

## Alchemy 1061

### Chapter 1061: Ancestor's Request

"Senior, someone left this for you." A woman passed along a piece of talisman to the leader of the Alchemy Association. The leader took the talisman and read it quickly.

"Sigh, failure again," he said softly.

"Is everything alright, senior?" the woman asked.

"Oh, no. Everything is alright. You can leave, thank you," the leader said and sent her away. After the woman left, the leader sat back on his chair and read the talisman again.

The talisman had come from a group of investigators he had employed to find Alex's father. Every month they sent him all their findings up to now and every time it had been a failure. This time was no different.

'He has to be dead, right? What other explanation could there be?' he wondered. If as Alex had mentioned, the man had not been returned back to the wasteland, then he had to have been found already.

It did not make sense why someone would not be found otherwise. As per Alex, the chances of the person being a cultivator were down to almost nothing anyway.

However, the old man did not find the heart to tell Alex that. After all, he was working here just so he could find him.

"Sigh, I'll let them keep working and hope that they end up finding him somehow." Once the old man thought of that, he went on with his day, not giving any other thought to the matter.

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A middle-aged man with a rough beard pushed open a metal door and walked into a room full of similar furniture. He had bought one of Alex's pills and had thus been in deep cultivation for the last month.

He would have been in much longer cultivation had it not been for whatever the somewhat urgent situation was that called him out there.

His spiritual sense reached all around the mansion and found the person he was looking for. The other person realized that she was being called and quickly went into his room.

"Brother, you are finally out," the middle-aged woman said as soon as she walked into his room.

"I thought I left you to handle everything. Why would you need to call me out?" the man asked with angry grunts hidden all over his sentence.

"The situation called for it," the woman said, not bothering with her brother's tone of voice as he had always been like that since they were a child.

"What sort of situation was it that you couldn't just handle it?" the man asked.

"The ancestor sent us a message."

The man's eyes went from disinterest to absolute glee in just a matter of seconds. "The ancestor? Really?" he asked, excited like a child who was promised that they were going to get the toy they had asked for so long.

"Don't get too excited," the woman said as she knew what sort of message it was. "It's not good news."

The old man didn't care, however. Their ancestor had acted like they weren't related for the longest time, so getting a message now meant that there was something they wanted. As long as he could fulfill that, he could get on the good side of his ancestors and hopefully get the opportunity to speak a few words to influence their decisions about the world.

As it stood, there was nothing they could do to influence their ancestor, and only had to act as they could so they could keep up the facade of having a rich background and important figures hiding in the shadows.

That was how they had managed to continue holding the conglomerate that had been created since ancient times after all.

"Such auspicious news, you should have called me sooner," the man said with his personality entirely changed to that of a happy man.

The woman frowned but said nothing. Her brother would understand when he read the information. So, she simply handed him the talisman with the information on it.

The man took the talisman and started reading it. "There's nothing bad here at all," he said. "The ancestor just wants us to help find someone, right? We can do that."

"Keep reading," the woman said.

"Okay," the man said and continued reading.

The talisman included their ancestor's urge to help him find a person on someone else's behalf. That, someone, was Alex, which was information available in the talisman, but it was mentioned to not use his name outside.

The information went on to ask for their help in finding a man that was important to Alex.

The old man saw no problem until here. After all, what problem was there really? He could help not just his ancestor with this, but also an incredible Alchemist. Having an alchemist like that owe you one was ever cultivating man's dream.

However, the problem came after that.

After that point was what held the information on the person they were supposed to be finding.

A middle-aged man named Graham Benton, with black hair, a muscular body, most likely tanned, little or no cultivation base, most likely a body cultivator, and came from the wasteland using unconventional means.

Below that info was an image of what Graham was supposed to look like.

The old man knew the face all too well.

"No... the ancestor wants us to find him?" the old man shouted. "Why him?"

"He's someone close to the alchemist, it seems," the old woman said. "Judging by a bit of information I have acquired, the alchemist goes by the name Alex Benton. At best, they are friends that happen to share the same last name, but at worst..."

"They are family," the old man realized, and with that, a deep sense of dread pricked his spine. "No... no, this can't be happening."

"Do we tell them what we know?" the old woman asked.

"The hell we will. Do you think when the alchemist and our ancestor find out what we've done, they will only say thank you and return?" he shouted. "NO! We will be dead the very next day."

"Then what do we do?" the old woman asked.

The old man wracked his brain trying to think of something to do, but there was no situation where they came out on top here.

It wasn't just the alchemist or their ancestor either, if the world found out what they had done, they would be in much deeper trouble.

The old man had to make a decision, and he made the one that made the most sense right now. "We will have to hide the information," the man said. "Hide it forever."

He nodded as he spoke to himself before suddenly jerking his head toward his sister. "Who else knows of this?" he asked.

"Uhh... the searches? A few of the family members, but—"

"No, not the searches. Why would I care about the search? I'm talking about that body cultivator. Who else knows in this house?" he asked.

"Uhh... I believe there are about 10 or 12. We always use the same people after all," the old woman said.

"Good, bring them all here," he said. "We need to make sure this information never gets out."

The old woman nodded. It was the best choice they had right now. "And what about the others that are searching for him?"

"The others?" he asked.

"Yes, I've been contacted by a few other families and sects who were also notified by their own ancestors to commence this search. It's a search of a way larger scale than we can ever imagine," the old woman said.

"Goddammit, woman! Tell me that earlier," the old man cried out in anger. "Everyone is accepting the search?"

"Yes, they are just about as happy as you were 2 minutes ago," the girl said.

"Fuck!" the old man couldn't help but curse. "What can we do now?"

"I... I have a plan," the old woman said. "It's a horrible plan, but... I don't see what other choices we have."

"What plan?" the old man asked.

"We... uhh... we kill the alchemist," she said.

"Kill the alchemist?" the old man was stunned. "But... but he makes such good pills. Do you know how comfortable my cultivation was for the pas—"

"Do you care about our family's survival or not?" the woman shouted at her brother this time.

The old man got a little more alert and nodded. "Yes... yes, we must kill him," the man said. "Or... force him to stop the searches?" The old man truly couldn't think of killing the Alchemist that made the best pills in the world.

"Fine, we can make him speak an oath or something. If that fails, then he dies," the old woman said. "How do we do that though? How do you kill the most sought-after person in the entire continent?"

The old man thought too. "Assassins are the way to go, but we can't do it out in the open. Even the ancestors are on his side. If they work together, I'm certain they will figure it out in no time," he said. "We will have to do it in a place where the signs can be easily erased."

The old woman's eyes narrowed as she understood the meaning behind those words. "Somewhere secretive, like a secret realm," she said.

"Yes," the old man said. "But not just any one. It has to be one where we can not only kill him but get rid of the body too if the need arises."

"Then we have the perfect secret realm opening for that in 2 years, don't we?" she asked.

"Yes," the old man nodded. "Once the Sundering Sanctum opens, our troubles will have ended."

## Chapter 1062: Carriage Ride

Alex arrived in Blindheart City early in the morning when the city started to wake up. He got out of the place and walked around the city.

There was nothing really that seemed to be done in the city, so he only roamed it without ever stopping anywhere.

After going around the city for a while, he finally stopped in front of a carriage that was filling up with people ready to leave.

