

## Alchemy 101

### Chapter 101: Leaving

"Hahaha hahaha," he started laughing like an idiot. Ma Rong could already tell that the pill had a high harmony, still, she walked in to test it.

Alex looked at her and said, "Oh, hello master. I didn't see you come in." He got up from the ground and dusted himself off.

Ma Rong had already taken out a pill tester and brought it forward. Alex didn't question anything and just put the pill directly into the pill tester.

Ma Rong watched as the fog slowly rise up. She had expected it to cross 40% and wasn't surprised when it did. As she watched the fog slowly rise up, more and more until it stopped at 50%.

"Heaven! You made a Heaven grade pill!!!" she involuntarily let out a loud shock.

"Yeah. I got lucky for the most part, but yes. Getting fresh ingredients also helped a lot." He said with a smile.

Ma Rong didn't say another word as she kept on looking at the pill and only spoke after a while, "It took me until I was an elder before I made a heaven-grade pill, yet you made it in just under a month. This is way too shocking."

Alex didn't reply, but instead asked a question, "What are you doing here master? Are we going to have another lesson?"

"Hmm... No. Did you forget what day it is today?" she asked.

"Today? It's Monday of course. Was something supposed to happen today?" he was a little confused.

"Did you forget what you said 2 weeks ago?" Ma Rong asked.

"2 weeks ago?" he started thinking. His perfect memory only went back until the Wednesday before the last one, so he needed to think a bit to remember.

"Oh, wait. Tiger sect. Am I going to Tiger Sect?" he asked, finally realizing what she meant.

"Yes, I'm here to take you to the Tiger sect right now. Come with me." She said as she started walking out.

"Master, the pill?" he asked, stopping her in her tracks.

Ma Rong only then realized she was still holding the pill tester. "Oh right," she quickly took out a pill bottle and put it back.

"Here," she handed him the pill back. Instead of taking it, however, he brought out 6 other pill bottles. "Master, take these. Please register them on my behalf when you have the time. I won't be able to now that I'm leaving for Tiger sect."

Ma Rong checked the pills and realized all of them were some of his best products. "How many more pills do you have to make?" she asked.

"None. That was my last one." He said pointing to the blood-red pill.

"Alright then, after you come back from the Tiger sect in 2 weeks, you will have to take the core disciple test." She said and kept the pills. She then gave him a storage bag.

Alex took the bag and found out it was full of different types of healing pills. "What's this for master?" he asked.

"You will need them if you are going to the tiger sect. Especially since you won't have Wen Cheng's protection for about a few weeks." Ma Rong said.

"Not have master's protection? I don't understand, Master."

"Basically, Wen Cheng wants to keep your relationship as a secret for a few weeks. That doesn't matter right now, Wen Cheng will explain to you most of the rest." She then took out a set of bluish-gray robes that were very plain to look at.

"Wear these for now," she threw the robes at him.

Alex quickly changed into his new plain robes and walked outside with her. "Master, I can go by myself if you are busy by the way." He said.

"Nonsense. Come on, I'm taking you there." She said as she took out the flying boat and got on top of it.

"Master, do you really need the boat now that you have spiritual sense?" he asked.

"Not really, but it is still easier to use, and I'm used to it." She said and gestured for him to climb up. Alex jumped onto the boat and the boat set off.

"Alright, listen up. I talked to Wen Cheng, and we decided that you need to learn to confront a normal sect on your own. You will enter the sect as a normal disciple and rise along with the ranks the normal way. Also, this might be the chance for you to breakthrough in your cultivation, so make sure to properly cultivate every night. "

"Wen Cheng will teach you the rest. While I may not like admitting it, he really is a good teacher. Both of his disciples are the best Tiger sect has produced in a while." Ma Rong talked a lot but somehow didn't give out a lot of information.

"Alright, go invisible," she said and watched Alex disappear in front of her eyes. "Oh yeah, one more thing. You are not allowed to use the invisibility technique or the Flickering Shadows technique during your fights. Only use them in training, or when you spar against Wen Cheng."

Alex couldn't understand why that was, but it probably had something to do with hiding his talent and abilities. His master did say it made people jealous.

"Here we are, Jump down and reappear in an alley. After that just go to the sect gate and tell them your name and that you are a new disciple of the sect. They should know that someone like you is arriving."

Alex nodded and did as she said. "Goodbye master," he said and jumped down, slowly floating his way down. After landing, he went to a nearby alley and appeared from the other side finally visible.

He walked towards the north side of the town looking for the gate to the sect. When he finally found it, he was shocked.

He had been expecting a big gate with no other building in the vicinity. But instead, the Tiger sect's gate was actually a small bustling market on its own.

#### Chapter 102: Inner Sect Disciple

Alex was shocked that the entrance to the sect was actually a bustling market. He saw some shops that sold alchemy ingredients, some that sold weapons, some sold general artifacts, some sold talismans, and some even sold formation flags.

'What is going on here?' he wondered. Most of the customers in this market were disciples of the Tiger Sect with their yellow robes and either green or blue linings.

'Blue, I think was Inner sect disciples, right? So green has to be the outer sect. Was senior sister's red-colored lining for core disciples?' he wondered.

He walked past the many disciples and finally saw a small but expensive-looking gate. The gates had two pillars with a statue of a mighty tiger in a mid striking pose on top of both the gates. Between the two pillars was a massive curved board that had the words, 'TIGER SECT' written on it.

Alex walked past the gate and was immediately stopped by a man in a yellow robe with silver linings. 'Elder?' he thought.

"Stop right there. Who are you, and what are you doing here?" the elder inquired.

"Ah, hello. My name is Yu Ming. I am a new disciple of the Tiger Sect. I was told that you guys would know about it." He said.

"Hmm... Yu Ming?" the elder quickly checked his notes and exclaimed, "Ah, yes. We are waiting for you. Come with me." The elder took him to a building right next to the gate and knocked on one of the doors inside the building.

