things, like himself, experiencing bouts of insanity. He would lose his ability to communicate with his body.

Thud!

Thud!!

Thud!!!

He tried again and again, yet never succeeded. His mouth opened slightly, revealing a set of fractured, yellowed teeth. His spittle wet the floor as he struggled with soft, exhausted grunts.

"Haaa...haaaa....haaaaaa..." His heaving breaths were heavy and ceaseless, but his scarlet eyes never left the opening of the cell. It was merely a few meters away, yet he hadn't moved more than an inch this entire time, but he similarly didn't stop his actions.

Wei Wuyin closed his eyes.

Su Mei didn't. She watched it all. *'Cultivation is difficult. Life doesn't have second chances, just learning experiences and future choices. Zuhei...just crawl...'*

She softly gritted her teeth. If Zuhei just crawled to the cell opening, he could get out. It was easy! But...

As she watched him continue to lift his body up with a body like that, her heart filled with a hint of bitterness. She recalled earlier events.

"Wha...t?" The dry, wild, and cold voice belonging to Zuhei softly said in confusion.

"I asked: are you hungry?" Wei Wuyin repeated.

"..." Zuhei remained silent, but from his scarlet eyes, he clearly regarded Wei Wuyin as a fool. Hungry? Haha, how foolish of a question was that? He has long since lost...

"You aren't? I guess it makes sense." Wei Wuyin abruptly answered his own question. He started to pace a few steps, turn, and pace in the other direction. This continued until those scarlet eyes followed Wei Wuyin religiously, trying to glean some understanding of his existence here.

"That's what you lack." Wei Wuyin calmly stated.

Zuhei's fractured and yellowed teeth were bared slowly, revealing a weak snarl as he brushed aside Wei Wuyin's words. "Wha...what do you know of hunger?!" His eyes radiated endless discontent and maliciousness. Did this man even understand what it meant to be hungry? To starve? There were times he wished to sever his own fingers and eat them whole!

Wei Wuyin stopped his steps, giving Zuhei a side-eye glance. "I know one thing: Hunger is for the living."

"..." Zuhei stilled. The brightness in his eyes that radiated murder dimmed considerably. His head slightly drooped and his features were concealed by his silver hair.

Wei Wuyin scoffed. He turned his body, approached Zuhei until they were merely a few inches apart, and his silver eyes met those scarlet eyes without an ounce of fear. Wei Wuyin could smell his turbid and horrific breath that was warped by the smell of decay, death, and filth.

"I once met a man. He was quite an interesting person, because when his life was no longer under his control, his fate decided by others, and everything was hopeless because he could no longer affect the world or hearts of others, he was simply one thing at the moment of his inevitable end: Hungry."

Zuhei shivered slightly. It was as if a thousand wisps of icy-coldness entered his body, traveled through his muscles and spine without end.

"I was simply a kid then. I didn't understand what it felt to be like that. In fact, I found it rather funny. But I wanted to save him, so I did." Wei Wuyin's eyes flashed with a hint of nostalgia. "I was merely a little kid at the time, but later...very soon, I would understand what he felt; the hunger. So hungry it hurt. So hungry that I couldn't think about anything else than satisfying that hunger, whatever the cost."

"..." Zuhei didn't reply. His thoughts were hard to settle, and a storm was brewing.

"So I ask for the last time: are you hungry?"

Su Mei watched as Zuhei continued to struggle to stand on his own two feet, a feat that might very well be impossible to perform alone. He refused to crawl to the entrance, regardless of how many times he failed. Even after an entire three hours, he hadn't moved more than that inch from before, but he never gave up.

His body was drenched in sweat that permeated the air with a bitter smell, yet he continued.

Wei Wuyin's eyes remained closed throughout.

Su Mei's eyes moved from Wei Wuyin to Zuhei. *'I know the feeling...the hunger. The want. The desire. It's endless and it drives you. Perhaps if I never met him that day, I would still be uncertain if I was truly hungry for life, for choice, for my destiny in my own hands.'*

Her thoughts had long since settled. She was hungry, and her willingness to satisfy her desire was endless and boundless.

She softly said, "Your pride isn't important. What's important is your willingness to seek what you want."

"..." Zuhei stopped. His head slightly lifted to see a figure outside the cell, a figure he hadn't noticed before. While his current gaze was blurry, and all he saw was a black silhouette, he felt as if someone out there understood him. Who?

He clenched his teeth, calmed his breathing, and looked at the two figures. "You want me to be your claws? You want me to be your fangs? Then give me a fucking body!" His voice was hoarse, strained, and quivering, teeming with a sense of unyieldingness and desire.

Wei Wuyin opened his eyes. His silver gaze moved to Zuhei's collapsed form, uplifted head, and eyes that radiated endless scarlet light.

"And what type of body do you want?" Wei Wuyin threw him this question out with an indifferent tone.

Zuhei didn't hesitate with answering this question with a loud bellow: "One that can satisfy my hunger!!"

"Hmph," Wei Wuyin slightly smirked. "I want the best claws, I want the best fangs, and in return, I will give you the best body. All I ask for is that your hunger, that feeling you want at this moment, never vanishes from your heart, mind, and soul. Can you promise me this?"

Zuhei breathily exclaimed, "Yes!"

Wei Wuyin laughed with a hint of coldness and excitement. He didn't ask for loyalty. That was a ridiculous request that could never be certain, nor would he be foolish enough to demand it. What he wanted was a set of fangs and claws that could rip through his enemies without question!

Everything else was secondary.

Wei Wuyin's fingers on his right hand moved, flickering with traces of multicolored light that shuttled between the gaps with a mystical aura. This was his Alchemic Qi. From his left hand, it trembled slightly and a single pill was formed. This pill was dull, grey like ash and revealed a desolate aura that seemed to siphon all life.

He inserted his qi into the pill and with a flick, sent it flying towards Zuhei's collapsed body drenched in sweat. It touched his forehead, and then melted into his body seamlessly.

Su Mei's eyes watched as the pill appeared and moved. "Isn't that..." She was shocked, looking at Wei Wuyin with disbelief. Since she was exposed to the Extreme Creation Mountain, she diligently studied all the known alchemical products that existed as a priority. That ash-grey pill was a pill she instantly recognized!

In the various spiritual jades, they would not only describe the pills appearance, but its aura. This pill wasn't an ordinary one, in fact...it wasn't a seventh-grade pill!

"Eighth-grade?!" But how? She knew eighth-grade pills almost never appeared, and if they did, they would be worth continents. From the pill's innate spiritual aura, she felt Wei Wuyin's unique signature! He...he...he wasn't just an Alchemic King?

Her eyes slightly bulged as she regarded this lord of hers who she devoted her life to follow alongside, to travel the ends of the world until death, and to forge her own path to ensure she would be able to remain by his side.

Was he already an Alchemic Emperor?!

Products at the eighth-grade were designed mostly for Astral Core Realm experts at the middle-phases, but those at this level were exceptionally rare throughout the entire Tri-Vision Starfield! In fact, out of the tens of trillions of people, less than a dozen Emperor Alchemists existed!

If the world knew...

Wei Wuyin didn't react to Su Mei's stunned reactions, merely watched as the pill's unique energies and medicinal efficacy started to seep into every cell of Zuhei's body and activate. The pill was a low-tier, eighth-grade pill called the Desolate Resurrection Pill. It was a pill designed specifically to repair the fragmented portions of a person's spirit, resurrecting one's Natal Soul.

