

## PARAGON 20

### Chapter 20 - 20: Inheritance

Before Wei Wuyin could react, his vision experienced an abrupt collapse as his world became dark. The darkness was cold, sinister, and gloomy. The only sound he could hear was the declining throbbing of his heartbeat.

He felt death.

It tasted like iron grinding on one's tongue, and felt icy like a frozen tundra. However, the fear that he had expected to overwhelm him did not come. It was instead a feeling of calm indifference that entered his heart and mind.

He sent out his spiritual sense in an attempt to gain an understanding of his current state, but all that he sensed was darkness, cold and lonely darkness. A bottomless pit that never met an end. It didn't fall, but simply kept one in a state of stasis.

Wei Wuyin felt cold. A sense of existential dread surged into his mind.

Was this death?

Is this how it felt to be dead?

Time flowed on.

A minute.

An hour.

A day.

A week.

A month.

It continued for years.

At some point, he lost the will to calculate time. It could've been decades or centuries...maybe even millennia. He was alone with his thoughts. This period of isolation could provoke insanity, but Wei Wuyin felt clear-headed.

Many questions he had in life were answered. While he did recall his past, that was merely a brief moment before his mind shifted elsewhere.

"The spirit is the soul and the soul is the spirit. When I created my spirit, I used my soul as its source!" He felt like he touched upon something simple yet incredibly profound.

"If I sever my spirit, I'll have an imperfect spirit. No amount of nourishment would make two halves whole, but if I could condense a new spirit from my soul. This...normally, it would be impossible, but I already have a new mind, a fresh physical aura, and purer essence! The Haven Heart Qi Method is flawed!"

As he pondered those countless years, he figured out an issue with this ancient qi method. He couldn't feel his body or life, but he knew it was there. He had to believe it was.

Slowly, he meditated.

It took an unknown period of time before he connected with his soul on an enlightened level. Normally, contact with the soul was beyond difficult. However, during Qi Condensation, one catches a glimpse of their soul within their soul sea. They would take a fraction of a fraction of a fraction of spirituality from the soul, and condense their Metaphysical Qi.

However, one must reach the requirement of mind, matter, and essence before that could be achieved. Now that Wei Wuyin had established all new versions of those, he once again started the process.

Poof!

Without warning, without any suspense, his four qualities merged in perfect unison as if they were a practiced quartet. Having gone through this transformation before, Wei Wuyin knew how difficult it was to condense qi, but the second time around was as easy as breathing.

In truth, if he had severed his spirit, he would've required the fifth and sixth level of the Qi Method, especially the Haven of Heaven level. That was a protective barrier that made up for the inadequacies of a severed spirit. The sixth level is nourishing the two spirits until completion and creating a myriad of hearts.

While it may sound grand, it left many issues behind that could affect a person's future cultivation. Particularly, breaking through the Qi Condensation to the Realm beyond.

Now, Wei Wuyin felt that his body had two, perfectly synchronized and compatible Heart of Qi.

"I can feel it?" He had now realized that he could feel his qi in this black void. He felt the rotation of his qi, the absorption of essence from the outside, and the return of strength in his body.

"I'm not dead...I'm NOT dead! I'M NOT DEAD!!!" An intense emotion of relief and excitement erupted from his very soul. Now, all he needed to do was wake up!

Just wake up!

WAKE UP, GODDAMNIT!!!

"Gasp!!!"

A pair of silver eyes opened as Wei Wuyin's body exhaled deeply, his body lurched into a sit-up position. He grabbed the grass and ground to steady himself. His breathing was long and powerful, as if every breath of air was precious beyond belief.

"The..." he tried to look for the black skeleton, but found nothing. Looking to the skies, he realized it was night as the astral stars shone brilliantly. A grin, one of happiness, crept to his lips.

"What was that all about?" As he said that, a black color caught his eye. He looked towards his right arm and realized that it was now entirely covered with tattoos. These tattoos were beautiful, and looked similar to mystical runes or divine letters.

As he held his arm up to get a better look, a burning pain erupted in the back of his head. He grasped his head slightly. A fear emerged in his heart as he did not wish to experience that pain or isolation again.

Luckily, the burning pain lasted for a mere few seconds before he felt a gush of new information enter his mind. There were three scriptures in his mind now.

The first was the Scripture of Karmic Sin & Karmic Luck. It denoted the teachings of sin and luck, how it is obtained, how it is avoided, how it is changed, and how it can be stolen.

It was systematic in structure and ranks for calamities and benefits. The first part of the scripture answered a question he had from the beginning: "Birth."

