

Chapter 341 - 337: Reconstructing Body From Soul

"!" A wave of surprised, shocked, and jubilant exclamations resounded. The expressions on the faces of these bevy of beauties, and Long Chen, were quite animated as they recognized Lin Ziyuan.

Long Tingyu cried out, "Big Sis Lin!" She was one of the few that had a close relationship with Lin Ziyuan, having been with her prior to that wedding crash. At the time, she was merely a fledgling cultivator coming to her own, hiding behind her big brother's back as she quietly observed Lin Ziyuan's astonishing beauty and aura. There was a point in time where she wanted to even be like her, capable of dazzling the world with her mere presence.

"You're...back?" Na Xinyi asked skeptically, her words containing more than one meaning, more than one question. The Lin Ziyuan before had been confined in a wheelchair or a bed, unable to properly speak or move as she wanted. Lin Ziyuan even needed help to go to the bathroom or bathe, a task that Na Xinyi had assisted her with a few times.

The Lin Ziyuan before was far, far too different from the one currently present. A contrast that was incredible to say the least, heaven-shattering to say the most. Especially since her change had happened in less than two days!

Lin Ziyuan had luscious, full, and flowing brunette hair, a radiant set of ocean blue eyes, a slender and curvaceous body, and blemishless skin that seemed so soft that one could squeeze water from it. She walked on her own two legs with incredible stability, even a little peep in her step.

Long Chen was the most shocked out of everyone present, his jaws nearly dropped. It had truly been such a sharp difference in such a small amount of time. He was speechless. Lin Ziyuan's current appearance and beauty nearly left him breathless. A light of elation built itself up within his dark irises, threatening to erupt with crazed happiness.

"Lin Ziyuan!" Long Chen's movements contained a little impatience as he rushed forward, embracing her. His movements were a little too fast, shocking Lin Ziyuan as she was directly embraced. She had lost her cultivation, forcing her to start once more from the beginning, so she wasn't even able to react before her body was wrapped by two arms.

She trembled. Her eyes flashed with all sorts of memories of their life, of their adventures, of their struggles, and an unknown rancorous light flashed within her eyes. Since she had assumed Long Chen was 'the one', she had followed him blindly, willing to accept and brave all dangers. She even forgave his pride that led to putting them in awkward or horrible situations. By doing so, by restraining herself, she was subjected to humiliation after humiliation.

She was beaten.

She was spat on.

She was tortured so thoroughly that her mind, body, and spirit was shattered.

At first, she thought it was worth it and everything was going to be okay. That everything was bound to be alright.

Then she learned what she regarded as the truth was actually false. Long Chen wasn't the one she was looking for, it was another. Someone who would've never allowed her to be the subject of such humiliation, someone whose very name would cause the entire sect to tremble and kneel.

All the struggles, the pain, the suffering, the reluctant acceptances and the adventures had become bitter and shameful. All of it...All of it!!

FOR NOTHING!!!

When she recalled the last words Wei Wuyin had told her, how he would ensure her the sturdiest foundation, how he would help her promote her cultivation to the highest level, how he would restructure her physique and innate talents...the utter ease at which he spoke, the proxy badge he had given her to represent him, and how even with just this badge, a Heavenly Commander Elder, someone she regarded as far beyond her limits before, was so damn respectful to her that others might mistake him as her grandson...

Those thoughts added fuel as a faint dark, ominous emotion simmered within her ocean blue eyes.

She didn't speak, merely tried to push Long Chen away with her arms and shoulders. But her bodily strength was far too low, having just regained her mortal state. She couldn't push away Long Chen who didn't want to let go, seemingly wanting to melt away into her body. A wisp of anger flashed in her eyes as she grunted softly.

While others saw this as an emotionally charged reunion, especially Long Tingyu who was in tears at this very moment, Wu Baozhai saw something entirely different. She had always been astute, intelligent, and observative of details, no matter how minor. As a Princess of a country, of a country that had a lot of schemes and contentions, she had to.

She noted Lin Ziyang's dark gaze, slowly emitting a repulsing emotion. This wasn't directed at the powerful hug, but the person who hugged her. Her eyes brightened with all sorts of thoughts as she calmly said, "Careful. You're hurting her, Long Chen."

These carefully selected words broke Long Chen out of his daze as he finally released Lin Ziyang, only now realizing her body lacked the refinement of energies and a cultivation base. She was almost completely mortal, incredibly fragile. The only difference would be her sea of consciousness was far larger than mortals, receiving a passive refinement from cultivating that couldn't easily be abolished, even if damaged.

"So-sorry!" He rubbed his head, feeling emotional.

Lin Ziyang saw that once lovable and foolish expression, and her heart that would have normally swooned experienced a different reaction. She was about to speak when Wu Baozhai intervened.

"We can speak about everything after the operation. Grand Sage Qin is about to begin," Wu Baozhai arrived by Lin Ziyang's side and pulled her away to observe the procedure. Her movements were completely natural.

Long Chen glanced at Xiao Bing, and he calmed his heart. Right, what was important right now was Hong Ru's rebirth. He, too, walked to a good vantage point.

Qin Rui was deeply shocked after witnessing and inspecting Lin Ziyang's current state. She was originally so thoroughly crippled that there was nothing the best Medical Sages of the sect could do but alleviate the pain she might be feeling.

Her meridians were shattered, losing the ability to absorb essence and leaking out her bodily refined energies until nothing was left. Her Yin Source was decimated into bits, causing her to lose her identity as a woman, and the energies of her Primal Yin was viciously extracted. Without them, not only would the body suffer an extremely high amount of health complications, but giving birth was utterly impossible. It was no different than castrating a man.

Her nerves had been scrambled, making it so that even moving was like playing with inverted controls that randomized every second. Her sea of consciousness was damaged to the point that the light of intelligence was seemingly siphoned from her eyes, and even forming memory, short or long-term, was extremely difficult. This didn't even include her cultivation base being abolished, losing a portion of her mind, body, and soul.

From what she sensed, her Yin Source had been repaired, and since it was untainted by Yang Essence, it had restored her Primal Yin. The light in her eyes were extremely refined, possessing the signs of a complete and thorough control of one's body and mind.

She had never seen such a complete crippling, so vicious and heartless, experience a recovery of this level. Or any level, for that matter. She was flummoxed by it all. Moreover, it was less than two days since she was taken away. The speed was heaven-defying!

She had to regain her calm after several minutes of shock. It was only then that she resolved her mind even further to question Tuo Bihan about all this.

She returned to her previous focus, putting all other things aside. She waved her hand above the operation table, causing a faint yet misty fiery light to emerge, hovering quietly while releasing delicate sounds similar to a baby's breathing. Within the light was the outlined yet indistinct figure of a naked young woman.

This was Hong Ru's soul!

It had been preserved by Wu Yu via a unique spell, and was still being maintained to ensure her soul wouldn't drift away according to mortal laws. As a cultivator that had exceeded Mortal Limits, capable of creating stars and planets, preserving a soul was a minor feat.

If it wasn't for his desire to allow Long Chen to suffer some set-backs, grow into his own, and become independent of his strength, Hong Ru wouldn't have died to begin with. While he might be in a spiritual form at the moment, just a fraction of his spiritual strength could've pulled Hong Ru away or frozen the wolf.

Qin Rui calmed her breathing, taking out the eighth-grade alchemical products. She handled them so delicately that others might mistake them as her children.

"Begin!" Her powers started to move, following Wei Wuyin's instructions to the letter.

The viewers awaited above with bated breaths. Xiao Bing didn't even breathe. Every passing second was extremely tense for her, and even Qing Qiumu's presence couldn't ease it. It was just anticipation and fear amped up far too highly to be influenced by anything or anyone!

To her, this had to succeed!

She needed her sister back!!

Chapter 342 - 338: A Success?!

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The entire procedure lasted three days and two nights. Qin Rui had to continuously infuse fire force throughout, holding on with her spiritual strength, and pushing her focus to its utmost limits. It was extremely strenuous, but the activity would certainly benefit her.

In fact, all those present who were watching the reconstruction of a body for the first time would receive intangible benefits regarding their understanding of cultivation and the mysteries of the body.

Every cell was born anew.

Every organ was shaped and constructed.

It was like a puzzle that was designed, created, and solved all at once, with Hong Ru's soul acting as the blueprint. The most crucial aspect: the Soul. It contained vital information about one's age, cells, bloodline, and core memory. It formed the sea of consciousness which gave birth to the Mind's Eye, it regulated the eventual growth and decline of the body, and it connected with the world beyond.

Without one, cultivation was impossible.

The Soul Impartation of legends, those sentient and inanimate objects who gain that legendary ability to cultivate and later change their forms were all due to the formation of their souls.

The soul allowed birth, growth, and decline. It was the most vital aspect of an individual's existence.

If Wei Wuyin was present, he would understand this concept deeply, obtaining great benefits. Or moreso, Eden would. For an uncountable amount of years, Eden had existed as a being without a Soul. It was a sentient existence that couldn't be classified as a demon, couldn't be classified as truly alive. It was akin to artificial intelligence. It was taken advantage of, had the will of others imposed on it, and it couldn't ever change that fact. To it, there was no way out.

Its previous incarnation wanted to hijack a willing soul, entering that person's Mind's Eye to become them, to become truly alive. Unfortunately and fortunately, it had met Wei Wuyin. What was originally just a wad of mental energies, an abnormal being, had transformed into an Astral Soul that possessed its own Spirit.

Now, it had a future. It tapped into immense powers that exceeded imagination, and had a family! A soul was the first and greatest blessing of everything beneath the heavens.

Hong Ru's soul had been encapsulated by flesh, bone, and blood. It had entered her chest, permeating throughout her entire existence as if merging with every little cell, organ, and drop of blood. Her pale, lifeless body had been reconstructed, but not revived.

She was still a corpse at this moment. There was no beating heartbeat, flow of electrical impulses through the body, or intelligence within her eyes. This was somewhat ghastly as she seemed like a ghost without an ounce of life.

Qin Rui breathed a sigh of relief. The process of constructing her body based on the blueprint of her Soul had been completed. It was an arduous and complicated task, one that required her to give 110% of her focus and strength. With it completed, the most complicated aspect was finished.

At least, it was the most complicated aspect here. In other scenarios, the reconstruction was the easiest aspect, because it was extremely easy to follow a blueprint to the exactness. A slight change might create dissonance of body, soul, and the subsequently produced sea of consciousness, but all you needed was to place the blue where blue was indicated and red where red was indicated.

It was extremely easy.

But here, this was the most complicated portion of the procedure because the revival part, the ignition and connection of mind, body, and soul, was handled completely by alchemical products.

She retrieved two remaining alchemical products, both eighth-grade. They were the Mind-Body-Soul Ignition Pill and the Burning Bluelife Elixir. The former was rather on the nose with naming, its purpose was to ignite the mind, body, and soul to formulate a renewed, perfect connection. It was usually used to repair those who were mentally crippled, or suffered a form of body-mind dissonance from an extremely powerful spiritual spell.

The impact of a powerful spiritual spell could turn an entire person out of whack, causing unlimited issues. This pill solved those issues. For it to be used on a reconstruction, if this was spread outside the starfield in advanced civilizations, there would only be one word spat out in incredulity: "Extravagant!"