"Where is this carriage heading?" Alex asked.

"To the Spiritsong City, brother," the man at the head of the carriage said.

'Spiritsong,' Alex thought as he placed the city on the map. It was in the mountains northeast of the Sunborn Sanctuary and was home to the Ren family.

"Sure, why not," Alex thought and got on the carriage.

The inside of the carriage was much larger than he could have expected, fitting nearly 20 different people at once with room for more if need be.

There were a few couples, lone riders, and various other people on the trip along with Alex. Alex smiled and gave a nod before sitting on a seat.

The other people nodded him back in greeting but did nothing else to start a conversation, so Alex let it be.

A man in his early 40s walked into the carriage as well and looked at the empty seats that were in there. "Hey, are there more people coming?" he asked the carriage driver.

"I'm sure there is sir. Please sit around, we will leave as soon as it is all filled up," the driver said.

"Sigh, hurry up," he said before getting onto a seat close to Alex.

Alex looked at the man and was surprised to find that he was a Saint realm cultivator too.

"You seem to be in a hurry, my friend," Alex said.

The man looked towards him and was surprised to notice that Alex had a saint realm cultivation base as well.

"I... am," the man said slowly. "What are you doing in this carriage?"

"Me? I'm just relaxing as I make my way around to new places," Alex said. "What about you?"

"I'm on my way to the city to fight," the man said still quite curious as to why Alex was there. "I'm sorry, are you poor?"

"Poor? No, I wouldn't say that," Alex said slightly surprisedly. "What makes you ask that?"

"Well... I don't see why someone would take the carriage if they are not poor," the man said.

"As I said, I'm just taking it slow while I travel," Alex said. "Are you here because you're poor?" He couldn't understand how someone in the Saint realm could be poor at all. Even if he was, why would he need to take the carriage when he could fly to wherever he wanted to?

"Ahem! Yes, I'm lacking a bit of money," the man admitted. "I made the wrong bet on my match last week and lost everything. I barely had enough to buy healing pills."



"Your... match?" Alex asked with a confused look on his face.

"Yes, my match," the man said and was surprised to see Alex still confused. "You know... the match in the Battle Hall?"

Alex tried to remember those words, but nothing came to his mind. "I'm sorry, I've not been around long enough to know what that is," he said.

"You don't know about the Battle Hall in Spiritsong city? Have you been living under a rock or what? It's all the craze amongst the cultivators that are looking to show off their skills," the man said.

"Oh, so it's like a competition?" Alex asked.

"More like a place where you get matched up with random opponents to fight with," the man said. "I'm surprised you haven't heard about it."

"I'm afraid I have not," Alex said. "So wait, I can understand that you are out of money, but then why are you not flying to the city? You seem to be in a hurry anyway."

The man hesitated a bit. "My match is tomorrow and this carriage is most likely going to take all day. I just want it to reach there in time. As for why I'm not going there on my own, it's because I need to cultivate for a while."

"Since I don't have any money on me, I was hoping to use this opportunity to cultivate for the entire day before I reach there. If I go to the city right now, there aren't any places I can go to cultivate in peace," the man said.

"I see, then please go ahead, don't let me bother you anymore," Alex said.

"Thank you," the man said and closed his eyes to start cultivating. 3 more people walked into the carriage afterward and the carriage finally continued.

Alex was surprised at how fast the carriage was. He had been expecting a simple carriage, but it seemed this one was pulled by a tamed beast, making it incredibly fast.

Still, it would take him some time to reach Spiritsong city.

'The Battle Hall, huh? Sounds like a fun place,' he thought. He was interested in the place now that he knew he could randomly fight someone. He could absolutely learn from the experience there, making it worth his while.

Since he had so much waiting to do anyway, he decided to take advantage of his time here.

"But, that has to come later," Alex thought to himself. "I should be going somewhere else for now."

The carriage continued moving through the streets that were filled with other people and carriages that were moving all the same.

It looked like a highway and was thus a busy street that made its way to and from various different cities. Alex felt the breeze that came in through the window which he was using to look at the outside world

The road ran through open farmland, then through the sides of some mountain, and finally through a large forest.

The forest was full of trees that reached incredible heights. From his position, Alex couldn't even see the top of the trees at all.

The sun was getting low as it was getting closer to nighttime. Once the night was over, only then would they reach their destination in the pits of the mountain.

The carriage continued down its path into another open space before going into another forest. It was already nighttime by now and the sky was dark with only a sliver of the moon visible through the cloudy night.

As the carriage moved, Alex felt it get closer and closer. Then, at a certain point, he sent a message to the driver at the front.

"I'm getting off here!"

Without anyone else realizing it, he teleported out of the carriage directly deep into the forest. He watched the carriage continue far away from him and looked back into the forest as he started walking deeper into it.

Whisker appeared on his shoulders a moment later as he too looked around. "Do you think you can recognize any plants that can be used in Alchemy here?" he asked.

Whisker had some knowledge regarding the various plants so he started looking around the forest with his spiritual sense. He pointed at various places around him to show different plants and named a few.

"That's correct, that one is a 2-leaved thornbill plant as you can see from the leaves, that one is indeed a Puffed Twilight flower, but it is too young so we should leave it for now," Alex explained everything that was right and wrong with Whisker's explanations.

The two of them went along as Whisker jumped out of his shoulders to go bring back some ingredients from time to time. Alex put the ingredients into his storage ring so that Whisker could use it later.

After going far enough, Alex stopped Whisker from looking at any more ingredients, and instead he started focusing on what was around him.

"Weird," Alex thought as he looked around. He walked a bit further into the forest following what he was sensing but he couldn't find what he was looking for.

"Is she not here?" he thought as he looked around.

His bond with Scarlet told him that Scarlet was around here, which was why he had come here in the first place to meet her.

She had left so suddenly that Alex wanted to learn more, so he had come here trying to find her. However, from what he could see, she wasn't here at all.

In his entire sense, he couldn't find her at all.

"Is my sense wrong?" Alex thought. However, that couldn't be the case at all.

She had to be here, but he couldn't find her at all. "Is she hiding?" he thought and tried to look around at the aura in the air, but there was nothing indicative of Scarlet anywhere.

"Is she really not here... or is she hiding somewhere my eyes and senses can't reach?"

With that thought, Alex released his spiritual sense again. However, instead of searching for Scarlet, he searched for something else.

And as he expected, in the direction where his bond was telling him Scarlet was, there was a patch of space that wasn't normal.

It was more warped than the rest of the other spaces around that place.

"A spatial pocket," Alex said with a smile on his face as he understood what he was looking at. "A secret realm."

He walked close to the normal-looking space and lifted his hands towards it. A moment later, a rift opened right in front of him, creating an opening that led to the secret realm.

Chapter 1063: The Secret Realm

Alex appeared inside the secret realm, in a field that was entirely forest.

As soon as he entered, a spiritual sense landed on him and he smiled. "So you really are here," he spoke out loud.

"How? How did you get here?" Scarlet's voice came from far away before she herself flew and arrived next to him.

"I have my ways," Ning said as he looked at the giant Phoenix that was towering over him. "Damn, do all Heavenly beasts cultivate that fast? I wonder if Pearl can reach your speed once he too evolves into a proper White Tiger."