Typically, the crippling of one's spirit was the result of a shattering and subsequent collapse of one's Natal Soul. If they were below the Eighth Stage of the Qi Condensation Realm, then it would be the shattering of their spirit. This wasn't extraction, but destruction, but like glass, if shattered, the pieces could be placed together again and restored.

However, it becomes exceptionally difficult to do so, and the stronger one becomes, the harder it is.

Zuhei was originally a cultivator at the Second Stage of the Astral Core Realm, the Sky Ruler Phase at his crippling, so the difficulty was a million times greater than those at the Qi Condensation Realm. However, the eighth-grade Desolate Resurrection Pill was capable of doing so!

It absorbed all the life force, mental energies, Natal Soul fragments, and physical energies, before refining it and restoring that which was lost. Its basis was a unique essence called Desolate Absorption Essence. It was a top-tier essence that was outside the nine elements, and an incredibly unstable and volatile material. Quite a few lose their everything, life, mind, flesh, and more simply by touching it.

Only Alchemists could handle it, allowing it to not just take, but to give everything it took in greater quantities

"Gaaarrgh!" Zuhei immediately started to shout in pain. It was loud and unable to be stifled. His body spasmed and twitched endlessly as his pale skin turned to the color of white-ash. It was as if everything within his body was being drawn away and forcefully pulled into his glabella.

"Not only will I give you the best body, I'll let you reach limits you've never even dreamed of!" The excitement effusing from Wei Wuyin's eyes was tangible.

Zuhei's scarlet gaze shined brighter with each passing moment.

"It seems you were right, Su Mei." Wei Wuyin turned his gaze to Su Mei who still looked at Wei Wuyin with a wisp of disbelief.

"W-what?" It was very rare to see Su Mei lose composure, but her mind was truly shaking with the understanding that Wei Wuyin was an Emperor Alchemist! They were in the sect for merely four months! She knew that he was merely a King Alchemist before, and even then, the difference between King Alchemist and Emperor Alchemist was larger than the gap between First Stage of Qi Condensation and First Stage of Astral Core!

But he jumped this gap using less than four months?!

"It seems your report was right," Wei Wuyin said. His eyes shifted back to Zuhei who was struggling to pain brought about by the pill. His aura was becoming desolate and filled with a sense of emptiness, but within this emptiness was a vigorous speck of slaughter and something else...

It was intense. It was fueled by fierce and unyielding will to challenge oneself without end, overcome all obstacles and challenge greater enemies! In comparison to the aura of slaughter, it was purehearted and untainted.

"No wonder he could overcome an entire phase in the Astral Core Realm in battle. He didn't just give birth to Slaughter Intent...but he also has Battle Intent!" Wei Wuyin's eyes glimmered with brilliant light.

Su Mei started. Battle Intent? Her eyes shifted to Zuhei's body and she realized his aura was like a bloody battlefield now. After his everything was taken away by the pill, his battle intent was no longer overshadowed by his intent to slaughter. In fact, his horrific pain brought it out as it tempered his will to overcome!

Wei Wuyin softly exclaimed, "He's perfect!"

Chapter 176 - 174: Three-Layered Ring, Jade Crystal?

Wei Wuyin and Su Mei exited the Hell Layer of War with Eyles and a completely unconscious Zuhei. Carried by Su Mei's qi, he was completely unable to recover his mental awareness after the Desolate Resurrection Pill. However, he had experienced some notable changes.

His hair seemed to become more lush and brighter, regaining a silver gleam to natural light, and his skin was neither pale nor ash-white, but fair and white. While his body still remained malnourished and emaciated, his physical aura was complete and interconnected as a singular whole. Those who investigated his body would notice that he had an infantile Astral Soul within his dantian.

However, it lacked any hint of quality or specifics to its nature. As for his innate bloodline aura, it was vigorous and surging within his heart.

For beastmen, their cultivation originated from their hearts, not their dantian, and their bloodline powers were heavily influenced by their cultivation base. Wei Wuyin finally realized that beastmen were a true cross between beast and human/demon/elf. This was just like his Draconic Spirit of Blood, but there was a slight difference.

While their Natal Soul was stored in their hearts, it wasn't one with the hearts. Wei Wuyin's Draconic Spirit of Blood had thoroughly merged with his heart, making it exceptionally difficult to discern for anyone that hadn't split his chest open and look at it.

Their hearts acted as a dantian, but Wei Wuyin's heart acted as a heart. It was more similar to Bai Lin and standard beasts than beastmen who cultivated like humans/demons/elves. This discovery made him understand that his cultivation path was slightly different.

Furthermore, their bloodline was like Han Yu's aquatic bloodline in the Scarlet Solaris Sect, and while it can interact with the spirit, it wasn't capable of evolving the spirit, only influencing qi. For example, Han Yu couldn't create an Aquatic Heart of Qi, but a Heart of Aquatic Qi. This was the fundamental factor that defined the true differences between him and those beastmen.

In truth, he hadn't known that Han Yu was a beastman until he was exposed to others on the Myriad Monarch Sect. Even today, he was still shocked by how human beastmen could look. Oftentimes, they lacked any difference outside of a few racial traits, such as gills or sharpened canines, abnormal hair growth, odd instincts, but these could be brushed aside as the person being abnormal.

To think it meant they had the bloodline lineages of beasts.

Truly enlightening.

"Lord Wei, what's next?" Su Mei asked for the side as they walked towards the Pegasus, leaving the two knights of enforcements smiling idiotically as they stared at bottles in their eyes in amazement. They were filled with low-tier, seventh-grade products, elixirs and pills, suitable for cultivation and recovery. This was a literal fortune to them!

Wei Wuyin looked towards Zuhei and then to Sky Layer. "I've checked the other candidates. None of the other ones in the sect suit my needs. There are, however, two in particular on the Bloodforge Continent. We'll venture there after I've reached the Astral Core Realm and made some...preparations." Wei Wuyin said.

He knew that there were countless people investigating and keeping track of his movements at all times. These people might even include the San Clan, the number one hegemonic power in the entire starfield. If he was going to act outside the sect, he needed sufficient individual power and protective plans in place. Out there, he wasn't protected by the elite experts of the sect.

Ohn!

An abrupt yet incomparably familiar prick of pain stabbed into the back of his mind and right arm. He simultaneously felt the influence, the faint whispers of the Heavenly Daos influence. His eyes were attracted to his ring, the three-layered ring.

Karmic Luck Value: 565.7 → 565.6.

First Calamity: Survived - 7/7.

Second Calamity: Suppressed - 39 Years.

After lifting his sleeves, his eyes narrowed. After a brief delay, he jumped onto the pegasus. After Su Mei followed while carrying Zuhei, they shot into the skies. They sped through the levels and flew to the Extreme Creation Mountain before piercing into the Sky Layer.

A few hours later.

Wei Wuyin sat within his study, his silver eyes fixated on the three-layered ring on his right index finger. Subconsciously, he touched the crescent necklace that hung upon his neck. As the two materials that survived the inferno incident with Bai Lin, he knew they were far from ordinary.

He had obtained this three-layered ring and necklace from the Commander in the Myriad Yore Continent that hunted and attempted to kill Jiao Ning and those other two youths. It had been embedded into his flesh, hidden away from prying eyes very carefully.