As for the Burning Bluelife Elixir, it contained a dense lifeforce suitable for reanimating a corpse temporarily or ensuring someone near-death will live on their last breath for a little longer. It was the most perfect product used on trauma patients on their last breath, beloved by Medical Sages. As for its former usage, reanimating a corpse, that was used for puppetry and other Evil Methods.

Of course, it wasn't designed for that purpose, but good intentions sometimes allowed evil means.

With these two products, restarting and reviving Hong Ru's body was extremely easy, barely an inconvenience for anyone.

As for the other two products, one had been an elixir used to recreate her Yin Source, and the other was a large quantity of malleable and transformative paste for her physical body reconstruction. Her whole body was made from the latter, with the moulding of Qin Rui's powers.

Qin Rui immediately crushed the pill into powder, mixing it with the Blazing Bluefire Elixir as instructed, and opened the freshly made mouth of Hong Ru. She poured the liquid in with the utmost carefulness, ensuring not a single drop was wasted. After, her delicate fingers rubbed her throat, causing the liquid to start to flow throughout her body, refining it via proxy.

Hong Ru's lifeless corpse started to emit smoke. Then...

Boosh!

Blue flames erupted from her body in an explosive fashion. It was so powerful that Qin Rui had to shield herself from it, forcefully keeping contact with Hong Ru's throat. She kept refining as the proxy, but the immense heat had started to burn her delicate skin. Her beautiful eyes grimaced, drawing upon her entire cultivation base to resist.

Fortunately for Qin Rui, the flames lasted for only a few moments, and Hong Ru's body was completely unharmed. After it dissipated, her skin had regained color, her lips and cheeks were reddened by the flow of blood, a distinct warmth emitted from her body.

thump...

thump...

Thump...

THUMP...

THUMP!!

A series of heartbeats started to resound from within her chest. First, it was weak, like a newborn baby's. But it slowly grew in strength until it was extremely powerful, rivaling an adult cultivator.

Her long eyelashes fluttered softly, like the faint flaps of a newly born butterfly. It was trying to reach its fullest potential! The anticipation and worry within everyone's hearts had reached a crescendo at this point. The prayers in their hearts flew!

And so did Hong Ru!

Her eyes opened, revealing a set of gorgeous, lively, and fresh crimson eyes that faintly burned with the light of life. That light became radiant, revealing intelligence as she tried to gain an understanding of her surroundings.

"Guwk, bha..." She tried to speak, but her vocal cords were new. They hadn't become accustomed to being used, coming off as strained, nearly babyish noises. Her hands softly clenched into fists, alongside the hearts of everyone.

Qin Rui brightly smiled, recalling what Wei Wuyin said a successful reconstruction and revival should look like. The very fact she tried to speak meant her body, mind, and soul was in perfect alignment. Her eyes weren't like that of a child, unable to recognize anything, so her soul had certainly restored her sea of consciousness completely. And this sea of consciousness flooded her new brain with memories and instincts she had developed in life, creating a mind.

With her trying to speak, it meant her mind was connected to her physical body.

It was perfect.

"It's a success!" Qin Rui proudly announced!

"It's a success?!" Xiao Bing felt a wave of surrealism batter her mind. Her hand pressed heavily on the slightly slanted observer's glass, as if she was trying to touch the newly awakened Hong Ru through it. Her memories of Hong Ru coursed through her mind, from the moment they first met until the moment she had been killed.

Wet hot tears flowed from her eyes like a bursting dam, something an ice cultivator like her shouldn't be able to naturally produce. She softly repeated, "It's a success."

Qing Qiumu held her hand tighter. There were numerous cultivators who would lose their loved ones, never able to see them again. The very thought of their revival would be their most cherished wish, their greatest desire in this world. To experience it, it must be a feeling that could never be accurately described to anyone else.

So Qing Qiumu merely held Xiao Bing's hand, and when Xiao Bing looked towards her as if seeking the final confirmation, she softly nodded with a warm smile. If there was anyone that could ensure this extremely difficult and seemingly magical process would succeed, then it would be Wei Wuyin. Especially the little braggart and perfectionist that he was.

Thinking of him, her heart warmed to an indescribable degree unknowingly. Wei Wuyin had become a source of reliable strength to her at an unknown point. Perhaps it was after learning who he was, the boy who saved her from captivity all those years ago, or after talking to him at that restaurant on that day, or when he arrived and cancelled her execution.

Who knew? After all, even she didn't.

But he was someone etched into her heart in the most indescribable way, someone that she could count on no matter what. Even if the sky fell or the three stars in the sky exploded, if Wei Wuyin said it was going to be okay, she would believe it without hesitation. There might not even be a trace of fear or worry in her heart.

'I wonder what he's doing now?' Her thoughts roamed, unaware of the faint changes in her mindset.

Long Chen's eyes effused a radiance of happiness and excitement. To him, he had accomplished his goal of reviving Hong Ru, confirming that things weren't out of his control or limits. He had used his Three Orders without hesitation, and this was the result—A success.

Furthermore, Lin Ziyang seemed to have made a complete recovery. He was optimistic about the Gateway. There, he might finally find a way to exceed Wei Wuyin. If what Wu Yu had said to him before was true, then this was his chance. He could one day reach unimaginable heights beyond this starfield with it!

But there was one person that wasn't filled with excitement, happiness, with their minds occupied.

Wu Baozhai!

Her limpid eyes were fixated on Lin Ziyang. The Lin Ziyang here was seemingly the same one as before, but she was skeptical. What had happened that made her feel a sense of repulsion towards Long Chen? While it was reasonable that her mentality would change after suffering such an event, it shouldn't have affected her thoughts towards Long Chen. After all, she felt that Lin Ziyang had an extremely senseless

reliance and hope towards Long Chen for some reason before. This would've allowed her to forgive him even if he forced himself on her. It was simply that extreme.

She had a bad feeling about this.

A feeling that would soon manifest into a clash between two figures.

Chapter 343 - 339: Returned To Us

"Uhn..." Hong Ru's freshly created eyes were filled with curiosity and confusion. '*Where am I?*' She tried to observe the surroundings, but the lighting had made everything indistinct as her eyes tried to adjust. She could only discern a tall silhouette hovering over her body and, in the background, several silhouettes that glinted with reflective light.

'*What happened? Where am I? What is this?!*' She tried to move, feeling a gradually receding numb sensation within her fingers, hands, and forearms. She could feel traces of air circulating between her fingers. Slowly, she clenched her fist to get the feedback from the pressure.

When she tried to speak, to ask a question, her voice came out in mumbles. She wasn't sure if she heard herself wrong or not, but it sounded like baby noises. A wisp of frustration emerged within her heart. Why was this happening?

Her heartbeat started to race. She felt a headache that pounded incessantly, her mind trying to recall the last events in her memory. But she had to go through some massive exploring, recalling her most emotional memories first.

Her fifth birthday. She was celebrated by her entire family. It was one of her fondest memories filled with happiness and love.

When she was fifteen and received word of her cousin's death. How she cried for days in grief, unable to eat for quite a while. She had given her father quite a scare.

When she was sixteen, meeting a frigid-acting young woman in a meeting between clans. She found her interesting, curious, and incessantly asked her questions without pause. But she received indifference and a cold shoulder, which only made her more curious, and more intent on causing this wintry young girl to change her expression.

When the two of them became official disciples of the sect, entering the Astral Core Realm on the same day. They competed against each other, and while it ended in what was declared a draw, she felt that she had lost by a small margin. This ignited her spirit, and their rivalry continued for decades.

There were so many memories, many of which included that white haired young woman. She tried to speak again and when she did, her words were more stable and clear.

"Xi-Xiao Bin...g..." After saying that name, tears welled up within her eyes.

She remembered.

She was participating in the Grand Spirit Trials. She had met Xiao Bing after noticing her distinct aura nearby, an aura she was extremely familiar with. They met another girl, and they traveled trying to subdue beasts. But they met Huangfu Jinwei. He was chasing after Long Chen, a young boy that the two

girls found interesting. It felt like their rivalry had extended to him, both trying to one-up each other in protecting him.

They unwittingly became close to this boy, one of the few boys they had ever decided to give their attention to.

Then...

Then...

Then...!

Her head started to hurt and her body shifted about in discomfort. She knew what happened, but she didn't want to remember.

"Hong Ru! I'm here."

She heard a soft voice that carried a hint of icy essence, and it calmed her raging emotions. She discovered that she was now surrounded by silhouettes, and the closest one held her hand, revealing an expression she hadn't thought she would ever see—a smile.

It was merely a smile, but it was extremely new to her.

Her new eyes soon adjusted, and a gorgeous face revealed itself. Her white hair, extremely ample set of bosoms that rivaled her own, even two adult handfuls might not be enough for one mountain, and icy-pale skin gave her both an alluring and familiar feeling.

"You're okay, I'm here." Xiao Bing spoke again while tightly holding Hong Ru's hand. Hong Ru clenched that hand hard, her tears still falling.

'I died. But, I'm alive. I'm alive...I'M ALIVE!' A wave of excitement, of emotions that very few living would ever feel, surged within her heart like a storm of tsunamis. She had felt her body be eaten, her head crushed by the inner mouth of that wolf, and her last bits of consciousness fading as a burning sensation of acid touched her skin.

She reached out and grabbed Xiao Bing, pulling her closer, as if wanting to melt into her. Her strength was terrifying, exceeding what one would think a freshly created body could possess. This new body of hers was made with the support of a Sixth Stage Astral Core Realm expert's fire force and an eighth-grade paste. Simply the energies within her flesh, both physical or elemental, could crush any World Sea Phase expert.

Feeling the imposing strength, Xiao Bing didn't feel an ounce of pain. She merely returned the embrace. The two, one clothed and one naked, were tightly hugging each other without holding anything back.

The sight of a revival and reunion was extremely emotional. Long Tingyu couldn't help but produce two sets of joyful rivers from her eyes. She was still a little girl, so her response was the most emotional. The others were more calm, not crying, but feeling extremely happy.

Regardless of who, besides Qing Qiumu who spent most of her time in cultivation with her ancestor, and Long Tingyu who did the same, they had all been saved by these two before. It was only because of

these two that many obstacles were eliminated or stopped from hindering their path. They gave them backing that dissuaded others from abusing their Power of Authority.

They were all close to these two, especially Lin Ziyan.

While she wasn't originally the most beautiful amongst the group, when Qing Qiumu and Long Tingyu left, she became the target of everyone's ill-intentions. While Lian Yu and Wu Baozhai were extraordinary, they were still a few notches below her in terms of innate beauty or talent. Furthermore, she was the only one amongst the three who still had her Primal Yin.

As for Na Xinyi, for some reason, whenever enemies targeted them, they avoided harming her. Usually, by some unknown manner, when they investigated them, their enemies were always faintly aware of her ambiguous connection with Wei Wuyin. Thinking back on it, she felt extremely bitter. There were times where Na Xinyi would be captured or threatened, but she never suffered a single scratch.

But if it wasn't for the timely assistance of Hong Ru and Xiao Bing, she might've suffered long before being captured by that Ji woman. So, how could she miss this? Lin Ziyan was genuinely happy for Hong Ru, and this fortified her understanding of Wei Wuyin's abilities.

The concept of revival, of bringing a disembodied soul back to life, was far beyond her understanding. Yet Wei Wuyin had casually performed such a feat. And he wasn't even present.

