

Chapter 181 - 179: Draconic Heart Of The Void Dao

Those three words were as clear as heavenly thunder erupting within a dead sea! It held the qualities of being a sound that was ever-present, elusive, far away, and unfathomably close simultaneously, giving one a sensation of cognitive dissonance that evoked boundless confusion.

Was this a voice a memory? Was it a premonition? Was it real? Was it fake?

All these questions surfaced within Wei Wuyin's thoughts as his heart wildly beat with tremendous force. His heart was like an ancient mythological god, pumping endless, boundless, and mysterious fluids into his body. He felt as if he was being shuttled through countless different streams of reality with each pump that surged from his heart, reaching his brain, and influencing his senses. It was as if he became an idle traveler in the vehicle that was his mind and it overtook his sense of balance.

This feeling lasted for a mere few seconds before it was resolved by a tree. The Alchemic Eden Natal Soul's roots that were plunged into his sea of consciousness sent continuous rainbow-colored light into it, allowing him to regain some semblance of a consciousness.

"Holy shit! What the fuck was that?!" He exclaimed directly as he seemed to experience a radical come-down from psychedelic drugs. He couldn't help but grasp at his head as he tried to recall all those sensations earlier, trying to find out what had just happened.

"Shared." - Alchemic Eden Natal Soul.

Since that day three years ago, the Alchemic Eden Natal Soul's ability to communicate directly to him had thoroughly improved. While its voice was still androgynous, its tone flat and without a sense of emotion, it was clear. Furthermore, it wasn't the only one who exhibited this ability.

All of his Natal Souls shared energies, this included alchemical energies and eden energies that were unique to the Alchemic Eden Natal Soul. It seemed they could transmit strands of eden energies into his sea of consciousness to communicate. While they all sounded the same, lacking any individualistic differentiation in terms of tone, their speech patterns were quite distinct.

Having this pathway of communication had greatly enhanced his understanding of the Natal Souls, but also confused him still. Because even they were unable to explain their sentience and ability to act independently. However, he learned a few essential things.

They were all connected to him. Any sensation he felt was similarly experienced by them, and his death would lead to their deaths. They relied on him to survive, and this was further proven when they couldn't externalize for longer than a few minutes at a time. Furthermore, they weren't truly independent.

They couldn't use Qi, merely their innate energies when they acted. This meant they couldn't be used as independent fighters, and they were highly vulnerable while externalized. This was even worse for the Alchemic Eden Natal Soul and Draconic Natal Soul, because it was completely reliant on his sea of consciousness and heart, if they suffered severe injuries, they could be completely shattered as a result.

With this, he was a lot more trusting towards his Natal Souls. This didn't mean he would lower his guard, however. After all, the Tree of Eden that was now embedded into his sea of consciousness had once tried to possess his body through his mind.

"What do you mean shared?" Wei Wuyin asked.

"...Shared moment." - Alchemic Eden Natal Soul.

Wei Wuyin pondered briefly before coming to a realization. His sensation earlier was what his Draconic Natal Soul likely felt upon completing its transformation. He swiftly inspected his heart and realized that his flowing blood had ripples endlessly coursing through his entire body, and his fleshy heart was greyish and three times the size of an average heart. However, it didn't seem to experience any discomfort and beat naturally.

The additional arteries and veins that circulated throughout his transformed body seemed to off-set the difference somehow.

"What is Void?" Wei Wuyin asked his heart, the Draconic Natal Soul. He had heard of the Dark Void, which is the emptiness between celestial bodies and stars that roamed the world. This area was incredibly dangerous and only Realmlords could traverse it without experiencing death. Well, Realmlords and unique existences like Bai Lin, or other star-grade beasts.

They were called star-grade beasts not because of their ability to enter or exit the Sky Layers of planets or continental flat earths, but because they could travel the starry skies and the Dark Void that held it. Of course, due to the immense distance, no known star-grade beast could even hope to make the trip to another land mass or celestial body.

He felt his heart rumble slightly, gathering its spiritual intent and mental energies, trying to transmit a message to Wei Wuyin. It was unaccustomed to doing so due to its dormant state for three years.

"I'll help." - Alchemic Eden Natal Soul.

"Me too! Me too! I want to help too! Let me help!" - Divine Elemental Natal Soul.

"Tch." - Divine Saber Natal Soul.

The three Natal Souls started to offer support to the Draconic Natal Soul, slowly infusing strands of intent that seemed to contain their own experiences in communication. It was as if they were helping the Draconic Natal Soul learn how to get on and ride a bike, slowly and patiently.

Wei Wuyin calmly observed this. Since they could communicate, he knew that their sentience would grow into personality, and their personalities were becoming more and more apparent as time passed. The most essential quality was their absolute support in each other, and when he recalled the Alchemic Eden Soul berating and even teaching the other souls lessons, he realized they've developed a dynamic akin to a family.

"...The Void is a Dao. The Dao of the Void...is space, time, astrological forces, and void energy. Space is fixed, stable, chaotic disturbances within the Dark Void and its various forms, including atmospheric

space. Time is the past, present, future, isolated, and paradoxical temporal periods of existence." - Draconic Void Natal Soul.

"...A Dao?!" Wei Wuyin was taken aback. He had learned that about Daos fairly earlier on, and knew that the Saber was a part of the Weapon Dao. There was also the Mind Dao and the Material Dao, which likely encompassed the Eden Qi and Elemental Qi respectively. Besides the Heavenly Daos, which governed the world and was its will, and the Alchemic Dao, there wasn't any other Dao that he knew.

But the Void Dao! It governs time and space? Did it govern all time and space? Fixed? Stable? Chaotic? Atmospheric?! Past? Present? Future? Isolated? What the hell was paradoxical?! Did he just gain the entirety of a Dao?

If the Alchemic Dao could be divided, then it was definitely classified into seven core types, based on the seven traits of Alchemy. It was broad and profound, and he had merely stepped onto its edge at this moment.

Step. Step.

His thoughts became chaotic, but he soon calmed down with several breaths. The steps were from those two beauties who were asleep, and he vanished. He arrived in his Alchemic Lab, an advanced version of his previous room. There were countless shelves of books, spiritual jades, and recording jades. He calmly sat on a chair and started to ask the Draconic Natal Soul a series of questions.

He was swiftly corrected that it was no longer just a Draconic Natal Soul, but a Draconic Void Natal Soul, in much the same way as the Alchemic Eden Natal Soul had Eden Qi, Divine Elemental Natal Soul had Elemental Qi, and Divine Saber Natal Soul had Saber Qi, it had void-based powers that originated from its bloodline powers. While its basis was still entrenched in a dragon's bloodline, its attribute now included the Void Dao.

After that, he learned that its bloodline abilities had awakened. However, they could only be used when he enters a unique state called Dragonification. His human traits would become secondary, and his True Dragon Bloodline will take the dominant traits of his bloodline.

This explanation shook him deeply. He could transform into a dragon?! He didn't know this before. Why hadn't he known this before?

According to it, he could always do it, but it would consume an insane amount of its bloodline energies, and when it ran out, his body would return to its natural state. The first innate ability was called the Infinite Void Wings, which was a growth-type ability where he would create a pair of wings. These wings will give him the ability of flight, no longer needing mana to enable this.

The second innate ability was called Void Crystallization. By using his Void Bloodline Powers, he could condense the ambient void and crystallize inanimate objects into it, such as a cup or a weapon. Furthermore, it would shrink it into a very small size, simultaneously creating an independent and stable space.

This seemed to be an elementary application of the storage ring concept, where a stable set of space was created and used to store things. Unfortunately, he couldn't seal living things, things with volatile energies, or objects of a certain size with his current cultivation base.

His third was the most important! DRAGON BREATH!

When he heard this, his inner child squealed in excitement. The stories of dragons breathing flames of annihilation was the main obstacle of any grand mythological epic! The Myriad Yore Continent had various stories written by scholars and enlightened writers, and he would often delve into them in his freetime, especially as a child.

Moreover, his dragon breath was actually fire and it was called Void Flames! He wanted to test it out, but the Draconic Void Natal Soul hurriedly expressed that he shouldn't. His growth on his throat hadn't completed its growth and it was the medium at which the void fire was produced. If he tried, he could end up igniting his throat and head in a quick death.

"...Okay. So no fire for now." An easy decision was made that moment, and Wei Wuyin instantly cooled down.

His excitement was quite tangible as he animatedly asked all sorts of questions. Unfortunately, he quickly learned that besides the basics of the Void Dao, the understanding of its innate abilities relating to its bloodline, it was completely ignorant of everything else. It didn't know how to use the Void Dao or manipulate space, time, or even what space and time really meant.

His eyelids twitched without end.

"Haaa..." That was the path of cultivation, after all. Everything must be learned or gained from previous generations. It's not like he immediately knew how to use his spiritual energies or qi when he gave birth to it, simply knew the basics after a bit of understanding. Even Wu Jiao could only clearly explain the cultivation paths he'd traveled and personally underwent. His Natal Souls were an extension of his soul, mind, and body, so it made sense they would be ignorant as well.

Otherwise, he could instantly master the Alchemic Dao and be invincible throughout the world.

Even if the Draconic Void Natal Soul hadn't told him these things, a little observation and analysis would've led to him discovering this through feelings and instincts. In the end, he could only sigh.

The road of cultivation was quite long.

Twiiing!

Just as he was about to casually concoct some products since he was already in his Alchemic Lab, he received a transmission message from Su Mei. It read:

"Lord Wei, there's a matter that might require your attention. Qing Qiumu is about to be executed."

Chapter 182 - 180: Exhausted

The sequence of events that inevitably led to that transmitted message was quite phenomenally chaotic and indicative of a rising star experiencing a sharp fall, and those that have risen with it will oftentimes be the first to experience the burning heat from its end.

Extreme War Mountain, Three Years Ago.

A tall, stable figure that fought endlessly to rise to his current point was beset with a calamity. A calamity he was all too familiar with and willing to challenge to the end; the chase of an elite clan.

Long Chen was a mere Nascent Dust Disciple facing the gargantuan entity that was the Ji Clan. Not only was their Clan Leader a peak-rank Mortal Captain, but they had a dozen Astral Core Realm experts as pillars that stabilized their destiny and status within the Myriad Monarch Sect.

While this might seem like a little in terms of numbers, one must know that in the entire Tri-Vision Starfield, the amount of cultivators at the Astral Core Realm was exceptionally low when compared to the overall population. If one considered all experts, all citizens, all cultivators, and all races, then out of the tens of trillions of those capable of cultivation, less than five million were in the Astral Core Realm. The vast majority of these five million were lower-phase Astral Core Realm experts, those at the World Sea, Sky Ruler, or Soul Idol Phase.

And the number of those in these phases dwindled as one rose. Those in the middle-phases were in the tens of thousands, with less than fifty peak middle-phase experts at the Sixth Stage, and this was across all forces, including the Five Hegemons. Moreover, the majority of these experts were a part of the Five Hegemons!

As for upper-phase experts, there were only two, and they both were renowned Realm Lords of the San Clan in the Seventh Stage!

The Ji Clan had a dozen experts of the Astral Core Realm, and this was sufficient to sweep across countless established forces without fear.

Facing this influential clan, Long Chen could only face it as they came. He was subjected to all sorts of plots and schemes, but they all fell short of their objective, some of them benefiting him at the end. However, as calamity after calamity brought about by the actions of this single clan was smashed onto his head, his invisible fortune and the eye that oversaw him was slowly losing its influence.

However, this wasn't the end. Other forces were offended by his wanton actions, forces allied with the Ji Clan who similarly took action and were even more despicable. They challenged not simply him, but acted against those around him, touching his reverse scale. He could only shield them with his fortune and his ability the best he could, and each time...it was a success by a small margin with coincidence and convenience at his beck and call.

Until he called...and it no longer answered.

This happened three days ago.

Long Chen's adventures were brilliant. The tales of heroes in various epics as he challenged and overcame with a little bit of luck, talent, and a whole lot of will.

Lin Ziyang, Wu Baozhai, Na Xinyi, Qing Qiumu, and Long Tingyu; these were the women he had met in the Myriad Yore Continent. Xiao Bing and Hong Ru, they were the two women he had met on the Myriad Monarch Planet. His relationships, his adventures, they benefited him and helped him overcome many matters, but this matter was far too intense and abrupt.

It occurred when Long Chen challenged and crippled the reproductive capabilities of a young elite member who attempted to snatch and do unsavory things to Lin Ziyang. Once more, she was the target

of desire for the young men of the sect. Perhaps it was her complete lack of backing or matching talent for her exceptional beauty, perhaps it was her intact primal yin and exceptional looks, or simply the misfortunes of being weak, but she was often the target of ceaseless attempts.

However, this time, after his violent actions, the next attempt that happened...succeeded.

The younger sister of Ji Yu, Ji Yin, had acted at the most crucial moment, taking Lin Ziyang away and...

Her fate was unfortunate.

