

**Chapter 551 - 547: Truth Of The Past**

"THIS IS ALL YOUR FAULT!" Long Chen glowered and growled. The madness in his eyes was reflected in the crimson lines that littered his sclera, seemingly threatening to invade into his irises and pupils.

When Long Chen began his shouting, everyone present could see the pent-up aggression and killing intent exuding from him, but not everyone understood the reason as to why. So they could only look onwards, remaining background characters to this event.

After all, the accuser was their Grand Prince while the accused was the Ascendant Emperor of Neo-Dawn. They both possessed statuses that made it difficult for them to intervene. Tuo Bihan, the one with the highest authority, received numerous looks at this moment. However, the old man shrugged, seemingly nonchalant towards it all.

"You! YOU! I should've killed you the moment I met you," Long Chen's coldly spat with a venomous tone. It seemed he wished he could go back to that moment that he'd met Wei Wuyin, that moment in the Heavenly Wu City. As Wei Wuyin and Qing Qiumu returned together, he could've kept his oath and struck! He should've!

Wei Wuyin's silver eyes were impassive, reflecting not the slightest trace of emotion or aggression. He observed Long Chen indifferently. Yet in his eyes, in the depths of his pupils, a mysterious feeling began to slowly manifest.

"Long Chen! You need to calm down!" Qing Qiumu finally arrived on scene and stood side to side with Wu Baozhai. The two exchanged a brief glance and seemed to communicate a thousand thoughts at this moment. The two were well acquainted. Perhaps, not too long ago, they both saw each other as sisters. They served as a divide for Long Chen and the rest, including Wei Wuyin.

Qing Qiumu glanced at Wei Wuyin, and when she saw his eyes that seemed devoid of emotion, her spine felt an unfathomable chill that caused her heart to race. She clenched her fists and turned to Long Chen, "We can talk about thi-

"SHUT UP! SHUT THE HELL UP!!" Long Chen swiped the air with his left arm, causing the ground to quake and the air to feel stifled. Qing Qiumu and Wu Baozhai were hit by a rush of torrential wind that caused their hairs to flutter wildly and their clothes to press tightly against their bodies!

Just a simple gesture of Long Chen had induced such a terrifying response!

*'What power!'* Wu Baozhai and Qing Qiumu simultaneously thought as they braced themselves, using their astral forces to resist the force lest they be sent flying. They both knew that Long Chen was powerful with mysterious means, but this was extremely exaggerated, no? They were both elite experts with extraordinary foundations, capable of fighting above their cultivation levels, yet Long Chen gave them a sense of total defeat.

Long Chen pointed at Qing Qiumu with a stretched index finger, "Calm down? Calm down?! You don't have the right to tell me that. You abandoned me. You left for him. It was always him. ALWAYS HIM!!!" Long Chen's madness seeped into his words as he spoke in brief sentences and fragmented meanings.

This was caused by his Sea of Consciousness in chaotic disarray, formulating too many memories and thoughts that disturbed his ability to make linear conversations.

Still, the target and those in the know understood what he meant.

Qing Qiumi slightly frowned after the surging winds died down. She looked at Long Chen, at this man who she fought alongside for over a decade. She couldn't help but remember his past self, the bright smile and hopeful attitude to face the world. In almost every situation, he was cool and calm, capable of responding to every situation with the clearest of heads. Yet today...

Wu Baozhai fiercely shouted, "Rein in your emotions, Long Chen! Think, don't let yourself run amok with assumptions and false realities."

"False realities?! False? Everything is as true as can be! I see it all. I see you all for what you are!" Long Chen's thoughts were consumed with images of gorgeous faces and happy smiles. His life in the Myriad Yore Continent was filled with bitterness yet that was only the early portion. He found his Master and later met many interesting people, beautiful women, and explored fascinating locations.

The time was the best time of his life. It was after meeting Wei Wuyin, when he saw Qing Qiumu smiling beside him, when he decided to not make any commotion to ensure his plan to ruin Lin Ziyang's forced marriage, it was then that everything started to go downhill.

The wedding crashing was unexpected as Wu Jiao ascended to another level of the Astral Core Realm, and he couldn't kill the prince and king in time, causing the Ancient King to side with them and slaughter his allies. He could only watch as that happened.

That was the first time everything truly went awry. The second was when Na Xinyi confronted Wei Wuyin, and he responded in a way no one would expect from a heartless bastard capable of using others for his benefit! He decided to take responsibility and offer Na Xinyi to be his wife...

He didn't take this seriously. After all, Na Xinyi acted as if she was extremely traumatized by the event, hating Wei Wuyin's guts to the utmost possible limit that a human could. She had a phobia and distrust of men from that incident. She had only started to open up to him after they were trapped and locked within a hidden temple.

She had tried to kill him and he spared her. Unable to do anything to him, they worked together to escape and fought a dangerous beast. Together, in concerted effort and harmony, they struck the beast down. After that, their future meetings caused her to slowly open up until she informed him of her life goal: to kill Wei Wuyin.

But she wasn't cultivating at a pace that the legend of Wei Wuyin was. Wei Wuyin had already reached the Yin Form Phase of the Qi Condensation Realm thanks to her Three-Point Yin Physique, while she was only at the External Flow Phase. Even he was only at the External Flow Phase at the time.

He swore then and there that he would help her seek revenge, and if he met Wei Wuyin, he would behead him and bring his head to her. After that, their relationship evolved and she tagged along with him on their adventures on the continent.

Then, Wei Wuyin vanished.

According to rumor, he had a cultivation treasure that was desired by numerous experts, both inside and outside of his sect, so most assumed he succumbed to a sinister scheme, that his body was ash or buried in some unmarked land. This was also their assumption.

Na Xinyi even left to investigate, to ensure he was dead. She discovered that Wei Wuyin left roughly around the same time as a strange phenomenon took place. A giant wall of air seemingly devastated hundreds of miles of land and lives, killing quite a few individuals in the process. It was speculated by the experts that Wei Wuyin had met his end there, as his direction was in that area.

With his death almost entirely confirmed, she had gotten drunk and laughed at the strangeness of this, even considering it divine retribution for the deaths of her sect members.

Long Chen felt assured that Na Xinyi would only ever trust him, no other man, so he already considered her his wife. While the Myriad Yore Continent had marital rules that heralded a virgin's status, no one knew of Na Xinyi's past and she had a unique physique. Even if he brought her to his old grandfather, he wouldn't be disappointed and give him their blessing.

Yet a few words from a cultivator that should've been long dead had disrupted his entire relationship. The hilarious fact was that they laughed at Wei Wuyin together for even suggesting such a thing. And then the truth about Alchemists was revealed, the status of a Sky Noble, and grandness of the starfield, and those laughs vanished, replaced by absent looks.

When he caught her staring out the window, looking at Extreme Creation Mountain's Sky Layer, obviously thinking about Wei Wuyin in his Sky Palace, he should've known. He should've reacted.

It didn't stop there either.

The comparison of him and Wei Wuyin kept growing within their group. Qing Qiumu's relationship with him grew stronger, especially after he intervened to save her life. Wu Baozhai and Lin Ziyan would often question how Wei Wuyin achieved his status. While Long Tingyu, that innocent little girl, kept speaking about how he would surpass Wei Wuyin, becoming a Heavenly King.

Wei Wuyin kept being discussed. He was in everyone's mouth!

Wei Wuyin killed an Earthly Elite while in the Qi Condensation Realm!

Wei Wuyin became a Heavenly King!

Wei Wuyin formed a faction!

Wei Wuyin...

Wei Wuyin...!

**WEI WUYIN!!!**

It just never stopped. All the while his accolades would often be compared to Wei Wuyin. They were at the same cultivation level, arrived at the same time to the sect, yet their statuses and influence were vastly apart!

But even through all that, Long Chen still had confidence in himself. He had his women that were outrageous beauties that held deep feelings for him, and the Grand Monarch Lineage, or so he thought. All of them left.

"All of them left..." Long Chen's outstretched arm and finger lowered alongside his head as his thoughts reached this point. Na Xinyi chose Wei Wuyin. Lin Ziyang left him. Wu Baozhai left him. Long Tingyu was disgusted by him. Lian Yu...

Even Lian Yu.

Long Chen's bloodshot eyes receded. His aura calmed and his head lifted to meet Wei Wuyin's. He took a deep breath, and exhaled out all of the turbid air from his lungs. His entire demeanor and disposition changed, completely unlike the maddened man from earlier.

"Do you know what her last words were?" Long Chen directed his words at Wei Wuyin. He was vague, so he didn't expect anyone to answer.

But Wei Wuyin was aware, he indifferently responded: "That she loved me."

"...!" Long Chen's eyes widened in disbelief, completely shaking his mental focus at this moment. He stuttered and muttered out a few incoherent words, as if thinking of something, he stared at Wei Wuyin with a strange, dangerous pair of eyes. "Yo-you were there?!"

Thinking about Lian Yu's death, his entire body trembled slightly. Was Wei Wuyin there?!

Wei Wuyin shook his head, "I wasn't. If I was, if she was as important to me as she was to you, I never would've let her die before I did."

"..." Long Chen's trembling body froze.

Wu Baozhai and Qing Qiumu were confused, as well as the other members of the sect. They glanced at each other, clearly unsure about what was happening.

Wei Wuyin unhurriedly continued, "But that's irrelevant now. What's important is the truth: Her last words might've been that she loved me in your eyes, but that's not what happened. I left a trace of my aura in her to save her from the Auric Sea. When she was dying, it triggered and she felt my aura at the last moment. You should understand what she meant to say as her last words."

"...?!" Long Chen was taken aback. He recalled Lian Yu's struggle to escape that strange pulling force of the Auric Sea. It was indeed Wei Wuyin who saved her after they touched. If so, was it because Lian Yu was surprised about Wei Wuyin's aura?!

A dense surge of happiness rippled through his eyes. If this was true, then her last words were what he wanted most! She loved him! SHE LOVED HIM! Not Wei Wuyin! This...this was amazing! In the end, she didn't leave him.

A wisp of light birthed in his heart, settling his thoughts a little. It had even concealed the fact that Lian Yu was dead.

But if he knew the truth of Lian Yu's last thoughts, that she had called out Wei Wuyin's name because she believed that he could save her from death, that his name had given her hope, that it had prioritized

her desire to give him those last words, perhaps he might descend into more madness. Because Lian Yu, at death's door, had considered him inferior. So inferior that she grasped hope in another man while he laid pathetically at her side, watching her heart be ripped from her chest.

"There's something else I wish to explain.. The truth," Wei Wuyin said.

### **Chapter 552 - 548: The Last Conversation**

The truth?

The eyes of everyone fixed onto Wei Wuyin's unearthly countenance, and those silver eyes of his reflected an indescribable emotion. It was as if he was utterly exhausted and had also accepted something unthinkable. It wasn't malicious, but it felt relaxed.