Hong Ru finally recognized the other figures behind Xiao Bing. Her eyes became extremely moist, threatening to spew out a set of raging rivers. She held out her arms, wanting to hug them also. She knew who her friends were.

Several hours later, Hong Ru had fully clothed herself, regaining her scarlet-colored eyes with a fiery light. She had cried herself nearly dry alongside Xiao Bing, who still held her hand, unwilling to let go. The two were like contrasting fraternal twins, one hot, one cold, but they both seemingly gained their mother's large assets and innate beauty. Even their height was the exact same.

Hong Ru had just familiarized herself with her new body and learned of what happened after her 'death'. She learned about the fate of Huangfu Jinwei, which instantly sated her desire for wicked vengeance, and Wei Wuyin's victory in the Grand Spirit Trials. She found it strange that the Grand Spirit Trials were made because of Wei Wuyin, and in the end, he won it all. Moreover, he won it by being unchallenged.

She learned about Long Chen revealing his status as the Grand Monarch's Successor, which shook her. She also learned that using the legendary Three Orders of the Grand Prince, he had sought the sect's strength to revive her completely. When Long Chen described this, the expressions of Lin Ziyan, Qing Qiumu, and Wu Baozhai had changed slightly.

If Qin Rui was here, even she would experience a change. While he wasn't wrong, he also wasn't right. After all, Wei Wuyin had assisted because he wanted to, not because of any order. Wei Wuyin was a Heavenly King and they could be considered direct competitors to the Grand Prince, so they were immune from the orders.

Hong Ru also learned that Lin Ziyang had fully recovered, just like her, and she felt much closer to her. After all, they both survived tragedies with untold difficulty.

"Thank you, Long Chen." She gave her deepest and most heartfelt thanks.

Long Chen smiled brightly, "No need. I did what I should." He basked in it, feeling a little embarrassed. He liked Xiao Bing and Hong Ru, and seeing these two well-endowed, gorgeous women together caused his heart to slightly race. If he were lucky enough to...

The very thought stimulated him amidst his joy.

Na Xinyi couldn't help but fix her gaze on Lin Ziyang. A flush of worry flooded her thoughts. She had assumed Lin Ziyang would be in her crippled state for much longer. But she had poured her heart out to Lin Ziyang's near-comatose state, and she wasn't certain if she remembered anything. If the Lin Ziyang she remembered did, she might run to Long Chen immediately and tell him her thoughts.

If she did...

If he knew...

She...she didn't know if she should be worried or happy. This feeling brought about a complex conflict in her heart.

Wu Baozhai on the other hand couldn't help but glance at Lin Ziyang, realizing that she hadn't made any attempts to get close to Long Chen. Before, she would always position herself the closest to Long Chen, clearly trying to state her intentions. But now, she was even ensuring a set distance between her and Long Chen remained.

'Did Wei Wuyin do something to her?' She felt that, given Wei Wuyin's personality and actions thus far, he would find it beneath him to play hidden tricks. He wasn't bothered by Na Xinyi's indecision nor Qing Qiumu's close relationship with Long Chen. This showed that he wasn't the jealous-type, or at least the jealous possessive type that tried to claim women as objects of his own.

Those opulent young masters of various clans or leaders of factions within the sect had this type of mentality or a variation of it. The competitive environment was a breeding ground for obsessive ego and a need for control, especially towards the fairer sex. However, Wei Wuyin had always shown a distinctive respect for women and their choices. There were no rumors of him aggressively pursuing women or forcefully snatching beauties as trophies.

If we eliminated the improbable, then the only thing she could think of was...

Her mind instantly recalled a memory. A memory of Wei Wuyin talking to Long Chen at Qing Qiumu's execution. He had cleverly goaded Long Chen into giving up his ring, using psychological tactics. At the time, she hadn't taken it too seriously, but there was a certain exchange:

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

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

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

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

Long Chen gritted his teeth.

"Oh? It seems you already knew about her promise. She must've given it out often. Then, you should know that I cultivated it fully when I was twenty-six. You would've been, what? Twenty-one at the time, right?"

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She recalled every little detail perfectly. Her countenance paled slightly. Is it possible that Wei Wuyin had told her? No, that's impossible. If he wanted to tell her this before, he could've long done it numerous times.

Then, how would she have learned of this? She wasn't present that day? Her thoughts scurried about as she recalled the numerous visits everyone had given to Lin Ziyang on the regular, even taking turns watching over her.

One of them must've mentioned it...

One of them...

Her light-brown eyes swept those present. The bad feeling she had earlier spiraled into an exploding eruption. Just as she thought this, Lin Ziyang spoke words that caused her heart to plunge. Words that the Lin Ziyang she knew would never have spoken, never have suggested with Long Chen nearby.

"Sister Bing, Sister Hong, I've asked Wei Wuyin to allow you both to cultivate in his Sky Palace. It's the quickest way to regain your cultivation base, Hong Ru, and this would be a good opportunity for Xiao Bing." Her words caused everyone to look towards her with unexpected surprise or complex emotions.

'So it's true...' Wu Baozhai's expression became unsightly, knowing what was to come as she witnessed Long Chen's expression contort in real-time.

Chapter 344 - 340: A Mortal Sovereign Alchemist?!

Time flowed onwards, and the destined date of the All-Alchemic Clash between the Princess of Everlore and the Ascendant Emperor of Neo-Dawn neared. The entire starfield was in an uproar, filled with excitement and anticipation. To many the King of Everlore was a figure of myth with the ability to create gods. This was even more exaggerated to lower-leveled cultivators, those who hadn't understood the limitations of cultivation.

The raging and raving emotions of everyone, from the lowest level cultivator to those at the peak of the starfield, had been riled up into a storm. This All-Alchemic Clash would be broadcasted to an audience even larger than the Grand Spirit Trials!

It was later arranged by the Alchemist Association to have the four hegemonic forces work in conjunction to bring the event to everyone they could, expanding its range to the very edges of the starfield. Those continental flat earths that were ignorant of all things except the King of Everlore, were swiftly brought up-to-date and understood this near-divine level event.

The Successor of the King of Everlore, Qingye Ying, Descendant of the Grand Association Master of the Alchemist Association was to face the Alchemist of unimaginable talent, capable of concocting an eighth-grade pill before the age of fifty, and a new generation of Alchemist, Wei Wuyin! Unlike the former, Wei Wuyin had combat prowess that placed him at the very top of the starfield's youths.

In fact, his one centimeter Astral Core while in the Sky Ruler Phase while less than fifty years old made him practically unmatched in terms of cultivation foundation across the entire starfield. The only ones that came remotely close were the mysterious Lin Ming and Zuhei.

The event was a battle of the New Era of Alchemist and Old Era of Alchemist! Will Wei Wuyin prove that an alchemist that hadn't followed the standard path of an Alchemic Astral Soul be able to exceed those who had? Were their thoughts of the King of Everlore's mythological abilities restraining their own growth?!

The venue had already been set. The Myriad Monarch Sect shall have it on their Main Planet. Of course, with the Realmlord Tuo Bihan present, the other three hegemonic sects were hesitant to enter such dangers, but after a well-crafted Spirit Oath, they were ensured that no vile efforts to harm them would occur.

This only exploded the news more as it was soon stated that nearly all of the elite powerhouses of the starfield will once more gather to observe the All-Alchemic Clash. In fact, there would be five judges, including the three leaders of the Sacred Light Palace, Demonic Abyss Mountain, and Elemental Heaven Pavilion. The other two will be neutral Alchemic Emperors who will ensure fairness of the competition.

It was gearing up to be an event of the highest grade! While a battle between elite juniors was exciting, the end result of this clash will be heaven-determining! If Qingye Ying wins, she will truly represent herself as the future face of the Alchemic World! If Wei Wuyin wins, he will cement himself as a talent that could exceed even the King of Everlore himself!

Of course, there were those of differing opinions. They felt that it was unfair that Wei Wuyin was less than half Qingye Ying's age. This gave her an advantage of practice. Furthermore, she was trained by the number one alchemic force in the starfield!

But those opinions were smoldered by the booming excitement. If Wei Wuyin had no objections to this, what right did others have to raise the matter?!

With less than a day left, the Myriad Monarch Sect's Main Planet was filled to the brim with visitors, having a grand colosseum seemingly built overnight that could house more than a hundred million observers, spanning thousands of miles. Above this colosseum was a translucent platform that was quite similar to the Grand Spirit Trial's platform.

It was the location where a single gigantic palace was perfectly placed, the future housing abode of the most elite figures of the starfield. There were likely very few individuals who would miss this!

While the world was raring to go, two individuals were discussing something above the eighth Sky Layer.

"Grand Sage Tuo, I want to know the truth!" A firm voice resounded. Qin Rui floated in the sky, staring daggers at a grey-bearded old man. Despite his cultivation base having reached the apex of the starfield, he wore a helpless smile before Qin Rui.

He had just returned from setting up everything properly when Qin Rui had intercepted him with an inflamed passion. She wore an adamant expression beneath her veil, but he could see from her eyes that she was unwilling to drop this matter. This woman who he always took care of, who he paid special attention to, who he protected, was acting like that little girl again. It brought back many tender emotions to his heart.

"...What do you want to know?" He wasn't certain what truth she wanted, but he felt it concerned his cultivation base. After all, he'd reached the Realmlord level despite being weaker than that Sacred Light Palace's elven genius from before.

Qin Rui said, "I've completed Hong Ru's bodily reconstruction and revival-"

"It worked?" Tuo Bihan interrupted, interested in this matter. After all, a revival was a wondrous thing. According to Wei Wuyin, he could attempt to do so in the future. This intrigued him to an extreme.

Qin Rui paused for a moment, nodded, and continued. "It was a total success, but when I was delivered the materials to use for her revival, they were all eighth-grade products, and some were high-tier!" Her eyes flared with a questioning light.

Tuo Bihan was startled. Of course...

He faintly smiled in understanding, a hint of helplessness within his eyes. Wei Wuyin wasn't the type of individual to perform a deed half-assed. It made sense that he wouldn't hold back and deliver eighth-grade products. He couldn't help but sigh.

Scratching his head, he said: "Yeah, that."

His response invoked confusion from Qin Rui. She knew that there was something suspicious about it. "Did you make them?" She and everyone was aware that Tuo Bihan was an Emperor Alchemist, and he had even supported her and Yao Zhen's rise to their current levels.

Tuo Bihan shook his head. Even if he wanted to create eighth-grade products, he'd have to spend a few years to a decade in the attempt. It was simply not worth it at his advanced age.

"So Wei Wuyin made them?" Her suspicions were almost confirmed, which caused her heart to be battered with waves of surprise. How was this possible?

Tuo Bihan looked at this little girl that he'd seen grow up into the extraordinary woman she was today. He softly asked, "What do you think of the little boss, of Wei Wuyin?" He had wanted to suggest to Wei Wuyin that Qin Rui should be the next candidate for a Realmlord, but he seemed to have little intentions to do anything of the sort. Without his support, Qin Rui would never be able to surpass her current phase.

He understood it a little. It was much better to invest resources into his own people, to develop them from the beginning and grow into greater subordinates than these old monsters who lived for a thousand or so years and had their own thoughts. If it wasn't for his advanced age and knowledge of his alchemic prowess, he might've not made that choice that day.