When the black skeleton informed him of his fate, she had said his karmic luck had been too little to survive the upcoming calamity, and he was born with a numerical designation of 2.2. He had expended his luck starting from when he entered the Scarlet Solaris Sect.

Everything he'd experienced as a fortuitous encounter, as dumb luck, seemed to have been geared for him to benefit. Even the Three-Point Yin Body female he found.

In the scripture, it said that the concept of rebirth and reincarnation was true. When one is reborn, their karmic value is reset and they can gain or lose karmic value during their life. If one is reincarnated, they retain their karmic luck to pass into the next life.

"To think there truly is an afterlife," was what he took from this. If someone had just told him these things randomly, he would've told them to piss off, but now...

According to the scripture, anyone who earns enough karmic value in their life, can live amongst the Heavenly Daos in peace until a certain point of time, where they'll be reborn. Those who gain enough karmic value relating to sin, they'll be sent into Hell.

A place where there was only one description, a single word in the scripture: Suffer.

The very thought sent shivers as his imagination went wild. "So, a person can live according to the Heavenly Daos concept of good in their life but they can't obtain karmic luck until the next life, only karmic value? However, they can gain karmic sin?" As he read this part, his expression turned ugly. Then, he sighed.

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Supposedly, there were three thousand commandments of the Heavenly Daos. If you break one, you receive a negative karmic value or karmic sin, and if you follow one, then you gain a positive karmic value or karmic luck. As he read these three thousand commandments, he flipped out and became enraged.

He didn't even want to read more.

He felt like these things shouldn't be read by mortals. They could scar one's will or perception of the world's sense of morality. Some of these commandments were straight evil. For example, there was a commandment that had to do with killing and the judging of it.

As long as one kills another who has karmic relations with them, it was fine and dandy. And 'karmic relations' was a very loose terminology. It simply meant, as long as you killed people you knew for more than a few minutes of casual engagement or had a connected history with, you're okay. However, if you kill someone you never interacted with on any connected level, it's a negative karmic value.

This was a complex, ambiguous concept. This meant that as long as someone from a clan, sect, or force offended you, you can slaughter their family and power without accruing a hint of karmic sin. However, let's say you saw a stranger being taken advantage of or possibly close to being raped, if you interfered and killed the culprit, you sinned. After all, that stranger and perpetrator held karmic links to you.

However, there was another one that says if you're fighting on the orders of another, as long as your actions are aligned with their will, you'll be free of sin, and all of it will pile on them. Soldiers were given a pass, but all general's likely went to Hell.

Another one, which was beyond ambiguous was the concept of theft. You can steal, but you can't steal more than you need. This was so ambiguous he didn't even want to delve into it.

The commandments overlapped too, so you can break ten and follow two, and your value would be scored as such. It wasn't possible to follow this. It was arbitrarily structured and lacked any cohesive belief or understanding of general morality.

Recalling the words of that madman prisoner, he said that he had done nothing 'wrong' yet he suffered. It seems by the heavens, he was deemed a sinner, but morally speaking - the human moral sense, he may have been an upright person. Then, he suffered a calamity that he could not avoid.

Incredible.

The next scripture was the Bloodline of Sin.

"Wait..." as he read through the information in his mind, his eyes widened as he looked at his right arm. Those symbols were physical manifestations, like birthmarks, that identified those who held the Bloodline of Sin.

"The Bloodline of Sin originates from the First Sinner. It allows the absorption of Karmic Sin. However, it can evade the eye of heaven. According to it, 'Whoever is the wielder of the Bloodline of Sin, shall not be judged by the Daos of Heaven.' That's..."

As he recalled how karmic sin can be accumulated and provoke a calamity, while karmic luck can only be gained for the next life, he felt some relief. At least his actions can not provoke calamities.

"This? Those who wield the power of Sin will have to undergo the Eighteen Calamities of Hell after obtaining the Rights of a Sinner? What type of bullshit is this? So I can avoid the calamities brought by the heavens but not by Hell?" He felt like crushing something.

He really didn't even want to sift through this anymore. All he knew was that the Eighteen Calamities of Hell were random and can not be divined by those who can see worldly fate. So, he'll have to go through these calamities randomly and without warning. Not to mention, he had to overcome them or die.

Moreover, he had to pass a trial against heaven, earn the Rite of a Sinner, before he could awaken the Eighteen Calamities of Hell?!

What type of inheritance was that?!

"Hm...the third scripture...Soul of True Sin. A soul cultivation art? By absorbing karmic sin through the Bloodline of Sin, I can temper my soul?" As he read through this, he frowned. The soul was a concept he had barely come into contact with, and even still, it was too little.