Qing Qiumu and Wu Baozhai once more exchanged looks, this was the first time that'd ever seen Wei Wuyin exude such a strange feeling. Unable to determine its origins, they waited as well.

"The truth?" Long Chen questioned. After figuring out that Lian Yu's final words were meant for him, that it was a misunderstanding because of specific circumstances, his mood had considerably proven. However, the killing intent in his heart remained unabated.

"The truth," Wei Wuyin faintly nodded. He lightly touched Huang Boqing's shoulder. A surge of power entered his brain and flared, causing his vision to turn black. He went unconscious, his body becoming incredibly slack and powerless. With a soft thud, he face-planted the browning grey dirt.

Wei Wuyin spoke in an unhurried fashion as he stared at Long Chen, "Today, I will kill you."

With a casual step, he slowly made his way towards Long Chen. The entire spectating crowd paused, their hearts pounded at those words. It lacked any form of killing intent, utterly lacking in a vicious gravity, and even the atmosphere hadn't grown tense. It was as if it was spoken in the most casual, most direct manner without any power. Yet they all felt their hearts seized.

Qing Qiumu's heart stilled, skipping several normal heartbeats. She tried to speak yet found her words caught in her throat. This was the situation she wanted to avoid, a fight between Long Chen and Wei Wuyin. These were most definitely the two most influential men in her entire life. The former had acted as a travel companion as they cultivated through their younger years. The latter saved her life twice, and felt like a kindred soul that comforted her every thought.

Wu Baozhai's pupils shrunk. There was a thundering boom in her head as she felt her world begin to collapse. For some reason, she wasn't expecting Wei Wuyin to ever say those words. But why? Why now? As if on instinct, she turned to Long Chen and a raging fear emerged in her heart. She wanted to shout, to scream for Long Chen to run, yet her heart fought against this action.

She was always astute, extremely aware of individual's personalities, their intent, and desires. This allowed her to thrive as a Commander, as the Grand Princess of the Myriad Monarch Sect, and as a member of a genuine member of a Royal Family.

She knew what the 'truth' Wei Wuyin wanted to say.

Long Chen was taken aback, observing the reactions of everyone in the background and these two beauties in his view. However, he smirked after a little bit of thinking. Did Wei Wuyin think he was

scared of him? After reaching the 1st Grand Transformation, the amount of trump cards and means he now possessed exceeded mortal imagination!

From the beginning, Long Chen never intended to allow Wei Wuyin to live past today. This was why he trekked this distance, why he tracked him here. If it wasn't for Wu Baozhai and the other members of the Myriad Monarch Sect, he would've already removed Wei Wuyin's head from his shoulders. Then, all the issues plaguing his heart would finally vanish.

With a mocking scoff and a powerful swish of his sword inducing terrifying winds, he replied: "Today, I will kill you." It was as if he was throwing back Wei Wuyin's words against him, a moment that might inspire sheer amusement after he held Wei Wuyin's head in his hand.

Step.

Wei Wuyin took one step further, slowly but surely nearing. He proceeded to speak the truth: "When I first saw you that day, I thought about my death. A death that would not come, but my death nevertheless. In it, you towered over me as your sword swung towards my neck, beheading me and bringing an end to my life.

"I didn't understand at the time why I would die by your hands. Really, there were many things I didn't understand, yet the two things I never felt towards you throughout these many years, even when told that you'll be a threat to me, was hatred and fear."

Step.

"How could I? You were insignificant to me at the time. You were not the greatest concern in my life. I faced heaven's wrath, survived Hell, viewed the yellow springs, and escaped my fate. What was a Long Chen before that? So, when we entered the Myriad Monarch Sect, and this is the completely honest truth: I never once thought of you of my own accord.

"I never once acted against you with ill-intent. I never felt the need to. You live your life, I'll live mine. Yet your fate intertwined with mine, and your companions, they all left you. Not because of me, but because of you. Because you blamed all your issues on others yet never realized the truth, the truth regarding the outcome of your own failings."

Step.

"..." Long Chen's expression twisted, glaring at Wei Wuyin with eyes suffused with boundless killing intent. If looks could kill, Wei Wuyin would've died long ago, eviscerated in body and soul.

Step.

Wei Wuyin continued, "I could go on, point out all your mistakes. I could explain to you why you didn't deserve any of these women, and that when actual competition was interwoven into your life and they were given a choice: you were not theirs. But you wouldn't understand, you wouldn't dare to let yourself see this truth."

At this point, Wei Wuyin had stepped past the two frozen women of outstanding beauty. Their eyes followed Wei Wuyin as he did, but his words weren't wrong.

Long Chen's sword released a ferocious hum as the Imperial Heaven Aura within him exploded outwards, ravaging the surroundings and tainting the sky above in a faint golden hue with endless dazzling stars. Those eyes of his narrowed to an extremely dangerous limit.

Yet Wei Wuyin remained entirely unaffected as the torrent of wind was pushed aside by an invisible power. He kept stepping forward at the exact same pace as before.

"Given gifts by the heavens and failing to hold onto it, blaming others for your failures. I must say: I'm truly happy that those beside you can have the freedom to make their own choice, to be given another opportunity not manipulated by something beyond their comprehension."

"..." Amongst everyone present, only Long Chen understood Wei Wuyin's last words. When they heard it, a sound in their minds tuned it out. This wasn't the Heavenly Daos, but Wei Wuyin's own actions. He laced his words with Eden Force that concealed his words to others.

Long Chen's aura reached an absolute peak. That smirk of his transformed into a frown and then into a vicious smile. The killing intent and desire to slaughter had leaked outwards the surroundings, shifting the sky's golden hue to a sanguine tint.

"You're pathetic," Long Chen countered. "You're simply a liar that's trying to salvage your face. Not have any ill-intent towards me? Do you think I'm a child? That I'm stupid?! From the beginning, you've acted against me! Your Extreme Creation Mountain acted against me! Your stooges acted towards me! Tried to kill me and those I cared about!!

"And you, you manipulated each and everyone one of them! Everyone I loved! You definitely caused Lin Ziyang to change! She loved me more than her own life, yet when she came back from you, she left me for you? And Na Xinyi hated you! Yet she, for some ungodly reason, decided to be your wife? YOU RAPED HER! Do you think anyone will believe that?! That she'll leave me for you?"

Long Chen huffed and puffed, exposing a closely guarded secret that only a few knew. Furthermore, this accusation was levied with immense emotion behind it. A few cultivators turned to Wei Wuyin and the looks they gave were strange. It wasn't with disgust. It wasn't with shock. It was with curiosity.

Qing Qiumu and Wu Baozhai paled when those words were said. They were more aware of Na Xinyi's thoughts and viewpoint than others. They knew more of the story, and it wasn't so simple! In fact, this complexity was why Na Xinyi would choose Wei Wuyin.

After all, he saved her life when she was captured and marked for a horrific death. He betrayed his sect by honoring his promise; he gave her a choice at living life. In the cultivation world, this was extremely rare. This was especially so in the face of great benefits and allure that a Three-Point Yin Physique held to male cultivators. Even they were shocked when they heard the truth of what happened, and their intense emotions towards Wei Wuyin was only lessened as a result.

A normal cultivator would've used Na Xinyi like a dual cultivation slave, extracting her usefulness before burying her ravaged and lifeless body in some unmarked hole or burning it to ash.

Wei Wuyin was unfazed. Although his actions inevitably led to his decapitating death by Long Chen's hands in that alternate timeline he was shown by the Black Skeleton, his heart contained no regret for

his choice. Because of Na Xinyi, Long Chen sneakily entered his sect when they were being attacked by the Elven Race, and found him and Jiu Lang.

He protected Jiu Lang instead of retreating, possessing a Heart of Scarlet Qi at the time. He was met with the cold edge of Long Chen's blade in utter defeat. If he didn't figure out that this event only occurred because he decided to act in accordance with his own principles and morals, staying true to his word even if it meant turning against him, and that calamity wouldn't have happened, then he would be an idiot. The Black Skeleton wouldn't have interfered and his life might've been different.

"You continue to lay blame elsewhere." Was Wei Wuyin's only reply.

"Enough!" Long Chen refused to accept Wei Wuyin's words as the truth. Everything that has happened since they arrived in the Myriad Yore Continent, he felt as if Wei Wuyin was behind each and every event to varying degrees. From the conflict with the Ji Clan to the Huangfu Clan, and perhaps even Lin Ziyang's crippling and Qing Qiumu's execution!

He faintly felt that it was all an orchestrated plot by Wei Wuyin. Why else would the Huangfu Clan, a clan linked heavily to Tuo Bihan and the Extreme Creation Mountain, decide to act against him? Why else would Lin Ziyang be crippled, not killed? Why else would, at the last second, a woman indebted to Wei Wuyin saved Qing Qiumu as the blade neared her neck!

IT WAS ALL SUSPICIOUS!

That's right.

Long Chen looked at Wei Wuyin with a look of grand realization. If he considered it from that point of view, then it all made sense! All the obstacles, all the struggles, all the numerous disasters they faced were all orchestrated by Wei Wuyin to systematically ruin his reputation, to take away his women!!

"When I finally kill you, all of these issues will be resolved. They'll all realize the truth, the real truth and come back!" He spoke gruesomely with a tainted tone. He hadn't descended into madness, but delusions had stricken his heart.

Wei Wuyin halted his steps, being quite close to Long Chen. He calmly ordered: "You two are not to interfere. No matter what." When he spoke out, everyone thought it was meant for Qing Qiumu and Wu Baozhai. Even they felt it was, but in truth, two figures that were concealed directly behind Long Chen turned to look at Wei Wuyin.

One of them was ready to use a translucent spear, and the other seemed ready to thrust out a palm of her soft hand. They looked at Wei Wuyin, seeing the decisive authority emitted from his eyes. With reluctant nods, they vanished.

Long Chen was unaware of the two that were ready to claim his life.

### **Chapter 553 - 549: The Death Of Long Chen**

Tuo Bihan observed the faint spatial fluctuations behind Long Chen. They were extremely brief, but they were mere meters away from Long Chen. When he tried to trace its origins, he felt as if he was sent into a swirl of sensory dissonance of time. Unable to figure out why, he was disturbed by Long Chen's growl.



The two, Wei Wuyin and Long Chen, stood roughly a few dozen meters away from each other. For elite experts of their levels, this was less than a single blink of a mortal eye. The former emitted no aura, and the latter was like a raging tempest of power.

Tuo Bihan reacted at this moment: "I will officiate the Imperial Combat between these two!" He recalled that Long Chen had challenged Wei Wuyin to Imperial Combat shortly before the All-Alchemic Clash with Qingye Ying. The rules of Imperial Combat were absolute, so regardless who won, the victor would suffer no blowback.

With a wave of his hand, Qing Qiumu and Wu Baozhai were pulled back and brought in for his protection.