Qin Rui stilled. She immediately recalled Wei Wuyin's silver eyes and handsome features. He had given her the Spatial Spirit Pill to decide however she liked. Her expression immediately changed. "What do you mean?"

Tuo Bihan didn't feel like beating around the bush or lying to her, "You should know how the little boss feels about you. If you sought him out, he wouldn't reject you."

Qin Rui frowned, "I'm over twenty times older than he is. Grand Sage Tuo, please don't be so ridiculous." While she said those words, she did know that Wei Wuyin had intentions towards her that he never pursued. "What does that have to do with anything?"

Tuo Bihan stared directly into Qin Rui's eyes for a long while, and helplessly sighed. He decided to tell the truth. There was no Spirit Oath that Wei Wuyin had placed on him to prevent him from doing so and this showed a distinct trust. Moreover, a complete lack of care if the world even knew. Since he gave Qin Rui eighth-grade products without an excuse, his actions already spoke volumes.

"Do you remember the manifestation that had engulfed the little boss' Sky Palace?"

"Yeah, I do."

"That was the Stellar Manifestation of a Mortal Sovereign. The phenomenon that manifests during the creation of a Ninth-Grade Alchemical Product!" His eyes never left Qin Rui's.

"T-that...that means?!" Qin Rui was taken fiercely aback, her eyes widening at Tuo Bihan's words. She had always wondered what that was. Even today, numerous individuals speculated on its existence. While it had been explained away by using the planet's vital energies, she had always had a scratching suspicion.

Tuo Bihan gravely nodded, "Our Ascendant Emperor of Neo-Dawn is a Mortal Sovereign Alchemist! During that time, he successfully concocted the Everlore Ascension Pill! And it wasn't of impure-quality, but at least low-quality!"

Thump! Thump! Thump!

Qin Rui felt her heart beat heavily with every sentence. A realization dawned on her as her mouth became agape, her eyes widened to their utmost, and her skin became pale from shock. She gulped a wad of saliva, her mouth had become instantly dry.

How?!

Her mind tried to reject the possibility, but when she recalled that unique phenomenon and the eighth-grade products, the numerous events of sixth and seventh-grade being circulated throughout the sect like candy, landing in the hands of those with power, her heart knew the undeniable truth.

Wei Wuyin was a Mortal Sovereign Alchemist!!

Chapter 345 - 341: A Rare Moment Before

The world was slowly rising in hype. The numerous guests with the ability to make their way through the starfield, arriving at the Myriad Monarch Sect's Main Planet, were of the most elite status, the greatest strength, and the possessed the highest prestige. Not only were numerous old monsters in the Astral Core Realm that rivaled Grand Imperial Sages coming, but the alchemist community were making their way here.

This included numerous prestigious Emperor Alchemists across the entire starfield. While the alchemists' numbers were lacking in comparison to the population, especially the higher ranked ones, that was only if one saw it from a single Astral Territory. If you accounted for the entire starfield, the number of Lord Alchemists, those capable of concocting sixth-grade alchemical products, would number in the tens of millions.

As for King Alchemists, those capable of concocting seventh-grade alchemical products suitable for lower-phase Astral Core Realm experts, there would be roughly five thousand. In comparison, the Myriad Monarch Astral Territory had less than three hundred.

Of course, the majority of these alchemists resided in the Alchemist Association as a part of the 'neutral' force, with the second most being in possession of the Golden Coin Pavilion. Since alchemists were a rarity, they were likely to attach themselves to these rich, affluent forces where they contained an abundant degree of freedom.

These alchemists would definitely arrive, appearing with likely more than half. To many in the starfield, this competition was the perfect opportunity to initiate conversation and establish relations with these figures. This was especially so for those alchemists who lacked the qualification to be 'officially' recognized as Alchemic Kings. These opportunists were coming with bull-like ferocity with high hopes and greedy hearts.

The limited number of King Alchemists was one of the primary reasons of Wei Wuyin's immense importance the moment he entered the sect, directly becoming a Sky Noble and then a Heavenly King soon after.

Exiting from his Alchemy Room, Wei Wuyin was surrounded by a multi-colored aura that emanated a particular smell. This smell was extremely attractive to cultivators, stimulating their senses. When he left, he immediately noticed Su Mei. She was wearing a set of tight-fitting and valiant black battle armor that accentuated her figure. He couldn't help but think that she was a little overly prepared.

This was merely an All-Alchemic Clash, not a war.

Su Mei slightly bowed her head. "Lord Wei, the competition begins in an hour."

Wei Wuyin revealed a warm smile. She clearly didn't wish for him to be late. But he still grinned in the end, "Even if I'm late by a week, they'll still patiently wait." This was spoken with imposing arrogance, containing an innate prestige. Wei Wuyin wasn't one to act arrogant for the sake of it, but after indulging in concocting ninth-grade products, he felt a sense of superiority emerge within his heart.

It was exceedingly strange. With each successful attempt, he felt more and more far-sighted. The starfield and its inhabitants started to 'feel' small and insignificant to him. Not counting those he deemed important, of course.

'This must be how Starlords felt.' His thoughts honed in those who were once deemed at the peak of the Mortal-tier of power, those at the Ninth Stage of the Astral Core Realm, Star Core Phase. According to Wu Yu, they possessed the fabled strength of a solar star, and even large-sized planets could crumble beneath their might.

Su Mei was momentarily shocked, but quickly recollected herself. If anyone had the right to say this, it would be Wei Wuyin. Therefore, she quietly awaited his orders.

Wei Wuyin realized his tone and words truly carried a hint of supremacy within, making a mental note to reflect. He didn't want to be unreasonable because of his alchemical skills, but because of his power. That was the only force that ensured his actions carried no consequences. After all, there were existences that could kill you with a thought even if you were a Mortal Sovereign Alchemist of the highest level.

"Let's go," he said. With a quick change, he donned his black-colored Heavenly King attire with his white alchemist cloak above it. It gave him a sense of unity and balance, as if he embodied both martial might and alchemic might.

Exiting the entrance of his Sky Palace, Su Mei a step behind, he observed the world with his spiritual sense. He could feel the abundant spatial ripples that were endlessly erupting, the sign that there were numerous Void Gates active, being used every passing second.

"There must be at least a billion in number that's arriving for this. There's unlikely to be a single individual that lacked status and connections here." He bitterly smiled, thinking about his first All-Alchemic Clash on the Bloodforge Continent. There were an unhealthy number in the audience as well. Furthermore, that was merely a competition at the mid-tier level of a Lord Alchemist level.

He couldn't help but smile, "I hope this Princess of Everlore is of a high level. I really want to put my abilities against someone, to truly be tested. Even if I lose, I'll have no regrets." Wei Wuyin had been unrivaled in alchemy for quite a while, and a feeling of wanting a challenge emerged in his heart. Even before he stepped foot in the Myriad Monarch Sect, he was already amongst the top five thousand alchemists of the world.

Then, he entered into the illustrious Emperor Alchemist level in a few years, and the Mortal Sovereign Alchemist even sooner. It was such a tremendous leap that the legacy left behind by the King of Everlore wasn't posing much difficulty. He wondered if it was due to his Celestial Eyes, his Four Astral Souls, Eden, or his alchemic talent.

Thinking of Alchemic Talent, he recalled Qingye Yun's question that day. Whatever the Alchemist Association wanted him for had to do with Alchemic Talent. He just didn't understand why it was important. After that event, he tried to learn more about the degree of Alchemic Talent and what it meant. But when he tried to delve further into it, he could only get the gist of it. There was no elaborate explanation detailing it or its levels.

In fact, current information was incredibly simple. Either one had low-level talent, mid-level talent, or high-level talent and that related to the efficiency one could cultivate with an Alchemic Conversion Method. He wondered what Qingye Yun wanted.

'Regardless, I guess I'll find out soon.' Whether he won or lost, Qingye Yun had said he'd inform him of its importance. It had truly wet his curiosity.

Wei Wuyin placed it aside, standing at the edge of the cloud foundation that his Sky Palace firmly sat upon. He looked over, seeing the Sky Layers beneath and numerous clouds, including the faint outline of the land below. With a step, he directly fell over.

Su Mei followed without hesitation.

They began their free fall down to the earth, the speed producing wind currents that wildly fluttered against their clothing and hair. Wei Wuyin spun around, turning to see Su Mei who was following with a concentrated expression.

He gave a faint smile, and she looked at him, returning his smile. The feeling of free falling from such a height had a unique form of freedom within. He twisted around, feeling the air and clouds between his fingers, brushing against his skin, and observing the world beneath slowly gain clarity and closeness.

Puush!

He and Su Mei penetrated the eighth Sky Layer like stones, becoming drenched in astral essence and moisture. They continued to descend down, doing the same to the seventh Sky Layer, and then seeing the Extreme Creation Mountain. With a twist, they both seamlessly regained control of their bodies and started to fly.

Woosh!

Wei Wuyin exclaimed, feeling the rush of the world's mana heeding his call. There were numerous times where cultivators forgot themselves, their time being powerless being too short. But just a decade ago, Wei Wuyin couldn't fly on his own. He was marveling at Wu Jiao's ability to stand mid-air above the masses like a god.

He couldn't even penetrate a Sky Layer without help, but now, with just his body, with just a thought, he could achieve these things with ease. A feeling of exhilaration and appreciation of his power flowed within him.

There was a time in his life where he could only stare at birds, or merely dream of owning a palace within the sky, or to be have the power to flip an ocean or topple a mountain, but now...he could destroy an entire continent, he had a genuine palace that sat on clouds, and he could fly!

"Cultivation is marvelous!" Wei Wuyin shouted at Su Mei, increasing his flight speed.

BOOM!

He easily broke the sound barrier, blazing through the sky at incredible speeds. Su Mei looked at Wei Wuyin's speeding figure, her heart racing. This was the Wei Wuyin that she remembered when he wasn't embroiled in worries. He's the type of person to act truly free. With a soft chuckle, she sped up also.

Wei Wuyin could see Su Mei gaining on him, and he grinned as he looked back. "First to arrive wins?"

Su Mei's eyebrows jumped. A light of competitive spirit flashed within her pure black eyes. "Okay!" With that, she tapped into her Astral Soul, grabbing control of the ambient mana with the strictest and most powerful means.

BOOSH!

She exploded with speed, accelerating enough to surpass Wei Wuyin instantly.

Wei Wuyin joyfully chuckled as Su Mei passed him, "Confident, eh?" It seems this girl had forgotten who was the boss. It was time to remind her. His astral souls thrummed, and with that...

BOOSH!

The two traveled like shooting stars!

Chapter 346 - 342: Challenge!

"THIS IS OUTRAGEOUS!!" A powerful voice resounded, filled with displeasure. The voice permeated throughout the entire venue, creating cascading waves of sound that reached the ears of hundreds of millions.

"No! This is his right!" Another voice resounded, not lacking volume or power. The faces of those observing were mixed, but most were intrigued, curious, and even faintly excited.

The owners' of those two voices were two Grand Imperial Sages of the Myriad Monarch Sect, and the location of their exchange was the center of the colosseum that seated hundreds of millions, nearly a billion. The Alchemic-Era Grand Colosseum, it was aptly named.

The owner of the first voice was a figure of wizened stature, with a leaning posture and a turtle shell. It was Zen, the Grand Imperial Sage of the Extreme Imperial Mountain.