"The black skeleton said that if it wasn't for this calamity, she would've waited until I reached the Realm of Sages...does that have something to do with the soul? Is this the true inheritance?" As he pondered more on the subject, he felt that that was indeed the case. Not to mention, the black skeleton kept saying things relating to his soul in the beginning.

He had obtained the technique prematurely and thus, he had no use for it. Again, he sighed.

All three of these scriptures left him sighing with all sorts of emotions. He gained pretty much nothing from this, just a rather dreary understanding of the world.

"Hm?" His eyebrows furrowed as he looked at his tattoos. "This!!" A wave of shock battered his mind.

He saw a number on the tattoos. It was a very simple number but it hit three digits: "176."

The number didn't shock him, but what it represented! It was his Karmic Luck Value!!!

In the scripture - Bloodline of Sin, it mentioned using positive karmic value to gain immediate karmic luck via the bloodline. However, your own actions and sin can not be counted as the Heavenly Daos can not judge you, but the karmic value of others, and the main way to obtain it was through...an exchange. This was why he didn't take much notice of it. The willing exchange was essentially asking someone to give you the luck they would have in their next life, or their ticket to literal heaven.

Who would agree to anything like that willingly?

Not even a saint would be willing to give you everything they've worked their life towards, even if it would save your own.

"How did I?!" His mind raced like rapid winds as he tried to figure out a reasoning. "Wait...the tens of thousands of people..."

As he thought of the black skeleton snatching those people, the more likely it seemed. They were mentioned as 'Blessed' briefly by the skeleton. Could it be?

Ohn!

As he thought of that, he felt his arm sting a little. He looked at it and saw the number dwindle as it went from 176 to 171.2. His eyes twitched slightly.

Wuung~

An odd sound whirled into being. It felt like the whistling of grass. Wei Wuyin looked towards the grass and his eyes widened in disbelief. A pure, emerald color glowed around him originating from the grass in the clearing. He looked upwards towards the sky and saw a brilliant full moon. It was beautifully silver and left one's heart filled with serenity.

This emerald glow became lights as emerald motes like fireflies started to rise from the grass. His eyes shrunk in disbelief. The motes of light contained a vibrant lifeforce unlike any he'd ever seen before.

"Life Meadow Wood Essence?!" The disbelief turned to shock which turned into a sense of surrealism. The Life Meadow Wood Essence was one of the top three recorded wood essences known to cultivators. However, it would only appear randomly, and sometimes, reports of it appearing can be hundreds of years apart.

It contained a lifeforce that was beyond miraculous, could be used to heal the most horrendous of wounds, or even restore one from a state of near death, possessed a unique resistance against a myriad of poisons, and was powerful to boot. If someone could condense wood qi from this fully, they would gain all of these traits.

The last person to condense it left a legend that reached even today, lasting thousands of years. The Wood King of Everlore. A figure who united the surrounding countries under his name. When he ascended to the stars, it was said that his empire collapsed and created what became the Seven Countries of the Myriad Yore Continent.

The Wu Country was merely one of them.

He reached out and touched the emerald motes. They entered his body without the slightest resilience.

"I lost 4.8 Karmic Luck for this...is this an opportunity?" Wei Wuyin knew that finding the Steel Essence Source was considered worth a 0.5 while his discovery of the Three-Point Yin Body female was 0.8. Now, for it to take an entire 4.8...

He did not want to waste this opportunity. It was one that could only be chanced upon, a blessing from the heavens themselves.

He sat down and started to circulate his Heart of Qi. "Oh!" He had nearly forgotten, he had two Heart of Qi! As he inspected them, they were like carbon copies. The second Heart of Qi seemed to have wildly absorbed the first Heart of Qi's energies while he was out and reached completion. They were both at the standard of the Fifth Phase!

He started to circulate his Hearts of Qi, absorbing the Life Meadow Wood Essence! With two, he found that they complemented each other, devouring nearly four-times what he could do with just one. It was as if he had four Heart of Qi working in conjunction!

"It seems achievements I make myself with opportunities presented normally don't consume Karmic Luck, only the opportunities discovered with its support. I condensed Violet Lightning Qi, cultivated the Haven Heart Qi Method to completion, and used the rewards of the sect to enter the Yang Yore Fields, but the Black Skeleton hadn't mentioned it, nor did I lose Karmic Luck..."

As he came to this realization, he also realized that the benefits obtained from these lucky chances was still what you can take from it, rather than receiving automatic benefits. So, even if someone else was given this lucky chance, they may not condense their wood qi or the Meadow Life Wood Qi.

He would not waste this opportunity!