Qing Qiumu no longer felt a desire to speak. Their last conversation allowed her to fully understand that the Long Chen she knew wasn't here. This brought her endless sorrow. She felt a hand on her shoulder, shaking her. Qu Baozhai was looking at her with a faint, comforting smile. There were no words said, but it caused Qing Qiumu to feel an outrage of emotions. Tears welled within her eyes as she turned to the two male figures that shaped her life.

In her heart, she didn't want a draw.

In her heart, she wanted one of them to end this—forever.

Wu Baozhai saw the light of acceptance in her eyes. With her heart settled, Wu Baozhai turned towards the Long Chen that was currently in the 1st Grand Transformation. She sought Wu Yu's opinion, "Who do you think will win?"

She couldn't see through Wei Wuyin's cultivation and Long Chen was even more unfathomable. After dispersing the attack of a Realmlord with a swing of his blade, it showed his extraordinary powers.

"...Wei Wuyin will win." Wu Yu said, a tinge of sadness alongside relief in his tone.

His quick answer shook Wu Baozhai's heart. "How can you tell?" Her words were laced with endless curiosity. At this point, she had severed all her emotional ties to Long Chen. This was especially so after she learned that she was tricked into giving up her body for Long Chen to cultivate the Imperial Heaven Qi Method.

Her life had been derailed selfishly by Long Chen. Furthermore, there was no way that he, the one who knew of the Imperial Heaven Qi Method, wasn't aware of this disgusting trick. If it wasn't for her resources and cunning, losing her purity prior to marriage was sufficient to warrant her death in the Imperial Wu Clan.

In truth, she wanted him dead.

Wu Yu only said three words: "Because it's him."

And Wu Baozhai understood. She remained silent as she observed the two.

Long Chen smirked. After reaching the 1st Grand Transformation, his Imperial Heaven Aura can exert a unique World Pressure referred to as Imperial Pressure. With it released, he could suppress the world and destabilize energies. While the range only reached ten meters, it was enough to form an impregnable defense. It was how he escaped the clutches of He Yanglei!

Furthermore, his astral force was elevated by the Imperial Heaven Aura, raising its quality. The best expression and example of this was reflected in Astral Core size. Without the 1st Grand Transformation, his Astral Core size would be 5.5 centimeters, but with it activated, it had effectively doubled!

In this state, he felt unbeatable to anyone within his generation! While the stress it imposed on his physical body and Astral Soul was terrifying, his Seed of Law that remained in his body seemed to overcome a large portion of it, allowing him to mediate its effects.

"Die!" Long Chen violently roared as he grasped his sword and flickered towards Wei Wuyin with a ferocious glint to its edge. His sword force was abundant and fiercely sharp, as if it could split the entire planet in two!

Wei Wuyin responded by holding out his hand and calling out a single word in his mind: "Element!" In an instant, his saber formed and he clasped it with a single hand. There was a calm, focused, and incomparably sharp light effusing from his eyes at that moment.

Long Chen arrived before Wei Wuyin fearlessly, unleashing his Imperial Pressure. It had the unique power of destabilizing energies and suppressing an opponent's entirety in much the same way as World Pressure, so while in close combat, most opponents would be unable to exert any power!

Wei Wuyin remained unfazed. He glanced at the slow-moving Long Chen that was roaring with his mouth open, a faint smirk on his expression, and a bloody light within his gaze.

Wei Wuyin moved his body into a stable and balanced stance, and then lash out with a well-timed vertical slash that met Long Chen's strike!

The two, sword and saber, sought to clash while releasing keening sounds! But no sound of metal clashing with metal resounded! There was a deflated sword keen that erupted, dying off soon after with only the saber howl remaining. It overtook the world in its dominance!

"...Wah?!" Long Chen's heart sank as his sword met Wei Wuyin's saber in a direct clash. The supposed explosion of power and ferocious clash that was expected didn't happen. He saw the two edges meet! Then, as if butter meeting a hot knife, Wei Wuyin's saber sliced his sword cleanly in half!

The two passed each other off their moving momentum. In the blink of an eye, the two had seemingly swapped places. Wei Wuyin held his saber out as it howled to the world! While Long Chen's sword was trembling ceaselessly.

Wei Wuyin turned around. No words were spoken as he slowly moved towards Long Chen with light and even steps.

Long Chen's expression became incredibly rosy as he felt blood rise from his stomach, lungs, and heart and threaten to spew out into the world from his orifices. As he fiercely held this in, his sword's upper body slipped off and fell to the ground. A soft thud resounded!

The hearts of everyone tugged in their chest.

Long Chen's body quivered chaotically for several moments as steps echoed from behind him. He urged his astral force and swept his spiritual sense throughout his body. When he did, the rosy complexion of his paled as his eyelids grew slack.

With a strong lift of his upper body, he stood upright. With a few forceful nasal breaths, he pivoted on his heel and faced Wei Wuyin who stood no more than three feet from him. Those resplendent silver eyes meeting his own darkly-colored eyes. There was a strange peace within that overtook his mind at this moment.

For an entire minute, they stood there just a few feet from each other, no saying or doing anything. The situation to observers was incredibly tense. Unfortunately for them, the fight had already been decided.

'Was I wrong?' Long Chen's thoughts were soon met with a terrifying realization that encapsulated the truth. Wei Wuyin was outstandingly strong, frighteningly so. It was only at this moment that he realized that Wei Wuyin could've killed him before, perhaps he wasn't his match since they first met. A faint bitter smile formed on his face.

1st Grand Transformation? Imperial Pressure? Before absolute strength, what was all this?

Wei Wuyin ended his silence, "I don't usually swing my saber twice for those unworthy of the first swing. However, I think you deserve the honor of dying by my saber, and to die knowing how."

"..." Long Chen's eyes glanced at the saber that emitted faint howls that resonated with the world. When he turned his gaze back to Wei Wuyin, his heart was filled with endless questions, but he couldn't speak any of them out. He could only look at Wei Wuyin's silver eyes, using every ounce of his strength to remain upright and standing.

'I never realized how gorgeous his eyes were. Or how handsome he is. Is that how everyone sees him? It's outrageous...' Long Chen's thoughts spiraled into nonsense. The final thoughts of a Blessed genius.

Wei Wuyin lifted his saber, causing everyone's heart to squeeze with fear. If this saber's edge fell, would Long Chen die? A Grand Prince? An extraordinary genius of this era?! Is today really the day of his death?

SWISH!!

The saber swiped vertically, its edge meeting Long Chen's neck as he tried to voice out the last traces of his final thoughts. When his lips moved, no sound emitted, only Wei Wuyin who stood before him could understand what he wanted to say.

The saber's edge sliced into Long Chen's neck and exited from the other side!

THUD!

Long Chen's knee slammed the ground as he kneeled, the lively light in his eyes slowly vanishing until nothing remained.

### **Chapter 554 - 550: Still Alive?**

A solemn silence overwhelmed the world. The Myriad Monarch Sect members all had wide expressions, filled with disbelief and utter shock. While they had been present when both sides had declared their intent to end the other's lives, they expected an outrageous battle with all sorts of trump cards unleashed. They expected the continent to be ravaged, with the intensity no less than Tuo Bihan and Huang Boqing's battle.

The planet should be threatened!

Yet, it was over in two swings of a saber.

Wu Baozhai clenched her fist as she sensed Long Chen's life fade away. She held back her tears. While she wanted Long Chen to die, to actually see it brought up endless memories of their adventures together. They shared joys and sorrows.

While she was always a background character to Long Chen's life, destined to be a foil to his brilliance, it was not all bad. Besides being tricked into losing her virginity so that he could cultivate the Imperial Heaven Qi Method, Long Chen wasn't entirely hateful.

Perhaps at one point, she thought she loved him. This was why her tears came, why she couldn't hold back her emotions. But she knew that it wasn't true love, so she wiped the tears from her eyes and remained outwardly strong. This was the true beginning of her future.

Qing Qiumu, however, felt strange as she sensed with abundant awareness that Long Chen's life was ending. She didn't feel sad. She didn't feel angry. She only saw Wei Wuyin and felt relieved that this was all over. Did this make her a vile person?

She didn't know, but her respect and concern for Long Chen had long faded, only remaining as a faint mark in her memories. While Long Chen had been with her during the early stages of her life, she had a long life ahead of her to live.

Wu Yu remained silent within the unassuming black ring. He didn't try to reclaim Long Chen's soul like Hong Ru. This would just offend Wei Wuyin for no good reason. It was best that Long Chen, the one who descended into madness and delusions just rested. It was for the best.

Wei Wuyin stared at Long Chen's corpse. There was a faint emotion contained within his gaze. *'Your death will be the beginning of the proof that one can overcome the impossible.'* Lifting his eyes towards the sky, he awaited the response from the Heavenly Daos.

The action of killing a Blessed was not without consequence. If it was a normal cultivator, they would experience an accumulation of Karmic Sin that would influence their lives and cause them to descend to the greater depths of Hell as a result. However, as an Inheritor of Sin, this didn't directly apply to him.

Karmic Luck Value: 944.6.

First Calamity: Survived - 7/7.

Second Calamity: Suppressed - 4 Years.

After a few seconds, there was no change to his value. Moreover, the dark-grey clouds that crackled with lightning and thunderous booms were absent. The world remained in motion, and he was unable to feel the slightest chaotic change in the environment.

Confusion painted his expression as he lifted his sleeves to investigate the Karmic Luck Value again.

Karmic Luck Value: 944.6.

First Calamity: Survived - 7/7.

Second Calamity: Suppressed - 4 Years.

No change.

*'Is it possible that Long Chen's Karmic Luck Value had reached zero? That there is no retribution or reaction from the Heavenly Daos?'* Thinking this, he felt a surging wave of disbelief batter his beating heart. This couldn't be the case...right?

It did make some logical sense, however. Lian Yu's death was a sign and Long Chen's talent and cultivation was continuously lacking in terms of speed and foundation in comparison to Lin Ming and Yuan Longshi. Was this a sign of Karmic Luck Value depletion? He had always thought it was just his existence in close proximity that caused this.

"No. That's not it." Wei Wuyin concluded. This just wasn't likely. He didn't know how but he was almost certain that Blessed can obtain Karmic Luck Value by interacting with those with Karmic Sin Value accumulated throughout their life, likely sending them off to Hell and receiving a reward. If not this, there was some other way.

Furthermore, even if he had 0.1 Karmic Luck Value remaining, he should've plundered it. With a suspecting gaze, he glanced at Long Chen's corpse. It completely lacked any form of life or mental fluctuations.

By all accounts, he was completely dead.

Karmic Luck Value: 944.6.

First Calamity: Survived - 7/7.

Second Calamity: Suppressed - 4 Years.

But the tattoo hadn't activated! This meant Long Chen hadn't died! Even if only a certain level of Karmic Luck Value provoked the dark-grey clouds of lightning and thunder, he should obtain a small amount from the Bloodline of Sin's plundering powers. The Commander in the Myriad Yore Continent was proof of this!