When they were at their wits end attempting to find Lin Ziyang, Wu Baozhai finally contacted Qing Qiumu and Long Tingyu. They acted swiftly, abruptly ending their cultivation retreats and descending on Extreme War Mountain with anxious fury. At that time, Long Tingyu's identity as having an Ancestor of her demonic lineage in the sect was revealed, and this ancestor was a Heavenly Commander rank Elder!

They used their connections and statuses, one the descendent of a Heavenly Commander Elder and another the descendent of a Prime Imperial Sage, and they bulldozed their way into the clan and came upon an unfortunate discovery.

Ji Yin's maliciousness knew no bounds as she got thorough revenge for her brother on Lin Ziyang, the core reason for his death. While she wasn't dead, her eyes were like ash and dust that sought death.

Enraged, Long Chen went berserk with murderous intent, and clashed endlessly with the Ji Clan elite experts, but as he was not even at the Ninth Stage of Qi Condensation Realm yet, still trying to reach the Zenith Mortal State, he was not their match as a few Astral Core Realm experts easily suppressed him.

The matter exploded and the Knights of Enforcement arrived, about to investigate the matter with the utmost diligence. However, as they did, they soon found out about the situation and realized that Lin Ziyang was a Null Disciple. Those at this rank were not protected by the Knights of Enforcement, and their authority was unable to seek justice. This, and with the Mortal Captain Clan Leader standing up for Ji Yin, the matter imploded before it could even get off the ground.

However, this matter might have ended, but another one immediately exploded! And how explosive this event was!

Using a talisman bestowed to her by her Ancestor, Qing Qiumu directly obliterated the elite experts of the Ji Clan suppressing Long Chen and killed Ji Yin in cold-blood. Shocked, the Knights of Enforcement moved to capture her for murder!

She stood proud and upright as if she stood on the side of righteousness and justice. She flashed her emblem that her Ancestor had given her. Told that this was sufficient to ward off many troubles, she vastly overestimated the extent of its effectiveness. The Knights of Enforcement cared little about the emblem of a Prime Imperial Sage and moved to capture her.

She was immediately sealed in cultivation and mobility.

However, Long Tingyu panicked, shattering her own emblem and calling forth her own Ancestor! A Heavenly Commander tyrannically descended soon after. With imposing strength and authority, he swept the situation and seemed ready to handle it with a few words and an iron fist, until a member of the Knights of Enforcement, a member who held a grudge against Long Chen, similarly called forth a

higher-ranking official in secret! She witnessed the outrageous acts of the Heavenly Commander and flew into a flurry of rage.

This matter exploded into untold levels at that moment!

Murder!

Abuse of Authority!

These charges didn't just implicate Qing Qiumu any longer, but Long Tingyu and her ancestor that tried to sweep the situation under the rug and abuse his authority for the sake of his descendent!

When a Captain-class member of the Knights of Enforcement arrived, no one could stop Qing Qiumu, Long Tingyu's Ancestor, and Long Tingyu from being punished immediately with death! However, there was still one last individual who had yet to arrive.

Qing Qiumu's Ancestor!

This battle of backings were exceptionally vast, but her actions and authority at the Prime Imperial Sage could only ensure that they weren't immediately executed, and given a fair trial with evidence. However, what was there to argue? Numerous witnesses saw Qing Qiumu use a talisman to directly kill a disciple and elders of the sect!

She had no ground for arguments, but she did stall.

However, the investigation only condemned Qing Qiumu further, and she was sentenced to be executed.

Long Chen could only watch as all this unfolded, helpless to do anything. Even the spirit in the ring was helpless, not having recovered enough strength to provide any form of support against top-tier experts. There was no rescue that could be made, no arguments that could be levied.

Lin Ziyang's horrific fate had already happened, and Qing Qiumu's soon-to-be death was set in stone. A wave of hopelessness and hatred surged endlessly in his heart, but he was still too weak to take any action.

After three days, during that needless investigation, Na Xinyi and Lian Yu had gathered alongside the new additions of Xiao Bing and Hong Ru. They could only watch as the sentence was given, not just to Qing Qiumu, but to Long Tingyu and her Ancestor.

Those two would be punished with imprisonment for attempting to cover-up murder and the abuse of authority in doing so. While Long Tingyu would suffer a brief stint imprisoned within the Hell Layer of War for three decades, her Ancestor would suffer imprisonment for three hundred years!

This was how strict the system was!

"And that's what happened," Su Mei concluded her explanation of events to Wei Wuyin.

Wei Wuyin looked at Su Mei for a moment. Then, abruptly, he lightly chuckled. It started off slow and weak, then became a full-blown laugh with strength. It reached a point that he couldn't help but hold his stomach as his boisterous laughter resounded throughout his Alchemic Lab.

This lasted for several dozen seconds before it ended with a deep sigh and a slight shake of his head.

'So this is what happens when one's karmic luck just runs out. I wonder how many misfortunes I encountered in my alternate future, forcing me to make a Heart of Scarlet Qi, before Long Chen beheaded me.' He couldn't help but think this as he recalled the outrageous scene of him using a Heart of Scarlet Qi against Long Chen and even protected his sworn enemy, Jiu Lang.

Guess the saying rings true: When it rains, it pours.

While he had a budding friendship with Qing Qiumu, her actions were quite exceptional this time, and their relationship was never capable of reaching a sufficient point due to Long Chen's influence. All in all, he had no reason to interfere. It was an unfortunate situation, but it simply wasn't enough to throw his hat into the ring. And, considering this was an ongoing situation, she was likely already executed by now.

Su Mei calmly watched, but even she had a faint smile on her face. She didn't hate Long Chen, but she didn't like him or any of his women either. In fact, she only brought this matter to Wei Wuyin because of...

Oh wait.

She forgot.

"Lord Wei, the reason I brought this to your attention is...directly before Qing Qiumu was executed," Su Mei paused.

"Hm?" Wei Wuyin's left brow rose slightly.

"Before she was executed, Na Xinyi shouted that she was...your wife." Su Mei plainly stated, her eyes indifferent yet a hint of annoyance could be seen in the depths of those pure black pupils.

"..." Su Mei.

"...?" Wei Wuyin.

"And Qing Qiumu was too." Su Mei.

"...What?"

Chapter 183 - 181: Reputation

Wei Wuyin stared at Su Mei with a wisp of disbelief, but those eyes of hers seemed to lack the turbidity of a lie or joke. Only then did he realize her words were the honest truth. His left, right, and even the eyelids of his invisible Mind's Eye twitched.

"...Why?" He asked this question, but inside, he groaned as he already knew the answer. He had nearly forgotten who he was for a moment. With his current status, his reputation and influence was at an all-time high. Wife? There was a time where he did offer to accept Na Xinyi as his wife, but...

Su Mei seemed to realize that Wei Wuyin was processing this matter a little slowly and she explained, "According to my sources, when she made that declaration, the guillotine that was about to slice into Qing Qiumu's neck was shattered by the Captain-class Knight of Enforcement on site, Bei Ming, and they halted their actions immediately as they investigated the validity of her statement."

Deeply sighing, Wei Wuyin reluctantly conveyed that he understood with a wisp of helplessness in his expression. Qing Qiumu's death was all but guaranteed, and he was right; she should've been executed by the time he heard this news. However, her words provoked an insane and sporadic pause because of who he was.

Alchemic King.

Younger than fifty.

Heavenly King.

The 'widely assumed' Prince of Everlore.

He had the full backing of the sect, the Grand Imperial Sage, and a boundless future on the horizon. While abuse of authority and unsanctioned murder against fellow disciples was accompanied by ruthless punishment, the sect wasn't beyond being corrupt or turning the other way for the sake of its benefits. Furthermore, there were numerous rules that allowed him to make any suffer consequences for offending him, perhaps even pushing them to their deaths.

Kill his wife?

It'd be lucky if they didn't kneel before her in an attempt to get into his good graces. In fact, they might directly give her apologies and beg for forgiveness. How crazy was this?! But, it was the inherent truth of reputation, status, influence, power, and wealth.

For a moment, an impulse to simply make a statement that he had no wives or fiancées at the moment was pounding his heart. However, in the end, he wasn't one to go against his word when he said it. That was a slippery slope that would start to attack his personal principles and morals as a person, principles and morals taught to him by his older brother and parents.

Disregard them? Impossible.

If he could meet them in the afterlife one day, he wouldn't be able to stand before them, and that wasn't something he was willing to experience.

Su Mei slightly pouted her lips. *'When he originally offered, she hesitated, but to save the skin of others, and after he reached such extraordinary heights, she goes and does this?'* She felt nothing but disdain and contempt for Na Xinyi's actions in her heart. It stank of desperation and seeking advantages at a timely manner. If she was Wei Wuyin, she would've ignored such an opportunistic and indecisive woman.

Wei Wuyin spent a few minutes thinking about this entire situation with leveled breaths. In the end, he couldn't brush this aside no matter how much he wanted to, but he was quite wary of having beauties that were designated by the Heavenly Daos. They seemed to be magnets for misfortune and leeches of

Karmic Luck. After all, overcoming a calamity required a sufficient amount of luck to achieve, and benefiting similarly required value.

Lin Ziyang's entire timeline thus far had been one rife with misfortune and calamity. It was quite impressive really. She must be something special to be given such treatment.

He didn't know the exact details of what Ji Yin did, but perhaps she was crippled? Perhaps she was raped? Even Su Mei didn't know the exact details, because the reporting parties considered her inconsequential and mostly irrelevant.

"He really obtained two new girls? Who are they?" Wei Wuyin asked casually as he got undressed, removing his robe designed for casualwear and directly putting on his black Heavenly King attire. Immediately, his aura underwent a massive change as a sense of imposing authority and wealth radiated from his entire body.

This outfit was a third-grade Astral Armament, and even experts at Third Stage of the Astral Core Realm would have difficulties damaging it.

Su Mei nodded, seemingly unaffected by Wei Wuyin undressing in front of her. "Xiao Bing, an Earthly Elite disciple from the Elemental Origin Mountain, and an ice cultivator. Hong Ru, similarly of the Elemental Origin Mountain and an Earthly Elite Disciple, and fire cultivator. They both have Earthly General-level backings and belong to large clans. According to the reports, they both pressured the Ji Clan to ensure no Astral Core Realm expert acted against Long Chen. This was the reason why he was spared from joining a faction or killed outside the sect."

"Ah," Wei Wuyin walked out of the Alchemic Lab and proceeded to exit his sky palace, with Su Mei directly behind him. "Guess it makes sense. If he joined a faction, while he might be protected, with the Power of Absolute Authority taken into consideration, there might be faction leaders willing to act in their own interests and give him up to the Ji Clan or other clans he offended." Calmly commenting, Wei Wuyin whistled.

Fweet!

Those a part of a Faction had to obey their Faction Leaders to the utmost, and they were intentionally the true definition of subordinates.

"Oh, how's Zuhei? Did he complete his assignment?" Wei Wuyin stretched his arms a little, feeling a little stiff. Those two girls were quite intense and exhausted him quite thoroughly. A slight grin tugged at his lips as he recalled last night's event.

"Zuhei succeeded two months ago. He's currently recuperating and preparing to leave for the Bloodforge Continent, as you've asked."

"Mhm." Wei Wuyin did a little more stretching as he realized that with the awakening of his Draconic Void Natal Soul, he could finally tackle the Astral Tribulation and assail into the realm. After obtaining Astral Force, wouldn't an entirely new realm of power and ability be at his fingertips? Particularly, Alchemic-type Astral Force which vastly improved concoction level, quality, and refinement speed. It was this power that allowed non-Alchemic Natal Soul wielders to become King and Emperor Alchemists.

'*Would I become a Mortal Sovereign Alchemist after?*' He jokingly laughed in his heart as he thought this. Mortal Sovereign Alchemist? That was a level that only the King of Everlore reached in the last several thousand years, and he had an Alchemi...c...Astr...al...Soul...

His eyes slightly widened with a light of realization!

If he could overcome the Astral Tribulation with his Alchemic Eden Natal Soul, then it would allow him to have the qualifications to reach the peak of the Mortal-Rank for Alchemists! Perhaps he would truly become the next King of Everlore then.

Woosh!

As his storm of thoughts raged, a large shadow shot into the sky. A bellowing neigh accompanied this sound as the shadow descended before Wei Wuyin. A surge and uplift of wind caused their robes to flutter wildly.

Wei Wuyin smilingly regarded the black shadow, which was a winged pegasus. This was the young pegasus that Wei Wuyin had received when he arrived, but it was no longer pure white, and had black stripes streaking across its body like lightning bolts. Beneath its feet, faint crackling sounds emitted that tingled the senses.

It was no longer sixty-meters, and had grown another twenty meters. Furthermore, its eyes flickered with black-colored lightning and its every breath caused various strands of electricity to flow outwards and cling to the air before dissipating.