"What is it?" a sound came from the inside.

"Leader, the disciple named Yu Ming is here." The elder said and waited.

"Come in." The elder opened the door and walked in. Inside the room, was a very young man sitting on a chair. He had short black hair and was wearing an elder's clothes. As for his age, he was barely in his late 20s.

'Such a young man, and he's already an elder? He looks way younger than even martial uncle.' Alex thought.

"Leave," he commanded and the other elder left. "So, you are the new disciple huh." The young man said.

"Yes, Elder," Alex replied. The elder stopped for a second but continued as if nothing happened. "Hmm... Bone Tempering 3rd realm huh. He did say you were around this cultivation stage. That means you will directly become an inner sect disciple."

The elder took out a couple of things from his bag and handed it to Alex. "Here are 2 sets of clothes, and this is your badge." Alex took the clothes and kept them in his bag. As for the badge, he looked at it and just saw a big number '2608' written on it. He tried to scan it with his spiritual sense and realized it had a formation plate inside of it. But unlike a nameplate, he couldn't access it.

The elder then began to explain, "Tiger sect is different from Hong Wu sect. The alchemists are a bunch of pacifists who only hole up in their homemaking pills. In the Tiger sect, everything depends on your cultivation and fighting strength. You are currently the lowest-ranked disciple in the sect."

"However, you can go challenge anyone in the top 275 that is not in the Bone Tempering realm and get their homes for free. I suggest you go for the person at 275 so that it's an easy win and you don't need to go through a lot of trouble today."

"In Tiger sect, the disciples are separated into Outer, inner and core disciples based on their Cultivation base. Anyone with cultivation can automatically become an outer sect, anyone with Bone tempering realm of cultivation can become an inner sect, and anyone with Meridian Tempering realm can become a core disciple."

"There is a maximum quota of 50 core disciples, 225 inner sect disciples and the rest are outer sect disciples. Depending on your rank, and the strength of other disciples, you can be a disciple with high cultivation base and still be an outer sect disciple."

"Also, I don't know why, but I was told to give you this." He took out a normal-looking sword. "It's a Common mortal-grade sword that doesn't even have a name. From now on you are to use this sword to fight."

Alex was surprised. 'How often do I have to fight in this sect?' he wondered. "Now go and settle or fight. Here in Tiger sect, we do whatever we want."

Alex was stunned as he was sent away. The elder didn't give him a single piece of information about the sect itself. 'Where am I supposed to live? I don't even have a map,' He thought.

After he left the building, he walked a little further to see a massive mountain. The mountain wasn't very tall, but it was very wide. He saw thousands of houses on the mountain and a single pathway up the mountain. Many disciples were walking up and down the mountain.

He walked up the mountain and saw the houses had numbers. "Hmm... 2138" he walked to the right of the house and saw the next house had the number 2139. "Oh, so we are supposed to live in these houses huh. Since I'm already an inner sect disciple, I should do what the elder said and challenge someone in house 275.

It took him a while to understand the logic behind how the houses were named. From the ground to the top of the mountain, there was only a single path. However, every time the path crossed a line of houses, there were another 2 paths spawning from the original path, that circled the mountain.

The lower the base a house was, the higher its number was. Alex immediately started walking upwards, skipping tons of houses.

Finally, after skipping dozens of lanes, he reached the lanes where the houses were numbered in the 200s. After searching for a while, he found a house numbered 275. He scanned the house using his spiritual sense and found that no one was inside.

Alex was puzzled as to what to do next.

### Chapter 103: Fighting Hall

Alex looked at the house carefully. It seemed to have been made out of brick and mud mostly, yet had a moderately large wooden board on the outside.

'That's a weird choice for a design,' he thought. He looked around thinking what to do next.

He then saw a person walking on the road outside and stopped him. "Hello brother, I'm new here. Do you mind telling me how I can find the owner of this house?"

"New?" he looked at Alex's cultivation base and realized he was just as strong as him. "If it's for challenging, just go to the fighting hall and challenge him. Unless he is out of the sect, you can fight him for the house."

"Oh, and where is the fighting hall?" Alex asked.

"Take this road straight around the mountain, and you will find the fighting hall in the sect crater." The man left after saying that. Alex decided to follow what the man was saying and followed the path that went around the side of the mountain.

After a few minutes of walking, he went past the mountain, coming up on the other side. When he looked down on the other side of the mountain, he was surprised.

"He wasn't kidding when he said crater." In front of him was a massive crater on the back half of the mountain. The crater had reshaped the mountain to have a crescent shape on the backside, and the paths that went around the side, all joined eventually to go down to the crater through either of the two narrow parts of the mountain remaining.

Alex walked down to the crater and was shocked at just how large it was. The crater, just by itself, was about twice the size of the Hong Wu sect's sect valley.

'What could have fallen here to have caused such a large crater?' he wondered. Even a saint realm monster only made a 20 meters wide crater. For something to make such a big crater, it would have to be very large or very powerful.

He walked into the crater looking at the different buildings. Surprisingly, there were very few buildings here. What there were a lot of were fighting stages. Everywhere he turned his head to, he could see two disciples fighting each other with an elder staying as a referee.

He finally found a building named Fighting Hall. He saw at least a dozen different lines of disciples outside the hall. He asked the person in front of him how he should go about fighting someone, and the person simply pointed towards the wall behind the elders recording the fight requests.

'Oh wow, that's quite a comprehensive list of rules.' He thought. He read the rules and was surprised just how much fighting was allowed in the sect.

A disciple could challenge 10 times in a day, and could also be challenged 10 times a day. Unless the disciple was out on leave by the authority of the sect, he would have to fight every single one of the challenging battles.

Every Monday to Thursday, one would have to finish their fights by 9 pm. On Friday and Saturday however, there was no limit to how much someone was challenged. But also, one didn't have to end all of their fights at all. But, if they went an hour without fighting, the match would be automatically forfeited.