*'But how is he alive? A second soul? A second body? Is he going to undergo Temporal Reincarnation?'* Using his Celestial Eyes, he inspected Long Chen yet found nothing of note. He was as dead as any other corpse. His body kneeled with his head shifted to the side, barely holding together and not sliding off his shoulders.

*'No! You need to die!'* Wei Wuyin frowned as he grabbed Long Chen's head by the hair and pulled, removing it from his neck and causing blood to gush out wildly. This caused Wu Baozhai to look away in shock. Seeing Long Chen's decapitated head was a little too much for her.

Yet Wei Wuyin ignored the shocked gazes as he desecrated Long Chen's corpse. After sending his spiritual sense into his head, he found nothing. With a deeper frown, he waved his hand towards Long Chen's headless corpse and it flew before him. With a few pats of his fingers on the dantian, he saw that Long Chen's Astral Soul had dissipated.

The dissipation of Astral Soul was remarkably quick. It was as if the worldly law instantly dragged all things soul related of the deceased with it. Long Chen's soul wasn't complete without the portion that belonged to his Spirit of Cultivation, so it was to be expected.

He inspected his Bloodline of Sin tattoo once more.

Karmic Luck Value: 944.6.

First Calamity: Survived - 7/7.

Second Calamity: Suppressed - 4 Years.

It remained unchanged, much to his frustration.

*'How are you still alive? Why is nothing happening? Was your karmic luck value truly zero? No! Even if it was, I refuse to believe there wouldn't be a retribution just for your death.'* Wei Wuyin kept inspecting Long Chen's corpse but found nothing after a full three minutes. There was no stone left unturned, even his spatial ring was thoroughly searched.

Wei Wuyin turned his eyes and saw Wu Yu's ring nestling between Wu Baozhai's ample bosom. After the first minute of his search, Wu Baozhai had regained her stomach and heart to look at him in curiosity.

*'Could Wu Yu have kept his soul alive?'* A fearsome killing intent flared within his eyes for a moment, causing Wu Baozhai to experience a vicious chill so terrifying that she almost lost control of herself. But when she noted his gaze was locked onto her ring, her entire body relaxed.

Wu Baozhai was about to remove the entire ring, but Wei Wuyin looked away and went back to inspect Long Chen's body with other methods. This causes her to feel greatly confused. She asked Wu Yu, "What was that about?"

Wu Yu responded briefly, "He thought I kept Long Chen's soul."

Kept his soul?! Wu Baozhai was shocked, but then she thought about Hong Ru. The girl had been killed before everyone, eaten in half by a beast and crunched into nothing, yet she was resurrected by Wei Wuyin.

"Did you?"

"No. He's dead." Wu Yu said, and then his aura receded completely into the ring. The grief contained in his voice was not false, so Wu Baozhai believed him. If so, why would Wei Wuyin think that Long Chen's soul still remained?

Qing Qiumu walked towards Wei Wuyin. Seeing the strange actions of Wei Wuyin bewildered her. "Are you looking for something?" When she asked this, her eyes turned to Long Chen's dripping head that was held casually by Wei Wuyin. She gulped a little.

Wei Wuyin glanced at Qing Qiumu. He wasn't in the mood to talk or joke around as usual, finding this entire situation outrageous! Did a Mystic Ascendant Realm cultivator arrive in the starfield and act without his notice? Was Long Chen's soul taken away?!

"All of you leave. I've taken control of the Grandquake Array. For now, rest in the city and await further orders." Wei Wuyin directly ordered Tuo Bihan. With a flick of his finger, a grey-colored square-shaped emblem with concentric rings at the center was sent to Tuo Bihan. It was the Commanding Array Key for the Grandquake Array.

After saying this, he gave Qing Qiumu a comforting smile, glancing at Xue Yifei and Wu Baozhai. With a step, he vanished from everyone's sight like a ghost. After using Spatial Shift to travel for roughly a thousand miles, Wei Wuyin held up Long Chen's headless corpse and head.

With a clench of his hands, he infused a bit of power within them.

BOOM!

The head and body exploded into pieces of flesh and bones. The scattered pieces floated before him as he used his Celestial Eyes to observe every trace of Long Chen's body. Yet after this, he found nothing. "My instincts are rarely wrong. Whatever is preventing you from truly dying is here. I know it."

He scoured for an entire hour, yet he found absolutely nothing.

Karmic Luck Value: 944.6.

First Calamity: Survived - 7/7.

Second Calamity: Suppressed - 4 Years.

"You're definitely dead! I need you to speed up! I NEED TO KNOW!" Wei Wuyin roared in anger, a very rare sight. His eyes lifted to observe the Worldly Trend. There was only eleven days until the statfield met the cause of its eventual demise!

This eventuality was unstoppable, even Wang Yutian had said those words. In terms of cultivation, he likely exceeded even those Ascended guardians.

The reason for killing Long Chen was threefold. Firstly, while he wasn't a threat to him, his deranged mentality and status was dangerous to his Valkyries. If he decided to seek revenge by attempting to harm or kill a lover of his, it would be too late to regret.

Secondly, Long Chen had the aura of an Ascendant on him. He had certainly killed a subordinate of his during the trial. While he didn't know who, it didn't matter. He was a man of fierce principle, and anyone who acted against his subordinates would not get to enjoy their lives as they pleased.

These first two reasons were sufficient to kill Long Chen. However, the third was the most crucial: he needed to see if he could defy and perform the otherwise impossible or extremely improbable. The Calamities of Hell were not meant to be accomplished with a Mortal Soul, this was a fact he was extremely clear of.

He had only succeeded last time due to coincidence. After having his mind sealed after his injury, the other 'him' was forced to experience unending torture of losing his loved ones to seeing horrifying futures as realistic as one's breath in a frosty day. Yet the other him was nascent and untethered by emotional memories, so those events were as if they were movies or a play.

How could that 'him' be affected?

When he recalled that Calamity of Hell, he knew he would have completely failed it. He was an emotional and sentimental individual, and lived his life based on principles and morals taught to him by those he respected to the utmost.

The First Calamity held within the first floor of Hell was far too much for him. This was the truth, so how could he hope to survive the second floor of Hell? The Second Calamity that was considered to be far worse than the first? Was all his efforts pointless?

Now, faced with everyone and everything telling him its impossible to stop this ruin, feeling this deeply within his soul, he refused to accept it!

Passing the Second Calamity with his Mortal Soul! Not as a member of the Realm of Sages or with a Soul of True Sin! This should be utterly impossible, but if he could do so, then even facing the eventual destruction of the starfield could be overcome!

"Wait!" At this moment, his turbulent thoughts were struck by a shocking realization. He turned to the floating pieces of flesh and bone that was originally Long Chen's body and head. His silver eyes glowed faintly as seven stars emerged in each eye, each exuded a different color that highlighted and represented the Alchemic Dao!

The Alchemic Stars of Mortal Spirituality! This was the Intent infused in his eyes after concocting a Ninth-Grade Alchemical Product successfully! They were the signs of a Mortal Sovereign Alchemist, an individual that reached the peak of the mortal-tier of the Alchemic Dao!

The things it could see exceeded his Celestial Eyes. He realized this was because his Celestial Eyes grew in power as he ascended the Astral Core Realm, the last stages of the Mortal-tier in cultivation. Even though his cultivation foundation was outstanding, the Gaze of a Celestial within the Celestial Eyes of Spiritual Divinity Method seemed to grow solely from his cultivation base.

When Su Mei was struck by that strange event, his Celestial Eyes was unable to see what was happening, but the Alchemic Stars of Mortal Spirituality infused within his gaze revealed the truth of what was happening.

With the Alchemic Stars of Mortal Spirituality within his eyes, he finally saw something different!

"Is that Long Chen's Soul Aura?!"

### **Chapter 555 - 551: Second Calamity, Begins**

Within the pieces of floating flesh that was originally Long Chen's brain, a faint Soul Aura was being emitted. The Soul Aura was extremely faint, and it expanded and receded as if it was a living heartbeat. The active reactions gave it a feeling as if it was alive.

"What the hell is this?" Wei Wuyun closed in to investigate this anomaly. He discovered a rather peculiar detail regarding this strange fluctuation: the Soul Aura felt as if it was like Intent, a Will of some sort. But this particular Intent was infused heavily with Long Chen's Soul Aura. It was as if a piece of his soul was imbued within permanently, similar to a Spirit of Cultivation forged during the initial stages of the Qi Condensation Realm.



"I've never seen an Intent of this level, even the quintessential foundation of my Elemental Heart Intent that rests within my Sea of Consciousness lacks such qualities. It acts alongside my will, capable of influencing the world itself, but it lacks this lively, growing emission linked to the soul." Curious about this, he couldn't help but think about what outstanding fortune that Long Chen had obtained to acquire something that exceeded the Mortal Limits and carried such strange characteristics. Whatever it was, it must've been exceptional.

After all, Long Chen was certainly dead, yet this Soul Aura suggested that he was alive, and fully at that.. The faint Soul Aura didn't feel like an incomplete soul, and more like how his soul felt before he formed his Spirit of Cultivation, extracting a piece of his soul to form it. However, this was clearly a remnant Soul Aura without any soul attached to it.

This meant that Long Chen's Soul Aura was present, complete and thriving, yet his real soul had long since moved on to the afterlife. The thought of resurrection emerged in his mind, but he didn't feel like this light was similar to Hong Ru's incomplete soul that was acquired by Wu Yu.

"It feels more like this can't be used for resurrection directly, but might be able to locate, summon, or recreate Long Chen's Soul." This conjecture of his felt absurd, yet oddly possible. With his Alchemic Stars of Mortal Spirituality active, he had ideas in relation to using this Soul Aura for a variety of ways. Being keenly aware of how souls traverse the River of Souls and that such beings that have Ascended can surpass Mortal Limits, even extract and preserve detached souls such as Hong Ru with some effort, he felt it could be possible!

Wei Wuyin had to strongly suppress the awe in his heart lest he get lost in endless and imaginary possibilities. Calmly, he reached out to gather the bits of flesh that contained the Soul Aura. When he brought all of it to him, he realized the Soul Aura was only being emitted by a single piece of flesh. It originated from a portion of the brain. If he recalled, this soft portion was likely located at the glabella, the frontal portion of the brain.

"What exactly is this? Well, if the Alchemic Dao can sense it, observe it, then it can also refine it!"

Wei Wuyin exerted his alchemic force to engulf the piece of flesh and slowly contain the Soul Aura. It wasn't as difficult as he imagined and he quickly isolated it, extracting it from the flesh, and brought the faint light to him. When he did, he was met with a strange glob of white light no bigger than a marble. It wiggled chaotically as if slightly unstable, not fully formed.

When it was all fully extracted, taken away from Long Chen's flesh, Wei Wuyin finally felt it!

OOOOM!

The world froze.