The pegasus was no longer a Sky Pegasus. With a few seventh-grade, top-tier Thunder Blood Pills, Wei Wuyin followed Bo Kay's advice and awakened its latent bloodline. Not only did its size rapidly grow, but it could now harness the forces of lightning and thunder. Its raw flight speed could be said to reach levels that even some middle-phase experts would find difficult to catch up to. As for its combat abilities? He didn't think any Astral Core Realm expert at the second stage or lower would be its match.

Su Mei stepped forward, "Xiao Bai!" When she spoke, the Sky Thunder Pegasus joyfully nickered, lowering its large head as it allowed Su Mei to caress it.

Wei Wuyin shook his head. This name was coined by Bai Lin, and its meaning was very clear. While she was the boss, he would always be below her in the pecking order. However, her mischievous nature aside, the name stuck and Xiao Bai similarly had no objections.

Su Mei has been using this pegasus actively for the last three years and have thoroughly tamed it. It reeked of loyalty and honest affection. In truth, it was probably all the alchemical paste, elixirs, and pills he fed it with Su Mei as a proxy.

With a jump, they both leapt on the broad back of Xiao Bai. Su Mei took the leading seat, clearly acting as Wei Wuyin's chauffeur for this pegasus express.

Boom!

Woosh!

A thunderous boom followed by the slicing of the wind resounded as Xiao Bai took off, looking like a black lightning bolt as it circled a bit to gain speed. Just as it was about to descend, a hundred meter sized pegasus pierced through the Sky Layer below. A figure riding this pegasus exclaimed in intense shock. After a sweep of its spiritual sense, it hurriedly called out: "Heavenly King Wei!"

Su Mei swiftly gave the order to Xiao Bai to halt, and Wei Wuyin got a look at the new arrival. His eyes lit up as he realized that, regardless if he went down or not, someone would arrive to inform him of this matter to validate it.

And it was someone he was familiar with.

When he first arrived as a Sky Noble, this man had arrived.

Zhao Yan, Vice-Commander of the Knights of Enforcement.

He was a tall, brawny, dark-skinned, middle-aged human male with an unshaven face and usually sported a stoic expression. However, now his eyes were fixated on Xiao Bai. "You awakened its Sky Thunder Bloodline?!" His voice trembled slightly as he spoke. In fact, the pegasus below him that was larger yet pure white with faint traces of jade light at its wings revealed a clear and dense amount of envy and jealousy.

It was a fully-matured pegasus, yet this barely aged, barely off its mother's tit little colt awakened its bloodline! It had an urge to stomp its prideful little head.

...Wait.

Was it smiling at it? Was it smiling with pride and arrogance?! It just neighed with disdain, how brazen!

While Xiao Bai truly did those things, before the adult pegasus could teach the young colt a lesson, Zhao Yan sent a spiritual message that caused its stomach to turn. It was simply: "You're not its match."

It could only accept this, and blow vast amounts of wind through its nose. A Sky Thunder Pegasus versus normal Sky Pegasus was a predetermined outcome regardless of the age difference.

"I was lucky to concoct a few Thunder Blood Pills," Wei Wuyin casually remarked. But this casual remark shook Zhao Yan's heart to the utmost limits and it nearly stopped! Lucky? Lucky?! That was a seventh-grade, peak-tier pill!

He had to take several breaths to stabilize his emotions, but he similarly felt pleasant in making relations early on with this monstrous genius. Others deemed him a fool for lowering his status to establish relations with a non-official Alchemic King. After all, Wei Wuyin was merely a fledgling in terms of age and experience. A potential to concoct seventh-grade products didn't mean he would become an Alchemic King in the next three or four hundred years!

It was a reckless investment they said!

Yet, here he was. From the beginning, he formed relations with this young man and was already thoroughly rewarded. Especially regarding the Zuhei Recruiting incident. The amount of sixth and seventh-grade products he received was mouthwatering, and he had no sadness for trading a crippled prisoner for this.

Even today, his cultivation base has advanced more in three years than it would've in thirty.

Wei Wuyin could see Zhao Yan was losing himself in his thoughts as he asked, "Vice-Commander Zhao, what brings you here?"

Zhao Yan snapped back to reality and his expression became solemn and dignified. After all, this matter was rather sensitive, and the Wei Wuyin today was no longer the Wei Wuyin before. Even he had to step on his tip-toes to avoid offending him.

After all, he was merely an Astral Core Realm expert at the Fourth Stage, the Spatial Resonance Phase. With Wei Wuyin's potential, influence, and wealth, it wouldn't be hard to have him lose his position.

"Heavenly King Wei, it's like this..." He proceeded to once more retell the events, but this time, something even Su Mei wasn't clear on, Zhao Yan was thorough. For example, Lin Ziyang's fate wasn't one where she was physically violated, but her primal yin essence were completely extracted, her cultivation was crippled, and she experienced a severe shock to her sea of consciousness.

All in all, she was crippled in cultivation, body, and mind. Without her primal yin essence, she couldn't generate anymore yin energies and she'll slowly decay as a woman. In fact, she couldn't have kids any longer, and her ability to formulate new memories, thoughts, and control her body would be severely affected.

Wei Wuyin clicked his tongue lightly. Quite brutal. However, Su Mei was straight-faced and entirely apathetic despite being a woman.

Seeing the lack of raging emotions when Zhao Yan spoke of events caused his heart to relax. The incident of the Grand Axis Faction was still fresh in his mind. In the span of a few hours, various clans, forces, and a Sky Noble was uprooted and obliterated.

"I'm here to ask the validity of the young woman's, Na Xinyi, claims that she is your wife, and so is Qing Qiumu, the one to be executed." At this point, he was thoroughly relaxed.

"She's not my wife," Wei Wuyin answered. Zhao Yan's heart truly lost all its tension at this moment. A wave of euphoric relief surged through his body. Unfortunately, that wave ceased with the utterance of a single word.

"Yet."

Chapter 184 - 182: Gathered Once More

"..." Zhao Yan's eyes shrank slightly. "Y-yet?"

Wei Wuyin shook his head slightly. *'You're the Vice-Commander of the Knight of Enforcement, the authority that handled punishment and order within the sect. How did you become so skittish?'*

While Wei Wuyin knew that the Grand Axis Faction Incident had instilled fear in others, scaring the monkeys quite thoroughly, he hadn't realized that his three years of concoction and networking had spread amongst the elite circles. He was like a factory for sixth and seventh-grade products as he bribed his way through everywhere.

In fact, he found out that one of his direct subordinates was a spy for Wei Wuyin today, giving detailed information to Su Mei. Furthermore, while this went against the code of conduct, they couldn't be punished?

This person literally cursed him and said, word for word: "You want to fire me? You'll have to ask Heavenly King Wei's permission first." Then, he casually handed him the transmission crystal. He could only stand there and have his eyelids twitch ceaselessly.

After all, wasn't he on his payroll too? Furthermore, he went to him! But seeing the level of corruption was quite impressive nonetheless. He had a sneaky suspicion that even the other four Vice-Commanders were similarly bribed. After all, the Captain-class Knight handling this matter wasn't even his subordinate, yet according to various reports, a mere mention of Wei Wuyin's name had triggered her.

Was she already on his side?!

This was fear; this was influence; this was power.

In a mere three years, the sect was already tainted by his aura. How many products did he use to establish such a sphere of influence and so swiftly at that? No way mere reputation could cause that.

Wei Wuyin had truly taken wide-spread action in the sect. Unlike in the Scarlet Solaris Sect, he had something others didn't have: Wealth. He could concoct several high-quality seventh-grade alchemical products in minutes, when others took decades. As for sixth-grade alchemical products? He had too many to count, and mostly experimented with them and sold them off, having Su Mei establish a network to collect rare artifacts and information.

After all, information was key.

Luckily, while sixth-grade products were typically suited for upper-phase Qi Condensation experts, there were quite a few products that could help lower-phase Astral Core Realm cultivators in their cultivation. The majority of cultivators were at the Qi Condensation Realm anyhow.

Zhao Yan audibly gulped. "What do you mean...yet?"

Wei Wuyin smilingly replied, "I once gave my word on this matter. How about we go and see the situation before we jump to conclusions?"

Su Mei no longer paid Zhao Yan any attention. With a powerful snort, Xiao Bai turned into a black lightning bolt and pierced through the Sky Layer.

Zhao Yan rubbed his forehead, trying to smooth out his mental worries. He could only hope matters weren't too simple. If Wei Wuyin decides to make another showing off power, even he might be implicated. He could only sigh as he gave orders for the pegasus to follow.

As they pierced through the Sky Layer, Zhao Yan's eyes bulged as he sensed Xiao Bai had already reached half-way. His speed was exceptionally fast! The pegasus he rode couldn't even keep up. In fact, it might be dozens of times faster. The pegasus neighed in defiance, jade light swirled around its beautiful wings as it stomped on the air and sped up. It trudged downwards with all its might, yet in a few moments, it lost sight of Xiao Bai.

When they entered the seventh-level, Xiao Bai was nowhere to be seen. They couldn't even see the black streak through the Sky Layer that acted as the foundation for the seventh-level! It shot downwards faster, pushing its limits.

Breaking through the Sky Layer and re-entering the sights of the Extreme Mountains, they finally saw Xiao Bai. He was standing upon the air while its eyes regarded the beast and man with the utmost degree of derision. It said to the pegasus in a sound only they understood: "We got here at least an hour ago, how slow! Did you take a piss break along the way?"

Not only did the pegasus's eyelids twitch, but Zhao Yan, who didn't understand what it said, couldn't help but feel insulted.

"Mad? You want to fight?" Xiao Bai snorted.

Wei Wuyin shook his head. This attitude deeply reminded him of Bai Lin, causing him to lift his head towards the sky and miss that beautifully arrogant creature. She was still only three years into her nine years nirvanic resurrection. When she returned, he planned to travel more.

"Let's go," Wei Wuyin said. He had waited for Zhao Yan because it would be easier to settle the situation with him there. Otherwise, he would've gone ahead. On his word, Xiao Bai calmly flew towards the Extreme War Mountain with Zhao Yan flying alongside him. They no longer sped like madmen. The only reason they did that was because being inside the Sky Layer was an uncomfortable experience.

Extreme War Mountain, Platform of Criminal Execution.

The Platform of Criminal Execution was located on the first level of the Extreme War Mountain, and was a vast square that could house hundreds of thousands of people. At the center of this square was a clear-view tower that reached ninety-nine feet high, and had a guillotine that was often used in mortal executions there. The hole tainted with dry multicolored blood that housed the necks of those awaiting to be sent off was adjustable. After all, demons were sometimes larger, taller, and thicker than average humans or elves.

There were numerous individuals present, both on the wide floor of the tower and in the spectator square. Those below who were watching the event weren't originally numerous, but it quickly reached over capacity with nearly a million watchers.

On the tower, there were dozens of figures, and shockingly, not all of them belonged to the Knights of Enforcement, but several disciples, elders, and even a Prime Imperial Sage. This Prime Imperial Sage was a veiled woman with a thin and tall physique, and she was Qing Qiumu's ancestor, Qing Lingjiu.

Bei Ming, the Captain-class Knight of Enforcement and current overseer of this incident, was quietly waiting beside a shackled and imprisoned Qing Qiumu. She was a tall, icy-cold human beauty with tied-up black hair, chilly black eyes, and a beauty mole at the side of her upper lip.

Directly below the execution platform, Long Tingyu and her Heavenly Commander Ancestor, Jar Vin, were tied, their cultivations sealed, and were surrounded by Knights of Enforcement. He was a demonic dwarf with black skin, violet pupils, and violet hair. The most notable feature was a gloriously wavy

beard that flowed without wind. He looked nothing like the young teenaged beauty that was Long Tingyu.

Her black hair had violet highlights and her dark eyes would flicker with violet flashes from time to time, but her flawlessly pale skin was still exceptionally beautiful and quite jade-like, almost resembling a porcelain doll. Furthermore, her chest was showing an exceptional rate of growth, already being more than an average handful.

Given a few more years, she would definitely become a world-shaking vixen-like beauty that could only bring calamity to the hearts and groins of men.

A few ways off was a familiar figure that Wei Wuyin would immediately recognize. Her eyes revealed undisguised worry as she focused her gaze on Long Tingyu.

Despite nearly four years having passed, she still remained exceptional. With those full lips that were painted with red, akin to freshly cut roses, and a voluptuous and curvy figure that seemed to be moulded to perfection. Her eyes, lips, thin eyebrows, slightly sharp nose, and jet-black hair that flowed downwards like a cascading water was still as perfect as that day.

It was Xiang Ling!

It was her who brought all of them to the Myriad Monarch Sect, and shockingly, she did it for these two who were currently about to be imprisoned or executed. Next to her were several women and a lone male.

This male was Long Chen, his eyes seemed calm, but a light within exuded boundless murder and a desire to kill. Next to him was Na Xinyi, Lian Yu, Wu Baozhai, Hong Ru, and Xiao Bing. The others were as beautiful as always, and Hong Ru with her fiery red hair and scarlet eyes that faintly revealed the light of flickering embers and Xiao Bing whose white hair released faint chilly air, were definitely no less beautiful. Moreover, they were both...well...well endowed.