The owner of the second voice surprisingly belonged to Ji Changkong, the Grand Imperial Sage of the Extreme War Mountain. They were currently standing a few dozen feet above the colosseum's core platform, floating imposingly while their surging auras radiated out endlessly. The sheer sound of their clashing auras were like thunder, explosive and loud.

Zen's eyes were inflamed with rage, pointing at Ji Changkong with a trembling finger. While wrinkled, that finger contained immense power. The tip emanated an aquamarine light.

Ji Changkong was surrounded by Sword and Saber Intent, gorgeously sharp light circulated around him like fairies. He had his hands firmly clashed on the hilt of his sheathed sword and saber, one of each at the sides of his hip.

Beneath them was a young handsome man with black hair and dark eyes, in a unique swordsman robe colored in white, red, and gold. He emanated an Imperial Aura befitting a noble prince, and there weren't many who recognized him, but those who did knew he wasn't merely emitting that aura—he was a prince! A Grand Prince!

Long Chen!

His expression was dark and heavy, containing a wisp of gloominess within. Long Chen stared at Zen with those eyes, displaying not a hint of respect.

Above the colosseum, in a specific area that was between the colosseum platform and the translucent platform above, there were five throne-like seats with figures quietly sitting in them. They watched the ongoing events like judges of the world.

They were five of the most prestigious figures of the entire starfield, including the Demonic Abyss Mountain's Mountain Lord Gao Zi, Sacred Light Palace's Palace Master Jiang Feilan, and Elemental Heaven Pavilion's Pavilion Master Lin Ruyan. Accompanying these three absolute leaders of their Astral Territories were two Alchemic Emperors.

The first were dressed in all white, with a hearty black beard that stretched to the floor and seemingly moved with the movements of the natural world. He was a black-haired middle-aged elf with greying at the sides of his temples that accentuated his looks. He was officially recognized as the World Swirling Pill Emperor, with the name Yi Yun. He was renowned for his invention of the Swirling Transformation Pill Method.

The other was dressed rather casually, not in any official alchemist robe or possessing any flair. He was merely an old human man with beady eyes, a skinny body, and average looks. He wore normal blue robes that were very reminiscent of Tuo Bihan's own comfort wear. He was known as the Imbibing Stars Elixir Emperor, or Li Che. He originated from a legacy of Alchemic Emperors who mastered the Assimilating Star Elixir Method, being the fifth in line for the lineage, and the third Alchemic Emperor born from it.

These two figures both belonged to their own forces away from the hegemonic forces, with Yi Yun belonging to the Golden Coin Pavilion, and Li Che being an independent alchemist.

Amongst the five selected judges, none of them belonged to the Alchemist Association or the Myriad Monarch Sect to promote the utmost fairness.

They were observing the situation below with keen eyes. Without much explanation, a young man took to the stage without announcement. This wasn't their venue, so they merely watched, and then Zen arrived, clearly sending spiritual fluctuations to him in a patient and collected manner.

But without warning, she grew angry and irritated. Then, the young man shouted to the world four words: "I will challenge him!" And Zen went berserk. She galvanized her immense strength and tried to forcefully remove the young man, but another Grand Imperial Sage arrived in his timely defense. Thus, the current situation was born.

Zen was exasperated to the limit, "Do you understand what you're doing? Where we are?! What today is?!?!" Her voice throbbed with anger, staring at Ji Changkong with fierce rebuke. She glanced around, trying to indicate this wasn't the time nor place.

But Ji Changkong, who had always been a stubborn individual, merely nodded his head with eyes filled with resolute understanding. "I do. Regardless of what, I won't allow you to stop this."

Zen's breathing became heavy, turning her gaze onto Long Chen. The resolve he showed was unprecedented, shocking even her a little. She wanted to ask 'why' but no words came out. Looking into his eyes, she knew he wouldn't back down today no matter what.

With clenched fists, she said: "Grand Sage Tuo won't let this happen."

Those words finally caused Ji Changkong's expression to change a little, recalling the only Realmlord in the Myriad Monarch Sect. If he acted, they could only be stifled. Despite this, he gripped his two hilts tighter. "This is his right. I won't allow it to be taken from him," he firmly stated.

Zen clenched her toothless jaws, a byproduct of her turtle lineage, in helplessness. She could only turn to Long Chen, "Do you understand what this challenge means? What would happen if you were to lose? Do you understand, do you truly understand?!"

Long Chen had thought this through, so he was filled with certainty. Heavenly Kings were the competitors of the Grand Prince, and if the Grand Prince proved themselves unable to be beyond their generation, to be unrivaled within the sect, they were no longer qualified for their position. He would lose his right to be Grand Prince, stripped of his title forever.

But despite knowing this, he nodded with certainty.

He took a step forward, swept his gaze across the hundreds of millions of people, the vast number of elites, of those with prominent status, and even the five judges, and valiantly declared: "I, Long Chen, Grand Prince of the Myriad Monarch Sect, challenge Wei Wuyin, Heavenly King of the Myriad Monarch Sect, to Imperial Combat!!"

Chapter 347 - 343: Voice Of Millions

"...?" The majority of the crowd was sent into a state of silence and curiosity. What was Imperial Combat? For most of these would-be spectators, they weren't familiar with the rules of the Myriad Monarch Sect. They were foreigners who were merely present to observe the era-changing event that was the Ascendant Emperor of Neo-Dawn Vs. the Princess of Everlore.

For those who did know, they weren't sent into a frizzy state due to excitement and intrigued, but adopted dark expressions filled with gloom and taint. They were members of the Myriad Monarch Sect, inhabitants of its continents or planets, those who were familiar with the concept of Imperial Combat.

Long Chen, to them, was the future Successor of the Grand Monarch Lineage, and a month or so ago they were thrilled at the resurgence of the Myriad Monarch Sect's greatness. Not only did they have Wei Wuyin, an alchemist with endless potential, but their core legacy that was thought to have been lost was recovered.

But this...

What was this?!

So the gasps of shock and raving excitement that Long Chen had expected was met with a subversion of his expectations. Instead, the expressions of those who held Wei Wuyin in the highest regard, a household name with the potential to allow them to live beyond any other era, were ill and angry.

A Fifth Stage Astral Core Realm expert, a Prime Imperial Sage, and someone who believed himself to have close ties with Wei Wuyin, couldn't control his temper nor words as he shouted with forceful spiritual might.

"WHO THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?!" These words were like powder kegs to the already existing flames that were brewing in the hearts of quite a few.

A mature woman, gorgeous and lively, usually possessing an elegant and gentle demeanor had an extremely ugly expression at the moment. She shrieked, her cultivation base lacking but her words thoroughly clear, "YEAH! You little SHIT, do you even have the qualifications?!"

"!!!"

These were merely two, the first, but pebbles of words were soon thrown by the handful amongst the crowd. To the majority, the Grand Prince was an insignificant figure compared to Wei Wuyin. A cacophony of insults were hurled, all targeting Long Chen.

It was as if Long Chen had challenged their King to mortal combat as a peasant, the script of status being severely flipped. They were enraged. Spittle and rage! It flowed everywhere!

"THE AUDACITY!! YOU IMPUDENT LITTLE CHILD, SIT YOUR ASS DOWN!" To them, where did Long Chen get off challenging Wei Wuyin. What right did he have? They didn't care about the grievances Long Chen might have, or if Wei Wuyin had his mom choke on his anaconda in the back of his Sky Palace, they purely saw it as an insult to them and the figure they worshipped.

Normally, if random individuals were shouting insults at a Grand Prince, they would experience a summary execution, but what if it wasn't just a few people? What if it was a thousand? Ten thousand? A million?! A near billion?!

"BLAND PRINCE, YOU SHIT-FILLED TRASH! GET THE FUCK OFF THE STAGE BEFORE WE THROW YOU OUT!!"

Those who came to watch Wei Wuyin display his talents in alchemy were all present, and a possible fight was not within their minds. In fact, the general rule of belief was that alchemists should be protected and beloved, being one of the few ways to alleviate the challenges of cultivation, to change one's fate and talents.

Just arriving at this event, they were filled with endless stories about the legendary past era, the King of Everlore Era. During that era, Astral Core Realm cultivators were far too numerous to count and the population was lesser. Now, there are only five million or so in a world of tens of trillions!

"You want to challenge Ascendant Emperor Wei?! Let my dog take a piss so you can see yourself clearly, then ask if you are even worthy?!"

To them, Wei Wuyin was their ticket to the Astral Core Realm, to a thousand years of life, to untapped potential power, and to an endless future they've imagined themselves as. While the Princess of Everlore was the 'true' successor of the King of Everlore, very few people were here for her.

They were here for HIM!

"Grand Prince?! TRASH! GRAND TRASH IS WHAT YOU ARE?!"

The sounds coalesced into a ferocious rebuke, with the crowd nearly rioting. It was a display of mob mentality as their ill-emotions and pent-up feelings, for some even entirely unrelated, were unleashed with that male youth at the center stage.

"TRASH? TRASH?! FOR SOMEONE LIKE HIM, BEING CONSIDERED GRAND TRASH IS AN INSULT TO TRASH! AT LEAST TRASH HAS VALUE!!!"

Zen's toothless mouth opened in complete shock and utter disbelief, her ears hurting from the sheer volume of the collective shouting. Ji Changkong's expression transformed into a grimace, having never experienced the hatred of nearly a hundred of millions people. The colliding soundwaves targeted in their expressions caused his skin to ripple ceaselessly in all directions.

Long Chen was the target of it all, causing his mental state to momentarily go blank. All his willpower, all of his fortitude built-up from being insulted as a youth, declared as trash, wasn't capable of withstanding and unexpected rampage of so many individuals.

The usual bevy of beauties by his side were located in an isolated chamber, brought there and watched over by an allied Earthly General. The demon was a friend of Long Chen, someone who he respected, and thus took it upon himself to restrict the movements of these young women.

They would clearly attempt to interfere in this event, and this battle was something Long Chen was determined to initiate. Therefore, Qing Qiumu, Lin Ziyang, Lian Yu, Wu Baozhai, Hong Ru, Xiao Bing, Long Tingyu, and Na Xinyi were all here, watching as Long Chen was berated by seemingly the entire world.

Their mouths were agape as they stood aghast. It was an event of vocal slaughter, all of which directed at one person.

Lian Yu's eyes were scarlet red, a feeling of grievance unknowingly stabbing in her heart as the crowd shouted crude, sometimes creative, insults. Long Chen was the Grand Prince, the successor of the Grand Monarch Lineage, what right did they have to act in this way?

Her eyes looked to figures of authority and great power, seeking out with hopes that they'll shut these despicable individuals up. If they knew why Long Chen challenged Wei Wuyin, would they be on his side?

Wu Baozhai's left eye twitched. This...was a disaster. A complete and total disaster. Regardless of the outcome of the Imperial Combat, if the fight could even happen, there would likely be no way anyone would respect Long Chen. Instead, he would be remembered as the individual who couldn't read the situation, who overstepped his boundaries, who was a true historical idiot.

As a member of an Imperial Clan, she understood the perception of the masses was very important. If Long Chen wanted to claim the reins, he would have to wade his way through it all, uplifting their thoughts and belief towards him lest he be met with endless obstacles in the dark.

She didn't know what to do or how to de-escalate the situation.