That familiar feeling of the Heavenly Daos ensuing wrath was manifesting within Wei Wuyin's heart. However, unlike before, Wei Wuyin wasn't frozen along with the myriad lifeforms of the world. Eden and Kratos had already experienced this sort of freezing once before and expected it, so they reacted instantly as the unknown, unseen, and pervasive force invaded them. With fierce retaliation, they pushed all of it out!

There was no crackling of lightning, thunderous noises, darkening of the skies, or grey-clouds that formed without warning like before. Wei Wuyin only felt raging winds sweep throughout the world, but the wind did not affect a single frozen existence. It was as if it was all fake. Even the grey sand that was showing signs of browning from lack of desolate power remained unaffected. Not a single speck of sand was lifted in these raging gale force winds that could topple entire cities.

Wei Wuyin lifted his gaze towards the sky and noticed that there was a twister descending from the skies with ferocious momentum. It was producing this turbulent wind! The twister's tip was descending upon him!

His first thought was to instinctively move away, dodging this natural disaster that went against the laws of this world. But that's when his Bloodline of Sin tattoo inscribed on his right arm emanated dark-red radiance that flickered continuously.

Ohn!

He finally remembered that his first instinct was to flee from the Heavenly Dao's retribution before as well when he noticed the phenomenon of the clouds and lightning. It wasn't out of fear but self-preservation. An instinct developed in all living beings, especially when facing the heavens! Fortunately, his Bloodline of Sin reminded him of his identity, not just a survivor. The one identity that made it so he can be afraid of cultivators, of life itself, but never be afraid of the Heavenly Daos!

Wei Wuyun regained himself and calmly waited for the narrow and fiercely spiraling twister to descend. As he did, he recalled a distinct and crucial memory from years ago. When he kidnapped Ming Shufeng, using the Spirit Oath, he had forced her to repeat the contents of the eighteen layers.

That was when the Bloodline of Sin had interfered, preventing him from understanding her words with concealments and ear-screeching sounds. It was torture that originated from his very soul, and it was the first time that he felt the faint hypocritical aspects of the Bloodline of Sin.

However, despite such an obstacle, he fought through it and paid the utmost attention to everything. He tried to conceive a pattern to snatch a clue, no matter how small, on how to survive and what to expect. A single piece of information might be what allows him to overcome a Calamity of Hell with a Mortal Soul. He hadn't found much, but he did decipher a little.

It was:

"Second...survive in darkness, life passes."

It was an utterly jumbled and nonsensical mess, but he knew the Second Calamity of Hell, the punishment for those who accrued karmic sin in their lifetime, was based around darkness.

The first trial was the weakest calamity that only the lowest of karmic sinners experienced and was called the Calamity of True Loss. It revolved around cleansing the soul of sinners by plaguing them with alternative scenes of their pasts, presents, and futures, reliving harsh and horrifying memories, experiencing their own death or the constant loss of lives important to them, and then the deterioration and loss of one's greatest, most cherished memories.

It forces you to experience intense, burning agony of living these events over and over until the outer shell of the soul disperses. After the outer shell of the soul had vanished, the sin that infects the soul

would vanish along with it, and the soul can then safely enter the River of Souls to go through the process of reincarnation, losing the individuality that it gained in its lifetime.

This so-called outer shell of the soul could be regarded as one's consciousness that was attached to the soul, adhered to it by Karmic Sin. If one lacked Karmic Sin, then they wouldn't need the cleansing of Hell, directly moving to the River of Souls.

However, with each layer of Hell, the punishment intensified alongside the cleansing strength. It was all for the sake of allowing a soul to undergo reincarnation. However, this was only experienced by sinners.

The fragility of a Mortal Soul was far too great. The Soul of True Sin Method existed solely to temper the soul's outer shell, its consciousness, with Karmic Sin. If the Calamities of Hell couldn't be passed in a way like he had in the First Calamity, then the Inheritors of Sin, those at the Realm of Sages, were meant to forcefully resist the cleansing process with a tempered soul to survive. As for why? He wasn't certain.

With a Mortal Soul without any protection, without the slightest tempering, a single mistake was all it took for his everything to end, for his soul to be cleansed and sent into the reincarnation cycle. All it takes is just one misstep and Wei Wuyin would vanish from this world—forever.

WUUUUM!

The twister had already appeared directly above Wei Wuyin, the tip of which twisted and contorted but inevitably sought after his glabella with unerring accuracy. Once again, he sensed the abnormal power that was alluring, disgusting yet oddly arousing. A bundle of conflicting emotions and feelings as it drilled into his glabella.

Ohn! Ohn! Ohn!

The unique mental alarm of the Bloodline of Sin kept blaring within his mind, and the dark-red tattoo on his arm kept flickering with pure, untainted radiance. The light erupted like an explosion, engulfing Wei Wuyin within just as the twister was a single centimeter from piercing his glabella! The feeling of being branded by this light on every piece of his flesh once again reappeared as the light entered his body.

At his glabella, a small, dark-red diamond consisting of esoteric symbols, runic markings, and sinful light emerged! It had a single golden patch at its center, and it seemed to take on the appearance of an eye! It was horrifyingly abnormal, like a vertical demonic eye with side-ways pupils!

At this point, the twister had touched Wei Wuyin's glabella which emitted a faint silver light. This light emerged and vanished strangely as if it wasn't a part of the sinful ensemble and had only been awakened due to the rousing activity nearby.

The twister was sucked into his glabella at outstanding speeds as images of fierce winds emerged on his skin, lively crawling in motion as if his skin was canvas for which a living painting was contained. But those winds swiftly turned dark-red, tainted by the sinful symbols within Wei Wuyin's body.

In an instantaneous flash of sinful light, all the symbols, marks, even the third eye and raging twister vanished. They seemed to all retract and return to the Bloodline of Sin tattoo.

Karmic Luck Value: 944.6.

First Calamity: Survived - 7/7.

Second Calamity: Suppressed - 4 Years.

-

Karmic Luck Value: 944.6 → 967.6.

First Calamity: Survived - 7/7.

Second Calamity: Suppressed - 4 Years.

-

Karmic Luck Value: 944.6 → 967.6.

First Calamity: Survived - 7/7.

Second Calamity: Suppressed - 4 Years → 3 Years.

-

Karmic Luck Value: 967.6.

First Calamity: Survived - 7/7.

Second Calamity: Suppressed - 3 Years → 0 Years.

-

Karmic Luck Value: 967.6.

First Calamity: Survived - 7/7.

Second Calamity: Initiating.

### **Chapter 556 - 552: Second Calamity, Enveloping Darkness**

"You're so bad!" A coquettish laughter resounded that could cause tingling of the soul. It was accompanied by heavenly laughter of numerous women, like music to the soul. Just from their voices that were as harmonic as an orchestra led by a grand maestro, one could tell every last one of them were beauties of the ages.

"Am I? I'll show you how bad." A manly voice, proud and excited, resounded. The sound of flesh rubbing against each other and suckling of lips and other parts sounded. The man's moans alongside the womens and their playful, seductive laughter left one's imagination running wild.

In what seemed to be a palace forged from silver and gold laid on a large bed enough to accompany thirty individuals was Wei Wuyin, plowing within a bevy of beauties without restraint. The smell of their natural fragrance was intoxicating to the senses.

With roaming hands, he felt mounds of plentiful flesh and outstanding curves. It was enough to salivate any man who understood the fascinating beauty of the woman's form. With a glance down, three heads

fought playfully to claim their prize.. When one of them finally won out, the other two would move to find other areas to take control of, reinitiating the fierce fight after a few moments.

He glanced at their gorgeous faces, blushed and filled with invigorating smiles. With a turn of his head, he saw four women to his right. Another turn, and he saw three girls to his left. A total of ten heavenly beauties!

This scene lasted for hours, days, maybe even weeks as he unleashed all of his pent-up desire on each of their exquisite forms until they would remember him even in their last moments. After weeks, maybe months, perhaps even years, he was finally satisfied as he laid on this gigantic bed with their soft bodies warming him up.

He felt a surge of endless peace overwhelm him. Memories flooded his heart as he recalled his life. After killing the Long Chen, he went on to kill Lin Ming, and found the Temporal Reincarnator. After finding that person, he snatched their piece of the Heavenly Daos and used it to seal the Tiangou that sought to eliminate the starfield.

Solving such a crisis, he relaxed as he celebrated with his women. They were all raring to go, willing and wanting his affection with the most direct manner possible. Without even asking, he was invited by all of them in a proactive fashion to this palace and bed.

He was free to indulge. He deserved this rest. It was the best possible ending that led to solving all his issues. Even the entire starfield had become his, and the name of the starfield had changed to the Neo-Dawn Starfield. This was everything he desired, and he couldn't have planned it better.

...Could he?

"..." He glanced at the exhausted beauties snuggled up to him, trying to inspect their faces yet he found his vision blurring. With a brief shake of his head, he thought: *'I guess I'm just exhausted after sealing that Tiangou. I should rest.'*

He closed his eyes, enjoying the feelings of flesh and being loved. With heavy eyelids, he closed his eyes and drifted off into a sleep.

BOOSH!

A crashing explosion occurred at the entrance of his room, scattering fragments of silver and gold metal throughout the room. Wei Wuyin was shaken awake by the alarming screams of panic and fear from his women. With an enraged snort, he lifted his head to find this disrespectful attacker seeking death!

"Who dares?!" With authority and a powerful roar, he lifted himself half-way off the bed when an overwhelming, heart-quivering aura engulfed him. He had recognized this aura with clarity! Confusion flashed in his gaze as he saw a figure that should've long since been killed!

A handsome face with dark-colored eyes, short hair and a sword that glinted with a sharp, bloody aura ready for war! It was an existence that had lost to his saber!

LONG CHEN!

Shocked, confused, and filled with an array of emotions, he sought to first move and suppress when he found that the aura emitting from Long Chen's body exceeded anything he'd ever seen before!

He turned to his women who were quivering in fear. They spoke, exchanged words with Long Chen, yet Long Chen merely chuckled and laughed. For some reason, he couldn't hear or sense their conversation. It was as if Long Chen's aura had blocked off his senses!

Long Chen moved with extreme quickness, grasping Wei Wuyin's body and giving it a light shove! Like lightning striking the ground, Wei Wuyin's body explosive crashed into the walls that caused endless cracks! What power!

"How?!" Wei Wuyin threw out this one-word question that encapsulated all his current thoughts with a raging roar, finding endless disbelief and uncertainty exploding in his heart. Before, Long Chen was not only killed by him, but his strength was incredibly weak! How could it so drastically change!

Then, he heard Long Chen's voice. It was deeper than before, older. "Haha! You really thought you killed me thirteen years ago? I'm not that easy to kill, you fool. I spent all this time diligently cultivating while you indulged in your desires, and now I'm back to fulfill my promise: Today, I will kill you!" Long Chen's cold, mocking voice sent shivers down one's spine.