If it wasn't for his exceptionally powerful spiritual sense, he would've missed it. When he first obtained it, he thought it was like normal storage rings that acted as a gateway to some concealed box in another location, but the more he investigated its internal space, the more he felt that wasn't the case.

It seemed like an independent space that was spoken on in legends. Only Mortals believed that rings could store independent spaces, and this was often refuted. In fact, in the Myriad Monarch Sect, this was similarly the case. The idea of rings being able to contain independent living spaces was a fantastical concept that could never be applied.

The closest thing he obtained from it was that, those at the peak of this world, those two in the San Clan, had minor spaces that they could store things in, and this could be connected with storage rings allowing them to be personal vaults. Besides this, he didn't find any information regarding this. Moreover, each layer was protected by a spiritual barrier that had to be pierced to enter.

When he obtained the ring from the corpse of the commander, the first layer was opened and empty, likely taken away by the commander. His theory was that it contained a special Spiritual Spell that could bring about unique effects, capable of reading the book located in the second layer.

The second layer had a three-page book and this crescent moon necklace that he wore to this day. Through all his struggles, he had kept this necklace. Even when he lost his memories and nearly died, he still had this necklace around him.

Unfortunately, the third layer was impenetrable regardless of his actions. If it wasn't for the jolt by the Heavenly Daos, he might've forgotten about it until he reached the Astral Core Realm. The whisper was two-fold, in fact.

It wasn't just trying to influence him to investigate the ring, but to seek help in opening its third layer. Perhaps it was capable of calculating the karmic ties he possessed, wanting him to use them to his advantage.

This meant there was something in the ring that could help him somehow. At first, he thought it was for him, but he quickly shook his head at this thought. If it was specifically for him, then the Heavenly Daos influence would've happened far sooner.

The only new variable added at that moment was his decision to visit the Bloodforge Continent. This likely meant something in this ring was capable of helping him obtain something from the Bloodforge Continent. While he couldn't be absolutely certain, he felt this deduction was correct.

'A 0.1 deduction? A meeting? Or a fortuitous encounter?' His thoughts were clearer than ever before as he made some brief calculations. According to all other 0.1 deductions of his Karmic Luck Value, they all included meetings of opportunities, such as with Qing Qiumu's father, Qing Qi, and that Blessed before. However, this was the first time it was directed towards an inanimate object.

He knew that the Heavenly Daos can't assess his strength properly. Perhaps his current cultivation was sufficient to open the ring, and perhaps he could bring out the greatest benefit from this. Since there was no sense of urgency in his mind, he realized this meeting or encounter didn't have a particular timetable.

He no longer hesitated. His spiritual sense entered the three-layered ring, bypassing the first and second layers, and meeting the barrier to the third layer. His eyes glowed brightly as his spiritual strength was gathered and focused before smashing into the barrier!

Boom!

He felt a rebound! His four Natal Souls shook slightly, but this shake was like provocation!

Shiing!

His Divine Saber Natal Soul released a sharp, domineering keening sound that seemed as if it was provoked into a grand battle. Wei Wuyin barely got a chance to take action when his Nascent Saber Soul flew out of his sea of consciousness and his Divine Saber Natal Soul externalized, merging with his Nascent Saber Soul. As one, they zoomed into the ring.

He was taken aback as the saber sliced against the barrier with dauntless momentum! With its edge, it seemed willing to shatter all obstructions, end all things!

Riiip!

The barrier was mercilessly split apart, ripping at its seams as it split into two and trembled fiercely! Slowly, it started to break down as sharp spiritual energies bit at its endlessly until it became nothing!

Wei Wuyin's eyes observed this all, a sharpness within his gaze. After this, his Divine Saber Natal Soul and Nascent Saber Soul separated, returning back to his dantian and sea of consciousness respectively.

"You can control the Nascent Saber Soul with your Saber Intent? Or..." Wei Wuyin was deeply suspicious. From what he knew, while Intent was a part of a Natal Soul, it was birthed by the Mind's Eye which linked to one's comprehension.

Shiing!

A keening sound echoed in his dantian, and Wei Wuyin understood why. His eyes glowed with frightening brightness as he learned that his Divine Saber Natal Soul and the Nascent Saber Soul was one in the same, merging with his Saber Intent. That's why they could control each other, but the Nascent Saber Soul lacked its own sentient will.

This caused him to enter an unfathomably deep level of thought for several minutes. After that time, he let loose a long, calm breath. He no longer pondered on this matter, inspecting the third layer that was just opened.

As he did, he couldn't help but once more realize a truth: the Heavenly Daos was unable to gauge his ability or trump cards. Unfortunately, he didn't know to what extent he was shielded. Was it his Natal Souls? Was it his cultivation base? Was it his skills and talents?

Did it know of his level of Alchemic skill? Did it know of his pellet-based trump card?

Did it want him to bring Bai Lin to the Sky Layer via the Void Gate or...

He was really unsure.

"Oh?" His senses swept the third layer and discovered only a single object: A Jade Crystal.

It was tetragonal, emitted no light, merely the size of a fingernail but faint ripples were visible within it. It was like a constant and endless rippling of a water's surface, and it felt very familiar somehow. It felt like...the Void Gates aura.

"A spatial material?" He lightly frowned as he inspected the crystal with his senses before he withdrew it, holding it within his hand. He felt a slight vibration force enter his palm and quake his entire body. He clenched his fingers around it and exclaimed slightly. A repulsive force pushed his fingers away.

When he opened his palm, he tossed it slightly upwards.

"Impossible!" He said as it started to levitate. However, when he inspected it, there was no energy being emitted or exerted on it. It was floating naturally and without any external or internal power, not even the world's mana was being manipulated to sustain its flight.

It was as if all of its power was coming from an invisible, untouchable, yet existed outside his perception. He softly touched the crescent moon necklace and realized the materials were different.

"What the hell is this thing?" This abnormal crystal seemed to be an otherworldly object that existed outside his understanding, likely even the understanding of the current era. He swallowed slightly as he inspected it thoroughly.

'Could this be a lucky chance of the Commander? Wait...if I estimated the overall strength required to break that barrier, perhaps only Third Stage of the Astral Core Realm experts could do so. At that realm, they form their Soul Idol and receive a tremendous boost in spiritual strength and sense.'

If he thought about it a little more, this ring seemed to be carefully prepared so that only those of a certain level could procure the benefits each layer contained.

'The 0.1 gain of Karmic Luck was after I killed the commander. Could I obtain Karmic Luck by killing Blessed?!' His eyes bulged and his pupils shivered ceaselessly at this revelation. This was possible?! While he had suspicions, this was the only time he felt it with certainty!

Then, if he killed Long Chen...

Chapter 177 - 175: A Bit Of News

"Huuu...haaaa..." Wei Wuyin took a deep breath and exhaled all of his turbid thoughts, immediately regaining his calm. While killing for wealth was something he could do, have done, and will continue to do, he still had to clearly take into consideration other variables and concerns lest he seeked personal disaster beyond redemption. For example, that ring...

If greed led to haste, then haste inevitably led to death.

This mantra and consistent remainder had saved his life many times on his road of cultivation.

Rumble! Rumble!

His heart felt like it had become a ravenous dragon roaring with impatience! He felt the constant deep beating throbs that shook his vision and other organs. "Enough!" He suddenly shouted as he quickly realized the Draconic Natal Soul was trying to communicate with him.