"Why are they being so mean to Big Brother?!" In a tearful choke, Long Tingyu cried out. She was still a child, her understanding of the human heart and the concept of idols were far too lacking.

Na Xinyi mindlessly and thoughtlessly responded, "He challenged the idol in their hearts." She understood the concept of eyeing the idol in other hearts. Weren't Hong Ru and Xiao Bing a literal causality of a similar event? Of course, not of this scale. But Huangfu Jinwei idolized, loved, desired the two, but then Long Chen arrived and he was challenged for their attention, threatening to take away what he wanted.

It might seem slightly different, but the fundamentals were still there.

In a brief few years, Wei Wuyin had not just become a household name, but a legend spread further by his insane deeds and accomplishments. Furthermore, the former title Prince of Everlore carried incredible weight that helped thrust him even further into the forefront of their lives.

Long Tingyu was still confused, tears threatening to spill. She seemed so cute and delicate that anyone who saw her would want to hug and protect her from the cruelty of the world.

Lin Ziyang's eyes were extremely wide, not expecting this. She knew this was all due to her, so she bit her lower lip with anxiety.

BOOM!

"We sho-" Before Qing Qiumu could speak out her thoughts, an explosive sound erupted in the sky. It was so loud that the voices of the crowd had been dulled out for a moment, causing everyone to look at the direction of its origin.

When they saw who it was, the eyes of everyone widened, and some even became frenzied.

"ASCENDANT EMPEROR OF NEO-DAWN HAS ARRIVED!" A voice shouted out enthusiastically.

Wei Wuyin was floating far above the colosseum, his brilliant pair of silver eyes regarded the world with an icy indifference. This only highlighted his imposing demeanor and extremely handsome features. Just his presence alone was extremely stifling, causing the entire crowd to simmer down until become silent like a doused blaze.

The wind caused his outer alchemist robe to flutter, and a distinct scent of alchemical energies permeated throughout the world, the senses of nearly a billion were simultaneously stimulated. The people present were breathing quietly, some even going as far as to suppress the sound of their heartbeat for an unknown fear.

While Wei Wuyin didn't speak, it was as if he shouted the word: "Silence!"

This was what it meant to be imposing, and even to people who've never met you, didn't even know how you looked, but simply the brief announcement of your name sent them into abject obedience. A formless aura that effused your every thought without needing to convey a single word.

Power.

Not just to decimate the world, but to influence the minds of the masses.

Na Xinyi, Lin Ziyang, and Wu Baozhai's heart went aflutter with complex and pounding emotions. They simultaneously thought: "This is what it meant to be a Sovereign."

Wei Wuyin started to slowly descend, his eyes focusing on the platform of his upcoming All-Alchemic Clash. It was currently occupied by three people. These three slowly watched as Wei Wuyin approached.

Zen and Ji Changkong had apprehension. Even despite their thousand years of cultivation and high strength, they felt inferior. This feeling permeated into them as if they were observing the peak of the Mortal Dao. As members still within the Mortal Dao, how could they not feel fear, respect, and inferiority before its presence?

Ka.

When that first step pressed against the platform, everyone felt their hearts skip a beat simultaneously. Wei Wuyin was still shrouded in the alchemical aura of ninth-grade products, and due to the isolation formation set-up, his entire body was brimming with its scent, power, and innate influence. It forcefully called to attention all those within the Mortal Dao.

Even his Alchemic Stars of Mortal Spirituality was constantly present within his eyes, even Eden found it increasingly difficult to suppress. The more ninth-grade products he successfully concocted, the stronger it was. Now, his silver eyes were infused with peak Mortal Dao presence and the essence of the Alchemic Dao.

Zen gulped as she met his gaze. She, an old creature, lowered her head in obedience as if before a ruler. Ji Changkong, who possessed two sharp Intentions, was feeling extremely conflicted, but he removed his hands from his hilt. A sign of his surrender.

Despite their strength, they were still restrained by the Mortal Dao, until they exceeded these limits and touched upon the Mystic.

He finally glanced at Long Chen, who, shockingly, was less affected. It was due to the Imperial Heaven Qi Method, a cultivation method designed by Wu Yu, an existence who exceeded Mortal Limits. While he couldn't be said to have even remotely touched upon that limit, the fundamentals of his cultivation was still influenced by the Mystic Ascendant Realm.

Despite not being heavily influenced, he still felt a distinct inferiority develop within his heart. He clenched his teeth, staring at Wei Wuyin, and then noticing the unassuming black ring dangling around his neck. His eyes became reddened.

With a fierce point of his finger, he shouted: "Undo what you did to her!"

Chapter 348 - 344: Shifting Of Fate

"Undo what you did to her!"

Long Chen demanded. Despite the unexpected event of being berated, insulted, and almost spat on by millions, he still remembered Lin Ziyang. He was here because of her, for her.

When Lin Ziyang returned, he felt something was off. It was highly suspicious that she had been repaired so quickly; furthermore, she acted increasingly distant from him. This was completely unlike what she was before. He still remembered how she consoled him, how gentle she talked to him, how lovingly, how emotionally, and how supportive she was. But after coming back from Wei Wuyin's so-called 'recovery procedure', she had changed.

He didn't see a light of admiration, respect, and gentleness in her ocean blue eyes anymore. Instead, there was a light of bitterness, annoyance, and flashes of anger. Such rancor had never been revealed to him before. Why would she resent him?

It had to be because of Wei Wuyin! He must've done something to her, likely brainwashed her somehow using his various means!

Even more, her first desire was to bring Xiao Bing and Hong Ru to Wei Wuyin's Sky Palace! In his perspective, it was Wei Wuyin's plan to do the same to them as well! How could he allow that?! Without hesitation, he kept them there and tried to convince Lin Ziyang, talk to her, but her responses were hogwash!

What 'I've chosen to stay with him'!

What 'This is my own choice'!

What 'You don't have the right to interfere'!

Before he had you, you loved me! You're going to him?! The thought of it drove him to complete and utter rage, and he knew, HE KNEW, that Wei Wuyin had altered her mind somehow! He used some tricks to brainwash her!!

All that time they spent together, how he valiantly fought for her! The Lin Ziyang he knew would never even associate with his rival, no matter what?! Especially not Wei Wuyin! The guy he hated the most, he despised the most, and the one he wanted to kill the most in this world. All he does is take, take, and take!

He took his ring, he took Wu Yu, and now he wants to take YOU?!

Driven by these thoughts, Long Chen could no longer hold it in and had to challenge Wei Wuyin to Imperial Combat. And what better venue than the location where the entire starfield would view? He would finally settle his differences with Wei Wuyin, and save Lin Ziyang as well!

While these thoughts drove his actions, Wei Wuyin was briefly confused. Did Long Chen want him to unheal Lin Ziyang? It was only for a moment, and then he came to a realization. Recalling that kiss, her soft body in his embrace, and those words of hers, he realized what brought Long Chen to this point.

He thought for a moment. Then, with a faint, cunning smile he stated: "I, Wei Wuyin, swear an Oath upon my Spirit that I haven't used my abilities to alter Lin Ziyang's thoughts, memories, or beliefs outside of her benefit during or after her recovery. That all her actions from the moment she awakened until now were of her own free will, not imposed by any of mine." Besides isolating her memories of torture from her psyche, making it unable to distort her personality, he hadn't done any alterations.

"..." The crowd was faintly confused, but they remained silent and respectful.

"...?!" But the beautiful women that were gathered together were all sent into a state of shock. They knew why Long Chen had taken to challenge Wei Wuyin, and it was due to Lin Ziyang's change. Well, it was merely one of the many reasons, but it was his core reason at the moment.

In the matter of two sentences, Wei Wuyin had instantly sworn a Spirit Oath that he hadn't interfered with Lin Ziyang in any way that might be detrimental to her decision making.

Lin Ziyang was startled, a heavy breath of relief was unleashed within her heart. She feared this too, which was why she hadn't stopped Long Chen. But when she recalled her current thoughts, beliefs, and wants, she was once again reaffirmed of what she desired.

"..." Qing Qiumu, Na Xinyi, Wu Baozhai, Xiao Bing, Hong Ru, and Long Tingyu were silent, unable to speak. They had all thought that there was a possibility that Wei Wuyin had actually acted, likely to spite Long Chen. Even Qing Qiumu was skeptical. After all, Lin Ziyang was the picture of an adoring wife before. The image had been completely flipped in a short period of time.

But what they didn't realize was that this 'short period of time' wasn't short to Lin Ziyang. She was in a half-comatose state. A state given to her because Long Chen had decided to be petty, castrating a member of the Ji Clan. As for her? She was merely the target of that Ji Clan member's lustful desires. She was innocent, yet her life was nearly taken from her. And Long Chen did nothing to help her. Regardless if it was the Medical Sages who alleviated her extreme pain or her recovery, it was all because of someone else.

"...I-" Long Chen stumbled over his words, unsure what to say. He saw the distinct spiritual fluctuations emit from Wei Wuyin, a sign that the Spirit Oath was authentic. The rage and anger he felt, the reason he used as the foundation to justify his actions, had collapsed with a mere few words.

Speechless, he was left floundering without a paddle.

Wei Wuyin didn't even give Long Chen another look, turning away to the area where the girls were located. "It's quite pathetic that you, the Grand Prince, would challenge me for a woman that no longer wants you. Must you blame all your shortcomings on me? Take some responsibility, will you?"

With a scoff, "But a challenge of Imperial Combat must be accepted by those of similar ranking. Since Heavenly Kings and Grand Princes were on the same level, with some minor differences, I can't reject your challenge."

Imperial Combat was designed as a way for disciples to settle their differences in combat, and it could even get extremely deadly. Wei Wuyin had once used this very concept to kill Gu Hao, who assaulted Xiao Bai, and caused the downfall of a Sky Noble Faction using a bounty system.

If it was any other time, Wei Wuyin would gladly accept, slaughtering Long Chen as a result. From Wu Yu's silence, he would likely not interfere. After all, since Long Chen challenged him of his own free will, if he did interfere, Long Chen would no longer be a qualified successor, no longer embodying the essence of the Imperial Heaven Qi Method. The two were of similar age and Wei Wuyin even had a weaker cultivation level than Long Chen.

A Grand Prince that had to always live beneath the heel of a Heavenly King wasn't suitable to become a Grand Monarch.

Wei Wuyin continued, "So, we'll have our battle. But the time and place is to be decided by the challenged party: Me. I'll choose a suitable time later. For now, leave my stage." His words were uttered with the utmost calm, treating Long Chen with no respect.

In the greatest and most genuine of truths, Wei Wuyin wanted nothing more than to kill Long Chen. This was a desire that had existed since the Myriad Yore Continent. It wasn't purely due to the Bloodline of

Sin, but a heartfelt want produced after witnessing Long Chen's mocking, triumphant smile when he was beheaded in that alternate timeline.

But he couldn't. Even if he were to disregard Qing Qiumu, even if he were to disregard Wu Yu, he couldn't disregard the consequence of suffering another rapid acceleration of his Calamities of Hell. Just Yuag Longshi caused him to lose twenty-seven years.

He always had a feeling that killing a Blessed would send him into more than one Calamity instantly. This wasn't a result he wanted to see. To him, his life was far more valuable than Long Chen's.

Long Chen was about to speak, his expression contorting, but Wei Wuyin glanced at Ji Changkong who experienced a jolt. Before a word could be uttered, Ji Changkong forcefully brought Long Chen away in a comet of sharp light.