Scarlet had grown massive now. She had not only managed to grow but also had reached the Saint Condensation realm in the time they had been separated.

Alex couldn't make sense of how someone could cultivate that fast, except for assigning it to the fact that she was a heavenly beast that had a bloodline that was blessed by a true god.

"How did you find me?" she asked him again.

"I just followed our bond," Alex said. "I had some free time, so I came to see what exactly you were doing. Seems like you were just cultivating."

"And how did you enter this place? No one but us is supposed to know this place exists," she said.

"Is that so?" Alex said as he looked around. Now that he looked at it, the space in here was quite stable. So stable that unless he was looking for it, he would've most likely missed its existence entirely.

"I suppose I'm lucky that I have learned the Dao of Space then. I would have not been able to enter without it," he said. "Anyway, how are you doing? You seemed pretty excited when you ran away from me."

"No, I wasn't," Scarlet quickly said. "I just... I needed to cultivate back then. Since it didn't look like you could enter at all, I had to make a choice."

"Well, you could've just asked. You left without even telling me," Alex said.

"That's... sorry. I was way too focused on trying to enter. I needed to cultivate," she said.

"Well, I don't really blame you," Alex said. "It's my fault for thinking all of my bonded beasts would be loyal to me since both Pearl and Whisker are quite loyal."

"Hey! I'm not... never mind," Scarlet didn't speak anymore.

Alex chuckled a bit and looked around. "So, what really is this place? Does no one else really know about it? I can't even sense any other beasts in here."

"No, no one else knows this. The first Vermillion bird that came to... um, was the ruler of this continent found this place on a random tour," she said. "He gave the information to each subsequent ruler and their family and we've all known about this forever."

"You don't have to hide about the immortal worlds, I know about them," Alex said. "I would like to learn more though. Where do the Phoenix and the rest of the other beasts come from?"

"Um, I don't know if I should be talking about those things to you," Scarlet said. "I'm still suspicious of who exactly you are."

"Huh? Why would you be suspicious of me? You bonded with me, remember?" Alex asked.

"Yes, which is suspicious to me. I wasn't as intelligent back then, but to bond with you, it was definitely because I was attracted to you for some reason," she said.

"Oh?" Alex was surprised. "You're not going to say it's because I'm handsome, right? That doesn't feel right."

"No, of course not," she said. "It's the feeling I get from you, like... like there is something familiar about you."

"You feel that way? Is that why you bonded with me?" Alex asked.

"Yes," she said. "Bonding was just a side effect of the familiarity. It's not what I feel though, it's what all Phoenixes should feel around you."

"Um, is it because of the White Tiger's bloodline? I told you I have that, right?" Alex asked.

"Yes, you did. But it's not that," she said. "It's something else that I can't make sense of."

"Well, let me know when it makes sense," Alex said. "Anyway, why are you here? Why haven't you gone home yet?"

"I... I can't," Scarlet said, almost afraid.

"Why not?" Alex asked.

"I... I'm afraid they won't let me enter," she said.

"Why would they not?" Alex asked with a surprised look. "Their daughter is coming home. It would be stupid of them to stop you from even going back home."

Scarlet hesitated and kept her mouth shut.

"Are you scared?" Alex asked.

"The last time I was going to go home, they instead pushed me away to the Wasteland. I'm afraid this time will be the same if I were to enter as I am," Scarlet said.

"How long ago was this?" Alex asked.

"Hmm... I don't know," Scarlet said. "10 years ago maybe? You have to remember I wasn't of the right mind to remember time passing."

"10 years? They let their daughters roam the outside world for 10 years? What sort of parents are they?" Alex asked. "Also, what are you exactly? An outcast? The worst of the pack?"

"I'm not an outcast. I just... I..." Scarlet's head drooped a bit. "I may have hurt some people while I still wasn't right of mind. It was definitely not intentional, but I guess they were afraid I would do it even more."

"Well, normal parents take in their child and teach them, but I don't know what sort of fucked up parents a Phoenix has," Alex said as he shook his head. "So, what do you want to do this time? You want to go home right?" he asked.

"Of course," she said. "This time, I'm going to cultivate every single waking moment and get strong enough to fight off anyone that tries to stop me from going home."

Alex laughed when he heard that. "That's the spirit," he said. "Fight them all. Want my help?"

Scarlet got curious. "How can you help?" she said as she looked at his cultivation base. "You're strong, but not enough to fight them."

"No, no, not that sort of help," Alex said, nearly sweating in fear. He would never think of fighting the phoenixes even if it was for someone like Scarlet.

They wouldn't kill their daughter even if she came fighting, but they would definitely kill a random person that was not only coming to fight them but had also bonded with their daughter.

"I can give you these," Alex said as he brought out a small bottle.

"What's that?" Scarlet asked curiously.



"Look inside," Alex said and opened the bottle.

Scarlet looked in and her eyes went wide. "No way! Are those—"

"Pills."

"—Pill veins," Scarlet said.

Alex was a little surprised. "You know about pill veins?" he asked. That wasn't knowledge that was so easily available.

"Of course," Scarlet said excitedly. "My mother used to make me these all the time back at home."

"Really?" Alex looked surprised.

"Yes, where did you get these?" Scarlet asked.

"I made them," Alex said proudly.

"No way," Scarlet said with a distrustful look on her face.

"Did I not tell you before?" Alex asked. "I'm a master alchemist. Had you stuck with me back then, not only could you have started cultivating just days later, you could've also gotten to enjoy these for the next two years that you were gone."

"But you decided to leave me so you got nothing. Call that the heavens repaying you back for leaving me," Alex said.

Scarlet looked worried when she heard that. "I'm sorry, okay? I didn't mean to leave you. I just needed to find a place with Qi quickly. I thought you would go back to searching for your father or something. How was I supposed to know you would go out to cultivate too."

"I don't mind it, you don't have to worry," Alex said. "Here, there are 10 pills that can help you cultivate quickly for the next 2 and a half months, you should eat one each week."

Scarlet looked inside the bottle again. "All of these have 5 pill veins. Are you really that good?" she asked. "How does one even learn to be that good in this world? That too without reaching the Immortal realm?"

"I... don't know what to say to you but that I am just that good when it comes to alchemy," Alex said. "It's a mixture of hard work and luck so I can understand why there aren't others in this world that can reach the same level."

"Alright, I'll believe you," Scarlet said. "I will pay you back for these once I'm back home."

"You don't have to pay me anything," Alex said. "Although... if you can put a good word in for me, I want some Phoenix blood if possible. The White Tiger's blood essence helped improve my Metal spiritual root, so I'm hoping the Vermilion Bird's blood can do the same for my Fire spiritual root."

Scarlet looked confused but still nodded. "I've never heard of something like that, but if that's what you want then I will consider it," she said.

"Thank you," Alex said.

Scarlet nodded and moved away to cultivate. With the new pills she had received, her cultivation would go much smoother than before.

Alex sat down next to a random tree to and brought out a bunch of talismans from his storage ring.

Now that he finally had some free time to himself, he was going to look through the list that was given to him by the Insight Pavilion. If he was lucky, he would find some clue to his father there.

## Chapter 1064: Fire

Alex looked through the talisman but nowhere did he find any relevant information. Most of the people who collected his information were unnamed, and those that were were useless to him as he was searching for his father.