He hastily made a connection with it, trying to feel its intent while transmitting his own, but he only felt endless desire. This desire was entirely directed towards the jade crystal.

"...You want to consume it?" Wei Wuyin was momentarily shocked when he felt the fierce and adamant intent originating from his Draconic Natal Soul. "Do you even know what..." As he was about to seriously question the Draconic Natal Soul, his pupils shrunk.

A wisp of a sound entered his mind. As this sound emerged, it continued to endlessly expand within his mind until it was all-encompassing!

It was the Alchemic Natal Soul! No, to be exact, it was words!

"Absorb! Change bloodline!" - Alchemic Eden Natal Soul.

These words were like an infant speaking its first words, but he could still understand it. This was the first time he felt it actually speak to him, and not just released muddled intent through his sea of

consciousness. The Alchemic Eden Natal Soul was sending him clear, verbal messages! It sounded androgynous and infantile, yet quite defined and intelligent.

"Okay!" Wei Wuyin didn't hesitate for a second longer. In fact, he realized the Zenith Mortal State had deeply changed them all on a fundamental level, and the more he felt them evolve, the more connected he was to them. While he couldn't say for sure about the Alchemic Eden Natal Soul, the other three Natal Souls were like innocent children and had incredibly honest feelings towards him. They acted purely in his best interest.

If this jade crystal could benefit the Draconic Natal Soul, he would never hesitate to allow it to do so—fortuitous encounter be damned! He was just about to swallow the Jade Crystal when his heart thumped and it nearly caused his vision to darken.

"Stop it!" Wei Wuyin immediately regained himself and scoldingly exclaimed with a hint of annoyance. That feeling was incredibly unpleasant, and he hated how he felt. While he knew this was simply the Draconic Natal Soul's way of communicating, it was bringing him to a state of near-unconsciousness every time.

"Refine first." - Alchemic Eden Natal Soul.

"Refine?" He had learned about what it meant 'to refine' and the most general definition was to use vigorous energies to enhance the compositional structure of an object or thing. This was done through alchemical energy and/or lifeforce. It was this very method of refinement that allowed him to turn a few drops of blood essence belonging to a far-off descendant of a True Dragon into a legitimate blood essence of a True Dragon.

Of course, that required tens of thousands of years of lifeforce to achieve, and even then, it was barely enough for the second level of the Mark of Myth. If a normal cultivator wished to achieve the same, even the entire lifespan of a peak Astral Core Realm cultivator would be insufficient!

There were two types of refinement that he knew of: that which binds its existence to your life aura and that which was enhanced by external energies. The first was the method of the Heavenly Daos and the second was the method of the Dao of Alchemy. The first used lifeforce, the second used alchemical energies.

Unfortunately, his cultivation base was sorely lacking to achieve the same effect with alchemical energies that he could accomplish with a single strand of lifeforce.

He nodded in understanding. Gripping the crystal, he started to interface with the Mark of Eden, which contained an unfathomably vast amount of pure lifeforce. He drew out strand after strand of lifeforce and sent it into the Jade Crystal. Due to his aura being connected with the Tree of Eden, all objects refined by these strands of lifeforce were bonded to him completely. If Evil Cultivators tried to refine using others' lifeforce, the refined object would have no fate with them.

Each strand of lifeforce represented a single year of lifeforce, and he continued to ceaselessly integrate it within the crystal. It started to thrum and drone with a low-frequency sound. The jade crystal absorbed his lifeforce like it was the most delicious, refreshing water brought to a parched man, drinking every last bit without a hint of rejection.

While he didn't know what this crystal was, he trusted the instincts of his Natal Souls. Their actions thus far have mostly been for his protection or benefit. If he didn't allow some trust, he might as well destroy them now.

After about thirty thousand or so years was absorbed, the Jade Crystal had spontaneously changed shape, from tetragonal into a hexagonal pyramid! At that point, it no longer absorbed any more lifeforce! It no longer gave off internal ripples, and the insides were still like a windless sea, but the edges of its points made one dizzy upon looking at it. It seemed the refinement process had evoked an unfathomable transformation to its fundamental nature.

When Wei Wuyin inspected the Mark of Eden's reserves of lifeforce, he felt astonished that it seemed the thirty thousand years of lifeforce was like a drop of water in the bucket. While he knew it seemed to continuously and silently absorb energy from the world to produce more lifeforce, he didn't know the rate of its conversion, but if thirty thousand years was but a drop of water, then was the Mark of Eden containing a pond, lake, or ocean?

ROAR!

Before he could think further on this, his Draconic Blood Natal Soul roared in excitement, causing the entire room to tremble as if subjected to an earthquake. A potent bloodline power emanated from his heart as it latched onto the jade crystal. In a single blink of an eye, the crystal was sucked into his chest and left a large bloody hole!

Spurt!

Wei Wuyin directly spat out a wad of blood, his eyes flashing with disbelief and uncertainty. With a thought, elemental wood qi surged within his body, coursing through his chest to seal and repair the hole punctured through. This little bit of pain didn't cause his expression to change nor his focus to waver as he funneled his senses towards his beating heart.

His heart which had scales and flesh on its surface, and each beat was like a roar from a dragon of ancient myth, had become oddly silent. In fact, it was no longer beating. His blood wasn't being handled by its power, as his qi started to take control and navigate his functions.

He realized this intricately controlled qi was under the explicit control of his Alchemic Natal Soul, acting as a secondary heart to ensure his body received sufficient oxygen to function. While he was somewhat amazed, he still remained fully focused on his heart.

He realized the changes were minute, with strands of invisible ripples that caused his blood to surge to circulate through his entire body, especially his bones, blood vessels, and spinal cord. They seemed to be most affected by this power.

'The Draconic Natal Soul is absorbing the crystal's unique power? I wonder what changes that will bring about.' After watching over his heart for twelve full hours, he realized the changes taking place were unfathomably slow. Furthermore, his Draconic Natal Soul seemed to have sealed itself off during this transformation.

'Now that I think about it, each of my Natal Souls have defining characteristics except for my Draconic Natal Soul. While it is unique in and of itself, it doesn't have a particular attribute.' His Divine Elemental Natal Soul and Divine Saber Natal Soul had exceptional spiritual strength, energies, sense, and quality due to their 'Divine' transformation. Even Wei Wuyin wasn't entirely sure of the massive benefits a 'Divine' Natal Soul will or could provide.

All he knew was that his spiritual abilities were massively amplified, and this better his control over Saber and Elemental Qi. Furthermore, their personal attribute was defined by Elemental and Saber, yet the Draconic Natal Soul could be said to lack a personal attribute.

Did this Jade Crystal act as a catalyst to give it a personal attribute, and if so, how far will it go? A wisp of excitement entered and soon fully impregnated his eyes! It seemed as if it was going to give birth to lofty aspirations.

"Lord Wei," a soft, yet stable voice called from outside his room. It was Su Mei.

Opening his eyes, he swiftly used his elemental wood and water qi to wash the blood and any bitter smell away before allowing Su Mei in.

Su Mei walked in, her aura was stable and seemed to contain an innate sharpness. She was garbed in black robes, her attire form-fitting and attractively valiant, and a dark-colored scabbard was at her hip. Even from within, her saber glistened an aura of a piercing sharpness that could hurt the eyes.