Wei Wuyin was baffled! Thirteen years?! Had time really passed so quickly? Had he made a mistake in ensuring that Long Chen was dead? Was this because of negligence?

"Before I do, I'll let you watch as I ravage each and every one of these women of yours. These pathetic traitors, disgusting whores that only know how to seek success. Do you all regret it now?!" Long Chen laughed endlessly as he swept his gazes on the ten outstanding beauties before him.

Wei Wuyin's eyes went bloodshot and an explosive rage overtook him. With all of his power, he forcefully unleashed his everything! A terrifying explosion erupted that shook the entire palace, likely even the planet itself!

Long Chen sneered, "Weak." With a casual swipe of his sword, five sharp lights were born that sliced into Wei Wuyin! His arms and legs were chopped off, and his manhood, a magnificent existence, was severed along with them!

With a bulging pair of eyes, Wei Wuyin gritted his teeth yet his full power did little as the sharp light entered his bleeding stumps and crippled his meridians, devastated his dantian, and eviscerated his Astral Souls. In moments, he was crippled as a cultivator and as a man. There was no worse fate.

Long Chen gave off a malicious smile, grabbing one of these beauties with a sadistic gleam in his eyes. "I thought about it: these women, they aren't worthy enough for me to even ravage. They deserve to live in a total nightmare. And you, you deserve a quick death."

With that, he lifted his blade. Wei Wuyin felt himself superimposed with Long Chen, as if Long Chen was mocking him, he took the same stance he had when he beheaded Long Chen! But he kept his teeth gritted and his eyes matching Long Chen's gaze. The blazing desire to kill had never been more prevalent in his heart than this moment.

"Goodbye, trash." Long Chen swung his sword!

Wei Wuyin felt the cold steel meet his neck and pierce into it. It was as if time had frozen as he felt as if every second was stretched out to days. The triumphant face of Long Chen, the fear and quivering bodies of his lovers, and his weakness was forever branded in his heart.

When the sword completely passed through his neck and separated his head from his body forever, he still had some lingering consciousness as Long Chen took his severed head in his grasp and waved it around before the beauties who grasped and wailed in pain and horror. He felt a sinister void-like blackness encroach the edges of his vision and slowly dilute all of his senses.

*'Is this death? Is this how I die, by beheading? I guess one can't escape fate in the end...'* A seed of regret formed in his heart. If he hadn't indulged in sensual pleasures, continued cultivating, there was no way Long Chen could rival him! No way...right?

Unfortunately, there was no pill for regret, no second chance to change it all.

He heard the final voice of Long Chen, "I lied to this idiot. I intend to enjoy you all before letting you enjoy all the generosity of my friends. Don't be scared; it'll be fun. I'll..."

Darkness overtook him.

### **Chapter 557 - 553: Second Calamity, Calamity Of Endless Regret**

Death.

It was such a simple word but one can typically only experience it once, and before you do, it is as unknown and terrifying as can be. An unavoidable eventuality that all things must experience. It meant the end of everything. It could be painful or painless, but it was always abrupt.

There were many assumptions about what happens after death. There were religions that believed that their souls would be carried by their divinities to eternal lands to live forever alongside their loved ones.

There were those who believed that it all just ended, that there was no reincarnation or divinities that brought one's soul to eternal lands to seek everlasting happiness.

There were those who believed that the soul is cleansed, brought along the River of Souls to be recycled and reborn into new individuals. There were new souls without pasts, but the vast majority of souls were assumed to have experienced at least one lifetime before.

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In this same vein, some believed that they'd been beasts or even inanimate objects like mountains in their past lives. Some believed they were of their species, and their souls can only be reincarnated into their own species.

There were endless beliefs and thoughts on what one would experience upon entering death, but only those who've died could give an answer to this single word: Death.

Step. Step. Step.

A series of pattering steps echoed out. The world was dark without the slightest trace of light. The curtain of darkness that blanketed the world was as endless as the cycle of life and death.

Step. Step. Step.

*'Where am I?'* Wei Wuyin's thoughts were born as he walked, taking step by step in complete darkness. There was no particular direction he traveled or even a reason to move, yet he felt compelled to do so. An unknown amount of time passed before Wei Wuyin recalled his entire life.

He recalled his two memories of being born. The warm, gentle, and gorgeous smile of his silver-eyed mother as she held him. The exhaustion in her eyes from a tiring birth was as prevalent as the sheer happiness she felt. The first memory was filled with endless smiles and a faint humming lullaby that caused his crying to cease then and there.

The second memory was of him remaining utterly silent, observing his mother as she reacted strangely. She seemed to be filled with questions yet she spaced out, unable to react in time.

These two distinct memories kept diverging from his two minds and lived out double his lifetime with tiny deviations during his firsts. The first time he saw, the first time he walked by his own power, the first time he made love, etc.

*'I remember now.'* He finally reached the end. Long Chen's malicious smile as he swiped his sword across his neck, beheading him before his lovers.

*'I'm dead.'*

Step. Step. Step.

*'So, this is death? Darkness? Endless darkness?'*

Step. Step. Step.

*'How tiring, disappointing even.'*

Step. Step. Step.

After every three steps he was allowed thoughts, and he formed those thoughts. He had noticed this pattern instantly, finding such restrictions incredibly odd. But what was he to question death? He had already lost in life, so why did the particulars of death matter to him? Screw it all.

Step. Step. Step.

As Wei Wuyin walked within the empty darkness that seemed as everlasting as the cycle of life and death, a figure, gigantic and ever-looming, was towering outside a spherical world of darkness. This figure had numerous eyes of varying colors, both brightly radiant and darkly dim. Along with these seemingly infinite eyes were infinite arms that stretched out in all directions. Those arms seemed to grasp everything above and below. As for his body, it was indistinct and lacked depth like a shadow.

Below this looming shadow were two smaller winged figures. One of them had bright silver wings with a healthy and vigorous appearance alongside sparkling feathers that emanated dazzling light. The aura of this figure was majestic, yet lacked a particular holy quality that one would expect.



The other had dark crimson wings that were thin, cracked as if extremely dry, and lacked feathers. There was only a thin layer of flesh like a bat, with the bones being overly apparent. The aura of this figure was abundant, yet it lacked a particular malevolent quality that one would expect.

Their faces and bodies were unclear and distorted, yet they were certainly humanoid in shape.

"The Sinner that carries the Bloodline of Pride has returned," the rough and gruff voice of the silver-winged figure resounded. There was a faint expectation in his voice.

"But he still possesses a Mortal Soul. It's too unfortunate that his soul remains untempered by Karmic Sin nor is his Mortal Soul complete. Without reaching the Realm of Sages, he's one step from it all ending; there is no second chance." The crimson-winged figure spoke in a soft, gentle voice that was as delicate as a child's.

"That's more exciting!" The silver-winged figure exclaimed. "He's the only Sinner that carried a Mortal Soul and survived the Calamity of True Loss. Not only did he survive, he overcame ALL seven stages of loss. There has never been a Bloodline of Sin wielder that has survived that, let alone one that carried the Bloodline of Sinful Pride."

"..." The crimson-winged figure didn't speak further. In truth, even it was a little startled by Wei Wuyin's feat. While the Calamity of True Loss was the weakest of the Eighteen Calamities of Hell, it was extremely difficult to overcome as it played upon one's emotions and memories. To overcome all seven either required a strong mind or an emotionless one.

As none of the Bloodline of Sin holders were emotionless, they were always affected and always failed at least a few of the Calamity of True Loss. Of course, they had souls tempered by Karmic Sin, so they could resist the degradation of their outer shell. A Mortal Soul couldn't! Yet Wei Wuyin had accomplished what no other had before!

A flawless run!

The silver-winged figure continued, "The Calamity of True Loss is divided into seven stages, but the Calamity of Endless Regret is only a single stage. Do you think he can make it?"

"...I think eight thousand years." The crimson-winged figure spoke out his thoughts.

"Eight thousand? Only? He can't make the full hundred and eight thousand years? I don't believe it." The silver-winged figure shook his head.

"The Calamity of Endless Regret is about suffering, losing one's sense of self in regret on the long stretch for unreachable salvation. It induces endless despair and isolation, feeling of loneliness. With every negative emotion that emerges, his outer shell will deteriorate. With his soul, he has only one failure. I don't think he can resist the despair, loneliness, and regret." The crimson-winged figure spoke more words than he'd ever had before, clearly he was opinionated on this topic.

"Even if that's the case, I think he'll make it to the end." The silver-winged figure was optimistic. However, there was a clear sense of adamant rejection from the crimson-winged figure.

The Calamity of True Loss tested emotions, how one feels when coming across alternative futures and witnessing endless loss, but the Calamity of Endless Regret instills boundless regret, replacing one's

original death with a devastating one directly after succeeding in their greatest goals in life. The reason for this death was due to their negligence or actions, producing boundless regret.

This regret ate at the soul without end, cleansing the karmic sin and deteriorating one's consciousness. Furthermore, one's memory of other events are unclear except for that particular event. It was utter torture to only remember your greatest possible regret without your five senses, just your thoughts and memories for years and years.

The loneliness. The despair. The isolation.

Unimaginable.

Step. Step. Step.

*'I can't believe I was killed by Long Chen of all people. It's all my fault. I failed all of them. All of them...'*

Not even an hour had passed before this thought formed, followed by a vivid reliving of that event. The smell of fragrant scents and joyous laughter combined with sensual pleasure flashed like lightning to be followed by a thunderous intrusion and a swift, unforgettable death.

Wei Wuyin couldn't escape his thoughts as they were the only things that he could feel. It gave him a feeling of being alive, addicting yet terrifying.

Just as he once more relieved that devastating moment of neglect that led to him losing everything, a soft yet forceful sound replaced his thoughts.

"Tch!"

#### **Chapter 558 - 554: Second Calamity, Never Alone**

"Tch!"

The familiar sound broke Wei Wuyin out of his chaotic thoughts, forcing him to hone onto that voice's origin. He couldn't see, feel, hear, taste, or smell anything as he was, and besides the sensation of steps that seemed both his and not his, there was nothing else. Only his memories and his thoughts seemed to truly exist. All else was illusions.

"Here! Here! Here!" An energetic voice resounded as well, but it too was soft to be heard. Wei Wuyin grew sluggish as he tried to find the origin of the voice, yet he couldn't feel his body. No matter how much he wanted to see, how much he wanted to look around or even turn, he couldn't.

The sensation of isolated despair and chilling dread enveloped his entire mind and every fleeting thought, like cold and wet blankets on a winter day. It was an endless discomfort that refused to slither away from his mind. Wei Wuyin's mind continued to swirl, recalling his death and delved into that vivid memory in continuous repetition.

*'It's all my fault.. I should've...I should've...'*

"Hear us. Hear us!" A voice that seemed to distort throughout time and space, quivering the senses until surrealism, echoed out endlessly. It pleaded and shouted.