At the moment, several Knights of Enforcement locked them down with their spiritual auras, awaiting word from Bei Ming.

Hong Ru, with her burning eyes, looked towards Na Xinyi and hesitantly asked, "Are you sure you're...his wife?" Her eyes drifted to Long Chen in suspicion. There's no way Heavenly King Wei, the Prince of Everlore's wife, would be so close and familiar with another man and suffer such mistreatment, right?

Why was she a Null Disciple? While she can't exceed the Nascent Dust rank due to strict rules, shouldn't she at least be at that rank and enjoying immense wealth, status, and environmental benefits? With the backing of a King Alchemist, reaching the Astral Core Realm and joining the five million elites shouldn't be too difficult.

Xiao Bing coldly said, "How could she be? This is a ploy to stall for time. Long Chen, will you use that?" As she spoke, her eyes sneakily took a glance at Long Chen's ring. Her icy disposition was on full display as she directly rejected the idea. After all, Long Chen and Na Xinyi were closer than most and it was utterly impossible for her to be another man's wife with those actions.

Unless...

As she thought of this possibility, Hong Ru said with disbelief: "Are you having an affair?!" Her words were somewhat subdued but there were quite a few with keen hearing, especially beastmen.

A hush clamor occurred with exclamations and gasps. While a few felt this was outlandish claims, a few others couldn't help but love a scandal.

Na Xinyi's eyes nearly burst out of her sockets! *'This idiotic woman! Why are you speaking so loud? Are you trying to make sure everyone hears you?!'* Hong Ru was renowned for her no-filter mouth and loose lips, but this was outrageous. Was she truly an idiot? Did all her brains go to her chest?!

She was already feeling very anxious about this entire thing, and those words only exacerbated her anxiety. But this was the only solution that had come to mind at the critical moment to save Qing Qiumu from death. Wei Wuyin had experienced a monstrous rise within the sect, his name known to most, unknown to very few, and was easily a household name. In most casual conversations, he would be brought up.

Even she was shocked by his current status and reputation! While they weren't even fully disciples, he had caused countless waves and shown the world his exceptional talent. In comparison...her eyes moved to this man who once swore revenge for her, who once fought against and then forever with, and the words of Long Tingyu, Wu Baozhai, and Lin Ziyan echoed endlessly.

"Big Brother will definitely surpass that silver-eyed idiot!"

"He's the man I chose, and I know that he'll reach heights that goes beyond the sky, into the starry skies, and even further beyond."

"Na Xinyi, he has boundless potential and a hardy life. You made the right choice. You won't regret it."

Her hesitation before...

Long Chen's lips twitched a little before he said, "Quiet." He directly ignored all their words and thoughts as he communicated with the ring. Unfortunately, it was currently in a weakened state. He hadn't been able to find nourishing materials for it. However, at this critical juncture, only it could carve out a path of hope.

He had already failed Lin Ziyan, could he simply watch as Long Tingyu was imprisoned and Qing Qiumu was executed?! He absolutely couldn't! However, all his actions to communicate with the ring's spirit was met with no response.

He balled his fist and gritted his teeth. *'Why am I so weak? If I had enough strength, I could sweep aside all this with a single word.'*

Unfortunately, he swiftly learned a very cruel fact about cultivation: It was difficult. In the five years since he'd ascended into the Eighth Stage of the Qi Condensation Realm, he had met numerous fortuitous encounters and benefited greatly from rare resources, but his Qi Essence count was merely eighty-three with both Natal Souls!

He desired to embark on the peak path with two Natal Souls, reaching the Zenith Mortal State in both! This was the only path to a true martial elite, and if he settled at the beginning, his future would

definitely be gated! He knew this because only those who reached the Zenith Mortal State could reach the realm beyond the Astral Core Realm!

This was what the spirit living in his ring told him, and he believed it thoroughly. He couldn't settle! He wouldn't settle!!

Boom!

A thunderous explosive boom erupted in the sky, causing numerous heads to simultaneously lift their heads to see two winged shadows descend.

Pegasus!

He was here!!

Chapter 185 - 183: Power

In the sky above, the chaotic and explosive cackling of thunder and lightning overtook senses of those below. In a grand entrance, Xiao Bai inhaled before letting loose a powerful snort that shook the world before descending, smashing his hooves aggressively in the air as if it was flat ground. He floated directly above the execution tower.

"Is that a Sky Thunder Pegasus?!" An avid connoisseur of beasts spoke fervently. He was a middle-aged man with a gruff voice and beady eyes, but his words were particularly noticeable! With a feverish cadence, he continued: "Only three of them exist in the entire sect! Who does this belong to?!"

Sky Pegasus were a rare breed of creatures that were winged horses. However, their individual bloodline was quite diverse and varied. It was rumored that they were the descendents of the progenitor of feathered creatures that had mated with a mortal horse, thereby giving birth to pegasi. However, due to the mortal horse's poor bloodline and physique, all of its multifaceted bloodline abilities were sealed. These abilities randomly split apart as the pegasi continued to breed.

It was this reason that Pegasus who've awakened their bloodline are varied, with some harnessing lightning, fire, ice, or an entirely different bloodline characteristic.

Sky Thunder Pegasus were a star-grade pegasus who've awakened their latent bloodline power, capable of harnessing the chaos of black lightning and forceful power of thunder! This was their innate bloodline potential. Unfortunately, unless they were given the appropriate trigger that could awaken their respective sealed bloodlines, most pegasi are never capable of exceeding their limitations of being a slightly better winged horse.

Bo Kay had stated once that there was a chance for Alchemic Kings to awaken their Pegasus's Bloodline Power, and almost a certainty for Emperor Alchemists. With sufficient talent, deducing and concocting the appropriate product merely required some effort before success. Yet, it was still quite difficult to achieve to the point less than a hundred pegasus have awakened their bloodline potential.

Xiao Bai's bloodline power was that of lightning and thunder, and the black-colored characteristic was evidence of being influenced by darkness-based forces. It was now one of four in the sect, but most definitely the youngest, being a mere colt that was barely four years old. Unlike the others, it still had time to develop its strength.

"Look!" Numerous eyes swiveled as they saw a tall, upright figure standing on Xiao Bai's back, dressed in the signature black alchemist robes of the Extreme Creation Mountain. While he seemed very small in comparison to the glorious size of Xiao Bai, his presence was dominating to the point that no one could miss it. It was like his body emitted vigorous physical energies that dominated space.

Wei Wuyin swept his silver eyes over the crowd of nearly a million people. There were countless disciples from Extreme War, Origin, and Creation Mountain spectating. *'To think an event like this would instigate numbers of this amount to gather. Quite intriguing. Regardless if you're mortal or a cultivator, executions simply are an attractive experience. As long as it's not you, right?'* Sneering in his heart, Wei Wuyin knew this was the basic nature of humanoid creatures.

He didn't dally. After all, he had a show to give. Lightly kicking off Xiao Bai, he swiftly descended on the tower's platform. When his feet landed on the platform, there wasn't a single sound that was made. It was as if he was as light as a feather, yet it was like a rock crushing into the earth to those who observed him. This jarring contrast caused many hearts to stall briefly, even assuming the execution tower would collapse.

Bei Ming's eyes focused heavily on this tall, handsome figure, and the other Knights of Enforcement that stood guard were similarly paying the utmost attention to the new arrival. Subconsciously, their cheeks tightened, both below and above as they took subdued breaths. It was one thing to hear about the man, an entirely different thing meeting him.

And his sheer presence truly eclipsed his reputation!

Bei Ming's heart raced without her consent, and an unfathomable amount of pressure seemed to overtake her thoughts. Despite Wei Wuyin's current cultivation being insignificant in comparison to hers, she couldn't help but feel a wisp of awe in her heart. This was the youngest Alchemic King, albeit unofficially, in the entire starfield.

Furthermore, his rate of refinement and concoction quality trumped every single Alchemic King present. Others of the lower levels might be unaware, merely basing their knowledge and thoughts off rumors, but she knew. She knew of his capabilities.

In three years, he has thoroughly spread his hands throughout the five extreme mountains and various upper-echelon members. For example, her. While it was painful to admit it, and while she had never met the man herself, she was already in his debt and under his banner. This debt could not be repaid either, and her decision was not a light one.

Now, standing before her, was the man who helped her in ways no one else could. A continuous wave of emotion surged in her heart.

Step. Step. Step.

Wei Wuyin calmly stepped towards the shackled and sealed Qing Qiumu. His gaze was the epitome of calm as he didn't even sweep his eyes towards Bei Ming or her subordinates. This only tightened their stressed heart. Was this woman truly his wife? If so...

"..." Qing Qiumu.

She was shackled, her emerald-colored hair ruffled and free, and those originally glistening eyes were slightly dimmed from the spiritual and physical suppression from the shackles that bound her. They flashed with various lights and were etched with various esoteric marks.

Lifting her head slightly, those eyes of hers observed Wei Wuyin's approach. "It's actually him." Her thoughts were a mess. The entire situation was a mess, and she was scared. Before, after she was captured and sentenced, she was similarly terrified. However, she had three days of stalled time to quell her hope and accept the possible consequences of her action. She acted to avenge Lin Ziyang, and this was a good reason to die, for a friend, right?

She had thought she accepted death with no regrets. It was even to the point where when she was brought to be observed and executed atop this tower in front of nearly a million people, her eyes were suffused with pride, dignity, and a complete lack of regret. But when...

Her head was forcefully placed on the guillotine and she saw the crowd of hundreds of thousands watching, including all her friends. A tinge of sadness flashed in her heart at that moment. Even still, she didn't reveal an ounce of fear on her face, ensuring that her friends who were watching would know she died as she lived—fearless.

"Ready!" This sound caused her neck to tense and her heart to become gripped with a strange emotion. Her life flashed swiftly before her eyes and she realized something no one facing death wanted to: she still had so much to live for. She tried to maintain her strong will, show the world that she still had no regrets; she didn't want to cry.

"Release!!" The fall of the guillotine's blade sound was like the release of the floodgates of her emotions, the straw that broke the camel's back, and her tears welled within her shut eyes and she wanted to shout, scream, yell until her lungs collapsed: "I don't want to die!"

Shockingly, her tears fell, but not her head. The one shouting for her death had shattered the blade and her life was unexpectedly spared.

She didn't know why she was spared, her thoughts and senses were overwhelmed with emotions, but everyone seemed to be quietly awaiting something...someone. To think it was Wei Wuyin.

"Heavenly King Wei..." Bei Ming hesitantly spoke, completely unbecoming of her station.

Wei Wuyin gently gestured with his right hand, and Bei Ming acted almost instinctively to it, activating the various formations and arrays that restricted Qing Qiumu, suppressing her energies and qi with ruthless dominance. They lit up and in the next moment...

Clank!

They were unlocked and fell from her limbs.

The crowd gasped. Without a single word, she was freed against protocol and not a single knight dared to speak out. This was telling and gripped countless hearts! Beneath the field, Long Chen balled his fist as a myriad of thoughts echoed within his mind.

Wei Wuyin soon stood a few feet away from Qing Qiumu, who was on her knees, and sat down. He folded his legs, reaching her level, leaned in and warmly smiled.

"It's quite something that I cause shackles to fall from you twice in a lifetime, huh? If you keep at it, people might think you have a kink." Wei Wuyin lightly chuckled, rubbing his nose.

"Ah!" Qing Qiumu was startled as the shackles left her, and Wei Wuyin sat before her, and even made a joke. It was quite true that Wei Wuyin was the cause of her release twice in this lifetime, saving her from not just being ruthlessly extracted and abused, but executed.

Her emerald eyes roamed his unearthly handsome features, his kind smile, and bright silver eyes. He was still the same man as before, the man she first met and shared a several hours long conversation with on that day.

She took a deep breath and lightly laughed, nearly forgetting where she was for a moment, or the dried tears that still stained her face.

"You know, this is the first time I've seen you without your veil." Wei Wuyin pointed out. These words were the only thing that were being said, as everyone else was silent to the point a dropped needle could be heard. Outside of breathing, everyone else just remained silent and observing. These two were the center focus right now!

Qing Qiumu's eyes widened as she rubbed her bruised wrists. She actually never showed Wei Wuyin her face before. Furthermore, she never felt his spiritual sense invade her veil, or even attempt to, and this caused her to immediately pause as she touched her face.

"Do you like it?"

While it was marred by the past sadness and stress, she was still an exceptional beauty. Her bright emerald-colored hair, limpid eyes, and pale skin that seemed as smooth as jade. Her peach-colored lips with a sharp cupid's bow and gentle lines, and soft fullness that made it seem as if it could squeeze water from it.

Her heart-shaped chin and thin neck that was accompanied by a slim body and an impressive set of breasts that could make any woman feel envy at their perky and uplifted form.