Zen had already lowered her head, her heart in turmoil. Earlier, she had attacked Wei Wuyin, and she wasn't sure where they stood. But Wei Wuyin didn't mind her, "The All-Alchemic Clash will begin soon. Thank you all for being here, bearing witness." After announcing this, he looked at the room with Lin Ziyang.

He slowly soared over, arriving in a quiet and stable manner. Only after he left the stage, left view, then the impassioned voices of the crowd started to resound.

"That was the Ascendant Emperor?! How handsome!"

"Did you see his eyes?! It felt like he could see into your soul, shatter all illusions, and view the world's mysteries! I think...I think I'm in love!"

"Pfft, with your body, he'll never see past your thick waist and balloon body!"

Avid discussion abound, regardless of men or women, they were talking.

When Wei Wuyin arrived in the room, he swept his eyes over all those present. With a faint smile, one filled with a slightly playful grin, he couldn't help but say: "You should be more clear with your wants and intentions next time." While those words seemed to be directed at Lin Ziyang for producing this event, there were other girls who felt their heart tremble at those words, as if speaking to them.

Na Xinyi especially.

Qing Qiumu felt her heart pound for a moment. Whenever Wei Wuyin entered the scene, he would awe the world and then warm her heart. His gentle, warm, and down-to-earth smile after displaying world-shaking feats allowed her to understand him more. Regardless of what event, he would always remain his truest self.

"Alright, I need to make some last minute preparations. See ya later," Wei Wuyin smiled at the blushing Lin Ziyang and was about to leave.

Qing Qiumu cried out, causing him to stop. Despite all that happened to Long Chen just now, none of it was Wei Wuyin's fault. So she said in the most excited manner, "Good luck! Beat that princess!" She gave a thumbs-up and a bright smile. It was extremely cute, even causing Wei Wuyin to chuckle.

"Was always the plan," With that, he left.

The room was left with complex emotions, and the image of Wei Wuyin and Long Chen, the sharp, stark, and clear contrast in demeanor and openness, it had formed a comparison in their minds they couldn't shake. While one was subjected to ridicule and contempt, the other demanded respect and exuded warmth.

Someone who always acted aboveboard, never indulging in his inner pettiness versus an individual whose pride always brought along troubles and endless consequences. The plundering of their hearts, it was completed at this moment.

Na Xinyi first thought as she saw Wei Wuyin leave, swaggering out with the utmost confidence was: *'I've decided.'*

But these thoughts were similarly echoed by another, an unexpected woman within this group, and it was firmer and contained more resolve than Na Xinyi.

In a far off land, in a dark and dimly lit room, a cloaked figure was holding a perfectly spherical crystal orb that was infused with golden mist. It floated before the figure, their hands rotating around it in a mystical manner, almost forming afterimages.

Then...

CRACK!

A soft gasp of shock resounded as the crystal orb revealed a faint, chaotic crack on its surface. For a long moment, silence reigned supreme until words were finally spoken. "Little girl, your fate shifted?"

Another figure emerged, shadowy and indistinct. "What happened?"

"...We'll need to change our plans."

Chapter 349 - 345: All-Alchemic Clash, Start!

While the previous show had provoked the crowd's excitement, their emotions, both ill and foul, unleashed on the poor soul that was Long Chen, they soon moved on. They had already bore witness to Wei Wuyin accepting the challenge, but they didn't have any expectations for Long Chen. Just the way the others reacted to their presences, the vast difference, was enough for everyone to relegate Long Chen as a mere clout chaser.

If he wished to use their Ascendant Emperor as a stepping-stone, they surely wouldn't have any good opinions of him.

"They're here!" Someone with a powerful cultivation base announced, spreading his voice through the ears of millions. The voice caused numerous heads to twist and turn until they lifted and saw a group of individuals were descending from the sky.

The Alchemist Association's Prince of Everlore's entourage was filled with numerous prestigious and relevant members of the Alchemist Society. They arrived in like-minded, same-colored outfits sporting the Alchemist Association's emblem. There were nine of them, including Qingye Yun and Qingye Ying. The rest were Alchemic Emperors that were easily recognizable.

This showing had fully displayed the Alchemist Association's forefront charge in the Alchemic Dao. To possess seven Alchemic Emperors in a mere entourage was far too luxuriant. They were speaking to the world, confessing their boundless strengths in the Alchemic Dao. Furthermore, they were all surrounding Qingye Ying, following a step or so behind her to insinuate their status and position.

Despite these figures being capable of creating rain and storm, they were willingly following the Princess of Everlore in this manner. This only served to hype the crowd! An emotion of deep expectation surged into the hearts of everyone present. While Wei Wuyin had far more presence, far more terrifying aura exuding from him, he didn't have that mindset of superiority. When he looked at the crowd, he didn't see them as ants.

But these figures did, and it added an above-all feeling to them. It was seemingly pretentious, arrogant, and condescending. If this type of aura were to appear on normal individuals, they would immediately be beaten on the streets and left without any dignity, but when placed on these notorious figures of the Alchemist Society, the impact they felt hit differently.

The group of nine had always been present, fully aware of what had happened. But they hadn't made their appearance, staying above the translucent platform while watching the crowd's actions.

When they fully descended onto the platform, Qingye Ying took the lead with an elegant step. She truly exuded an innate grace and calming disposition, and her veil added a distinct feeling of mystery. It left the crowd in wonder. What was under that veil of hers? Was she a heartstopping beauty that could cause nations to fight for her or ordinary, with merely her potential as the future successor of the King of Everlore as her greatest feature. It enthralled the curiosity of men and women alike.

"Qingye Ying, the Princess of Everlore, HAS ARRIVED!" A voice that penetrated further and louder announced to the crowd, causing a low clamor of discussion. In comparison to Wei Wuyin, there was not much known about the Princess of Everlore. Be it her looks, her talent, her skills, or her feats. She was an almost complete mystery. The only key detail they knew was that in the several millennia of the starfield, she was the only individual to have succeeded in cultivating an Alchemic Astral Soul since the King of Everlore.

Besides knowing her name and background, there wasn't much else to say. In contrast, Wei Wuyin was a household name discussed in the idle time of cultivators, alchemists, and even mortals. In a mere few years, he marked himself deeply in the minds of everyone present. He had become an idol, a representation of what everyone wished to become. An embodiment of talent, of looks, of influence, of strength, and of intelligence.

He was a rising star that couldn't be unseen.

Therefore, there wasn't an explosive uproar that one might expect. Instead, it was more like low whispers of gossip. There was barely any concrete information about the Princess of Everlore, Qingye Ying.

Qingye Ying and her entourage were standing on the platform, the center focus, but the expressions of these Emperor Alchemists were a little odd. They expected their reception to be greater or at least more indicative of their status. This crowd was looking at them without their reverence one should have! It caused anger to swell in their hearts.

An Alchemic Emperor, old yet noble, softly said to Qingye Ying: "You must show everyone the power of the Alchemist Association. It seems they've forgotten!" A soft snort later, and he felt unwilling to stay with such a subdued reaction. Witnessing their original showoff intentions deflate before they even received any gas had caused them to have no reason to remain.

They collectively left in a regal and important fashion, flying back to the translucent platform and disappearing. Their self-important demeanors even earned the hidden scorn of some.

The only two that remained were Qingye Yun and Qingye Ying. Qingye Yun looked upon his great-great-great granddaughter and took a calm, deep, and relaxing breath. He didn't speak, merely pressed his hands softly on her shoulders.

Qingye Ying felt the weight, the expectations, and her mission. Beneath that veil of hers, on her gorgeous face, was a pair of eyes radiating determination. She nodded to Qingye Yun, responding to his emotions. There were no words spoken between the two, either spiritually or vocally, yet they exchanged a thousand words.

Qingye Yun flew upwards, arriving near the Judge's station. He waved his hand, forming a seat of his own out of astral force. The three hegemonic forces leaders and two Emperor Alchemists didn't mind his actions, merely waiting for this event to begin.

"..."

Step. Step. Step.

The crowd suddenly descended into silence once more, Wei Wuyin walking into view. His every step, while too far away to truly be audible to everyone, felt close and forceful. It was an exquisite display, attracting the attention of everyone. When he fully entered the platform, standing no more than a few dozen feet away from Qingye Ying, he mused with a smile

"When I participated in my first All-Alchemic Clash, I wore a face-covering as well. I guess it was a mask, but it's all the same really." Wei Wuyin found it interesting. Of course, he had worn it for an entirely different reason. With his Celestial Eyes, he could see her heaven-shaking appearance. She was a blessed beauty if he'd ever seen one. If her looks were revealed, there would certainly be endless suitors lining before her.

He recalled his first impression of her: "Luscious, silky, warm golden-blonde hair adorned her head and reached mid-way to her back, paired perfectly with a set of bright golden eyes that seemed to contain unfathomable purity within. It was purity that one could easily lose themselves into for days, and willingly do so for life. Her slim body had curves that seemed far too perfect, seemingly unreal even. With her ample breasts that seemed to be more than a handful for any man, she possessed an astonishing sexual appeal that was impossible to ignore.

Just these could cause many men to devolve into their most primal instincts."

It was truly spot-on. Even Qing Qiumu's looks were merely even with hers. In his mind, only Xue Yifei exceeded her.

Qingye Ying was startled by Wei Wuyin's casual comment, seemingly lacking any urgency within his tone. Did he not know the importance of this clash? She felt that this might be a way to lower her guard, so she remained silent.

Wei Wuyin softly smiled, realizing she was far too tense. Before he could talk any further, Yi Yun, one of the judges and Alchemic Emperors, lifted from his seat and clapped his hands. He brought everyone's attention to himself, and with a stern expression and announced: "Welcome! The beginnings of the All-Alchemic Clash between these two young talents will soon begin. To start, I'll explain the rules in thorough detail to all those unaware!"

He began a wordy explanation.

The All-Alchemic Clash was a form of battle between Alchemists held in the highest regard, and it challenges the four essentials: Pill, Pellet, Paste, and Elixir. It tested one's overall skill in the Alchemic Dao, and the only true way to claim victory was to triumph over your opponent in the most convincing manner.

The Challenged Party will first choose a type of product, then the Challenger will choose one of the three unchosen ones. This will continue once more until all four types are selected. Then, parties decide on the recipes they will be competing with, and these recipes were carefully selected to give their selectors the absolute advantage.

It was often that the recipe chosen wasn't one the other alchemist was even familiar with, something obscure and odd. This was merely to ensure their victory. Then, both will begin concocting their respective products. The rating system was absolute, with quality of product being the primary decider of victory. After that, if both sides create the same quality, the number of attempts would decide the winner, and then time used for concoction.

All concoctions will occur in the open, with both parties fully displaying their skill. Typically, some of these competitions can last months, sometimes even years. Therefore, Yi Yun had reminded the crowd that this could last for a long time. Very few alchemists could achieve success on their first concoction, probably not even their tenth, so there was a need to emphasize this point.

While these two might be talented, the difficulties of alchemy were still there.

After going over the finer details to ensure he didn't miss a single thing, Yi Yun finished.

He loudly announced, "Let the clash officially begin!"

Chapter 350 - 346: All-Alchemic Clash, Calculated Foresight

The announcement of the official beginning of what would likely determine the next era was exhilarating, and the spectating crowd showed it. They were already shouting in excitement, seemingly rooting for their favored member.