Most of these people wanted to know where he was, where his next pills would be made, and many other sorts of information that he was surprised they even asked.

Some even tried to look up if he had any family members, usually a wife so they could search for some way to get their daughters married to him.

Alex shook his head in frustration but continued reading through it all. After all, that was what he paid for anyway.

"Sigh, there's nothing here," he said as he finally finished looking through it all. He turned towards Scarlet who was cultivating not far away and decided to cultivate himself.

He brought out a pill of his own and ate it. For the next two days, he cultivated without giving any other thought to what was happening in his surrounding.

Given how secure this place was, he wouldn't even have to worry about someone else disturbing him at all.

Scarlet was resting while he finished cultivating. He slowly stood up and looked around.

"You done?" Scarlet asked.

"Yes," Alex nodded. "You seem to have been done for a while now."

"Of course," she said. "I couldn't continue since your pill left me with sore meridians. It will take a day or two to heal and then I can continue again."

"Yeah, it does that," Alex said. "But it's very fast, isn't it?"

"Yes, I was quite surprised at how fast it was," Scarlet said with a surprised look on her face. "Thank you for the pills again."

"It's fine," Alex said. "Anyway, what is your plan now? Just sit here and cultivate until you're strong enough?"

"Yes, that's the plan," Scarlet said. "It will take many years, but with your pills, it will be slightly faster."

"I wouldn't doubt it," Alex said. "Since you won't be going anywhere then I will be leaving. There is apparently a place where I can fight people, so I'm going to use that as training."

"Fighting? I can fight you?" Scarlet said.

Alex chuckled and shook his head. "Maybe later. You're too weak right now."

Scarlet was a bit offended. "I may be weak, but I'm still a Heavenly beast at the end of the day. My cultivation base is way better than those in the same realm as me. Come, fight me and you will see that one's cultivation base isn't everything in this world," she said proudly.

Alex couldn't help but smile. "Oh, is that so?" he asked. "Fine then, come attack me."

"Okay, get ready," Scarlet said and immediately took off flying. She came down swooping through the air and flapped her wings. Instantly, winds picked up all around Alex that tried to cut him up.

He stood where he was and protected himself with his Qi. His body could handle that bit of damage, but he didn't want to ruin his clothes at the moment.

Scarlet saw this and cried out loud. A Phoenix screech reached Alex, making his head hurt slightly. But with a bit of focus, he could use his own spiritual energy to stop her voice from hurting him.

Scarlet was once again surprised to see her action useless. She flapped her wing and disappeared from in front of Alex, moving very quickly with her movement technique to appear behind Alex, but by that time, Alex himself had already turned around and looked at her with a smile on his face.

Scarlet was shocked and backed off. "What? How did you see me? You shouldn't be this fast," she said.

"I have my ways," Alex said. "Is that all you can do?"

Scarlet was ticked off. She flew once more and started sending down a barrage of Qi attacks, all of which Alex fended off rather easily.

He was quite surprised to find that Scarlet was strong enough to improve her strength by nearly 3 realms, reaching close to Saint Condensation 9th realm, but that wasn't able to hurt Alex at all.

Even if he was a normal cultivator with a 1st realm Saint Foundation cultivator, it wouldn't have hurt him at all.

He couldn't help but give her a mocking smile. "See? You're weak. You can't hurt me at all," he said.

"You!" Scarlet got even angrier this time. While in mid-air, she suddenly burst into fire, surprising Alex as he got on guard.

"Let's see how you can deal with this," she said as she started shooting down the fire that was burning all around her.

Alex saw the fire and freaked out. "Hey! That's Phoenix fire. Don't use that so easily," he shouted as he got out of the way of the attack.

"Haha! I knew you would lose to it," She shouted at him. "I win!"

Alex frowned. Suddenly, the air around him moved as all fire in his vicinity started growing smaller and smaller until nothing remained. Even the fire that burned around Scarlet herself grew smaller and smaller.

"What? Intent?" she was surprised. She fought back with her own intent to keep her fire going, and surprisingly she beat Alex, keeping her fire alight.

"Don't use Phoenix fire," Alex scolded her from where he was. "You can do so much dama—" He stopped.

Scarlet chuckled. "What damage?" she asked.

Alex looked around in shock as the fire he had extinguished had left almost no damage at all. A patch of grass and some branches of a few trees had burned off, but nothing else was destroyed.

"Wait, what?" he looked around with a confused look. "But how?"

"A Phoenix has full control of Phoenix fire," Scarlet said. "They can choose whether it heals or burns. I intended for it to deal small damage just now. Even if we had fought for another 3 hours, the most we would've lost would have been a few trees."

"Really?" Alex couldn't believe it. "But then, what about the wasteland? That fire is so dangerous and also heals so much. Are you saying the phoenix whose fire it was intended for it to be that way?"

"No," Scarlet said. "One can intend it to act that way, but that is unattended Phoenix fire. Unattended ones have no restraint and are very dangerous since no one else but a Phoenix can extinguish them. And... for some reason you."

"I have learned True Fire dao," Alex said to explain.

"WHAT? You have such a rare dao?" Scarlet said. "No wonder you are so proficient at getting rid of my flames. Had my mind not been stronger, you would have definitely gotten rid of my own fire too."

"Well, your mind is quite strong too," Alex said. "Now that we're talking about it, I wanted to ask something. Do you know why I can't create Phoenix flames? I can emulate them perfectly, but I can't emulate the healing factor or the ever-burning factor."

Scarlet looked at the fire that Alex had created on his hand and was surprised to see just how similar it was to a Phoenix flame. "But of course," she said. "To summon Phoenix flames, you need the bloodline aura of a Phoenix. If similar to the White Tiger, you had a Vermilion bird's bloodline in you too, then you might be able to create them. Might."

"Oh, that makes me want phoenix blood even more," Alex said.

Scarlet listened to his words and sighed. "Well, anyway you are too strong for me. You were correct," she said.

Alex couldn't help but laugh when she admitted to being weaker. "Alright, have fun cultivating here, I will leave now."

"Um... bring me more pills you come next time okay?" she asked.

"Sure," Alex said. "But what's in it for me?"

"You want money?" Scarlet asked. "I don't have any on me."

"It can be anything," Alex said.

Scarlet fell into thought for a bit. "Okay, I can't pay you just yet, but once I can return home, I swear I will pay you for it all," she said. "Not just the pill, but for bringing me all the way here too."

Alex smiled. "Alright, I will be waiting for it then. Goodbye for now."

Scarlet nodded and watched as Alex opened a spatial door to go outside. Once he was gone, she sighed and went back to cultivating.

Alex appeared outside the secret realm in the middle of the day and quickly flew over the forest to see where the highway was.

Once he found it, he followed it and flew towards Spiritsong city. It took him no more than an hour to reach the city that was high in the mountains.

Alex landed and looked at the city in front of him. While most of the city was on the slope of the mountain, slowly moving up, the major buildings and powers were on the flattened top that was nearly a kilometer wide all around.

Alex could see many massive buildings and an entirely separate area that only had residential buildings.

"That must be the Ren family's mansion," Alex thought. He searched around and quickly found the Battle Hall where he could register to fight.