Wei Wuyin rubbed his chin as he nodded, but his eyes didn't contain a single trace of lust, just raw appreciation for beauty. While he had seen her facial features thanks to his powerful physical senses, it truly paled when observing without any obstruction. As an elf, she was most definitely at the top of her gender in terms of appearance.

Qing Qiumu felt relieved after realizing Wei Wuyin didn't reveal that gaze that most guys had when they saw her face. In fact, it was such a problem that she was forced to constantly wear a veil. When she didn't, the impending trouble nearly got her and Long Chen killed.

Long Chen...

Her eyes shifted to below the platform and saw that figure that was looking at them from afar.

Wei Wuyin didn't mind her wandering thoughts. "You know, to save you, Na Xinyi declared to everyone that you were my wife. Was this your plan all along?"

"..." Qing Qiumu stilled. What? She didn't know this. Her earlier thoughts were a mess, and she hadn't heard anything but the fall of the guillotine and the words leading up to it. Afterwards, all her senses were just a jumbled mess of memories and chaos.

"Oh? You didn't know?" Wei Wuyin briefly inspected the shackles and realized that they didn't suppress senses. But considering the event she experienced, he understood why she wasn't particularly concerned about other things at that particular moment. She was quite preoccupied.

"I..." Qing Qiumu didn't know what to say, but the seed of an idea formed. Did this mean she would have to marry Wei Wuyin? What...

"So, what do you say? Want to become my wife?" Wei Wuyin said while wearing a teasing smile.

"Yo..." Qing Qiumu couldn't speak a single syllable further. She...didn't know what to say, but her eyes were obviously revealing a light that considered the possibility.

Wei Wuyin rubbed his nose as he waved his hand, "I'm kidding. I won't accept it even if you say yes now. I don't want a wife who agrees because she thinks the only other alternative is death. I want to be their choice because I am a choice. How crazy would that be if I let her words be twisted into our truth? I think I and you are worth a little more than that, no?"

"..." A moment of silence was born as Qing Qiumu looked at Wei Wuyin with a piercing stare, as if she was trying to see his truest thoughts. She hadn't noticed that her fear of facing execution had already been abolished in the depths of her heart, and she felt serenity and safety, even enough to accept a joke and the teasing or think about other nonsensical matters like marriage.

Wei Wuyin didn't stray away from her gaze, and matched her without a hint of shyness. "I'll be honest, I wouldn't mind if you said yes. But I don't think that's what you or I really want or need right now." Since the day he met her, Wei Wuyin had never felt a desire or even an idea of conquering or wooing her. His mind had been as pure as a baby's first breath.

He felt a single feeling when he was with her: Comfort.

An unprecedented sense of comfort and warmth that he had only ever had with a few people in his life. Perhaps it was their natural personalities that clicked like two pieces in a puzzle or something else entirely, but he enjoyed this feeling. If Qing Qiumu was killed, he might not blink an eye due to the lack of development in their relationship, impeded by the consistent obstacle that was love-interest Long Chen, but he still wouldn't let her be killed now that he was on the scene.

Moreover, he would use this.

Qing Qiumu inhaled deeply and softly exhaled. Her eyes never left Wei Wuyin's eyes and she agreed somewhat in her heart with his words. At least right now, this wasn't the right moment or time to even consider that. She had never even considered marriage or union of any type, but she also didn't have any particular goal for the future. Since long ago, she merely followed Long Chen on his adventures, watching and observing his exceptional growth, and supporting how she could.

"So, what do you want?" Wei Wuyin asked.

"..." Qing Qiumu was silent for a moment before she smilingly said, "I want this entire thing to be over."

Wei Wuyin nodded without a moment of delay, "Alright. But, I think you might not like what I'm about to do and what I have to do."

"...what?" Qing Qiumu was startled. What was he going to do?

Wei Wuyin lifted himself up, and patted himself off slightly before he turned towards the crowd below. His eyes easily located Na Xinyi and the others amongst her group. He abruptly jumped off the platform, causing a few people to gasp, but before he even got a few yards off the platform, Xiao Bai flashed beneath him with an outstretched wing that he lightly stepped on, a strand of qi attaching himself completely.

With another step he arrived on its back and he arrived directly above Na Xinyi's group. Wei Wuyin jumped off, landing just as quietly as he did before. When he arrived, the crowd retreated, creating a large opening that left only Na Xinyi, Long Chen, Lian Yu, Wu Baozhai, and Xiang Ling. Even Hong Ru and Xiao Bing retreated just like the others.

Long Chen and Wei Wuyin's gazes met. A burning desire flared within Long Chen's pupils, but Wei Wuyin had a wisp of indifference.

Seeing this tense atmosphere developing, Na Xinyi stepped forward to quietly call out, "Wei Wuyin..."

Wei Wuyin shifted his gaze onto her. While he had given his word before, he didn't like the situation in which she decided to accept it.

「Spiritual Spell: Isolating Saber Barrier」

He lifted his finger as spiritual energies infused with Saber Intent started to ripple out endlessly, until it thoroughly encapsulated Wei Wuyin and the other five. Now, all physical senses would only perceive the sound of a keening saber and spiritual senses would be sliced apart without mercy. Unless a cultivator forced their way through, perceiving their conversation was impossible. And who would do that?

"I gave you my word that as long as you wanted, I'll accept you as my wife, and I won't go back on it now. But I'm quite disappointed in you. While others in the know might think what you're doing is a noble sacrifice, giving yourself for the life of your companions, I find it idiotic, pathetic, and unworthy of someone I'd call my wife." Wei Wuyin coldly uttered, causing Na Xinyi and Long Chen to freeze.

"I promised you on that day to give my everything to ensure your happiness and dreams while facing all trials of the heavens and earth together. This was me taking responsibility for something I didn't regret, but never coincided with my principles and morals. Yet you use it now? And for this?!" Wei Wuyin's tone became colder and colder, causing Long Chen to clench his fist in agitation and fury.

Long Chen couldn't hold back and said, "If you don't wan-"

"Shut the fuck up,. This matter doesn't concern you. Wait your turn," Wei Wuyin viciously interrupted.

"..."

Wei Wuyin ignored Long Chen raging huffs and killing intent, "You haven't broken my condition, so I won't decline, but I won't accept it either. At the very least, not now. I won't break my principles again, forming a substantial relationship with someone under duress, especially not with my first wife. If you

want to truly become my wife, then you can decide that on your own by coming to me, not me coming to you. However, unlike before, you now have a time-limit."

Wei Wuyin glanced at his right arm slightly, "You have thirty-six years. After that, regardless of what you want, I will never accept you. I don't care if you finally realize that you're a tool of another man, unable to realize any of your dreams, and unwilling to remain as one of the many beautiful yet utterly useless shadows of another who cares not if you suffer, become crippled, or die. And..." He paused, looking into Na Xinyi's grey eyes before saying with a glacial and dark tone: "if you ever use me to get yourself or anyone else out of trouble again when you're not my wife, I'll kill you myself."

"..." Na Xinyi didn't know what to say, but her heart chilled as Wei Wuyin's words resounded in her ears and heart. For some reason, she knew that he truly wouldn't hesitate to kill her. She bit her lower lip, unable to reconcile with this in her heart. Yet those words of his truly pierced into it without a hint of mercy..

A beautiful yet useless shadow...of another. For the last three years, she'd been following the story of Long Chen, and she was absolutely useless in it. She even pondered deeply on whether she should use her Yin Physique and dual cultivate, helping Long Chen reach a sufficient state to breakthrough, accelerating what a rise she knew would happen regardless. However, her reservations caused by Wei Wuyin's promise had always stopped her.

Furthermore, was that all she amounted to? A cultivation tool for someone else? Could she only do this? Be a useless woman that could only follow behind, spread her legs, and hope she's remembered? Long Chen was constantly flocked by women, and even if you didn't count the two new additions, there were already five women vying for his love and attention! And he was endlessly busy, constantly entering conflict and fighting fierce battles.

She didn't want to become a shadow. She wanted to be a figure at the peak, having commanding influence, power, and wealth with exceptional personal strength. The reverence and worship of endless individuals, the fear of her every word that left her lips or gesture of her hand!

As she thought more about it, her heart quaked furiously.

She wanted what Wei Wuyin currently had!

After a long period of silence, Wei Wuyin's expression lightened up as he finally faced Long Chen with a hint of a smile. "Now it's your turn. How about we make a deal?"

Chapter 186 - 184: A Deal!

"...Deal?" Long Chen was still fuming at Wei Wuyin's admonishing and threat towards Na Xinyi, suppressing his desire to unsheathe his sword and deal a lethal strike at Wei Wuyin when those words left his lips, causing him to become confused. He slightly sneered, "And why would I ever make a deal with you?"

Wei Wuyin didn't react to Long Chen's ill-attitude, instead he continued to smile with a joyous excitement within his eyes. "Don't worry, this is a deal you won't be able to say no to. Because if you don't accept it, then while Qing Qiumu will not die today, she'll still be crippled, and Lin Ziyang, the woman who you owe too much to, and was a sacrifice to your enmity, she'll never recover."

"What?!" Long Chen grew agitated hearing this. How could he not after hearing that Qing Qiumu will still be crippled and Lin Ziyan would be unable to recover.

"Lin Ziyan, oh Lin Ziyan." Wei Wuyin folded his arms and tilted his head slightly. "Did you know, I was 'this' close to marrying her all those years ago. To think she would end up like this, tch tch. Her life might've been better if she..." He shook his head with a wisp of pity in his eyes, but the implication was clear.

"Shut up! She would never marry you!" Long Chen's breathing became erratic as his Slaughter and Sword Intent flared within his eyes, unleashing a faint spiritual pressure.

Wei Wuyin remained entirely unbothered, his eyes similarly flickering with Saber Intent. He was completely unaffected by this level of spiritual suppression, and shrugged it off as he calmly stated: "She once came to the Scarlet Solaris Sect and said that anyone who could reach a certain level of the Haven Heart Qi Method would earn her hand in marriage. As you can clearly see..."

Wei Wuyin lifted a finger, causing Saber and Elemental Qi to flow upwards and become two wisps that intermingled and swirled around each other above his finger. It was quite a beautiful and elegant display of qi control.

Long Chen gritted his teeth.

"Oh? It seems you already knew about her promise. She must've given it out often. Then, you should know that I cultivated it fully when I was twenty-six. You would've been, what? Twenty-one at the time, right?" Wei Wuyin was somewhat shocked that Long Chen knew, but it didn't halt his verbal intentions. Thinking about it, was this one of the reasons he went to such lengths to 'rescue' her from marriage?

Long Chen froze. Twenty-six? He had cultivated the method after obtaining the spirit within the ring and given a safer alternative for the incomplete technique, but he cultivated it in his mid-twenties. Considering he was five years younger...

Wei Wuyin saw it all in his expression, and he clapped with amazement. "I wonder...with a Seer beside her, was she waiting for her fated one? I wonder if she was mistaken. Do you?"

"Seer?" It wasn't just Long Chen, but the other four women revealed confused and uncertain expressions. They didn't know Lin Ziyan had a Seer beside her, or that it was Ming Shufeng!

Wei Wuyin didn't know this either.

Interesting.

"Anyways, the deal. Are you interested?" Wei Wuyin deliberately and abruptly changed the topic. While he wanted to rile up Long Chen's emotions to influence the situation, he had obviously completed that. His current state was one filled with rage and pain, unwillingness and a desire to prove. People like this were quite easy to manipulate.

Long Chen wasn't an idiot either, and he knew the severity of the damage Lin Ziyan suffered. Not only was she crippled, but her primal yin essence was extracted, and her sea of consciousness was heavily damaged. This could be considered as thoroughly ruined as a cultivator, as a human, and as a female.

He clenched his teeth, balled his fist, and glared. "What can you do?"

Wei Wuyin's smile never left his face, "A lot of things. Firstly, I can completely brush aside this matter; Qing Qiumu, Long Tingyu, and Grand Elder Jar Vin will be acquitted of all charges. You can protect your woman, adopted sister, and her family. Secondly, I'll clarify to the world that Na Xinyi isn't my fiancée or wife, but she's an acquaintance who I owe a favor to. I'll tell them that I told her to say this if she found herself in danger, but no longer owe her after today.."

"How would the second help me?" While the first was what he wanted, the second felt like it didn't really benefit him, but absolved Wei Wuyin of his responsibility of taking care of Na Xinyi.

Wei Wuyin knew Long Chen would think this and replied without hesitation, "If I don't make a statement, then countless people will think that you're a little 'too' close to Na Xinyi, and they might try to...misguidedly help me and, well, kill you. And this might even include the vast majority of the sect. No, my mistake. The vast majority of the starfield."

His status was exceptional. Everyone would seek ways to better their relations with him, and if that meant killing a weak Qi Condensation cultivator to do so, there would be five million elites willing to take that offer.