Yet Wei Wuyin's thoughts were ensnared further into that memory, thinking about the fate of his women that likely suffered unbearable grievance. The thought of another person torturing them with delight, mocking him in death, was pounding his heart. It was painful and if he could feel his eyes, he felt an urge to cry out.

*'I didn't deserve it. I didn't cherish them. I should've...I should've...'*

All the power and talent he had, all the numerous means he possessed, yet he had neglected the fundamental foundations of happiness in this vast world of cultivation: Strength. Only with the strength and willpower to step forward could one grasp their own fate. It required an relentless desire that was like an insatiable hunger.

"Life isn't about looking back and wishing for change. Remember this, little demon, life is about moving forward to ensure that you'll never have to look back in regret, to never want change of the past. Do you understand me?"

A gentle, warm, and familiar voice resounded within those twisted and sinking thoughts. They battered the walls of Wei Wuyin's mind with relentless fervor, declaring war upon the horrific thoughts of regret, depression, and hopelessness.

*'...Who?'*

Step. Step.

Wei Wuyin halted his third step, seemingly standing in place despite the urge that originated from his entire existence to push forward in this dark, unfeeling world without an end. The boundless darkness rippled as a faint glowing silhouette flickered into existence.

The silhouette effused warm rays of light that comforted the soul, taking one away from the traumatic pain of one's own thoughts and exhaustion.

A soul was the amalgamation of individuality. This individuality was often described as personality, but it wasn't so simple. It was an interconnected complex system of experiences, thoughts, and emotions that established a way that the soul responds to stimuli.

A man drenched in fear their entire life will run away when threatened. If there was no way to run, a breakdown would ensue. It is because fear and escape was all he'd ever experienced, thought about, and felt within his heart. This defined who he was—a coward.

A woman given nothing, forced to fight for survival will similarly run if threatened, but stand their ground if there is no escape. Even at the cost of her life, she would fight to the bitter end without hesitation. This defined who she was—a survivor.

"See us."

Wei Wuyin's entire life flashed before his mind in incredible vividness. He saw the gentle smile of his mother, heard the stern words of his brother, and felt the soul-ripping pain of his past. He recalled who he was, the man forged from his experiences, thoughts, and emotions. He lived by principles and a set of morals of his own making, influenced by his greatest beliefs.

Within the darkness, two faint and dimly lit silver lights slowly emerged. It was as if an individual was opening his eyes for the first time in a thousand years, with eyelids that were as heavy as a world. With a trembling lift, the eyes slowly escaped and were clearly seen within the darkness.

There was no silhouette that glowed before those eyes, yet they quivered without end.

*'I understand...I understood.'* Wei Wuyin felt the awareness of his sense of self had returned. The memories that had been vague and distorted had been returned, brought to the forefront of his thoughts and resisting the feelings of dreadful despair.

"He's awake! He's awake! He's awake!" Ori's exuberantly vibrant voice echoed within the darkness.

"Tch." King's judgmental sound followed, and it clearly carried a hint of impatience. He was dissatisfied that Wei Wuyin took so long to escape. Yet the reverberation of relief was also included in that single sound.

"There's nothing that can halt us!" Kratos' powerful voice exploded in raging excitement.

"Good." Eden's content voice was last yet the most impactful. Wei Wuyin could feel it the most and while it had never called out to him, it had performed the most.

Wei Wuyin's silver eyes observed only darkness, and he couldn't feel his body. With a brief glance around, Wei Wuyin calmly muttered to himself: "So it worked." A satisfied glint flashed past those silver eyes.

"It did! It did! What's next?!" Ori spoke, far too excited to keep its voice down and controlled. However, Wei Wuyin found only comfort in its energy. It had been a risk, yet to think that he'd be able to accomplish the first steps of his plan.

When Wei Wuyin had first gathered the details of the Second Calamity, that it was surrounding darkness and surviving, his first thought was the overall goal of the calamity. Darkness was often regarded as being encroaching and overbearing, so he feared that his sense of self would be stripped away or details of himself would be taken away.

The first solution in overcoming this trial was to reverse this process. Unfortunately, he didn't have much else to go on despite his tortuous experience with Ming Shufeng. However, he delved into the Scripture of Sin and made some conclusions.

The Calamity of Hell's explanation stated that one's soul would be drawn into the Calamity, and this likely meant his entire soul! It was very likely that his Astral Souls, forged from a portion of his soul, might be brought along. Instantly, he sought out answers from King and Ori regarding their experiences.

Unfortunately, they were sealed and dormant at the time alongside him and their sense of self was still in the midst of being developed. They had determined that they felt foggy throughout the incident. There weren't any assurances, but if they were brought along, they might be able to help reestablish his sense of self.

As long as he survived this darkness, he would be able to overcome the trial. He just couldn't afford a single mistake. Not only had his Astral Souls been brought here, but his Celestial Eyes were continuously active. While it was ineffective in this environment, it was an unexpected discovery met with joy.

If he reached higher levels, these Celestial Eyes of his might bring him unimaginable advantages in surviving upcoming calamities.

*'If it wasn't for your voices, I might have never regained myself. Thank you.'* Despite having no senses of his body outside of thoughts, he felt a chilling shiver course through his spine. This Calamity of Hell was terrifying. It created an alternative future of the most horrible mistake a person could make, and then stripped one's sense of self until only that mistake defined them. They were engulfed by despair and agony over their mistake that their regret would eventually consume them.

They would slowly descend into utter madness. It was exceptionally cruel, even more so than the Calamity of True Loss that showed alternative pasts and futures of losing those you loved. That was merely death, but here, death was the defining start, not the end result.

He was more agonized over his negligence than the loss of his pride or dignity at a humiliating death. It was he who caused it to occur! It produced turmoil that ripped at his soul and he hadn't even felt the pain he was causing, but after regaining himself, he was very well aware of his soul state.

Since becoming an Inheritor of Sin, meeting the Black Skeleton, his awareness of his soul was extraordinarily clear and defined. It was how he recreated a better version of the Haven Heart Qi Method, forging four Spirits of Cultivation.

At the moment, the outer shell of his soul had been grinded away until twenty percent had remained. He had only a fifth of his outer shell that kept his individuality, his self, attached to his soul!

A FIFTH!

He was shaken.

*'How long has it been?'* He couldn't tell the passing of time. It could've been a second or ten years. It was hard to tell.

"...Three minutes, twenty-two seconds." Kratos answered, a hint of graveness within its voice.

*'Just three minutes?'* With a Mortal Soul, he lost eighty percent of his outer shell in three minutes!!!

A few dozen seconds more and it was over, his soul would lose its outer shell, his individuality and consciousness would be dissipated while his soul moved to the River of Souls after this terrifying cleansing.

*'What matters now is overcoming this calamity.'* He thought, pushing the unchangeable to the furthest reaches of his mind. With a renewed self, he followed the urge of his soul to continue forward.

Step. Step. Step.

### **Chapter 559 - 555: Secondary Calamity, Affecting Souls**

A boundless world of infinite darkness, absent of the slightest trace of light. Hope was not permitted here, and the endless desire to move without purpose or reason wore upon the soul at its most vital essence. This darkness wasn't alone, accompanied by vivid memories of the most terrifying memory a cultivator could possess, tailored made for them.

Wei Wuyin lost eighty percent of his soul's outer shell in a matter of three minutes, and this affected him drastically. The outer shell of the soul was a living being's existential consciousness. It defined who they were, tethered their memories, emotions, and experiences to the core of the soul, shaping it and creating individuality.

To lose eighty percent of it was not to be underestimated, and if it wasn't for his unique location, he might lose himself in madness at the incomplete portions of himself. Fortunately, he had four Astral Souls who helped instill his emotions, memories, and experiences back into his thoughts.

After regaining his sense of self, Wei Wuyin had to relive his entire life to regain himself, and more than once. It was only then that his soul's outer shell that sculpted his individuality started to make repairs, restoring itself little by little.

*'This world is without end, and it takes away all your senses.. I know my soul is here, but as an Inheritor of Sin, my physical body should be present as well. This separates me from normal souls, yet I feel almost entirely disconnected. I can only feel the steps I take to move forward.'* Despite opening his Celestial Eyes to observe the world, the enveloping darkness was ever-present. He wasn't even certain if he was actually moving or not.

"Strange," Eden calmly remarked.

"Tch." King urged Wei Wuyin to slice through the darkness with that single sound. With its edge, what darkness? What calamity? Just end it all. If one swing won't do, then use two. If not two, use three!

Wei Wuyin ignored such urgings. He couldn't even feel his arms or legs, let alone his dantian or cultivation. It was as if he was just a wad of thoughts in motion, strange and hopeless.

"If we want to leave, even this trifling Hell can't stop us!" Kratos' response wasn't much different from King's, focused on escaping. As an Astral Soul forged by the Dao of Void, it believed that there wasn't a single location in the world it can not go or leave from. Whether it could or not, Wei Wuyin wasn't really sure.

However, Wei Wuyin wasn't too far gone yet. Their desires stemmed from the dangerous and terrifying environment that they were in. He could still feel the unease and discomfort from their voices, and this revelation placated his own fears after realizing that he wasn't alone.

After regaining his sense of self, his soul's outer shell was slowly restored little by little, while the memory of Long Chen's revival and revenge kept springing into his memory every three seconds. He was forced to halt his thoughts, relive that moment in vivid detail, and then was returned to this world of endless darkness with the urge to take a step.

After three steps, which took three seconds, this process would repeat itself.

*'If I wasn't aware of myself, I would've sunk deeper into regret until my soul lost its individuality, being sent to the River of Souls after this cleansing. Yet the calamity has little impact on an alert version of my thoughts now.'*

He didn't know if having a tempered soul meant retaining more of one's awareness in this situation or that the deterioration of the soul's outer shell was drastically reduced. There were too many uncertainties and unanswerable questions. The core issue was that his soul wasn't tempered and he

wasn't in the Realm of Sages. From the beginning, he was given the most terrifying set of pitifully low odds of survival to face this situation.

It was incredibly unfair.

It was fortunate that he never dwelled on the concept of fairness in this world of cultivation. After all, if he hadn't been passed the mantle of Inheritor of Sin, his life might've come to an end by Long Chen's sword already. It wasn't fair to Long Chen that he survived, that he thrived, and that the future had changed where Long Chen lost his life to him instead.

Step. Step. Step.

Three thousand and forty-five.

This was the number of times that he'd relived that vivid memory. It had lost all effect on his thoughts and emotions. To relive the same horrifying event as if it was fresh with a deluded consciousness was terrifying, compounding the affliction to one's sanity. One thousand and fifteen, that was the number of times he'd experienced it. A little over fifty minutes.

"When will it end? I don't like this!" Ori declared, the wariness within its voice was abundantly clear. Unlike Wei Wuyin who viewed it all with a firm and cold mindset, apathetic to it all with his regained sense of self, it still affected the four Astral Souls.