However, before he went in, there was a slight problem. "Won't they come to bother me to make pills if they know who I am?" he thought.

If he wanted to fight without any worries and without having the others bother him every other moment, he needed to hide his identity here.

"I guess I'm Yu Ming again then."

#### Chapter 1065: Battle Hall

After deciding on what he wanted to do, Alex went to an Alchemy shop to buy a few ingredients. The Alchemy shop was towards the lower level of the mountain, so he had to walk all the way back down.



After buying the required ingredients, he bought himself a place to stay and started making some pills. Over the course of the day and then night, Alex finished making a few high-harmony pills that he would most likely be needing in the Battle Hall.

Once he was done, he took one of the pills and ate it. Within the next moment, his facial muscles started moving. His hair turned slightly browner and a small stubble appeared on his chin.

A few moments later, he looked like a completely different man with absolutely no resemblance to Alex at all. Even his age seemed to be a bit older judging by just his face.

Once he was fully changed, Alex took out a set of clothes and changed to look different.

"Whisker, come out!"

Whisker jumped out of his right shoulder and looked at him with a confused look. He knew that he was looking at him, but for some reason, he couldn't recognize him at all.

"You changed?" he asked through his bond.

"Temporarily," Alex said. "I will have to be this person for the next month or so."

Alex made sure that there was no problem with how he looked by looking at himself through Whisker's eyes and finally nodded to himself.

"Good, we can go now," he said.

He walked out of the room after putting Whisker back into his beast space and walked up the mountain toward the plateau again.

This time, he walked directly into the Battle Hall and was surprised at how dark this place was. There were little to no windows after passing through the main door and the inner reception area was massive with tall ceilings and far-apart walls.

Sounds echoed continuously as the many people that were here spoke over each other, creating a cacophony.

Alex ignored everyone and spoke to the receptionist directly. "Hi, I am here to participate in some matches, what should I do?" he asked.

"If you want to participate, please fill up this form and pay the amount written at the bottom," the girl said and handed over a talisman.

Alex nodded and looked at the talisman. Surprisingly, the talisman didn't ask for much information. All it wanted was his name and his cultivation base. There was other information to fill up too, but they weren't necessary to fill so Alex left them blank.

At the bottom, he saw the price.

Every single cultivation base realm had a price attached to it. For Alex's case, a Saint Foundation realm cultivator had to pay 25 thousand True Spirit stones.

Alex frowned a bit when he saw the amount it wanted. However, he handed over the money anyway since that was what he had come here for. Besides, that much money wasn't much of a problem to him anyway.

Once he paid the price, the receptionist called someone to take him to another room for some tests.

A middle-aged saint walked out and greeted him. "Greetings, brother. I am Ren Jurong. Will you please come with me?" he asked.

Alex nodded and walked along with him, going away from the hallway that was so full of people.

"You charge quite a lot, don't you?" Alex asked.

"The fee? That's nothing. I'm sure you will make it back in a match or two with proper luck," the man said.

Alex nodded with some new understanding. "So where are we going?" he asked.

"Do you know much about the inner workings of the Battle Hall?" the man asked.

"I'm afraid not. I only heard about it a few days ago," Alex said.

"I see. Well, either way, I am going to tell you the various rules of this place," the man said as he reached a room.

Inside the room was a giant formation on the ground which seemed active. Alex tried to look at the formation to see what it did, but before he could get a good look, the man spoke, "Please step on the formation."

Alex frowned a little. "What is this?" he asked.

"It's a formation that will record your aura and also check your cultivation base to make sure you didn't lie," he said. "We here at the Battle Hall take things very seriously and we can't let a bad matchup take place due to the other person's lies."

"I see," Alex said and got onto the formation. He could now see that the man wasn't lying and that it was what he said it was.

He stood on the formation and let it learn about him. A few moments later, the energy was no longer there and he walked off.

The man looked at the new information and nodded. "Your information is correct, brother Yu," he said. "However, would you reconsider putting in more information? You don't have to if you don't want to, but it would certainly help us."

"I have nothing else to add," Alex said. "Although, if possible can I request fighters that are in the Saint Core realm?"

"That's... not possible. You are too weak," the man said.

"I'm not," Alex replied, but the man wouldn't believe him at all.

"You can't choose your own opponent, the Hall will do it for you," the man said. "There are a few other rules that I will now tell you."

The rules in the Battle Hall were quite simple. Every time he wanted to fight, Alex had to come and notify it to the staff. The staff would then try to find the perfect match for him and would notify him when it was available.

While notifying for a request to battle, the person had to also put some money in advance so that if he ever did miss it, the Hall could pay the winner for not getting to fight that day.

Fighters could also bet some money before the match. Each bet made would be doubled for them by the Hall if they won.

For Saint realm fighters, there would be no audience and no referee. One side would have to stop when they knew they were losing. This was a rule since there weren't many people that could referee a fight between two Saint realm cultivators without any issue.

The fighters were obviously not allowed to cripple, dismember, or kill their opponent. Any long-lasting injury would require the other person to heal them of it, and if they couldn't, the Hall would ban them and release their information out to the world.

Alex was surprised at how brutal the place was in regard to breaking rules. He didn't really mind his information being public, but he could imagine just how devastating it would be for others to know that the sect or the family of the person you hurt was coming after you.

"So only two fighters will be present? No audience at all?" Alex asked.

"No," the man said. "Most Saint ranked fighters wish to not show their skills in public so it is done in private instead. The Audience will still be notified of your fight half an hour earlier, so they can bet all they want then."

"I see, that makes sense," Alex said. "Is that why there are so many people out there?"

"Yes," the man said. "Most people go watch the fight between the True realm cultivators, but some still remain to bet on the Saint realm matches. That was what you saw outside."

"I see," Alex said. "I wish to fight then."

"Please leave us a method of communication and 20 thousand True spirit stones. We will notify you once we find an opponent for you," the man said. "Since you are just starting out and we don't know much about you, your match should be confirmed relatively soon. Please be on the lookout for our notification and don't leave the city."

"Sure," Alex said and brought out a communication talisman as well as the required amount of money. "I'm expecting to hear from you in a few days."

"You will, brother Yu," the man said.

Alex nodded and walked away from the place, coming out into the main hall again. He could now hear the crowd again, but this time it didn't seem as much of a mess as before.

Since he knew that they were betting on some matches, Alex could hear them adding to more bids, or complaining about how bad the bid was. They were even complaining about how some bids didn't have as good a return on the win.

Alex looked at the board with a lot of lists and information. He could see who was fighting who and when.

The Saint realm side of things was mostly blank, but there were still 3 more matches that were going to take place today.

Alex was slightly curious, so he stayed for two of the 3 matches to see how it went.

He was frustrated very quickly when he realized that he could neither hear nor see their fights in any manner. If not for the ground vibrating from time to time, he would've doubted that either of those two was even fighting.

After watching absolutely nothing, Alex left the Battle Hall and went back to his room where he began cultivating.

A day later, he was notified that his first battle had been set. 2 days later, around 10 in the morning would be when he fought his unnamed opponent.

Chapter 1066: Added Rules

Alex arrived at the Battle Hall half an hour before his match was to begin. He met with someone who had been waiting for him and went along with her to a place inside the Hall.