"..." Everyone. However, they all understood the truth in these words and the implication. Even Long Chen didn't want raving people seeking to eliminate a love rival and obtain a place by Wei Wuyin's side going after his life.

"Good, you understand. Lastly, I'll have the sect provide Lin Ziyang with sufficient care and resources to recover. She'll be admitted on my order, so she'll definitely be given the best doctors, treatment, and resources. This way, she might have a chance to recover. Or, at least, her condition can be stabilized until you possess enough strength and ability to treat her or find a way to help her."

While Wei Wuyin could easily give her various seventh-grade and eighth-grade products that could, not only heal all her afflictions, but completely enhance her innate talent at the same time, he didn't feel like investing that much. However, his words caused Long Chen's eyes to sparkle intensely.

It seemed he knew that the sect had facilities that could help with her condition. In fact, it was likely that he had not only learned about it, but tried to get her admitted but failed due to various factors like lack of wealth, rank, status, and strength.

"So, what do you think? You're interested in saving the woman you love?"

"..." Long Chen truly couldn't find the heart to refuse, but he had a faint trace of unwillingness etched into his heart, an unwilling to concede anything to Wei Wuyin. If it was anyone else, perhaps he would accept, but Wei Wuyin was someone he wanted to not just kill, but eclipse.

"You may be a Heavenly King now, but in the future, my status, power, and influence will exceed yours by a thousand times!" This was his thought whenever Wei Wuyin's name would float around. After all, the Dao of Alchemy had its limitations, and only cultivation could ensure one a true path to the peak beneath the heavens!

If Wei Wuyin heard his thoughts, no, if any true expert that understood the world heard this, they would be laughing their asses off on the floor for three days and three nights, and those in their graves would revive and laugh as corpses.

Such juvenile thinking was truly a frog in a well, and this becomes more and more apparent in the Astral Core Realm! After all, the number one mantra of the cultivation world was: Cultivation is difficult. While that was three simple words, it embodied so much.

However, Wei Wuyin didn't care and he needed to hammer the final nail into the coffin.

"Tch, here I thought you were willing to do anything for the people you love. They can give up everything for you, but you aren't willing to do anything for them, even if its to save them. Guess you're not the man they think you are." Was all that needed to be said, especially in front of Lian Yu, Wu Baozhai, and Na Xinyi—especially Na Xinyi.

Long Chen was like a stick of dynamite that went off. He withdrew his sword, its tip flickered with a sword qi, and he seemed ready to fight to the death if Wei Wuyin said another word that attacked his character.

"What do you want?!" Long Chen demanded with a wintry tone.

There it is.

Wei Wuyin calmly and smilingly answered: "Just one thing. A little thing, really."

"What little thing?" A wisp of confusion flashed in Long Chen's eyes.

"Your ring."

Chapter 187 - 185: With Every Move, Word, & Action

The vast majority of people who observed this exchange between two males would be entirely unaware of the deliberate and precise steps that Wei Wuyin made to reach this exact point, except one person: Wu Baozhai.

She grew up in the Imperial Clan and was surrounded by renowned schemers that preyed upon others' emotions and trust, and they were exceptionally talented at it. Having been taught to notice and be mindfully aware of these tactics, she still didn't see the connecting actions until that last sentence. Her heart shivered intensely.

'He's not here for Qing Qiumu, Na Xinyi, or anyone else! He's after the ring!' Her thoughts quickly concluded. Since he arrived, he only talked to Qing Qiumu and had an audible and ambiguous conversation with her, where they laughed and smiled before everyone. All those with sharp perceptions could see her noticeably calm down and grow relaxed at his arrival.

While others could misconstrue this as accepting the truth of Na Xinyi's declaration, it was a show. A show for Long Chen. Then, he arrives only before them, and isolates all those who know Long Chen or have a relationship with him in a private barrier.

Every action, from his needlessly thunderous arrival, to his display of absolute control on scene, to his care and affection revealed was absolutely deliberate! But that was definitely not all, he riled Long Chen up, insulting him, implying that he's unable to satisfy the desire of his women and cared not if they suffered, crippled, or died.

And all of this was before the audience he has the most to prove himself to; the women of his life. These women were witnessing the stark contrast between the two, and this was exacerbated by him being insulted repeatedly without any ability to defend or act.

Wei Wuyin emasculated him. Wei Wuyin stated and emphasized his uselessness. Wei Wuyin displayed their difference with words, with actions, and with attitude.

There were even more nuances, hidden behind each coldly uttered word, each viciously thrown insult, and each action he took since arriving, so much that they would subliminally influence its target to a specific conclusion!

He gave him a choice: "Prove that you're capable, willing to do anything, or accept your worthlessness as everyone else sacrifices themselves, but not you."

After all, it was a small thing, a little thing really...it was just a ring.

An unassuming black ring.

Wu Baozhai's heart raced with fear and terror. He did all this so that Long Chen would willingly give up his ring as if he could refuse? It could clearly be seen that Long Chen believed he'd one day surpass Wei Wuyin, so he could simply reclaim it later, right?

She couldn't help but feel surreal and disbelieving. When she lifted her pretty eyes to meet Wei Wuyin's silver one's, he met her gaze. From within his silver irises, she could see a knowing smile, as if he knew that she would figure out his plans!

And it...held a trace of threat within.

She felt as if she was dipped into an icy ocean without any land in sight, and if she spoke a single word, she'd drown to her death.

She wanted to say something with all her heart and soul, but the survival instincts embedded into her DNA were ruthlessly suppressing her entire mind, freezing her up completely. She could only stand there and stare at this terrifyingly handsome schemer.

Wei Wuyin stealthily removed his gaze from Wu Baozhai. This girl was a little too smart for her own good. She was a good woman, though.

Long Chen was the one with the most intense reaction, because this ring was his everything. However, his eyes flashed with an unwillingness to give up, but various images of Lin Ziyang, Qing Qiumu, and Long Tingyu's smiles kept appearing within his thoughts, flooding his mind. Then, his failures and how they were in this mess because of his actions. A dense amount of guilt washed his heart, guilt that stained it thoroughly.

He twirled the ring on his finger, unable to make a decision, but this inability was already a sign of his inevitable choice. Wei Wuyin didn't need to press more, because if he did, it would only make it seem as if he was pushing Long Chen into a trap rather than Long Chen trying to extricate everyone else from the sandpit he formed.

These two different thoughts could completely cause him to turtle up, and if that happened, how could he safely obtain the ring? He didn't know what it was capable of, but Long Chen's confidence thus far

was very telling, especially as he was fearless even before him with his status, power, and authority. It was even to the point where he was willing to offend others of a higher rank in a place like the Myriad Monarch Sect! Even he found this baffling, especially how strict the rules were and how those of higher ranks could easily abuse him.

It was unlikely that he was drunk on the guardian angel that was the Heavenly Daos to the point of stupidity. He needed a tangible source of confidence to invoke such actions.

'There is something that is concerning though...' Wei Wuyin's Celestial Eyes could see the faint traces of a higher form of spiritual and mental energies emitting from the ring, energies he was unable to even observe or sense before. Whatever was in the ring, its cultivation base was beyond his current knowledge. Furthermore, the ring was constantly absorbing the surrounding mana in minute amounts.

The amount was so insignificant that likely only very high-level Astral Core Realm cultivators could notice it. He has never seen a ring or object that can store or absorb mana.

The thing that felt concerning was how it hadn't taken action to save Qing Qiumu's life. After all, it was certainly awake. Could it have some misgivings about revealing itself? This was definitely not a Long Chen choice, considering his selfishness and need to prove himself. In fact, it might be feigning being in slumber as he could see an active mental energy fluctuation that could only be created by active thoughts, and it was haphazardly changing too, which meant it was clearly aware and reacting to everything around them, including his words.

If it was truly in slumber, he wouldn't hesitate to kill Long Chen right now. Unfortunately, he felt that wasn't the case. He similarly had misgivings that it would throw away its own concerns and kill him to protect Long Chen. Until the ring was out of the equation entirely, he wouldn't touch Long Chen. After all, he didn't know what link they had.

What if their senses were connected?

He needed these favorably crafted circumstances that would give Long Chen a set of certain beliefs and thoughts to allow him to willingly give the ring up. In fact, he didn't just do all this to influence Long Chen, but to influence the existence in the ring. This was the key factor. If he knew Long Chen was checkmated into an impossible decline yet was confident in its ability to hide, it was highly likely it would agree to be in Wei Wuyin's possession. However, for that agreement, Wei Wuyin needed to ensure it was willingly decided by Long Chen and itself.

After all, how could Wei Wuyin pose a threat to it?

He was banking on it having the arrogance of an expert.

And oh boy was he right.

The ring flickered with dim, nearly indistinguishable light, clearly communicating with Long Chen. After their brief exchange, Long Chen no longer was conflicted, and even a hint of smile and decisiveness surged in his eyes. He removed the ring, and held it out.

"Keep your word."

Wei Wuyin's heart pounded with sky-rising excitement. Even though he knew they likely schemed against him as a unit, he didn't care. After all, it's not like he spent three years not preparing for this day. It just came a little sooner than he expected.

With a brilliant smile, he said: "Of course."

Chapter 188 - 186: A Single Sentence

Long Chen giving Wei Wuyin the ring caused Na Xinyi's heart to quake. She knew that the ring was a precious treasure, but his willingness to give it up for the sake of Qing Qiumu, Long Tingyu, and Lin Ziyang caused her thoughts to veer towards a realization. A realization that Long Chen wasn't someone that could only take, but someone who was willing to sacrifice.

It was not just her but Wu Baozhai and Lian Yu were similarly shocked by his decisiveness to give up the ring. While they didn't know what it was, if Wei Wuyin wanted it, it had to be unfathomably precious. Their hearts moved.

Xiang Ling watched all this unfold, and while she wasn't Long Chen's woman, she was Long Tingyu's master, and she couldn't help but reconsider her opinion of him.

Wei Wuyin didn't care about the imaginary heart points Long Chen obtained by this sacrifice, nor the selective memories of these fickle women that forgot that Lin Ziyang was thoroughly and nearly irreparably crippled because of something 'he' did, and this led to the current set of events. Wasn't he just cleaning up his own mess, and he had to rely on Wei Wuyin to even do it?!

If spectators knew of the story, perhaps they would laugh at these women for their foolish thoughts. After all, outsiders looking in could see all from an unobstructed view.

Wei Wuyin was careful, not reaching out to grab the ring, but using a strand of qi to condense into a solid string to coil around the ring until it was wrapped in a makeshift ball.

Long Chen coldly laughed in his heart at Wei Wuyin's caution, but after the ring was pulled out of his hand, a sense of emptiness emerged in his soul. His eyes froze for a moment as he observed Wei Wuyin withdraw a ten-inch cubical object that seemed like black jade. It was etched with multicolored esoteric markings reminiscent of a spiritual formation, and these marks were far stronger than what he had ever seen before.

...What's that? Was their simultaneous thought.

Wei Wuyin didn't give them time to analyze as the ring was brought over swiftly and entered a small opening just the right size to fit a ring, and was placed within the cube. The opening closed, seemingly vanishing as if it was never there, and there was no longer an opening or ring present. Then, the cube disappeared.

Wei Wuyin finally gave off a relaxed smile. This box was quite expensive to purchase, costing several dozen seventh-grade high-tier products. It was called the Soul Sealer Cube. It was designed specifically to seal an Astral Soul, the advanced version of a Natal Soul, and allow for long range transportation in a preserved state. It could be brought an untold distance swiftly or kept to be refined for later.

It was a tool used by Evil Cultivators to store, seal, and maintain the potency of Astral Souls for various reasons, like cultivation or transformed into a life-saving tool. Regardless, it was quite difficult to procure, but very suitable to seal the ring. After all, it can contain Astral Force and that embodies mental, physical, spiritual, and elemental energies.

Long Chen was startled for a moment as he felt a weakening connection with the ring. *'Wait, did he always have that prepared? Wait...why did he act so cautiously to begin with?'* He had originally assumed that Wei Wuyin believed he had a cultivation treasure, like some people have in the past, and sought to excavate its secrets, but it was more like he was deliberately caging something.

Did he know?!?!

Before he could let that question properly settle in, Wei Wuyin dispersed his spiritual spell and turned his gaze to Xiang Ling. Since the beginning, when he had first met her in the Myriad Yore Continent, he had been interested in this woman, yet she was like a ghost, constantly elsewhere and never here. "You have an open invitation to my sky palace, whenever you want." He calmly stated with a gentle smile.

Xiang Ling's heart shook. Was Wei Wuyin interested in her? While she wanted to forge a relationship like others, she felt her discipleship of Long Tingyu would automatically exclude her. Yet here he was, giving her a verbal invitation before everyone.

Wei Wuyin didn't stay here. He jumped upwards like a shadow, causing Long Chen to take a step as the realization that Wei Wuyin might already know about the ring's true secret and what it contained dawned on him.

Woosh!