Wei Wuyin's eyes widened slightly as he regarded her aura. What...the...

"You birthed Saber Intent?" He immediately asked, shocked by Su Mei's advancement in cultivation. While he knew she was more talented than him in terms of cultivation, he was shocked to discover her recent achievement.

Su Mei's eyes brightened momentarily, a tinge of happiness within as she nodded. "It came about in a cultivation session earlier today."

Wei Wuyin stared at her for a quite a while. The more he understood the greater path of cultivation, especially in the Tri-Vision Starfield, the more he understood the scarcity of things in this world. The most scarce were those who birthed Ethereal Intent and high-level Alchemists.

While the starfield didn't put much importance to Ethereal Intent, because while it can improve cultivation prowess, so could armaments, established arrays, or spiritual formations. Given the right circumstances, a cultivator could kill an elite expert two phases above. It all depended on various factors.

"Good." Wei Wuyin softly remarked as he was relaxed in his heart. His intention was to develop his faction, Ascendants, as one that held quality over quantity, and Su Mei was a crucial piece to his structural hierarchy. As long as she could hold her own against monsters like Zuhei, she would be able to maintain a semblance of authority.

Su Mei held back her smile, maintaining a flat expression as she said, "Lord Wei, I've fully investigated the events of the Nascent Dust Examination."

"Oh?" Wei Wuyin's eyes glowed slightly. He had given her an objective in hiring others to get a full report on what happened to the ascenders that were from the Myriad Yore Continent. He was quite curious about one person in particular: Mei Mei.

She had also been a part of the Nascent Dust Examination, but he didn't interfere in her choices or influence her status. This wasn't due to his unwillingness, but because of the Dao Companion Oath. Furthermore, he felt a feeling that he needed to stay away from her otherwise it could adversely affect him.

This wasn't an intuition from his Bloodline of Sin, but a direct feeling transmitted by the Heavenly Daos. While he was uncertain of the specifics, he made a few assumptions. He presumed that perhaps due to their Heavenly Oath, his interactions that could be misconstrued as establishing a relationship could lower his Karmic Luck Value.

After all, him knowingly interfering would be directly against the Heavenly Daos Will. This was a little frustrating, but this was probably for the best.

Su Mei explained, "Mei Mei inevitably did not take the examination. Instead, she left, traveled around for a short period before she was picked up by one of the recruitment campaigns. It belonged to a sect from the Jinai Continent called the Rainbow Crane Sect. She was inducted after an examination and was brought away to the Jinai Continent."

Wei Wuyin frowned slightly. He knew that lesser sects or clans recruit from the Myriad Monarch Planet. Those from this planet or any of the three planets had a better environment, so their talents and cultivators were oftentimes exemplary. Unfortunately, those elite talents would choose to join the Myriad Monarch Sect.

In fact, most of these external sects were managed by factions led by Sky Nobles or Heavenly Kings.

"I've investigated the Jinai Continent and Rainbow Crane Sect, they only accept female cultivators and are within the Myriad Monarch Astral Territory. It isn't too far, and their reputation is rather good in how they treat their disciples. It belongs to an Imperial Sage of the Extreme Origin Mountain named Bing Chunli." Su Mei thoroughly explained the rest of the facts.

Bing Chunli was an Imperial Sage that has been in power for over a hundred years and had control over several continents. She was renowned for her Ice & Frost Arts. It was said that one of the continents she controlled was a winter wonderland, and her and her clan had set it as their base of operations.

Her strength and reputation was considered rather good. After learning this, he felt some relief. While it was unlikely that him and Mei Mei would ever become more than what they currently were, he still owed her too much.

Others might not know...

But he did.

"There's also a report about Long Chen," Su Mei flatly stated as if she was in a contest to win 'most apathetic'.

Wei Wuyin didn't care too much for Long Chen's matters, but his innate curiosity was explosive when it regarded that ring he kept on his finger. He felt it was the core reason for his success. It's funny how everyone in his sect and even the country had assumed his success was brought about by a mystical treasure of some sort when Long Chen was likely truly relying on some treasure or spirit yet was never thrown any suspicion.

He felt this was definitely the work of the Heavenly Daos concealing the truth from others. This was most definitely the case when everyone kept talking about his endless potential and boundless talent. It was as if they were certain that was the case.

In the end, he replied: "Let's hear it."

Chapter 178 - 176: Preparing Against The Shadows

Su Mei proceeded to explain the various events that happened, not simply regarding Long Chen, but his companions as well. According to her, amongst their entire group, only Long Chen had sufficient talent and skill to immediately become a Nascent Dust Disciple, completing all nine floors. As for the others, such as Lian Yu, Wu Baozhai, and Lin Ziyang, they qualified as Null Disciples.

There were a few interesting details, such as Ming Shufeng's disappearance and a few promising members from the Myriad Yore Continent that became Nascent Dust Disciples alongside Long Chen. He contemplated whether he should find a few good seedlings from this group.

As for Ming Shufeng, Su Mei couldn't locate her, gather any hint as to where she went, or determine if she was still alive. However, Wei Wuyin didn't believe a Seer like her would suffer misfortune.

After becoming disciples, Lian Yu entered the Extreme Origin Mountain as a Null Disciple and the other three entered the Extreme War Mountain together. They stayed with Long Chen, but an incident happened regarding a Mortal Common Disciple and Lin Ziyang. This led to the fierce clash against Long Chen and the Mortal Common Disciple, Ji Yu. Due to a moment of carelessness, Long Chen had killed Ji Yu in an unexpected triumph.

However, Ji Yu originated from a mid-level clan called the Ji Clan that had a peak Mortal Captain as Clan Lord, and he was the Earthly General's descendent and promising candidate to succeed his position as Clan Lord. This led to further conflict which was mitigated by the timely assistance of an Earthly General named Xian Hu. Due to his actions, the Ji Clan didn't directly use their Power of Authority to suppress Long Chen.

However, they were still in the midst of conflict with him, and many clan members were taking action to hinder or directly remove Long Chen from the world of the living.

"Huh. So much trouble..." Wei Wuyin shook his head. Long Chen's life had always been filled with conflict and enemies, so much so that he gave birth to Slaughter Intent. He knew Zuhei had killed like a bloody monster after suffering tremendously horrific loss to develop his Intent, so Long Chen must have experienced similar circumstances.

'As long as his Karmic Luck is sufficient, he'll avoid certain calamity. That being said...this might not extend to his women.' Wei Wuyin didn't find Long Chen killing a Mortal Common Disciple odd. In truth,

when he heard about the abrupt overturning of a battle at a critical moment, he knew it had something to do with that ring of his.

Long Chen was fearless even against Wu Jiao, so he had sufficient trump cards to ensure his life against Astral Core Realm experts, or at least a source of confidence. Unfortunately, this protected just him, and the dead allies at the wedding were proof of this.

Qing Qiumu had been accepted as a disciple of a Prime Imperial Sage, her ancestor, and was currently in secluded cultivation to make-up for her wasted cultivation time during her youthful years. It's unlikely she'll be seen for quite some time.

Long Tingyu had entered the Extreme Demon Mountain and hasn't been heard or seen since. Even Su Mei couldn't glean much information about her from her sources, and it seemed there was a shroud of mystery around her current state of affairs. While this was mildly thought-provoking, Wei Wuyin's interest in that biased little girl was to the floor.