The girl took him through a hallway with no natural light, bringing him to a waiting room.

Only after he sat down to wait did the woman leave and Ren Jurong entered. "I am happy to see that you are here. Would you like to know who your opponent is?" he asked.

Alex shrugged. "Sure, who is it?" he asked.

"Gong Buxiao," the man said.

Alex showed absolutely no reaction to the name, and that surprised the man a little. "Are you not worried?" he asked.

"Why should I be? I don't even know what that is," Alex said.

"Huh, I would've thought you would have done more research on the possible opponents," the man said. "You must not be here to earn, but to just have fun."

"I'm here just to train," Alex said. "Fighting humans is different from fighting beasts, and I've been lacking that experience for a while now."

"I see," the man said. "Now that you've heard of your opponent, would you like to wager on whether you will win or not?"

"No, it's alright. As I said, I'm not here for the money," Alex said.

"I understand. Then please wait here for a while. We will call you as soon as the current fight ends," the man said.

Alex nodded and relaxed a bit as he waited for the next battle. He knew that the first few were going to be easy for him. Since no one believed that he could fight Saint Core realm cultivators, his opponent would be incredibly weak for him.

But, it wasn't like he couldn't use that to his advantage. His blood aura, Qi, and sword aura were strong, but his body was still not that good.

He hadn't tested it enough to know, but he was certain that it was about Saint Condensation 8th realm in terms of strength. If he were to only use physical attacks, he wondered if he could win it.

A few minutes later, Ren Jurong arrived to call him to the fighting arena. Alex nodded and went along with him.

Alex arrived in a massive room with sunlight gleaming through the sky. The walls were tall and far apart, but there was no ceiling. However, there was something gleaming in midair, like a barrier.

It took Alex a few moments to figure out that there was a vision-obscuring formation that stopped the outside folks from peeping in. The walls were full of formations that made them sturdy enough to block a Saint realm cultivator's attack, and they also blocked spiritual sense from going in and out.

On the other side, another staff walked out, and behind him followed a girl with twin tails wearing blue and yellow robes.

Alex sensed her cultivation base and could tell that she had the exact same cultivation base as his.

Which was to say that she was weaker than him.

"Here, please fight on your own terms but do start within the next 10 minutes. Here is your talisman. Whoever breaks this is considered to have lost," the man he had come with said and walked up.

"That's it? No one is going to make sure that the victory is fair?" Alex asked.

"All victories are fair here," the man said and walked away.

Alex was surprised at the level of disregard for the fairness of the fight and couldn't help but wonder if they in fact indirectly motivated one to cheat.

Whatever, he thought and looked at the talisman in his hands. He was to destroy it to declare his loss. Since that would be unnecessary, he stowed it away.

The girl walked into the middle of the arena after the staff with her left her too.

"You new?" she asked.

"Yes," Alex said. "How do we begin?"

"Don't be in such a hurry to fight," she said. "Do you have any additional rules you want to propose?"



"None," Alex said. "Why? Do you have any?"

"Yes," the girl said. "I'm practicing some archery skills, so for the first 5 minutes don't attack me and just block or dodge. I need to get used to my new skill."

Alex thought about it for a bit and shrugged. "Sure, I'm okay with it as long as the attacks aren't intended to make me lose," he said. "Then after 5 minutes, I get to attack?"

"Yes," the girl said. "Do you have any you want to add?"

Alex thought for a bit. "Yes," he said after he thought of something. "If I can hit you on your body 5 times, consider it a loss."

"On my body?" she asked with a confused look on her face. "Won't I be dead if I take that many attacks directly to my body?"

"Don't worry, they will be weak," Alex said. "Besides, you can always give up if it gets too dangerous."

The girl nodded. "Fine, let's work with those rules then," she said and brought out a bronze-colored bow with a silver string and beautiful red flowers growing on each end of the bow.

"I'm starting," she said and pulled the string back. A green arrow coalesced from nothing, appearing on her bow. Once she pulled it far enough, she let it go.

Alex had already pulled out Midnight by this point as he got ready for the attack. The moment the arrow left the bow, he swung his sword.

Using nothing but just his body cultivation, he struck the arrow as hard as he could. But of course, an attack from a Saint Foundation realm cultivator was not something his body could so easily fight against.

With nearly 2 realms of difference, he was sent flying back nearly 10 paces before he caught himself.

"Are you okay?" the girl asked. She was both worried and confused at the sight of Alex getting sent back.

"I'm fine, please continue," Alex said. He understood that he couldn't take her attacks head-on.

The girl shot once again, this time striking with a red-colored arrow that she had created. Alex was a little curious about the arrow's color, but he focused more on its speed.

To his Demon Eyes, the arrow flew at an incredibly slow speed. However, his body wasn't fast enough to move along with his vision.

He struck the arrow again, this time a little to the side. Instead of attacking it head-on, he slightly moved the arrow in another direction so it wouldn't hit him.

It was a little hard to time correctly, but he had done it. The flame arrow flew quite far behind him and struck the wall.

A giant explosion rang inside the arena, but when the fires died down, the walls were intact. The formations on those walls weren't something that was so easily destroyed by either of them.

Alex turned around and waited for more attacks to come.

One by one, the woman shot arrow after arrow, all with energy belonging to one of the 5 different elements, surprising Alex quite a lot. People with such spiritual roots were supposed to have a hard time in cultivation, but here she was, a Saint Foundation realm cultivator.

Alex struggled a little during the attacks. With just his body cultivation, he couldn't block the attacks, so he had to instead dodge most of them.

After 5 minutes of doing that, he finally stopped and spoke to her. "Your five minutes are up. Are you ready to fight properly this time?" he asked.

"Oh," the girl said with a surprised look on her face. "Yes, let's fight."

"Good, here I come then," Alex said and dashed forward.

With nothing but just his body cultivation, his speed wasn't that fast. The girl could see him coming and pulled her bowstring as another power coalesced on it.

However, when Alex saw the color, he was surprised. The girl let go of the arrow, and a lightning arrow came flying toward Alex.

Alex immediately dodged to the side, losing some momentum in the process. At the same time, the girl pulled her string again, preparing another arrow.

Alex dashed back towards her and dodged another arrow that was much harder to dodge because of how close he was getting.

The third arrow appeared again when she pulled her bow and this time Alex was right in front of her.

He saw her let go of her bowstring and realized that he couldn't dodge it in time at all. A bit of Sword Intent appeared on his sword as she struck the girl right as the arrow left her bow.

A massive explosion rang in the arena, sending both of them backward because of how close they were to it.

The girl fell on her back with ringing ears. She could only use her senses to see what was happening, and before she could realize it, Alex was already next to her.

The girl spun to the side to dodge and pulled her bowstring at the same time before shooting another arrow out.

However, Alex had been ready for it and thus barely dodged it as he ran up to her. He swung from the side, and the girl put up her bow to stop the attack.

The sword and the bow clashed, and Midnight left a nick on the girl's bow. She tried to push it away, but Alex spun quickly, bringing Midnight from the other side.

This time, he struck her in the chest with all the force he had. He struck her in the armor and thus she was fine, but a hit was a hit.

"One," Alex told her. "4 more to go."

#### Chapter 1067: Easy Fights

Alex understood something from his current exchange. His body was way too weak to fight against the girl on its own.