Sunday was the only day of rest for these people and nobody was allowed to challenge anybody. This was his first day today, so he was exempted from the rules, but starting tomorrow, he would have to fight this way too.



Finally, when his turn came, he took out his badge and handed it to the elder, and said, "275". According to the rules, one could register a fight with someone based on their names or their badge number.

The elder was surprised to see a number difference between the number in the badge and the number of the opponent. But when he looked at Alex's robe, he understood.

The elder quickly registered the fight and took out a medallion from his bag to transmit something. "Go to stage 24 and wait for your opponent to arrive. If he doesn't arrive by 9 pm, you win."

Alex thanked the elder and searched for stage 24. It didn't take him long to find the stage as there were numbered stones in front of the stage.

He waited outside the stage and watched the people in front of his fight. Most of the people used swords or spears, while very few liked to fight hand to hand. He didn't see any of the other types of fighters his master has told him about.

Many people came and fought. The elder would call out his and his opponent's number from time to time, but only he would respond. His opponent was nowhere to be seen.

Once again another fight ended. The elder always took the disciples badged before they fought and gave the lower numbered badge to the person who won. 'What exactly is the benefit of having a lower-numbered badge aside from getting to live in the inner set disciple's area?' he wondered.

"Number 2608 and 275"

"" Here"" two sounds came out at the same time. One of them was Alex, while the other one belonged to a 20-year-old man with an elongated face. The man looked towards Alex and was shocked. Hearing the number, he had expected an outer sect disciple to try out his luck at the lowest-ranked inner sect disciple. But when he saw Alex in his inner sect clothes, he was shocked.

Alex looked at the man and realized he was in Muscle Tempering 5th Realm. 'So weak?' he thought.

Both of them walked up to the stage and handed their badges to the elder. The elder too was surprised to see Alex wearing inner sect disciples' clothes, but said nothing about it.

Alex wasn't sure how exactly to fight this person. His only fighting experience till now had been with the monsters in the forest, and those were the ones he killed. He couldn't even hurt his opponent badly here, much less kill them. He was in a real dilemma now.

"Fight"

Chapter 104: Black Stele

"Fight," the elder shouted. The young man immediately got into a fighting stance with a blue shining sword in his hand. Alex took out his new unnamed sword as well.

Not knowing what exactly to do, he waited for his opponent to start the fight. As soon as his opponent charged at him, he started using his Focus mode.

Suddenly, everything around him started to slow down. The blue light from his opponent's sword got much brighter as he saw both fury and despair in the young man's eyes.

Alex easily sidestepped the thrust and used the flat side of the blade to hit the man on his back. With a cultivation base higher than his opponent by an entire minor realm, his force was enough to make the man fly out of the 20-meter wide stage.

Alex looked at where the man had gone to and turned around to look at the elder. He didn't know the rules to a fight and was wondering if going out of the stage was considered a loss or not.

Once the elder gave the signal for the match over, he walked over to the elder and got the badge with the number '275' on it. The other man was already standing up and walking towards the elder to get his new badge. Seeing how low it was, he immediately got in the line outside the fighting hall to fight some higher opponents.

Alex on the other hand didn't know what to do. He didn't want to immediately fight after coming to his new sect, so instead, he walked around the sect looking at the different buildings.

There weren't a lot of buildings. There were only 4 buildings there, aside from the Fighting hall. They were a Training hall, a library, a disciple hall, and surprisingly a production hall. He hadn't expected a sect focused on fighting to have a dedicated hall for productions. He learned that one could produce talismans, artifacts, and pills in there.

'At least there is a place here where I can practice alchemy,' he thought.

Almost all of the other places in the sect crater were just fighting ground, except for one. At the very center of the crater, there was a massive black stele with texts on it that shined iridescent colors.

Alex tried to read the texts but realized he couldn't understand them. The text didn't belong to the language the mortals used or the ones cultivators used. 'Can it be?' he wondered and compared the text to the one in the Heaven's Impact book. They were the same.

"What a coincidence. I hope this is another spiritual technique." This type of text required him to read with a spiritual sense for some reason, so he decided to do so. He tried to use his spiritual sense to read it but he suddenly felt something attack his spiritual sea. He immediately brought back his sense and crouched on the ground with his hands around his head.

It hurt him like crazy. "Arghhh... What was that?" he thought. It took a while before the pain in his mind subsided and he realized he had lost all of his Spiritual Sea. It was totally dry.

It would take some time to restore, but if he hadn't reeled back his senses in time, he would have taken some real damage. He felt his forehead brimming with sweat as the fear started to die down finally. He looked towards the black stele once more with some remaining fear in his eyes.

'Screw this,' he thought and went back to his new home. It took him a while to return back to house number 275. Once he finally did reach it, he was confused as to how to open the doors.

He looked around the doors for a second but didn't find anything. So, he started using his spiritual sense to check for any locks. Suddenly, he noticed a formation plate inside the wooden board outside the house.

'That looks similar to the one on my badge,' he thought. He took out his badge and placed it near the wooden board.

KADAK

The door opened. He walked inside with his badge and pushed the door back and heard it lock back. Now that he was inside, everything inside started lighting up.

The house was fancy with multiple lanterns, but in the end, it was still just a single room. He sat on the bed and looked up. Suddenly, his eyes went wide.

On the wall in front of him, there was a large wooden board that had many names on it. He counted them and realized there were exactly 274 names in there. 'Everyone that is higher than me?' he wondered.

He memorized the names starting from the top. When he looked at the name on the top, he was surprised. "Well, I shouldn't be, but it's still surprising."

The name in the first place was Luo Mei. He also found another name he knew, Meng Yun, around 112. 'Wasn't she in the 7th realm of Bone Tempering back when I met her? Wonder how much stronger she has gotten.' He thought.