After a moment of thinking, he dismissed his thoughts of them and asked: "How is Zuhei's recovery?"

"He had suffered immense damage to his meridians, organs, cells, dantian, and sea of consciousness due to his crippling. It was quite thorough, but the alchemical products you provided should be enough to support a full recovery. Thus far, he's regained his innate reflexes and a consistent reaction time. It might take a year or two before he could digest all the products and regain his full strength," Su Mei assessed and relayed.

Nodding, Wei Wuyin couldn't help but think how frustrating it was that cultivators required weeks, months, or even years to digest alchemical products. He had originally experienced that exact issue, but since his Natal Souls could externalize, he was capable of bypassing his own innate talents and entirely digesting alchemical products in minutes or hours.

This couldn't be helped. Therefore, he didn't feel too down.

Suddenly, his eyes brightened with an extremely blazing light. His original goal had been to overcome the Astral Tribulation and make a trip to the Bloodforge Continent, but with his Draconic Natal Soul undergoing its transformation, he decided to wait until it completed the process.

He didn't know if his Astral Tribulation would be divided or combined, and having a single Natal Soul out of commission might not just affect its transformation if success is achieved, but lower his chances of succeeding. He knew that the higher the Mortal State, the greater the Astral Tribulation's level of difficulty. In fact, there were numerous factors that affected the Astral Tribulation's strength, and Mortal State was merely one of them.

It was best to walk the side of caution lest he commits an irrevocable and irredeemable mistake.

"It's time to settle my debts. Bring all the requests from the Extermination of the Grand Axis Faction. I'll handle them all now. Then, I want you to send a message to the sect leader of the Rainbow Crane Sect. The best I can do for Mei Mei is ensure a safe path of cultivation from the shadows." Wei Wuyin gave Su Mei her assignments and she nodded in understanding, leaving to execute his orders.

After being left alone, he rubbed his chin softly. "I have forty years before the Second Calamity of Hell; I need to look beyond that, however. My goal is to create the most supreme foundation for cultivation,

with sufficient cards to ensure my life for any and all obstacles. The Calamity of Hell is an active danger to my life, but its a danger that I'm acutely aware of. The true dangers are the ones I'm mostly ignorant of, the ones in this world."

The San Clan, the Alchemist Association, and other hegemonic forces and enemies that would seek to hinder Myriad Monarch Sect's rise by any means necessary. His existence had spread widely, and after learning about his title that was widely circulating—Prince of Everlore, he felt an unprecedented shadow of lethal danger lurking.

He had never been one to venture out without sufficient cards in his hands to ensure his life. While his cultivation base was a priority, and definitely the most reliable card in his entire life, it was also his current limitation.

'My first goal is to cultivate this Celestial Eyes of Spiritual Divinity.'

Two Months Later.

Since acquiring the Celestial Eyes of Spiritual Divinity Method, Wei Wuyin had spent quite a while deliberating whether the risk and difficulty of cultivating this technique was worth it or not. In the end, he felt that it should be. This cultivation method felt as if it was connected to him in a profound and inexplicable manner, and since the old man had recommended it, there was likely a reason for that.

The Celestial Eyes of Spiritual Divinity might've been placed on the first floor of the Martial King's Dao Pavilion, but it was by no means easy to cultivate, but its overall abilities were rather vague.

It wasn't divided into levels, and when cultivated, its either a complete success or a horrific failure with insane consequences. Once cultivated, there was no more need for improvement because it'll happen naturally as you cultivate and improve your mental, physical, and spiritual energies. This could be likened to the Haven Heart Qi Method. While it was divided into step by step directions for cultivation, after completion, there was no further need to seek any improvement of the overall technique.

The technique's primary ability was a spell called the Gaze of a Celestial Spirit. Wei Wuyin wasn't unfamiliar with ocular-based spiritual spells, having cultivated quite a few before, but this spell could be considered somewhat different, because it wasn't a 'spiritual' spell but simply a spell. Unlike ocular-based spiritual spells, this spell focused all senses into the eyes, spiritual, mental, and physical into one.

According to it, one can even view various forces with their eyes, like the world's mana, 'revokers of reincarnation', and the intricate laws of the world, but this was dependent on cultivation level. He didn't know exactly what 'revokers of reincarnation' meant, but it could be referring to fabled ghosts or souls that aren't accepted into Hell.

As he knew about the matters of Hell, he realized many myths such as ghosts, spirits, and phantasms likely exist.

The other three abilities were called the Eye of Illusion, Eye of Truth, and Eye of Immortality. They were simply named, but boundlessly profound to the point that Wei Wuyin still couldn't understand their abilities exactly.

The Eye of Illusion was described as being able to invoke changes in the senses of others, creating a false reality. This had limitations and consumed an immense amount of mental, spiritual, and physical energies. He believed it would allow him to temporarily 'project' illusions to others, hence the name. However, it seemed like it wasn't that simple.

The Eye of Truth could see the trend of the world, the origins of all things, and view the unseen divinities. Just as before, he didn't know what that meant. At first, he thought he would gain the ability of a Seer, but it didn't seem to be the case. It was weirdly worded, but he'll only really know if he successfully cultivated the technique.

The Eye of Immortality...

It didn't have any detailed description, just a single word: "Eternal."

Each ability was more vague than the last, but he was still adamant on cultivating it.

He took a deep breath.

Then, he slowly exhaled.

"Let's begin."

Chapter 179 - 177: Three Years

Karmic Luck Value: 563.2

First Calamity: Survived - 7/7.

Second Calamity: Suppressed - 36 Years.

Three years swiftly arrived, sweeping across the cultivation world like a blip on a seismic radar, fleeting yet impactful. During these three years, new deaths and births continuously occurred within the Tri-Vision Starfield with various developments both meaningful to all and meaningless to most.

One of these things was the resounding and echoing name of Wei Wuyin—the youngest Alchemic King of the Myriad Monarch Continent. His arrival had stirred many rumors and suspicions of its validity which had yet to be confirmed by the Alchemist Association. These rumors became widespread and more exaggerated as he continuously completed his promise of sixth-grade and seventh-grade products due to the Grand Axis Faction's eradication.

This slight stir soon enough became a turbulent storm that shook not just the Myriad Monarch Sect, but the Alchemist Association renowned for their elite alchemists. After all, his assumed success rate and refinement time was frighteningly great and short in comparison to these elder and experienced alchemists.

Talented?

This word soon made others feel numb as it was continuously uttered as if they were speaking about water, air, or cultivation. Spread alongside the heralding nickname of the Prince of Everlore, he was seen as the second coming. It wasn't long before he became a household name with much contention.

There were quite a few that believed his ability was highly exaggerated, and that his feats were supplemented by the support of the Myriad Monarch Sect to uplift their reputation. Others, they believed he was truly the second coming due to his origins from the Myriad Yore Continent and sought to formulate any and every relationship.

There were numerous elite clans that were attempting to send their gorgeous virgin daughters over, attempting to give gifts, and much more all for the sake of a meeting or forming a good impression. This could easily overwhelm the ordinary person, but it was all brushed off during these three years as Wei Wuyin had entered 'secluded cultivation' for preparation to enter into the Astral Core Realm.

This piece of news only erupted and caused more feverish attempts to tie themselves to Wei Wuyin. He could become an Alchemic King at his age without an Alchemic Natal Soul, without an Astral Core cultivation base?