Xiao Bai was timely, arriving and allowing Wei Wuyin to step upon his broad back without a hint of awkwardness. They flew swiftly back to the execution platform, and Wei Wuyin jumped off, landing before the now standing Qing Qiumu. While she wasn't allowed to leave until things were officially stated, she wouldn't keep kneeling either.

Wei Wuyin rubbed his nose awkwardly, "You'll probably learn what happened, so I hope you'll understand why I said and did what I did."

"...what? What did you guys talk about? What did you mean by I won't like what you have to do?" Qing Qiumu was slightly flustered, but she didn't know why.

Wei Wuyin scratched his head slightly and sighed. "This."

He lifted his head towards Zhao Yan's pegasus and shouted: "the Ji Clan are traitors of the sect and have been for four days!" His words were like an explosive boom that reached the ears of every last person present.

"...what?!"

"What?!"

"WHAT?!"

Wei Wuyin said merely this, then turned to the captain-class Knight on scene, Bei Ming. When he saw her shock on her face, he realized she was a little familiar. As he recalled a few things, he finally placed her. She was the infertile knight with a damaged yin essence, so she couldn't give birth to a child. Su Mei found out through her investigative efforts to procure a peak-tier seventh-grade pill that could restore Yin Essence, but with so few Alchemic Kings, and even fewer ones that could concoct such a pill, this was a dream.

After finding this out, she was given this pill in return and firmly cemented her allegiance to him. Furthermore, she had a baby a year ago. No wonder she shattered the guillotine the moment she learned that Qing Qiumu might be his wife. From the dossier Su Mei prepared for him that included her file, she was quite intelligent and decisive in her actions.

He gave her a smile and said, "Handle this matter properly."

Zhao Yan soared over. Bei Ming was truly intelligent as she took merely a few seconds to adjust and announced without hesitation, "The Ji Clan has been found collaborating with a group of Evil Cultivators, cultivating using various prohibited methods, and performing malicious methods against their fellow members, us. All those with the Ji name were no longer considered members of the sect four days ago, and thus the actions of those below are hereby not crimes against members of their sect, but righteous actions against traitors!"

Her attitude shift was a complete one-eighty as she condemned an entire clan and its hundreds of thousands of members to expulsion, and likely even execution. However, in her heart, she knew this was the only way to free these three of their actions without stepping on the rules of the sect. After all, openingly breaking the rules and bending it had very different results.

Zhao Yan jumped off his pegasus and descended next to her. While he was the Commanding Knight of the Extreme Creation Mountain and Bei Ming was under the Commanding Knight of the Extreme War Mountain, he still had influence and unfathomable prestige within the entire Myriad Monarch Sect. What was a single clan before the words of an Alchemic King and Heavenly King of their sect?

He not only echoed her words, he even brought out various traces of evidence that seemed to suggest the validity of this matter before the near million witnesses below. Where had he obtained this? Even Wei Wuyin didn't know. Perhaps the Ji Clan truly was corrupt and vile, or it was tolerably corrupt enough to allow it to receive a free pass.

Wei Wuyin seemed to feel that this was natural. As a force after a Blessed, they must have quite a few sinners. How unfortunate.

Qing Qiumu paled for a moment. *'Was this what he meant? Pinning crimes on an entire clan with a single sentence?'* In truth, she hated the Ji Clan, but to subject the entire clan to the treatment of traitors seemed unfair. No wonder he said those words...she was truly unable to like this.

But was there another way?

At this moment? Probably, but Wei Wuyin didn't want to spend more time on this.

He stepped towards Qing Qiumu, and leaned in to have his mouth reach her ear. He softly whispered a few words that caused her expression to change, and a hint of a laughing smile surfaced on her face. She almost snorted unintentionally.

Wei Wuyin smoothly retreated and asked, "Right?" With a little chuckle. It was this casual act that eradicated that heaviness in her heart.

Zhao Yan and Bei Ming were already making declarations of investigations and giving out orders. Before Wei Wuyin even retreated from Qing Qiumu's ear, Long Tingyu and Jar Vin were freed. In fact, Bei Ming was talking about a reward to Qing Qiumu for eliminating traitors, even openly praising her. But the one who she named was already no longer paying attention as Wei Wuyin and Qing Qiumu casually chatted for a bit.

This matter was acted out in the utmost swiftness, and before a few minutes had passed, the knights in the sect, or members stationed out, were given orders of capture for all Ji Clan members and bring them back for interrogation. They would either unearth more crimes or verify the innocence of certain ignorant people. Of course, there would be some that will have to be placed on this Execution Platform, but the rest would likely receive expulsion from the sect and the Myriad Monarch Astral Territory.

At this moment, Wei Wuyin and Qing Qiumu were at the edge of the platform, their legs dangling as they looked at the busy knights and rowdy people below. The crowd was quite restless as they started to either disperse or gather, seeking to catch a further glimpse of Wei Wuyin above.

"...Thank you." Qing Qiumu said from the heart, moving a strand of loose hair behind her sharp ear.

Wei Wuyin lazily stretched out his arms and shook his head, "I'm not the person that should be thanked. If Na Xinyi didn't say anything, I wouldn't even know about this situation. I was...quite preoccupied these last few days."

Qing Qiumu realized that Wei Wuyin was likely deeply enthralled in concocting pills, cultivation, or formulating his faction. If she knew he meant busy enjoying life with two exotic beauties, who knew how she'd think? But his words had unintentionally and inadvertently caused her heart to warm. When he did learn of it, did he not come and save her life at the most critical moment? Wasn't that enough?

Wei Wuyin wasn't a saint; he knew this about himself. That being said, he cared a lot for emotional attachments, even willing to subconsciously protect Bai Lin with his life before his own. After losing everything once, one's heart becomes shielded by armor, but those that could leave an impression was unimaginably valuable to him.

Qing Qiumu had not reached that level of importance in his heart before, and still hasn't today. And while this was mostly because of Long Chen's interference and existence, it was also due to their own personalities. Were they not both victims who found trusting others difficult?

He lost his entire family, and nearly his trust in humanity.

Qing Qiumu lost her sense of safety, peace, and her trust in others.

One was abused and hunted; One was captured and abused.

Perhaps it was this similarity that caused them to view each other as kindred spirits lit beneath the stars, yet kept them from forming that seemingly miraculous connection between them.

They had suffered and yet they thrived, and after regaining themselves, they didn't have any real goal except to see how far the road went. Wei Wuyin recalled his time directly before the Black Skeleton emerged in his life. His worries were just trust, how to survive, and how to cultivate effectively.

In the end, he had no true goals. It was only when he met that man with silver hair and black eyes, that bit into his neck, and the subsequent arrival of the Black Skeleton, that his life gained a semblance of purpose. It was the confrontation with one's death that truly sets one's perspective.

'I want to explore the entire world! See everything I can, enjoy all the things I can! After that, build a grand business, family, re-establish the Wei Clan, have many different wives and a few children to dote on.' - Wei Wuyin, age twenty-six(thirteen years ago).

'After this, I want to see more of what this world has to offer. Not just follow along others, but forge my own path and have my own adventures. Then, when I've had enough, I'll settle down and have a good husband, a few children to dote on.' - Qing Qiumu, age thirty-five(present day).

While they didn't know it, their thoughts were uttered at different times, but rang with the truest feelings and desires of their lives after experiencing a close shave with death. They also never imagined that their goals would inevitably birth a desire for immortality, and cultivation was the only way. This would lead them both down a long, difficult path!

Chapter 189 - 187: Ready To Ascend

Following through with his promise, Wei Wuyin sent out statements clarifying the entire situation and arranged for Lin Ziyan to receive the best care. The Ji Clan was marked as traitors of the sect and were hunted down, brought in, and interrogated for the truth.

Shockingly yet not surprising, his deliberate accusation had some truth within, and quite a few members of the Ji Clan practiced Evil Methods forbidden by the sect, even by the world. This news caused an uproar, and many praised Wei Wuyin for his foresight and decisive actions against a vile clan such as this.

While the Myriad Monarch Sect didn't strictly ban Evil Methods, they disallowed a select few ones that were disgustingly ferocious, vile, and vicious. As an example, there was an Evil Alchemic Method that gathered the primal yang and yin essence of a thousand virgin men and women before brewing them into a cauldron to condense a Blood Pill.

Or an Evil Cultivation Method that extracted the nascent, pure meridians and dantians from infants and refined them into one's own to strengthen one's innate talent.

These types of acts were considered beyond redemption and subsequently and ruthlessly outlawed by not just the Myriad Monarch Sect, but the entire Tri-Vision Starfield. Yet the Ji Clan was found cultivating these methods to help develop themselves.

Unfortunately, these methods were oftentimes employed because: Cultivation is difficult! Three words and it highlighted the most frustrating worries within everyone's minds. Despite there being tens of

trillions of cultivators in the starfield, only five million could reach the Astral Core Realm, capable of living more than a thousand years.

Regardless of the reason, their act led to the unified expulsion and near eradication of their entire clan. Those few had implicated the younger generation and those ignorant of their crimes. What became a capture and interrogate, became an order to capture, and if they resisted, to kill freely.

The Myriad Monarch Sect even placed bounties on their talented members, their experts, and those of direct lineage to the leader of the Ji Clan. It was quite a depressing sequence of events for this clan, and even Wei Wuyin hadn't expected such an extreme outcome.

Before long, days passed and Wei Wuyin had settled everything that needed to be settled and returned to his sky palace. The ring that he obtained from Long Chen remained sealed, kept within the Soul Sealer Cube. He didn't intend to inspect or inquire about the identity or purpose from whatever existence remained in the ring until his cultivation base reached the Astral Core Realm. Only then would he feel confident enough to ensure his ability to react and defend against most schemes.

Fortunately, that day would soon come, but today wasn't it.

Today, he had a visitor.

Xiang Ling!

A few days ago, he invited her to his sky palace, and today she had arrived. He hadn't expected her to be quite decisive and swift in accepting. After all, he didn't conceal his interest or intent. All things aside, he was somewhat elated at her arrival.

He personally went to greet her at the entrance. When he reached the front door, he saw Zhao Yan beside her, and his pegasus acting as a large background. He had a stoic expression, as if it was his default. When he sensed Wei Wuyin's aura, his expression became much more amicable and joyful. While this was clearly an act, it was still an effort that was worth the applause.

Wei Wuyin walked forward and greeted, "Commander Zhao, I have to thank you for bringing Fairy Blessed Spirit."

Zhao Yan hurriedly waved his hand, "It is my honor." If anyone heard the Commanding Knight of the Extreme Creation Mountain's Knight of Enforcement act in such a humbled and smiling manner, they would surely be jolted into surrealism. If they knew that it was due to the Heavenly King, Alchemic King Wei Wuyin, they would then reveal expressions of acceptance.

Xiang Ling gracefully stood there in wait. Her signature red lips, limpid eyes, and minimalistic yet perfectly applied make-up to those magnificently sculptured features of hers made her seem like the centerpiece of an exceptional painting. Her multicolored robes were form-fitting, revealing the exquisite contours of her breasts.

Wei Wuyin's internal fire could continuously be ignited as a surging wave of desire would sting his heart. This woman possessed an allure that could devolve most men into animals with a single smile, a shake of her hips, or a lean of her body.

He smilingly said, "You look as lovely as always, Elder Xiang." Although he called her elder, it didn't contain a hint of a junior speaking to a senior.

Xiang Ling's eyes never left Wei Wuyin after he arrived. This young man, just three years ago, was a mere junior cultivator from a continental flat earth with no background, yet now he had grown into an exceptional figure that became a household name, tagged with various sky-toppling praises.

Before, she found that his potential to become a King Alchemist was appealing, but now he was renowned as not just being a King Alchemist, but the youngest with the fastest refinement speed and wide-array of products. Considering that most King Alchemists took weeks, months, or years to concoct a single successful seventh-grade product, but also specialized in a single product or one of the four main types, Wei Wuyin was too bright in comparison to them.

She didn't know how to approach him now, and while his cultivation base paled beneath hers, she didn't dare see him as weak and fragile.

"I hope I didn't interrupt anything," she said, a little meek in tone. However, one couldn't fault her due to Wei Wuyin's current standings and clear intentions.

"You haven't." Wei Wuyin replied. His two beauties from nights before had long since left. They weren't his toys or tools, and they had lives of their own. They couldn't be his shadows and act upon his every whim, nor did he want women like that. They were both exceptional at their jobs and had a lot going on, and he usually couldn't arrange for both to be here at the same time. It was merely a fortune of scheduling that allowed such a blessing.

At the moment, he was completely alone. Not even Su Mei was here.

"Good." She said, before thinking of something and added: "Thank you for helping Yu'er. That little girl is a little too rash sometimes." She was suffused with endless worry after Long Tingyu was captured and sentenced to three decades of imprisonment. Unfortunately, she was powerless to change it.

Wei Wuyin shook his head, "I acted with my own interests in mind, so there's utterly no need for thanks. But I can see you care for her a lot. It's good that she has someone like you." He could clearly see the motherly feelings Xiang Ling had towards Long Tingyu. While he didn't probe it, he knew they were incredibly close despite only three years having passed.