"hmm..." he was shocked to see a few names that just didn't match the other names in the list. "Lucy, David, Adam..." he started reading a few more names in the list.

"These are Players? Wow, I didn't think I would meet one here. Hong Wu sect has none of them." He was finally in a sect with players.

It was time for his dinner, so he logged out to get some food. He returned back to the game shortly after and realized something was different in the room.

The wooden board that had names on it was now blank with a bit of dim light around its edges. There was a black circle on its bottom left corner about the size of a small bowl.

'What's that?' he decided to check with his spiritual sense. Suddenly, he realized that behind the wooden wall was a massive metal plate that has the formation scribbles on it. While next to it was a smaller, circular metal plate, very similar to the one outside.

He walked up to the board and placed his badge on it. Suddenly, the light around the wooden board died and a bunch of texts started appearing on the wooden board.

"Come to the top of the mountain, behind the sect leader's building. Try not to be seen by other disciples if possible, since I want your existence to be a secret for now. I will wait for you— Master"

#### Chapter 105: Training

"Oh, Master sent me this message," he said as he read the message on the wooden board. He took the badge off of the wooden board and the message disappeared.

Alex walked to the door and placed his badge on the wooden panel next to the door.

KDAK

The door opened once more. He sent out his spiritual sense to see if there were anyone. After confirming there were none, he turned invisible and activated his Immortal Concealment technique. Once he was basically untraceable, he left the house.

He went onto the main path and started walking upward. Quite a few disciples were walking around, but he managed to pass them without being noticed.

He looked straight at the top and saw a giant building. 'Is that master's building?' he wondered. He walked there without any distractions. After reaching the building, he went through the building to the back.

"Oh, wow" he looked down the mountain to see the sect crater fully lit up, looking extraordinarily brilliant. A person was sitting cross-legged on a giant rock nearby looking at the sect crater in a daze. He seemed to be in his late 40s with a scruffy beard.

The night was dark, but Alex could see the golden linings glittering brightly in the otherwise pale yellow robe.

Alex sent out his spiritual sense to see if anyone else was around, and dropped his invisibility and concealment after not noticing anyone.

"Master, I'm here," he called out to Wen Cheng sitting on top of the giant rock. Wen Cheng looked at him, surprised.

"You arrived much faster than I expected. You didn't let anyone see yourself while coming here, right?" he asked.

"Yes, master. No one saw me."

"Alright, come with me," he took Alex to a lone standing room away from the main building. It looks dirty from the outside, but when he walked in, he was surprised at how well kept it was.

The walls were white all around, while the floors were metallic. He looked at the weird carvings on the floor and asked, "Is there a formation here as well?"

"Yes, there is a formation set to the room that absorbs all sort of energy from escaping the room, including sound energy. So we can practice as much as we want without anybody noticing."

He then turned around to Alex and asked, "So, How did you like the sect? is it better than Hong Wu Sect?"

"It's not bad. although I will have to check it for a little bit longer, but this seems like a good place," he said. They talked for a little longer before Wen Cheng decided it was time to train.

"Alright, are you ready? We will be starting with the basics now. What do you use most? Swords, spears, or some other weapons?" Wen Cheng asked.

"I have a sword that I use, but I'm not a swordsman so I can train in other weapons if need be," Alex said.

"Hmm... since you have that True rank sword, I think it will be better to teach you in sword fighting. Did you get that normal sword I asked Liu Xun to give you?" he asked.

Alex took out the normal sword he got from the young leader of the guards today and showed it to Wen Cheng.

"Alright, let me see how good you are. Come attack me." Wen Cheng said as he got into position.

"Attack you? With the sword?" Alex was surprised. He didn't expect Wen Cheng to immediately start fighting without even giving any training.

"Yeah, attack me. I'm trying to test your limit as a fighter. I can't help you improve if I don't know where you are right now. So just attack me without any reservations. You won't hurt me even if you hit me. Although, don't use any damaging techniques, since I just want to test your martial skills right now."

Wen Cheng's explanation felt reasonable to Alex, so he nodded and readied his sword.

With a single dash, he arrived right in front of his master with the sword halfway through his swing. Without a single worry in his eyes, Wen Cheng simply stepped back and let the sword hit the empty space.

Alex didn't hit his target so he stumbled as his balance nearly destabilized, but he immediately steadied himself and went for a single thrust. This time, Wen Cheng simply brought a sheathed sword and lightly touched the tip of the incoming sword.

The small touch was enough to derail Alex's entire attack, making him miss by a very wide margin. Wen Cheng then thrust his sheath directly into Alex's chest sending him flying.

"This is what happens when you only focus on Alchemy and don't give enough time for normal cultivation. Just two attacks, and it's enough for me to know that you have simply no idea how to fight. No sword style, no footwork, or any other form of martial art. I had expected as such, but seeing you waste your talents still hurts my heart."

"Look at you, you broke through to the 3rd realm two weeks ago when I saw you first, yet you are already at the 5th realm. What people wouldn't give for such a talent, yet you don't even know how to fight. This is too much of a waste."

"Starting tonight, You will have a rigorous training schedule from 9 to 3. You can spend the rest of the time cultivating or doing whatever else you like. I will usually have to do my work as a sect leader during the day, so you will have to practice some stuff on your own during the day."

"Come here," Wen Cheng called Alex towards himself as he too walked next to a wall in the room. Wen Cheng banged twice on the wall and suddenly the wall split open to show a rectangular opening. Wen Cheng took out a metal plate and placed it on the opening.

"Ma Rong mentioned about teaching you a lot of things, but left Spiritual roots mostly untouched. Do you know what they are?" he asked.

"No, Master. Other than the fact that they exist and have something to do with the elements, I know nothing about them." Alex replied honestly.

"I figured as much. Alright then, I guess I will have to start teaching you about it from the very basics."