His name was resounding.

His future was limitless.

The Alchemist Association, which hadn't expressed their stance yet regarding this 'second coming' finally issued an official statement. Before Wei Wuyin took the official examination to prove his status as an Alchemic King, he will remain as an unreliable alchemist in their eyes. Of course, this could be rectified by his participation in one of the exams.

Quite a few scoffed at this. The King of Everlore never took an official examination, did that mean he was an unreliable alchemist? Furthermore, the Alchemist Association was only born because of this 'unreliable alchemist' in their eyes.

Alongside this self-centered and arrogant statement was a seemingly peaceful invitation.

It was an invitation to participate in the Alchemist Association's Grand Association Master's thousandth birthday that will similarly be his great-great-great-granddaughter's birthday. If it was simply a basic invitation, perhaps it could be avoided, but this invitation was officially delivered by the Vice Association Master in person to the sect, and they named Wei Wuyin personally.

The Grand Imperial Sages were shaken and disturbed. The Dao of Alchemy was the most crucial aspect of support for cultivation, and no one can do without it in this current civilization. The Alchemist Association may seem like a neutral organization, but it had the ears and stomachs of all the hegemonic powers and many of their own top-tier alchemists originated from the Alchemist Association.

It garnered the endless respect and reverence of the vast majority of cultivators, and if they offended them, this could lead to horrific consequences. While Wei Wuyin was a single alchemist, was it worth making an enemy of an entire organization of them? Of course, this invitation should've been impossible to reject.

This was the thoughts of everyone when it was publicly released, but what shocked them was the response of the Grand Imperial Sage, Tuo Bihan.

"Heavenly King Wei is currently undergoing a vital moment in his cultivation. Until it has been overcome, we will not disturb him. Apologies." This vague response was frighteningly clear in its intent!

Unless Wei Wuyin desired to leave the sect, they would not force him to do so! All invitations and plans be damned! This sent raging emotions through many, and they couldn't help but be uncertain about the Myriad Monarch Sect's exact intent. This was no different than offending the Alchemist Association! Was he worth it?

However, there was no response from the Alchemist Association, and the celebration for the Alchemist Association's Grand Association Master went off without a hitch, and Heavenly King Wei did not arrive!

Just like everyone expected, shortly after, the Alchemist Association made a move! It wasn't forceful. Various alchemical product shipments went missing en route, were delayed, or were inflated in price arbitrarily due to 'difficulties'! They stagnated communication with the sect and forces under the Myriad Monarch Sect. All three planets and their dozen continental flat earths were heavily affected!

While the other four hegemonic powers remained untouched, undisturbed, and even given faint discounts and benefits. This was an obvious move against the Myriad Monarch Sect!

Yet, while this went on, the man responsible was quietly resting on the eighth-level of the Extreme Creation Mountain in his sky palace, surrounded by heavenly bliss.

He laid in his god-satin sheets, cloud-cotton pillows, and ocean-cooling mattress. With every breath, his body devoured several wads of astral essence. With every exhale, all stress and turbidity remaining in his body naturally departed. The level of comfort was beyond mortal comprehension.

Besides his exceptional physical form, two bodies curled into his embrace. These two bodies were female.

Their nude bodies were similarly wrapped within his sheets, clinging to his chest and arms, with their legs wrapped around his in an intimate entanglement. Their sexy bodies and alluring natural fragrance could enthrall the hearts of all mortal men.

To his right, a demon. Her light-violet pigmentation of her skin glistened in the astral light, and her long violet hair that was a few shades darker created an exceptional complementing contrast. She was tall, about seven feet and eleven inches, towering over Wei Wuyin by quite a bit. Her long legs were thick and soft, the most suitable natural pillows for any man, and her long eyelashes softly batted with faint glittering glow. These features paired with her full-breasted and curvaceous figure made her an exceptional woman.

Her beauty easily surpassed countless human females, and amongst her race, she was by no means average.

To his left, a beastwoman. Her ears were feline, white and furry, perky and fluttering from time to time whilst slightly atop her head. Unlike the other woman, her stature was shorter, slim, and radiated a fiesty aura. Besides her short-cut brown-hair and ears, she was hairless and resembled a human. She wildly tossed and turned, and as she did, her sharp incisors were revealed within her mouth.

Within Wei Wuyin's sea of consciousness, he was not as peaceful. He floated within his sea of consciousness as a wispy figure of his original appearance. At the moment, he was quietly regarding the formation placed on his sea of consciousness, and how his Alchemic Eden Natal Soul was deeply embedded into his sea of consciousness.

The mental energies within were calm and still, but the complex formation was intricate to an entirely different level.

'Despite completing it three years ago, I still can't access any of its abilities.' His mental form frowned. When he completed his cultivation of the Celestial Eyes of Spiritual Divinity, his silver eyes hadn't experienced any overt changes, but he could see astral essence, energies, and mana with the utmost clarity.

That being said, he may have gained access to the Gaze of the Celestial Spirit, a passive ability, he couldn't access the other three abilities—Eye of Illusion, Truth, or Immortality. It's not like he hadn't attempted to do so, as each of the three formations should be interacted with to activate its corresponding ability, but whenever he tried, he'd pass out.

His mental, spiritual, and physical energies would instantly be drained and his body would shut down as a preservation mechanism. Even with his exceptional attributes and abundance of energies, he still severely lacked the qualification to activate any of these abilities.

He pouted slightly. Fortunately, the Gaze of the Celestial Spirit was extraordinary! It was greater than spiritual sense and all his physical senses combined, and he could 'see' mana and 'energies'. Normally, cultivators could only 'sense' mana or energies through their spiritual sense, or visually witness it after it is condensed and controlled, but this was completely unlike that.

He could see water vapor and the water energies stored within each molecule, the fire energies sent down by the sun that provided heat, and the wind energies of the world. It was like he was seeing everything for the very first time. At first, it was a little overwhelming, but he quickly adjusted and controlled what he wanted to see.

And this amplified his alchemic abilities to untold levels. Before, he had the ability to 'see' the process thanks to the Alchemic Eden Qi that connected his sea of consciousness, but with these eyes, he could see things that even his mind couldn't observe. The most minute changes and unintended shifts throughout the entire process.

Since these eyes formed, he hadn't created any product at the low-quality since, regardless of its grade, and his refinement speed was enhanced by at least eight-times. It was quite a cheat. But this only inflamed his desire to witness the other three abilities.

Twiing! Twiing!

After giving the formation one last look, his mental form started to dissipate. His physical body stirred and his eyes slowly opened. The three-layered ring was aglow with faint white light. He used his left hand to wipe the sleep from his face, briefly glancing at the ample, perky, and exceptional forms of these two beauties by his side.

A slight grin emerged on his face as he chuckled in his heart. With a flicker of his body, he quietly left the bed and replaced his body that was used as pillows by these two with actual pillows. Grabbing a robe, he exited the room and sent his spiritual sense into the transmission crystal.

It was from Su Mei.

After reading it, his expression changed!

Chapter 180 - 178: Five Hegemons

The first portion of the message read:

"Lord Wei, I've received news from the Shadow Haven Pavilion. According to them, there was once a society that devoted their beliefs to an ancient dragon called Anu Zhirazu, herald as a descendent of True Dragons."