If he wanted to win this match, he needed to help his body just a little bit.

He started using some Qi to improve his speed and defense. As for overall strength, he was okay with not doing much damage to the girl. After all, there was an alternate way to win for him.

Alex stepped back and let the girl get ready again, and once she was back up, he attacked.

The girl pulled her bowstring, only to realize that Alex was so much faster now. She could keep up, but it was definitely harder this time around.

Alex moved through the stage in a weird pattern to throw her off her aim, but the girl was way too good of an archer to get thrown off by something like that.

She let go of her bowstring and a fiery arrow came flying toward him. Alex struck it to parry it, but the girl used this opportunity to move as well.

She flew backward while sending a gust of air toward him. As soon as Alex diverted the arrow, he was hit with an unbelievably strong gust of wind which made it hard to move forward.

The woman now had a barrier created in front of her and was readying her next attack behind it.

Alex saw that and got ready to intercept it.

Another lightning arrow left her bow, but this time it turned into a snake that flew through the air toward him.

Alex was ready to stop it, but the snake split into 5 different snakes that fell all around him. The moment they landed, they formed a sort of cage that imprisoned him.

"Huh? Not bad," he said to himself after seeing that attack. He struck the cage with a single strike and broke free.

He dashed back toward the woman and dodged another attack before landing a strike on the barrier in front of her. The barrier was sturdy, but Alex's attack was strong for just that moment and easily broke apart the barrier.

The girl yelped in surprise, but Alex's sword was already on top of her, hitting her shoulder while she wasn't ready to protect herself.

Alex stopped and moved back. "That's two," he said, reminding the girl.

The girl couldn't help but get slightly annoyed and immediately shot out more arrows toward him, sending a barrage of attacks to keep him occupied.

Alex blocked and dodged through the many attacks to go hit the girl again.

By now, he was starting to get a hang of the fight's dynamics and he understood when he could hit the girl and when he could not.

With both speed and defense on his side, he easily overwhelmed the girl for the rest of the match.

After he landed the final hit on the girl, he stepped back and smiled. "You lost," he said. "Please destroy the talisman."

The girl frowned and pulled out her talisman. However, before she could crush it, she stopped and looked toward Alex.

"First tell me, why did you not use your skills in our fight?" she asked.

"I just didn't want to. This was just training for me," he said.

"Are you saying that I'm so weak that you can win without giving it your all?" she asked.

"Unfortunately, that is what I'm saying," Alex said. "I can understand if that offends you, I will ask the staff to find stronger opponents for me."

The girl thought for a bit and said, "Attack me normally. I want to see how strong you are," she said.

Alex paused for a bit. "Are you not going to follow through on our rules?" he asked.

"I will after I understand why you decided to not use everything you had on me," she said.

Alex shrugged. "Fine," he said. Suddenly, his swords glowed white with sword Aura rising from all around him. The girl was shocked to see Sword Aura as Alex had only been using Sword Intent a few times throughout their match.

Alex casually swung his sword and let the Sword Aura fly through the stage toward the girl at a moderate speed.

The girl felt the oncoming attack and was beyond terrified when she sensed just how strong it was.

"Saint Foundation 6th realm!" she shouted and got out of the way quickly to dodge the attack. The sword slash struck the wall behind her, making a loud sound in the process.

"You ready to give up now?" Alex asked.

The girl quickly nodded and crushed the talisman she had.

Alex bowed a little. "Thank you for fighting with me. If you can, please tell the staff that I am too strong for someone like you so I can be matched up with someone stronger," he said.

The girl mindlessly nodded and the two staff from before walked into the arena.

"Congratulations on your win, brother Yu. Please come with me," Ren Jurong said and took Alex away. Alex walked with him to the room he had been in previously and sat down.

"Here is what you have managed to earn from today's battle," He said as he handed the storage bag to him. Alex looked at the money inside and gave no more thought to it, since it was just the deposit he and the girl had to make before the fight.

"Would you like to rest for the next few days, or would you like to fight again?" the man asked.

"I would like to fight again," Alex said. "But please find someone stronger, much stronger. It would be best if the person is a Saint Core realm cultivator."

"The Battle Hall chooses what opponent you will be fighting at its own discretion," the man said. "But your suggestion will be considered as well."

Alex nodded and stood up. "Please notify me when my next match is. I will return for now," he said and walked away.

He left the Battle Hall and went back to his place of temporary residence where he cultivated for 2 more days before his next match was finalized.

Alex arrived on the day of the match and was once again taken to a waiting room by the staff that seemed to have been assigned to him.

"Who's my opponent this time?" Alex asked.

"Zi Zenping," the man said.

"Is he strong?" Alex asked.

"I'm afraid I cannot tell you that right now," the man said.

"I hope the person is strong so I can have a proper fight," Alex said. He was given the offer to bid on the battle, but Alex refused again. After all, he wasn't here for the money.

After waiting for a while, Alex went to the fighting arena where he saw his next opponent.

His opponent was an older man with Saint Foundation 1st realm cultivation base.

"Wait, he's weak. I thought I would be matched with someone stronger," Alex said to the man next to him.

"As I said, brother Yu. The matches are set by the Hall. You cannot ask for one and get it," he said.

"I thought my suggestions were heard," Alex said.

"They are, but the fighters are usually biased or wrong about their own strength, so we set the matches on our own," the man said. "If you do keep on winning, we will set you up with stronger opponents. For now, here is your talisman."



Alex was slightly annoyed, but he said nothing. He waited for the other two to leave and fought his opponent again.

The man used a sword and had a rather elusive fighting style. Alex found this a much better opponent than his last one, so he fought to his heart's content.

However, even then, it didn't feel right to fight without giving it his all. He started wondering if fighting beasts really was the only way to scratch that itch.

He won against the man rather easily in the end and walked away with another sum of money he didn't care about and a request for a stronger opponent. Preferably one that was in the Saint Core realm.

The staff assigned to him gave the same answer again. Alex left with frustration and went back to his place to cultivate while waiting for his next fight.

It was getting close to the time when he had to go back to make his pills again as it had already been nearly 3 months since the last time. So, at best, he had about 2 more battles to go through before he had to return.

He was starting to believe now that it was a mistake to have joined here. He shouldn't have been so hopeful of a place like this at all.

"No, I still have one card to play," Alex thought. A day later, he was notified of his next match.

Alex went to the Battle Hall 30 minutes prior to his match and was taken to the room where he waited.

His next opponent was mentioned to him and Alex sighed. He had done some research in the last two days and he knew how strong this man was supposed to be.

And it was not Saint Core realm.

"You will be able to fight any minute now," the staff told him.

"Good," Alex said. "I want to bid on myself this time."

"Oh, sure," the staff said excitedly. "How much would you like to bid?"

Alex took out a storage bag and handed it to the man. "11.5 Million True Spirit stones," he said. "You will double it if I win, right?"

#### Chapter 1068: One Strike

Ren Jurong's hand shook as he held the storage bag full of such a massive amount of storage bag.

"Brother Yu, I would like to advise you against doing so. You won't get it back if you lose your match to—"

"You don't have to worry about that," Alex said. "Just bid it. That's what I want."

"But—"

"No buts," Alex said. "Or are you trying to refuse me for some reason? Can your establishment not pay this measly amount?"