## Chapter 106: Testing

"From what I know of Alchemy, it doesn't seem to have any specific element-based techniques, so it's understandable why Ma Rong didn't teach you about Spiritual Roots and left them for me."

The metal plate that Wen Cheng had put up on the wall had started to glow as 5 distinct colors started appearing on it in a circular shape in 5 different places.

On the top center was a circle with a red light on it. To the right, a little lower was a circle with blue light coming off of it. On the bottom right was another circle with green light coming off of it. On the bottom



left was a circle with a brown light coming off of it. And finally, a little lower to the top left was another circle with Golden yellow light coming off of it.

At the center of the bigger circle that had lines connecting it to the other 5 circles. Inside the big circle was a drawing or a carving of a palm. At the center of the palm was another small rectangular cutout.

"This is a formation plate used to find a disciple's spiritual roots. Take a spirit stone and put it in that slot. After that place your palm along with the diagram and wait for the formation to do its work."

Wen Cheng stepped aside for Alex to move to the front and do what he was just told to. Alex walked to the front and was about to do what he was told, but he stopped. "Umm... Master, I don't have a spirit stone. Can I get one?" He was embarrassed even asking for one, but he had to since he had sent all of his to his bank account.

"You don't have a single spirit stone? I thought you alchemists were supposed to be rich." Wen Cheng was surprised but he still took out a spirit stone for him.

"You are going to have to sell your pills here if you want to do anything here. Unlike the Hong Wu sect, we don't do transactions in contribution points. Everything here is done through actual money. So if you don't have any spirit stones, you might as well not be here."

Alex took that advice to heart and took the spirit stone Wen Cheng gave him. He then inserted it into the slot and placed his palm on top of it.

"Alright, it's going to send a bunch of Qi into your body, don't try to stop it. Once it is in, use your cultivation method to allow it to coarse through your meridians. Once it is done, it will come back to the metal plate and light it up depending on what your spiritual roots are."

Wen Cheng started advising him on what to do. Alex then prepared himself, waiting for the Qi to come in. The Qi started to flow slowly into him and picked up in intensity as time went on. It started pooling along his palm waiting for him to use his cultivation method to take it in.

'Wait, if I use my cultivation method, won't I fall asleep?' He started getting worried. There hadn't been a single time when he had cultivated and not fallen asleep. He racked his brain to try and think of any other way, but couldn't.

'Whatever, here it goes.' He closed his eyes and started breathing slowly, waiting for his cultivation method to kick in. He fully expected his consciousness to vanish, but it didn't. For some reason, for the first time, he could finally cultivate without falling asleep.

'What is going on?' he wondered. This was a very unique situation he was in, but he instead ignored the situation, for now, to focus on the Qi moving into his body.

The Qi started to move along his body at a steady speed. The Qi went around his body through the meridians in his body. Alex used spiritual sense to look at the Qi moving along his body and was surprised.

For the first time, he properly saw the seven-colored light properly, instead of it being just a glimpse. The lights weren't very bright, but they were there. And they were all coming from his meridian.

'7 colors'... 5 of those colors are the same color as the one in the metal board. Wait for a second, is the meridian my spiritual root?' he was surprised. He had wondered what a spiritual root was, but never got a proper answer from anywhere on the Internet.

'Do people not know about them since they don't have a spiritual sense yet?' he wondered.

The Qi moved through his entire body and returned back to his palm in exactly 1 minute, and by this time, all of the Qi had shrunken in size by more than half and instead gotten more viscous as well as vigorous. They had also gained a slight yellow color to them. His Sun God's Divine Yang body had converted the Qi to Yang Qi.

<Sun God's Divine Yang Body increasing cultivation speed by 500%>

<Starry sky Qi Absorption method's Night bonus increasing cultivation speed by 200%>

<Obtained 200 Qi>

<Obtained 4382 Qi>

He had gained a lot of Qi from the spirit stones, yet the Qi wasn't in his control, so it left his body and entered the metal plate. Wen Cheng came forward and looked at the metal plate.

"You can remove your hand now," he said and waited for Alex to get back.

Alex did as his master said and stopped using his cultivation method. He got back to where his master was standing and looked at the metal plate as well.

It took a while for the metal plate to process the result, so Wen Cheng took the time to explain how it worked.

"The metal plate will take your Qi and use it to look for your spiritual roots. Depending on your elemental alignment, the board will light up to show your spiritual root. Depending on which light shines, we can tell what your spiritual roots are. Oh, look. It's starting."

Wen Cheng stopped talking as the board started lighting up. Slowly, under both of their eyes, all 5 of the circles started lighting up at the same time.

They were very dim at first but slowly increased with intensity as time passed.

#### Chapter 107: Bad Spiritual Roots

The light slowly started growing brighter and brighter. All 5 circles were shining with the same intensity. The board aside from the circles was also shining a bit yellow.

"The lights determine how well you can use that particular element. So at some point, some of the lights will go out leaving you with the ones that you have elemental alignment with." Wen Cheng said from the side.

Alex knew what his spiritual roots were, but he still looked forward to seeing how a normal cultivator went about to determine theirs.

The light shined brightly with no sign of going out and this started to make Wen Cheng nervous. The longer it went on, the more his face frowned.

At last, the lights in the circle stayed bright with no sign of increasing and the overall board also shined in bright yellow light.

"Sigh, so unfortunate," Wen Cheng said while shaking his head. Alex was surprised to see such a negative reaction.

'Isn't it good? I have all 5 elements. Why is the acting disappointed?' He was curious, so he asked.

"Is that bad, master?"

Wen Cheng sighed once more and said, "From my knowledge, Yes. It's not bad on its own, but when compared to other spiritual roots based on their advantage and disadvantages, it's the worst."

Alex got really confused at the very vague answer. Wen Cheng saw his confused face and said, "Let me explain."