They had their own individuality and experienced all the things he did, but their reactions weren't exactly the same as his own. Ori, for example, angrily shook every time Long Chen burst through the door and then felt further enraged after being helpless and forced to experience weakness before death.

Be it King, Kratos, or Eden, they all had different feelings and emotions towards this event, yet they were all filled with one single emotion that tied them together: frustration. To them, it was as much their fault as Wei Wuyin's.

They could externalize. They could cultivate independently yet they hadn't. They stayed complacent and enjoyed their luxurious status and indulged in gorgeous beauties while neglecting their strength. Long Chen's triumph was more on them, less on the others. This was what each of them felt individually.

Kratos felt that it should've sensed Long Chen coming. It was a Void Dragon! If anything, it should've been able to escape as it pleased with its siblings and Wei Wuyin! What's the point of being Void if he was forced to watch those close to him die? What's the point in being a dragon?!

Eden cursed its negligence. At the very least, it should've kept the others on a path of improvement, kept them focused, and concocted more alchemical products to ensure their safety. To it, their loss was all on its laziness! It had lived and experienced the most out of everyone, yet it still was so stupid!

King was the one who felt the worst out of the four. It was unable to even swing out a single time in this memory, being as useless as a third nipple. What's the point of being a saber if you were unable to slash? To cut? To kill?! Its Saber Intent was forged on the basis of Wei Wuyin's belief to emerge only when to protect or to kill. Yet he couldn't do either.

'...You all...are you...' The intensity of their emotions were growing by the second. Wei Wuyin was shaken by this. He hadn't expected that they would all suffer alongside him in this calamity, feeling the indignation, defeat, regret, frustration, and helplessness he felt.

'Stay focused!' Wei Wuyin mentally howled. It shook the four Astral Souls until their thoughts synchronized and united. It was only then that they realized the thoughts each of them had. This ability to connect their thoughts together was miraculous, enough for them to use each other as protective cushions and safety nets.

'It can affect my Astral Souls now? Or is this just an unexpected consequence of their sentience?' Wei Wuyin was thoroughly intrigued by this discovery, realizing that these Astral Souls of his had as much individuality and independent thoughts, emotions, and experiences as great as his own.

Fortunately, they hadn't suffered any damage to their structure. It seemed the Calamity of Hell's cleansing effect that was generated by the feeling of regret didn't affect them. It was likely because they weren't its target. He noted this peculiarity down as he kept 'moving' forward.

"That was scary. Really scary." Ori meekly stated, a large portion of its energy had been drained by its own thoughts.

Wei Wuyin agreed, comforting Ori before once more reliving the memory of Long Chen's revenge brought about by his weakness and neglect. With every experience, he felt himself become less and less impacted by this memory.

'If I survive this, I'll never neglect my cultivation. I'll never allow anyone I offend to survive to harm me. If I strike the tree, even the roots will be pulled.' Wei Wuyin felt his willpower become reinforced by this experience, like a form of relentless training. He felt his heart solidify towards the pursuit of power, a desire of unquenchable thirst to obtain strength above all else formed. With unrivaled power, such a situation would become impossible!

Those silver eyes of his exuded a colder light than before, and despite seeing nothing but darkness, it mercilessly swept the world with that terrifying radiance.

"NO!"

"STOP!"

"TCH!"

"You can't! You can't! YOU CAN'T!"

Four simultaneous voices exploded in his thoughts, shaking him so intensely that he felt the entire world of darkness quake!

Wei Wuyin halted his steps, feeling his consciousness was tiny and near the edge of dissipation. It was only after those thunderous shouts that he discovered that his soul's outer shell that had recovered a large portion of itself had been severely degraded! It was as if he was hanging from a sharp cliff with his fingertips. Just a slight movement and he would be sent to the endless chasm below.

There was less than two percent of his outer shell left!!!



## Chapter 560 - 556: Second Calamity, Staying True

Two percent?

Two percent?!

TWO PERCENT?!

He was mistaken!

Tittering on the precipice of death, Wei Wuyin's response was delayed yet extremely forceful. He refused the urge to move, to take that next step into the darkness as he anxiously delved into his memories in hopes to retain the little bit of himself that remained.

*'W-w-wha-what h-happe-ened?'* The feeling of his consciousness hanging on the edge was quite strange. There was no pain. There was no feeling of anxiety. There were no alarms to speak of. Yet he knew death was just a single breath away.

Besides King, the three other Astral Souls simultaneously spoke out in hurried panic. Their mixed words were extremely confusing to him who was concentrating on maintaining his sense of self and resisting the urge to traverse the darkness.. The jumbled mess offered no help, but he determined one definitive thing from their words: they didn't know.

Somehow, his outer shell that had restored itself and reaffirmed his sense of self had started to rapidly deteriorate once again. They hadn't even noticed until they felt the threat of dissipating themselves! If it wasn't for their alert, he wouldn't have noticed it at all.

For now, he had to try to recover once more before anything else. The four Astral Souls helped, sending bits of vivid memories that they recalled that shaped and birthed his individuality.

The day he met Du Ling.

As a young child, he ventured out often as the little lord of the Wei Clan who owned Red Dove City. The entire city respected him and he was quite playful at the time. His clan's city had a strict rule of executing criminals in a very public fashion, and a group of criminals from the Bucklion Gang had been recently detained by his older brother and were being executed one by one.

Du Ling was a causality of timing, yet he hadn't known that at the time. When Du Ling was given the chance to say his last words, the fear and despair on his face was as obvious as the full moon in a cloudless sky. Facing death, that fear of the end, terrifying exhaustion, and grievance in his heart, his last words were:

"I'm hungry."

The crowd went silent for just a moment before erupting in rambunctious laughter, as expected, when they chastised the fool who was about to lose his head. While the world laughed, those words struck a chord with Wei Wuyin. It allowed him to realize that even in the most dangerous of times, hopelessness and despair flooding the heart, the mind would always desire something else.

It could've been a slip of the tongue. A moment of confusion brought about by fear, but when Wei Wuyin, the child that he was, experienced all of this, it changed his mental image and perception towards everyone forever. Even a criminal about to taste death.

On a whim, he halted Du Ling's execution and offered him an apple. He saw Du Ling refuse to eat the apple, so he thought Du Ling wanted something else to eat. Then, they traveled together through it all. After his clan was exterminated, Du Ling never left his side.

His loyalty and trust was unquestionable. While he made mistakes here and there, it wasn't too important.

The day he met Su Mei.

After becoming a Core Disciple of the Scarlet Solaris Sect, on his way to pick up Bai Lin, he met Su Mei being abused by the harem she was a part of. Intrigued, he watched as Du Ling pointed out the owner of this harem was an outer disciple who was watching such abuse with delight.

One of the best decisions of his life was descending down and saving her. He pointed out her current circumstance, how she suffered under the watch of her trash of a man, and gave her the same question that he learned from Du Ling.

When asked that question, Su Mei responded with hesitation. In the end, he offered to take her somewhere else to figure it out. Since then, Su Mei had proven that she was hungry, and she was hungry for life more than most. She fought and trained ferociously, becoming his most capable lieutenant.

He learned a truth about humanity that day, and that all that was needed was a desire and a chance to forge something miraculous and outstanding. The question transformed into something profound, containing more meanings than just if the person wanted to eat, but if they wanted more in the face of all struggles.

These memories segwayed into his struggles in the Scarlet Solaris Sect, the schemes, the assassinations, and the challenges that he had to overcome. The allies he made, the enemies that sought after his life, and the pain of cultivating with everything he had.

He felt the sense of accomplishment at every victory he obtain, a feeling of pain at every loss he suffered, and a feeling of satisfaction at every success in his cultivation.

Before long, he had restored nearly thirty percent of his outer shell. With a refreshed sense of self, he calmly asked: *'Did the darkness just act to cleanse my outer shell without cause? I'm no longer affected by the tortuously vivid memory of Long Chen's victory, of my fatal negligence, so how did this happen?'*

"..." The four Astral Souls still couldn't answer. They knew nothing of this Calamity of Hell outside of those few words extracted by Ming Shufeng. Fortunately, Wei Wuyin hadn't asked them. He was asking himself.

While his Astral Souls were sentient, intelligent and self-aware, they lacked a critical aspect that could easily be overlooked: they weren't very good at learning, deducing, or explaining things. They could cultivate by themselves, a natural instinct of theirs as Spirits of Cultivation, but they couldn't train in arts, spells, methods or even concoct alchemical products by themselves.

They weren't complete souls, and they lacked this vital aspect. They thrived off what Wei Wuyin already knew or what their Daos were composed of. If Wei Wuyin was ignorant of something, they were similarly ignorant. If they knew of something, then Wei Wuyin already knew of it, but his mind would take a little longer to bring it out.

*'Think Wuyin, think. What changed?'* He hurried his mind to recall all his thoughts prior to the degradation. There wasn't much, so he pinpointed a peculiar detail. *'Before their shouts, I was thinking to myself that I would never neglect my cultivation.'*

That was it!

Wei Wuyin's silver eyes brightened in the darkness. This trial was based on causing the soul to experience a cleansing induced by regret, but regret didn't just manifest in the wallowing of the past, but the willingness to change oneself for the future! While he was aware of the falseness of the memory, it infused him with sufficient regret to induce a change in character, in thinking.

*'I'll never indiscriminately kill simply because someone wants to harm me or my interests. Killing is an extreme, and solving one's every problem with it wasn't always the best course of action. I certainly can't make it my only solution. I learned this long ago. If I was like this, I would've killed everyone in the Scarlet Solaris Sect that day. I would've upturned everyone's lives, slaughtered them and their children, family members, and spouses. To ensure there were no roots left behind.'*

*'I would've destroyed the entire sect! That's not me. I no longer cultivate to strive for power, but to strive for freedom and life.'* A calming sensation enveloped him, as if an invisible pair of hands grasping his throat had loosened its grip.

A cold, vicious mentality was forming within him and it was fueled by regret from his negligence.

*'So that's how it is. How terrifying! Just being affected by regret through any way is enough to cleanse the outer shell. What type of Calamity of Hell is this? Feels more like a trap. How could one not change their thinking even if they've obtained their awareness?!'*

This Calamity of Hell wasn't simple by any means. He had to ensure that he was completely unaffected by the memory, that he stayed true to himself. It was this self of his that was resisting the calamity, so he must not lose it.

"What's next?" Kratos asked. Despite his dignity as a Void Dragon, a being that could enter anywhere and escape everywhere, there was a lingering sensation of unease within its voice. This calamity had given it too many frights and it was the closest that its ever experienced death.

They all knew that if Wei Wuyin lost his soul's outer shell, his soul would be whisked away to the River of Souls. They would be forced to go along with it.

*'We stay true to ourselves. We continue forward.'* The urge to move was becoming too much for him to resist. If he continued resisting, he felt that his soul might instantly disperse.

Step. Step. Ste-

He stopped.