Wei Wuyin read this and it caused his expression to change with a tinge of excitement! Anu was the azure-scaled creature he had met on the Myriad Yore Continent, and he had been seeking information regarding him for quite a while. He couldn't fathom why such an existence was located beneath the Beast-Taming Sect.

Moreover, Anu could be a threat of the future, so he wanted to ensure he had a sufficient amount of knowledge regarding this variable.

As for Societies, they were often seen as religious groups with members that bonded together under a common belief or goal, and they weren't much different from sects. In fact, they could be considered as alliances of various like-minded forces.

He didn't delay and read the rest.

"Anu is classified as a now-extinct member of the Horned-Firmament Dragon Race. This specific race and several others were obliterated by the Divine King Han Xei and his force, the Elemental Heaven Pavilion. Supposedly, there were countless other societies that worshipped dragons at that time, even stronger than Anu's, but they were eradicated after Divine King Han Xei took action."

Oh?

'So was it hiding beneath that mountain? But it seemed like it had a grudge against the Beast-Taming Sect. Was there no connection or did the Beast-Taming Sect quietly built a base around its assumed hibernating corpse trying to seek benefits? Well, considering they enslaved beasts, I don't blame it for obliterating them all.'

Wei Wuyin had seen crueller acts for less. As a beast worshipped by humans, forced to witness their enslavement and demeaning statuses, even he would be furious beyond imagination. However, a glorious past was still that—a past.

'To think the Divine King Han Xei actually eliminated an entire beast race...wonder what's the story there. Now that I think about it, it's possible he's the Founder of the Elemental Heaven Pavilion.' His eyes roamed a bit before settling on this conclusion. The Elemental Heaven Pavilion was one of the five hegemonic powers of the Tri-Vision Starfield, controlling immense territory and authority.

They were alongside the Myriad Monarch Sect, Sacred Light Palace, Demonic Abyss Mountain, and San Clan.

The San Clan was the rulers of the Tri-Vision Starfield and bestower of its current name. They had two Realmlords holding the fort, making them the #1 undisputed superpower within the starfield. They specialized in fire methods, and were said to have a deep legacy with the King of Everlore.

The Sacred Light Palace was a force ruled by elves, and the majority of their territory's population and members were of the elven race. This held true for the Demonic Abyss Mountain and Elemental Origin Pavilion, which were demons and humans respectively.

The Myriad Monarch Sect was the only multi-varied force that accepted all members. They were a steaming pot of various ingredients and were widely considered the weakest force, and this was attributed to their diversity. While this might not be the actual case, it was still a fact that they were regarded as the weakest of the Five Hegemons. The high-level beastmen were all located here, and two of the five Grand Imperial Sages were beastmen.

For a force to be recognized as a hegemon, they didn't just need a foundation and territory, but cultivators at the Sixth Stage of the Astral Core Realm, the peak of the middle-phase.

Wei Wuyin assimilated all this information and felt that Anu will likely attempt to take revenge for his race's unfortunate fate. The Elemental Heaven Pavilion was definitely its target, and considering how its far weaker than during the era of Divine King Han Xei and the King of Everlore, this was the ripe time.

'Unfortunately, Divine King Han Xei's successor is a Blessed.' Wei Wuyin shook his head slightly. No wonder no one could find his legacy until now; it was designated by the Heavenly Dao as a tool to sharpen Blessed with conflict. In that case, Anu was destined to fail and likely die as he benefited the Blessed in the end.

How unfortunate.

He rubbed his chin slightly and thought about interfering in this, but stopped the thought. Blessed seemed to always have tools or means to survive calamities or unforeseen events, so it would be best not to be the target of the trump card that will be used against Anu at a critical moment.

That's if that unknown beautiful expert doesn't personally act.

Wait.

Wei Wuyin briefly stalled. "Was Divine King Han Xei's legacy on the Myriad Yore Continent? And if it was, why did that expert let that Blessed use the Myriad Void Gate? I know he was never inducted into the sect, never even tried to enter, but the Elemental Heaven Pavilion is even further away than the Myriad Yore Continent from the Myriad Monarch Sect."

His eyelids twitched slightly as he pondered.

"...!" His eyes widened slightly. *'Could the rest of his legacy be on the Myriad Monarch Planet?'* This thought caused him to audibly groan. How did he miss this?! A set of fortuitous trials to select a successor!

If so, then he would definitely be too late to claim any benefits. While he didn't have the Heavenly Daos guidance, he had an Elemental Natal Soul, so he would benefit greatly if he piggybacked on that Blessed fortuitous chance, just like before.

He rubbed his face with his palm in aggravation. *'I'm an Inheritor of Sin, I'm supposed to steal!'* He had to take several breaths before he regained his normal calm. He also needed to test his theory that killing a Blessed allowed him to steal their Karmic Luck Value as his own.

Long Chen felt too dangerous to act against due to his ring, but if an opportunity presented itself, he needed to take it. Regardless if it was Long Chen or that other Blessed. He just had to do it discreetly and with utmost certainty. If that beautiful expert descended for revenge, his death might be unavoidable even with his Karmic Luck Value. He didn't want to test it.

Unlike the others, he didn't have some protective charm from some spirit or expert. In fact, he felt the Heavenly Daos was quite biased as it provided everyone else with beauties and protective shields. Perhaps the truth was that there are different sets of methods or guidelines of Karmic Luck Value usage for each Blessed, but he still felt uncomfortable thinking about it.

Everything he received had all been opportunities that required his own talent, comprehension, level of situational discernment, ability to grasp to its fullest. A single mistake and he could miss out on everything and receive absolutely nothing.

He decided to put aside such thoughts for later, unwilling to descend into becoming whining and ungrateful. If his karmic luck was tied to min-maxing his lucky chances, then so be it. He'll always maximize every chance he gets with his own ability and talent.

Speaking of, it's been three years and he was still in the Qi Condensation Realm. The Draconic Natal Soul was still undergoing various changes of his bloodline, organs, and cellular structure. His blood, heart, and bones were slowly becoming light-grey in color. His body had given birth to additional arteries and veins, leading to other portions of his body, and he had even given birth to a unique organ that sat at the base of his throat, behind his tonsil.

It was like an abnormal crystalized growth of flesh, but it had a few holes within. This growth seemed to connect into his larynx, and quivered slightly whenever he wanted to loudly speak. It was clearly underdeveloped.

He felt it would definitely show itself after his bloodline had solidified and the various transformations had completed. When his Gaze of the Celestial Spirit viewed his body at a microscopic level, he could see his blood and bone cells possess unique rippling patterns on their surface. It was endlessly repeating and vivid, making him recall the refined Jade Crystal.

"What is this exactly?"

ROAR!!!

Just as he asked this question, his body emanated a ferociously explosive roar that shook the entire Sky Palace! The tiles beneath his feet shattered, fragmented and countless cracks extended that penetrated through the dense material and formations that reinforced the walls!

Wei Wuyin's head jerked back as his silver eyes effused a bright grey light! His entire body was filled with an unfathomably domineering and dominant power that quaked his everything!

A mysterious force shook space and time, causing a disturbance of a hundred feet with him as the epicenter to tremble endless as countless ripples emerged out of nowhere. They appeared and vanished as if they were fading in and out of space. The world instantly became restless!

He heard a voice that sent his mind, heart, and soul!

"!! AM! VOID!!!" - Draconic Void Natal Soul!