"There are two types of people born in this world. Those with a spiritual root, and those without it. For the ones that don't have a spiritual root, the best they can do in a cultivation world is reach the top of the organ tempering realm. They cannot go above that."

"The ones who are born with spiritual roots don't have any sort of inherent limitations due to spiritual roots. However, even among them, there are ones that are superior and ones that are inferior."

"A superior spiritual root is one that is aligned to a single or at most 2 of the 5 elements. If it is aligned with 3, it is considered an average one. While having 4 and 5 are considered the worst of the worst."

He sighed once again. Alex was surprised too. He hadn't expected his spiritual roots to be actually considered bad. As for why that was, he decided to ask.

"Why are they the worst master?"

Wen Cheng stopped sighing and started explaining.

"Spiritual roots determine how effective a person is at handling an element. If a person has a single element root, they can use that element to its highest power. However, the more elements you introduce to one's spiritual roots, the less effective their grasp of the elements gets."

"In this manner, both ends of the spectrum have an advantage and disadvantage. The ones with fewer elemental roots can only learn techniques with those elements, but have those techniques be really powerful"

"While those with more elements, they have more freedom at learning techniques, but those techniques won't be as powerful."

"In the end, being strong in a single type of element is way better than being weak in five. Ah, I was really looking forward to teaching you many things. It seems we will have to stick to the normal non-elemental techniques." Wen Cheng said as he sighed once more.

Alex also started getting a little sad knowing that his talent, basically magic, was going to be bad. Suddenly, he remembered something.

"Hmm... but, master. But, I am good at controlling fire though. According to this, shouldn't I be bad at that?" he asked.

"Hmm... show me." Wen Cheng said.

"Uhh... I need fire to control it. It's an alchemy technique." He said.

Wen Cheng immediately brought out a piece of paper and used a fire technique on it to burn it. Seeing this Alex immediately got to work. He started channeling his Qi and used the Flame Mastery Scripture.

Suddenly the little tongue of fire that was about to go out, burned brilliantly as it expanded in size to be about a meter in diameter. Alex controlled it for a second, then started to change its size once more. Once its size was changed, he changed its size. He fluctuated between making the fire very hot, to making it very low in temperature.

Alex himself had been previously surprised at how good his control of the fire had been, once his Qi had gone through another change and increased in intensity.

He dropped the fire, letting it disappear as he thought, 'Hmm... what if the reason my control is so good is because of my Qi? I doubt many people have Yang Qi if any.' He thought.

That was a logical assumption and the only one he could think of right now.

"You really are good at it. It doesn't make sense though? Is it because you also have a yang-focused spiritual root?" Wen Cheng thought.

"Yang focused spiritual root? What makes you say that master?" Alex was surprised his master got it wrong.

"Look at the board, it's yellow, meaning your spiritual roots are yang focused. If it was yin focused, it would've turned azure, and it wouldn't have glowed if it is neutral, which is what 99% of the people have." He said. Alex assumed the yellow was because of his Yang Qi, which overshadowed the yin element in his spiritual root.

'Does that mean me having both Yin and Yang is also a rarity even among the rarity? What if that is the reason behind my fire being so good?' he thought.

"Alright, that settles it. We will do something about your spiritual roots tomorrow. For today, you will have to learn swordsmanship and other non-elemental techniques."

"Now, tell me, did your Ma Rong teach you any battle techniques?"

"No, master. She only taught me alchemy-related techniques. She said that I should learn battle techniques from the Tiger sect since I can find the best techniques here. Although I did learn a mortal grade sword technique, that's it."

"Oh, you did?" Wen Cheng smiled a little and said, " Show me."

#### Chapter 108: Elusive Heavenly Sword

Alex took out the mortal-grade sword and started pouring his Qi into it. The sword showed some resistance at first, but quickly let his Qi in and started glowing yellow.

"This is a mortal grade technique, Master. It's called Smiting Blade and all it does is make my sword sharper and deal more damage." Alex explained to his master.

"Hmm... that is quite bad. Only a mortal grade? Ma Rong should have at least taught you an earth-grade technique. Honestly, what is that woman thinking?" Wen Cheng showed disapproval towards the technique.

"Oh no, I learned it before I went to the forest 2 weeks ago. So master has nothing to do with it." Alex cleared some misconceptions.

"Oh, if that is so, then okay. I can understand why you would learn such trash. It doesn't even have an elemental attribute to it. I will get you some better ones to choose from tomorrow."

"For today, let's focus on just swordsmanship."

Wen Cheng took out a common-looking blade and started talking.

"Fighting with a sword is not about using the sword to hit an opponent as hard as you can. It's about the proper techniques and practice."

"The techniques can range anywhere from how to swing a sword to how to best apply forces to how to move your feet to get the better advantage."

"Now, look at me."

Wen Cheng started swinging in mid-air randomly, but to Alex's eyes, it looked like he was fighting a very strong opponent. He weaved and dodged his enemy's attacks by moving in a weird way using his feet, and cleaved his enemy through the chest when he could.

As Alex watched more and more, he started becoming entranced. He slowly walked to an open space and started following Wen Cheng's movements.

The copy of the arts looked very wonky and not at all refined, but the basics were there. About 10 minutes later, Wen Cheng finally stopped and looked towards Alex, only to find him a distance away copying his moves.

He watched his move almost the same as him and started getting shocked.

'This guy managed to nearly copy my moves just by watching me move a while?' he thought. This was what they called talent. Wen Cheng was really happy inside that he made this kid his disciple.

Alex stopped moving after a while, as he had nothing more to copy. He got out of his entranced state and was surprised at what he had just done.

He looked at his own hands. 'Was I even controlling them?' he was honestly too surprised. He hadn't registered any of the things he did but somehow could remember them. It was a very odd experience.

"Did you try to copy me?" Wen Cheng asked. "Although that wasn't very good, the basics were there. Just the fact that you managed to do it means that you probably have a talent for it."