"ASCENDANT EMPEROR WEI, CRUSH HER!"

"Show HIM why you're the PRINCESS of Everlore! The world is yours, seize it!!"

While the cheers towards Wei Wuyin were louder, more direct, those who rooted for the Princess of Everlore were seemingly more elegant in their words. To most of these non-alchemist, this battle was

like a boxing match. While they understood that there might not be much excitement, likely a lot of standing and focus, they were still incredibly hyped.

They could see their idol, root and cheer, and bet on the inevitable outcome. How could they not be invested?!

The platform trembled slightly, generating a thin dome around it, isolating the two from the outside world. It was one-sided, allowing those outside to view those within while simultaneously preventing the loud noises and possible disturbances from disturbing the alchemists. After all, if these people cheered so loudly at one of them, it could ruin their concoctions.

To prevent this, measures were appropriately taken.

It didn't stop the crowd from cheering out their words, as if hoping the energy within could be given to their chosen victor.

"ASCENDANT EMPEROR WEI, WE LOVE YOU!"

"Princess, why the veil? I'm so sad! Remove it, PLEASE!!"

Some of these cheers were rather absurd, even a little embarrassing. There was even a full minute of women chiming in, constantly shouting out their love for Wei Wuyin. Some of which were...questionable...

"WIN THIS AND YOU CAN HAVE ME AND MY DAUGHTER!" Shouted particular woman who bet quite a bit on Wei Wuyin's victory, 3-0. The All-Alchemic Clash betting was set in six different outcomes, all with different ratios. They were:

3-0 Wei Wuyin.

3-0 Qingye Ying.

2-2, Tiebreaker - Wei Wuyin.

2-2, Tiebreaker - Qingye Yin.

3-1 Wei Wuyin.

3-1 Qingye Yin.

Hearing the crowd, especially the powerful women trying to send their voices out, Long Tingyu's soft cheeks were as red as an apple in their room. There were numerous rooms situated in the colosseum at the very top, capable of seeing everything. There was even a magnifying formation embedded in the glass so they can see everything happening despite their far distance.

The girls were in one of these luxurious rooms. As for Long Chen, he was sent elsewhere and isolated by Ji Changkong. He wasn't allowed to cause any more trouble.

Na Xinyi was clenching her hands together, her eyes emanating an anxious light. She couldn't help but turn to Qing Qiumu and ask, "Will he win?" Those words resounded in the hearts of everyone present, they, too, looked at Qing Qiumu.

The reputation of the Alchemic Astral Soul was legendary, capable of performing numerous feats that today's alchemists can only dream of doing. With it, the King of Everlore established his own era and defined the next few. It wasn't wrong for them to think this.

Qing Qiumu felt their gazes, her beautiful eyelashes fluttered slightly. She had confidence in Wei Wuyin, believing he'd never accept a challenge that he couldn't win. But she was similarly aware of the overwhelming advantages that Alchemic Astral Souls possessed.

The only one that wasn't concerned was Lin Ziyun. She had felt and observed Wei Wuyin's four Astral Souls. She felt a distinctive alchemical aura from one, permeating with vast mental waves. She didn't know what it was, but she felt that it was likely an Alchemic Astral Soul.

She just couldn't fathom how it existed. After all, Wei Wuyin had strength. Actual strength. Her assumptions on the neutered abilities of an Alchemic Astral Souls were overturned at that moment.

Qing Qiumu, unaware, still calmed herself and said with a hardened and absolute gaze. "Yes, he'll win."

Long Tingyu pouted, "How can you be so sure?" She was clearly displeased with Wei Wuyin, still prejudiced, even if Wei Wuyin didn't do anything sneaky to Lin Ziyun, in her heart, he was still inferior to her Big Brother.

"Because he said he would," Qing Qiumu stated. Somehow, this caused the girls to feel a sense of certainty in the outcome. As if there were no other possible outcomes after those words reminded them of what Wei Wuyin's previously said.

Na Xinyi clenched her fists harder than before, her eyes staring fixedly on Wei Wuyin's figure.

On the platform, Wei Wuyin was calmly regarding Qingye Ying. He was quite curious about this young woman, including what level she was currently at. He wasn't certain if his absurd concoction speed and success rate was a trait of his Alchemic Astral Soul or a byproduct of his talent in the arts. He was always curious about this detail.

Before, there was no way for him to compare himself to others, but not only was Qingye Ying older than him, had a greater alchemic foundation than him thanks to the Alchemist Association, but similarly possessed an Alchemic Astral Soul. This was the best way for him to measure his actual abilities.

"Will her first pick be a Ninth-Grade Product?" His silver eyes filled anticipation.

The initial phase of the All-Alchemic Clash began, and their selections were to be made. Wei Wuyin, as the challenged party, was given first rights to choose. Therefore, he smilingly picked an unexpected choice: "Pellet."

These words that were amplified in volume and carried throughout the colosseum was shocking! Even the Judges and Alchemist Association's utmost elites were startled by his choice. The typical first-pick choice was pill or elixir, because they were the commonly concocted products for cultivators and the most difficult. This would allow one of the most difficult selections to be yours to make.

As for Pellets, they were notoriously violent and inherently dangerous to concoct due to handling requirements, being one-time used products that can achieve a wide-range of mystical effects. They were very talisman-like, capable of containing uncontrolled and refined energies that can suppress

spiritual sense, explosively detonate, or even release poisonous miasma. These three weren't even scratching the surface of a Pellet's variable nature.

Yi Yun frowned, commenting: "Ascendant Emperor Wei's first choice is pellet. That is highly unusual."

The other Alchemic Emperor-level Judge, Li Che, rubbed his chin and chimed in. "Pellets are typically the third pick. This is already diverging from the standard operating procedure of an All-Alchemic Clash, I wonder what Ascendant Emperor Wei's intentions are." These words were similarly carried throughout the colosseum, allowing the crowd to understand these top-tier alchemists' thoughts.

Yi Yun nodded, "Pellets are often chosen as the third pick because they had easier concoction conditions than Pills and Elixirs, but are extremely violent, unstable, and prone to failure, more likely resulting in an exploded cauldron or self-injury. Still, they give the selector an advantage as they could pick a Pellet that coincides with their Intent or Cultivation Method, allowing an easier time to handle any unexpected fallout."

Qingye Yun was taken aback as well, uncertain why Wei Wuyin hadn't chosen Pill or Elixir. She had to calm herself down, trying not to lose herself in Wei Wuyin's momentum. Whatever tricks he's trying to pull, she still intended to claim victory, and she had been practicing this for months.

"Elixir." Qingye Ying claimed. After that, she paused for a moment as she saw the faint hint of a smile on Wei Wuyin's face. She felt as if her thoughts were seen through. She faintly shook her head, trying to dispel that feeling from her mind.

Wei Wuyin calmly announced his second pick, "Paste."

"What?!" Even the Emperor Alchemists of the Alchemist Association were extremely shocked this time, not to mention Yi Yun and Li Che. They nearly rose from their seats, wanting to throw Wei Wuyin a question towards his thought process.

Pastes were the easiest of the four to concoct, being mostly a form of mixture and balance, with very little chances of failure with a hint of mindfulness. They were also the easiest and quickest product out of the four to make. Furthermore, pastes were often non-cultivation oriented, using milder ingredients as a result. They were used as age-defying creams, lotions, and ointment. The concept of a paste was its initial state during concoction, not its end.

There were some pastes that turned solid, being like a rock that can be ingested and slowly digested to achieve a variety of effects. Wei Wuyin had used the Waters of Life, a liquid-like paste that contained life-sustaining and healing properties.

It was extremely rare for anyone to willingly choose paste, because it gave them no advantage whatsoever in the competition. It was the only product mass produced for consumption and usage. There are even fertilizer-based pastes that help promote growth of farm fields. The typical last choice was the second pick for Wei Wuyin, throwing all these elite alchemists for a loop.

However, Qingye Ying's eyes widened in total shock and heart-crashing disbelief. A jolt of cold chill traveled down her spine, her golden eyes staring at Wei Wuyin intently.

Qingye Yun's reaction wasn't anything different, his heartbeat pounding a thousand miles a minute. 'How did he know?!

They, this Grandfather and Granddaughter pair, now understood the terror of Wei Wuyin. With this move, he had eliminated their initial confidence, and they hadn't even seen it coming!

As if feeling their emotions, Yi Yun's eyes brightened. "Incredible! To think this is what he's planning!" He couldn't help but exclaim, and if it wasn't for the venue, he might be clapping for Wei Wuyin's strong foresight.

"...?" The three hegemonic leaders were stunned. Lin Ruyan, Pavilion Master of the Elemental Heaven Pavilion, questioned, "What is he doing?" Her words echoed the thoughts of the other judges, including the crowd. Taking this odd approach, what was the purpose?

Yi Yun smilingly looked back at Qingye Yun, noticing the slightly ugly expression on his face. Yi Yun patiently explained, "Wei Wuyin eliminated any chance of a surefire tie or victory for the other team."

"...what?!" Questions were immediately levied to Yi Yun in the form of various intrigued gazes.

Yi Yun continued, "Typically, the first choice will be either Pill or Elixir for both contestants, while the next choice is Paste or Pellet. The expected process is Pill or Elixir, Elixir or Pill, then Pellet, and lastly Paste. The challenger would usually always have to deal with paste, the very last pick. While it might seem like a disadvantage to some, for the Alchemist Association, a long-standing organization with numerous alchemists and vast resources, they can easily concoct a specific paste that needs a very specific method to concoct. As long as they chose one Ascendant Emperor Wei was utterly incapable of concocting, then he'd fail instantly. This would typically result in a 3-1 or 2-2, leading to a tiebreaker.

"A surefire win or tie," Yi Yun's explanation enlightened everyone to the intentions of the Alchemist Association. This had eliminated their failsafe, evening out the competition.

Lin Ruyan frowned as she thought of this, "Why didn't he choose Paste first then? Why Pellet?"

It was Li Che who answered this time, his skinny frame shaking faintly in excitement. "For the same reason the Princess Ying wanted to choose Paste. He must've prepared for both paste and pellet beforehand, not just one, something barely any Alchemist ever is left with. And that, folks, changes the entire clash." Those words thoroughly shook the crowd as they bore witness to an unprecedented development. This meant that Wei Wuyin was confident in succeeding in both of these selections with likely strange and difficult products to ensure a tie! This was preparing for the worst case scenario.

Gao Zi, with his heavy demonic voice, similarly spoke with interest. "If what you said is true, then there's another layer of damage inflicted to Princess Ying, and perhaps even hidden barbs lying beneath."

Yi Yun's eyes brightened once more, "You're right, Mountain Lord Gao. This just got a lot more interesting. For those hearing that are still uncertain, I'll explain: If Wei Wuyin could grasp a win or tie in one of the Pill or Elixir selections, he now has a far greater chance of victory, while this similarly reduces Qingye Ying's chances considerably." The crowd felt the genuine excitement from these aged figures, their minds already roaring with cheers, and soon their mouths followed.

Qingye Ying stilled, "Y-You..." She was speechless. Before the battle even began, she was seemingly cornered. Her selections of Pill and Elixir had to be victories.

"The battle has only just begun," Wei Wuyin couldn't help but grin.