Xiang Ling smiled in response. It was gentle and filled with warmth. Obviously, she was thinking about Long Tingyu.

"How about we go inside?" Wei Wuyin smilingly asked, gesturing to Xiang Ling that if she wanted, they could. Zhao Yan realized his purpose had been fulfilled, so he nodded before taking off on his pegasus.

Xiang Ling took a deep breath, taking in the high-quality astral essence which she never had a chance to absorb in her life, and revealed a gentle smile. With a nod, she solidified her will and understanding of what would likely happen in her heart.

Today, she stepped into the luxuriously elegant and grand sky palace, but she wouldn't be leaving for quite awhile.

Two weeks later.

Wei Wuyin sat quietly in his cultivation room, deep in thought. In front of him, numerous books and scrolls were scattered about. These mediums of knowledge storage contained the accounts of those who've witnessed the Astral Tribulation of others who've similarly reached the Zenith Mortal State.

His brows were deeply furrowed, nearly vertical. There have been numerous experts who've dedicated their lives to achieving the Zenith Mortal State, and subsequently faced the Mortal Star Formation Tribulation, the first Astral Tribulation of the Astral Core Realm, and the first tribulation they faced in their cultivation. Each account responded how the world's aura was intense, suppressive to the point breathing or circulating their cultivation base was profoundly difficult, near-impossible.

Furthermore, they all had the same conclusion: Failure.

Those who undertook this tribulation were forced to face seemingly insurmountable forces to properly refine their Natal Souls, becoming Astral Souls and birthing an Astral Core that can store their World Sea. He knew that the stronger the Natal Soul, the more difficult the tribulation, but to think it was this difficult.

There were even accounts of others helping them, attempting to interfere and allow them to breakthrough, but the Mortal Star Formation Tribulation must be fully overcome by the cultivator only or else their transformation would be incomplete, and they would be rendered into a very strange pseudo-Astral Core Realm state.

This state couldn't advance in cultivation. They would forever be a pseudo-Astral Core Realm cultivator.

While the Second Tribulation and subsequent tribulations can be helped with external forces, such as Xiang Ling helping Wu Jiao breakthrough into the Second Stage, this would cause their ability to advance in cultivation to be halted entirely, unable to ever ascend into the next phase. Only those who were desperate would ever resort to such a method.

Wei Wuyin was unique; he had four Natal Souls, all of which were at the Zenith Mortal State. Furthermore, two of which were unique, and one contained Elemental Energy.

According to past records of other cultivators, those who've attempted to assail the Mortal Star Formation Tribulation with specially fused types of Natal Souls were often forced to face immensely difficult tribulations. The purpose of the Mortal Star Formation Tribulation was to mould, shape, and transform the Natal Soul into an Astral Soul, the stronger it was, the harder it became to achieve.

Fortunately, this didn't seem to factor in the quality of energies, only the type of energies within. This meant that regardless if he had five advanced top-tier elemental essences or the normal elemental essences, the tribulation's intensity would remain the same. This benefited him slightly. After all, he had Steel Metal, Violet Lightning, Life Meadow Wood, Blazing Inferno Magma, and Absolute Zero Ice Energies.

If the tribulations were divided, he should have a sufficient ability to overcome that specific tribulation, but the issue was...if it was combined. His Draconic Void Natal Soul and Alchemic Eden Natal Soul were special, and the Dao of Void embodied all time, space, and astronomical forces! Would that affect him?

Also, if they were separate, could his Draconic Void Natal Soul and Alchemic Eden Natal Soul be relied on by themselves to overcome the tribulation?

He couldn't help but feel a ceaselessly throbbing headache over this matter.

"I spent nearly a week just gathering information, only to find out what I already know...I can't use pellets to overcome the trial, or my path will stop then and there. I can't allow that to happen." Wei Wuyin clenched his fists. His goal currently was to reach the Realm of Sages. Not only did he need to reach that point, but he needed the most stable foundation imaginable to bring about the strongest cultivation strength. Then and only then will he have a safety net in case he failed a calamity.

Right now, he didn't have the protection of a Soul of True Sin. A single failure in a Calamity of Hell to the current him meant only one path: Game Over.

Taking several long and drawn out breaths, Wei Wuyin collected the books and scrolls. He had prepared enough, and if he didn't take this step today, he might always find some excuse to take his time. But he didn't have time to waste.

"Today's the day."

Chapter 190 - 188: Astral Tribulation - Elemental Star (1)

Step. Step. Step.

A figure dressed in a black-colored martial robe with metallic bracers and a scabbard at his hip walked. His aura and presence was phenomenal for his age and cultivation base. Just it could cause countless hearts to shiver at the mere sight of him.

Wei Wuyin calmly took each step, followed by a serene inhale and exhale. While his expression was the pinnacle of calm, his heart was churning and throbbed with emotional waves. Today was the day. For some reason, he knew that today will likely define the rest of his life. While this was an understandable sensation considering the importance of ascending to the next realm for any cultivator—the enhanced longevity, the rise in strength, and newfound view of the world that accompanied it—it was different for him.

In the depths of his soul, he knew this was true.

Before making this decision, he sent Zuhei, Su Mei, and Xiao Bai off elsewhere. The resulting tribulation will cause immense destruction to his surroundings. Fortunately, the eighth-level had very few Sky Palace and each was separated by a vast distance.

At the moment, he was in a large courtyard with the Sky Layer and various formations as its foundation. With its stability and durability, there shouldn't be too much damage. After settling his mind, he lifted his head towards the sky, his silver eyes were gorgeously radiant beneath the luminescent sunlight.

"Astral Tribulation; the first tribulation of a cultivator's life. To ascend, one has to withstand the tempering forces it unleashes. This force is often described as fighting against a world, going against the heavens, and invoking changes that seem nearly species changing." Wei Wuyin calmly revisited his knowledge of the first Astral Tribulation, the Mortal Star Formation Tribulation.

To ascend into the stars, you must become one!

Each of his Natal Souls stirred, sending their feelings of excitement, anxiousness, indifferent, and curiosity through him. These were similarly his own emotions, and feeling theirs made his mind feel somewhat relieved. He wasn't alone in this, and while he might not admit it openly, he was human and felt a tinge of fear.

If he failed, would there be any purpose in living any longer? If his road of cultivation was blocked, life in a cultivation world would lose its purpose.

"..." He stilled. Never did he realize that his life had taken cultivation the same as a beating heart and a healthy brain—needed to survive; needed to thrive.

He closed his heart and assimilated all their emotions and thoughts into his own heart, mixing it into his own until they were indistinguishable. *'Let's do this.'*

"Let's." - Alchemic Eden Natal Soul.

"Tch." - Divine Saber Natal Soul.

"Will it be colorful? I hope its colorful! It has to be colorful!" - Divine Elemental Natal Soul.

"..." - Draconic Void Natal Soul.

A soft smile suffused his lips. *'When all this is over, I think I should give you guys proper names. What do you think about that?'* As he thought this, he felt a surge of confidence endlessly flow through his heart. While none of them answered him, he felt their joy. Names were crucial to any sentient existence, and it declared that they existed beyond their own thoughts, but in the thoughts of others.

They, specifically, were remembered and mattered.

Nodding slightly, he lifted his eyelids to reveal a set of resplendent silver eyes that were as stable as a star at a center of a starfield.

Unlike the previous cultivation realms, assailing the Astral Tribulation to ascend to the Astral Core Realm was exceptionally easy to do. All one needed was a Qi Condensation cultivation base at the Ninth Stage and a 4th Mortal State. There was no comprehension required. In fact, it was truly that easy.

At that point, it was merely connecting with one's Natal Soul and interfacing with them, connecting with an ethereal sensation that connected with the grander world. This sensation was noticeable the moment all requirements were met. However, while the qualifications were easily met, the Mortal Star Formation Tribulation was a notorious killer of dreams.

Wei Wuyin had witnessed first-hand the demise of an Evil Cultivator in the Myriad Yore Continent who attempted to ascend. Using his own power, he failed to weaken the tribulation by thirty-percent. This included setting up an expansive Spiritual Qi Array, drawing endless power from the surroundings, and detonating tens of thousands of Hearts of Qi and three Spirits of Qi that he had taken from others and refined into his own strength.

He inevitably failed in the most horrendous way, and his body was turned into bloody mist, broken bones, and smashed brain matter. That scene of his eyes that revealed hopelessness despite a valiant showing prior could invoke unfathomable fear in most.

Moreover, there were tens of trillions of cultivators in this starfield, and many of them could cultivate to the Ninth Stage with a 4th Mortal State, yet even still, only five million Astral Core Realm cultivators were active.

This was simply the first tribulation, but it gated so many cultivators that the numbers would cause any to feel dizzy and disturbed.

Wei Wuyin spread his fingers completely outwards, then clenched them into fists. He did this a few times until he was completely relaxed. Unlike Phantom Rogue, the Evil Cultivator, he hadn't set up any Spiritual Qi Arrays. Arrays were sources of external strength, and even if he succeeded using it, his cultivation would never progress another step. He could only rely entirely on his own power, this meant no pellets! However, this didn't dissuade him as he decided within his heart.

"Start." Wei Wuyin muttered. He hadn't known if the Natal Souls would challenge their tribulation together or alone, but he immediately realized the truth. They were to overcome the tribulation alone!

Zzoom!

His Alchemic Eden, Draconic Void, and Divine Saber Natal souls became dormant, their various movements subsided until it became almost entirely unnoticeable. The one that stirred the most was his first Natal Soul in his life! The Divine Elemental Natal Soul!

"Yes! Yes! I'm first!" - Divine Elemental Natal Soul.

The excitement reached Wei Wuyin's mind and was reflected in his eyes as they glowed brilliantly. Within his body, he realized his other Natal Souls might've gone dormant, but they were not entirely inactive. Their innate energies were being continuously funneled into his Divine Elemental Natal Soul, bolstering its reserves of energies by four times.

In the matter of seconds, his various energies he had cultivated throughout his life were drawn, gathered, and condensed entirely within his Divine Elemental Natal Soul. This was the state deemed as a Pseudo-Astral Core Realm! It was as if his entire Natal Soul was simultaneously igniting and detonating all at once, yet it was stuck in a profoundly mysterious limbo state.

This invoked miraculous and vigorous transformations of his cultivation base, and his strength reached an entirely new level. He felt tremendous power that seemed to shake the world with every motion circulate ceaselessly within his body!

In this state, not only was he at his strongest, but he felt as if he could face anything in the world!

RUMBLE! RUMBLE!! RUMBLE!!!

He felt the world violently rumble, causing the atmosphere to feel stale, extremely oppressive and suffocating. Up in the sky, he felt as if there was a gigantic invisible door opening, connecting with his entirety and assessing his existence. It seemed to wash over him, deciding what he needed to fully progress into an Astral Core Realm!

Perhaps this assessment was the heavens' attempt to suppress those who've reached this step, a trial that could only be overcome by those with exceptional talent, fortune, and skill. At that instant, his eyes subconsciously focused on a speck.

This speck was exceptionally tiny to his vision. It floated high above and seemed to exceed the Sky Layer, touching the Dark Void. His eyes widened.

'No way!' His thoughts erupted with an extremely potent degree of disbelief. *'Is that a fucking sun?'* The more he looked at that speck, the more he felt it was a simple star that had just popped out into existence randomly, and this star was simply very, very, very far away.

The most confusing matter was that it was brightly lit in the current world, and the starry skies were almost entirely concealed by the sunlight emissions. While he might be at the eighth level, within the Sky Layer, only at night or piercing through the final Sky Layer would one be able to truly witness the starry skies!

This was a sun that was visible during the day!

Furthermore, he felt an unreasonably intense connection to it. Was the Mortal Star Formation Tribulation's origins a legitimate star?! Before he could investigate or ruminate over the matter, he felt an unfathomably fierce oppressive might shake the world, and the mana of this world became volatile and violent. With his Celestial Eyes, he could see that the worldly energies were contaminated by some unknown force.

He tried to absorb the surrounding worldly energies or essence, but found it impossible. *'I see! This is why using arrays are considered external forces; its no longer unowned power, but power of the tribulation. No wonder it didn't help Phantom Rogue! Using the tribulations power against itself, how could you hope to exhaust its strength?'*

A truth to a question he had never even considered was answered. The changes didn't stop there, however. The star was growing larger and larger, approaching and expanding within his field of vision. It was coming closer! Closer and closer!

He stood his ground, but his heart was shaking slightly. When he had observed Phantom Rogue fight against his tribulation, it was as if he was fighting an invisible enemy, but it seemed it was invisible only to observers. It must've been this star!

He tightly clenched his fists. Within his palms, elemental qi started to manifest. Every passing second, his elemental qi grew in intensity.

Woosh!

When the star finally seemed to stop growing...the Mortal Star Tribulation was here.