Wen Cheng took out a rather thick book, at least thicker than most cultivation techniques Alex had seen and handed it to him. "This book contains the sword fighting style I use called the 'Elusive Heavenly



Sword'. It's mostly focused on footwork and dodging more than attacking. But it also has some strong attacks that would be considered Earth grade if they were a technique on their own."

"I will get you some techniques tomorrow that you can use as proper damage technique. Read this book for now and learn as much as you can. Since it's a heaven-grade technique, it is going to take you a while."

Alex started turning the book's pages over and realized there were a lot of images along with the text. 'This is going to take a while,' he thought.

"Master, is this considered a movement technique too? cause I need one of those as well." He said.

"Oh, no. This is just a set of footwork for swordsmanship. Real movement techniques are something else. Wait a second, did Ma Rong not teach you the Hong Wu sect's immortal grade movement technique?" Wen Cheng seemed to know about Flickering Shadows and asked about it.

"Oh, I already learned that technique, Master. But it's really hard to use during the daytime, in flat surfaces." He said.

"Is it? I don't know how that technique works. Ma Rong is too secretive about it." Wen Cheng said. Then suddenly, he recalled the first part of the sentence and immediately asked.

"Did you just say you already learned it? But it's an Immortal Grade technique, and you had at best only learned it 2 weeks ago."

"Yes, Master. I can somehow learn techniques very fast. Although practicing and perfecting the technique will take me a while, learning it however is pretty quick" Alex explained.

Wen Cheng looked at him closely. "Are you really not lying about it?" he asked.

"Of course not, master. Why would I lie?" he said with a little chuckle.

"Alright then, show me. Use that technique."

Alex was ready for him to say that, so he immediately disappeared from the spot and appeared behind Wen Cheng from his shadows.

"Oh my god. You really do know it. Then you won't need another movement." Wen Cheng was surprised at how talented his disciple was.

"But master, this technique doesn't work as well during the daytime at places with little shadows. The technique relies on shadows to be functional." Alex explained when it started sounding like he wouldn't be getting a movement technique.

"Alright, Learn this book for now. Since you are so quick, you should be done with it within the week. I will also get you a good movement technique tomorrow along with a few damaging techniques, defensive techniques, and a very important escaping technique to choose from." Wen Cheng promised.

"Thank you, master," Alex was genuinely happy at how much Wen Cheng was giving him. It had only been a few minutes, and he had already given so much knowledge and opportunity.

"Alright, you read that book. I will come to see you at around 3 am." Wen Cheng left after saying that.

#### Chapter 109: Practicing the Sword

Wen Cheng left Alex to learn the book by himself. Alex looked at the book and was still surprised by how big it was. However, he was also happy that he could read the language by himself now.

"Elusive Heavenly Sword. A technique that improves a cultivator's dodging ability and provides great offensive attacks. The elusive part is only useful against cultivators that fight in close combat, while the attacking part works on everyone. Attacks use wind, so cultivators with wood-aligned spiritual roots are preferred. But since the wind aspect only affects 2 of the 3 latter strikes, even those without spiritual roots can learn it."

Alex read the book's first page and was surprised. "Wow, that's a lot of information on the introductory page. It even talks about spiritual roots."

He used his system to read it and found that the description it came up with had barely any information. Aside from the name and the fact that it was a sword technique focused on dodging and attacking, the description gave no other information.

'Do other books give such information as well?' he couldn't check right now as he didn't have any books on him at the moment. He had already returned the Flickering Shadows book prior to arriving here.

He then proceeded to flip the page and was immediately surprised by what he saw. Instead of normal words like any other cultivation technique, this one had drawings telling one what to do.

The first set of 5 pictures showed one how to move with their feet. There was a bunch of text right below, explaining the movement in extent.

Alex put the book to the side and started to do what the picture in the image did. There was no Qi or other type of energy involved. It was just a simple way to move one's body.

Yet when Alex tried it, he found the movements he had just done to be wrong. 'That's not it.' He tried once more. 'That's not it, either.'

'How can I follow easily after watching master, but can't follow a book.' It was then that something came to his mind.

'Wait, do I need to finish the book before I start. Because that was exactly what I did with the other books. Just because I can read the books now, doesn't mean I have to change my learning style right?'

He immediately started using his spiritual sense to read all of the books. It was hard not to ignore the basic understanding from being able to understand the language, but he managed to do it at last.

Finally, after around 15 minutes, he finished reading the whole book.

'Alright, now it should be fine.' He thought and started using the movement technique. Surprisingly, he was still making mistakes at it.

'What's going on?' he couldn't understand what was happening. He still kept on practicing and at some point, started going into another trance.

During the trance, he couldn't think of anything or do anything. But the knowledge of what to do and how to do it kept flowing out of his brain. He practiced more and more, and four hours later, he had perfected it.

<Congratulations, You have learned 'Elusive Heavenly Sword'>

Finally, he woke up from his trance to see that he had learned the sword technique. He looked at the time and saw surprised that it was nearly 2 am.

'Did I fall asleep once more? That too while practicing?' he was starting to doubt if there was really something wrong with him. But just the fact that he had truly learned the sword technique kept him from believing it.

'Also why did it take me so long to learn the technique? Is it because the technique doesn't have anything to do with Qi and spiritual roots for the most part?' he wondered.

He practiced once more now that he had learned the technique and he managed to do every single footwork perfectly. Elusive Heavenly Sword had 3 different attacks.

None of the attacks had any name and were dependent on one's spiritual roots to use all of the 3 attacks.

The first strike was a simple sword strike that was used in close combat. As long as one had Qi, they could use this attack.

The second strike was one that was used from a little further away from the opponent. It required the cultivator to have a wood elemental spirit root for this attack to work.

With this strike, one could send out a small human-sized wind slice through the air that would fly towards the enemy.

The third and final strike was one that could be used from very far away and was the most devastating of all. It sent out a very fast wind slice through the air that had a very high penetrating power.

However, it required the person to only have wood elemental spirit root or dual elemental spirit root with wood being one of them. Anything more, and the cultivator could not use the technique to its full power.

Alex tried practicing the 3 attacks. The first attack was integrated with the footwork. At a certain segment of the footwork, he brought up his sword and poured Qi into it. As he brought it down, it glowed yellow and gave a loud sound as it cut through empty air.

He then tried the second strike. For this strike, he didn't require footwork. He simply started moving his Qi around his body. He brought it around his body to his palm, where the Qi entered the sword through the sword handle.

However, just before it entered, the Qi changed from Yang elemental to Qi with yang and wood elemental. The color, however, shifted to just green and the yellow from the yang didn't show.

He brought the sword up to the top and sliced it down. A massive slicing wind came forth from his blade and flew away to the wall in the room and disappeared with a boom.

The blade kept ringing in his hand as he looked forward in shock at the power of the strike.

#### Chapter 110: Training with Master

Although he couldn't tell the exact output of the attack, he could tell that it was without a doubt the strongest attack he had done until now.

Just the first strike alone was better than Smiting Blade, yet the second strike somehow far surpassed that.

'What would the third strike be like?' he wondered. He held his blade next to him once again and started pouring in the Qi. In the end, he swung the sword directly towards the wall once more.

A very sharp green slice came out of the sword and hit the wall far away.

BOOM

A big explosion rang out at the wall. However, instead of being happy, Alex frowned.

"The damage is much lower than I expected. It's barely any better than the second strike and yet it uses more Qi." He started to believe that his fire abilities were only good because of the Yang Qi. Now that Yang Qi wouldn't help Wood element, his true power finally showed.

"I guess I really have a bad spiritual root. I guess I don't care as long as it doesn't hamper me in my path in alchemy. Cultivating and fighting are just extra stuff for me. But still, it hurts a bit, knowing that I have a bad spiritual root." He thought.

He decided to only use the first 2 sword strike from now on since the third strike was bad when considering Qi to Damage ratio. Still, practicing it just in case he ever needed it was not a bad idea.

He kept on practicing for another hour and finally stopped when his Qi ran out. Sending out wind slices continuously for an hour was really draining for him.

A few minutes later Wen Cheng arrived just to see him down on the ground panting heavily.

"Oh, are you done for today?" he asked.

"Ah, Master. Yes, I'm done for today. I have run out of Qi." He said.

"Oh, okay. How much did you learn? Did you manage to practice some of the footwork?" he asked.

"Oh, I learned the whole thing master. It took me 5 hours to read it."

"5 Hours? Okay, lets tes- HUH? You finished reading all of this in just 5 hours?" Wen Cheng was shocked. When Alex had said fast, he had thought he was talking about taking just a few days to learn the stuff, but to finish it in a few hours? That was too shocking.

"Stand up. I will test you to see if that is true." He ordered sternly. He needed to check if he was lying or not, as it was a really hard thing to believe.

Alex stopped panting and stood up with his sword at the ready. Wen Cheng internally nodded when he saw that he was using a stance from the Elusive Heavenly Sword.

"Come," He said giving permission for Alex to attack. Alex too didn't waste another second and lunged forward with his sword. Wen Cheng saw the sword coming and stepped to the side to dodge it. At the same time, he also used his own sword to make a simple yet precise attack.

Alex immediately moved his feet in such a way that his whole body twisted to barely dodge the attack. Using the same momentum, he once more twisted his body to get in another attack from the side.

Wen Cheng's eyes widened at this. 'His body has yet to properly adapt to the technique, but he himself knows what he is doing. Just a few more days of continuous practice and he will become an expert at this rate.' Wen Cheng was truly shocked seeing Alex fight.

Wen Cheng once more dodged the sword and started making his own hits faster. Alex however, was dodging every single attack that was coming his way.

The fight went on for about 5 more minutes before Wen Cheng's hits were just too fast for Alex to dodge and finally got hit. He was hit straight in the chest and sent flying into the wall.

He dropped to the ground and started coughing. Wen Cheng on the other hand had bright eyes full of admiration. "Are you okay, Yu Ming?" he asked.

He stopped coughing and answered, "Yes, master."

"Good. You have truly learned the Elusive Heavenly Sword. A few more days of it, and you can be considered a Master at it."

"So, for tonight you will go back to your room and cultivate until you are challenged by someone. However, by 9 pm tomorrow, rank up until you are.... Let's see," Wen Cheng checked something using a medallion and said, "Okay, rank up until you are at 194. The person with that badge is a realm lower than you, but since they've been here for a long time, they will probably have more fighting experience than you."

"Only after acquiring the badge 194 will I give you the other techniques. If you can't get it, I will just train you in the sword for another day. Now, Go and cultivate. It would be good if you can breakthrough within the week. The faster the better."

"Yes, Master," Alex was about to leave when he suddenly stopped. "Umm... Master, you said I should break through as fast as I can?"

"Yeah. The faster you get stronger the better." Wen Cheng simply said.

"Umm... So I can breakthrough today?" he said.

"Yes, Of course. Go back and meditate properly. Be in the best state so that you don't fail your break through," Wen Cheng said.

"Are you saying this because you don't know, Master? I thought master told you about me."

"About you? What else is there to know about you? Ma Rong just told me a few things as to what to do. Although, she did say something about me being surprised by your talent. "

"But I already have been. You being able to learn the Elusive Heavenly Sword in 5 hours was very surprising. So I don't think there is anything else left." Wen Cheng said.



Alex finally understood. Ma Rong had purposefully kept his cultivation and learning talent a secret. Wen Cheng didn't really know how talented he was in regards to cultivation. He was mistaken by his own information.

Alex chuckled a little and asked. "So, Master didn't tell you that I can breakthrough whenever I want, did she?"