The man got straighter. "Of course, we can pay. I was just trying to caution you against throwing away such an amount of money. We have many customers who bid wrong and get angry at us."

"Don't worry, I'm sane of mind. Even if I lose it, I have ways to bring more," Alex said. "Now, please go ahead and bid it. We should be leaving for the fight soon."

"Yes," the man said. "However, since you are bidding so much money at once, you will have to comply with some rules."

"What rules?" Alex asked. "There weren't any rules additional rules from what I remember previously."

"No, these rules don't take effect until one side of the fight bids such an exorbitant amount of money," the man said.

"Let's hear it then," Alex said.

"To ensure that this is not an exploitation of the hall's rules, your match will be viewed by a single referee of ours. He won't interfere at all, but he will make sure that nothing nefarious goes on between the two contestants."

"Also, your opponent will have to wear a talisman on their head so that you cannot speak to them through your spiritual sense," the man said.

"Anything else?" Alex asked.

"No, that is all. These two rules will take effect when someone bids over a million Spirit stones at once. Are you still intending to go ahead with the bid?" the man asked.

"Of course," Alex said. "Please, bid it all."

"I will do as you say then."

The man left the room and didn't return for a very long time. Alex wondered what sort of talk he must have been having with the people that ran this place and couldn't help but chuckle at the headache he would be causing them soon enough.

The man returned after a while and told him that it was time for his match.

Alex nodded and walked off with him. They arrived at the arena and instead of 4, there were 5 people in there this time around. The two staff along with the two fighters had come, but a referee had also come to watch over their fight.

Alex nodded to the man as a greeting and walked onto the stage.

"They are making me wear this stupid thing," the nearly elderly man that was his opponent spoke up. "Youngster, you must be quite rich to bring them out."

Alex looked at the talisman on the old man's forehead and smiled. "I'm sorry you have to wear that," he said.

"Haha! Don't be," the old man said. "I'm actually glad to be wearing this."

"Oh?" Alex was a little surprised.

"I get to keep whatever amount you bid once I win after all," the man said and started laughing loudly.

Alex took the talisman he was handed by the staff and pocketed it. He wouldn't be needing it anyway.

The referee walked to the edge of the arena and stood next to the wall. They weren't here to referee their fight, but rather whatever else went on between them after all.

"Let's fight, kiddo. I want that money of yours," the old man said as the other staff members started leaving.

"I'm sorry," Alex said as he brought out midnight. "You must've waited quite a lot of days for this match. You were unfortunately matched with me."

"I'll see about that," the man said and brought out a spear as he charged, but before he could get close, Alex swung his sword.

A massive Sword Aura, much more powerful than anything he had used in these matches before flew directly at the old man.

The old man was surprised and tried to dodge, but the attack was too fast and too strong. The spear he held broke into two and the man himself was sent flying with a long gash around his shoulder.

Fortunately for him, most of the attack was blocked by his armor. Still, the pain that shot through his body from the wound on his shoulder alone was enough to make him scream.

Had the attack landed when it was meant to, he would have died.

"You tried to kill me!" the old man shouted.

"No, I didn't," Alex said with his sword down. He knew he wouldn't have to attack again now.

"YOU WENT FOR MY NECK!" the old man shouted. "Had I not moved, I would have died."

"I know," Alex said. "That's why I used such a weak attack. I gave you ample time to dodge so that I don't hit any of your vitals."

"What?" the old man couldn't believe what he had just heard. "What did you say? That... that was a weak attack?"

"Of course," Alex said. "If you don't believe me, I can use my normal attack too."

Alex readied his sword to attack. The wind around him picked up, making his clothes flap in the violent wind. His Qi peaked and the old man could feel the devastation that would come if he were to try and face the attack.

"I yield!" he shouted as he brought out his talisman and crush it. "Don't attack, I give up."

The aura around Alex disappeared as if nothing and he put his sword back into his storage ring.

"Thank you for your time," Alex said and bowed toward the old man. Then, he turned around and left.

The man held his shoulder in pain and quickly pulled out some healing pills of his own to eat. Once he started healing, he walked away too.

Alex felt bad about leaving the old man bloody, but he didn't have any healing pills on him that he could just give away. Every single pill was above 90% in harmony, and giving a single one would clue people in on who he was, even if it didn't outright reveal it.

The man was coming in just as Alex was walking out, so they met at the doorway out of the arena.

"Brother Yu, you won?" he asked. His eyes drifted towards the referee to see if there was any sort of problem with the fights.

The referee was walking up to Alex as well.

"Jurong, have this person's cultivation base tested again. Make sure he isn't concealing anything," the referee said. "He is too strong for what his cultivation base is showing."

"Right away, senior brother," the man said and looked at Alex weirdly.

Alex just shrugged in return. "I told you, I'm stronger than you think. Let's go test me again?"

The man nodded and took Alex through the hallway, back to the room where he was tested again.

However, no matter how thoroughly the man tested him, there was no way that Alex was anything other than a Saint Foundation 1st realm cultivator.

"Can we leave now?" Alex asked.

"Yes, please come with me," the man said and took Alex back to the waiting room. After taking him there, the man left for a while, leaving Alex all alone.

Alex waited around for a few minutes before the man returned with a storage bag. He handed it over with unsteady hands and looked quite sour doing so.

Alex looked into the storage bag and while he couldn't count so many spirit stones at once, he could tell that the number had about doubled for sure.

"Thank you," Alex said. "I didn't realize it was this easy to earn money here. If my opponent happens to be weak next time as well, I wouldn't mind doubling it."

Alex showed the storage bag to the man, making him quite anxious. "Here, 20 thousand for my next match's deposit. Please call me when you have found an opponent for me."

With that, Alex left the Battle Hall and returned to his residence.

After the stunt he had pulled today, it was certain that his next opponent was going to be strong. Even if not for the threat of losing an astounding amount of money, the referee in his match should relay what had happened to the heads of the Hall.

That was why Alex had revealed so much of his strength after all.

He let Whisker come out and be free in his room while he took out a talisman from his storage ring. Someone had sent him a message not long ago and he hadn't had the time to check.

"Oh, it's the leader," Alex said and read the message. "Haha, he thinks I might have forgotten about the pills."

Alex put away the talisman and started cultivating. He had many things to focus on, so he couldn't waste any time.

For the next 3 days, he continued with his cultivation of Qi, physique, and eyes. It was only on the 4th day that his new match was finalized.

"Finally," Alex thought. "2 more days, and I would have had to forfeit the match."

He needed to return to the City of Many Flowers soon, so he was glad that his next match had been set.

And if the people managing the Battle Hall were any smart, they would certainly pick the hardest opponent for him so he couldn't bid and win so much money.

"Finally, I get to do what I came here for."

#### Chapter 1069: Yao Bujiang

Alex arrived at the Battle Hall again. This time around, he was hopeful that he was going to get a rather strong fighter to train against.

"Who is my opponent this time around?" he asked the man that was assigned to him.

"Yao Bujiang," the man said.

"Yao Bujiang..." he went through the list of names he had learned about previously, and if the information was right, then this person was most definitely someone either in the late Saint Foundation realm or early Saint Core realm.

Alex nodded and gave an appreciative smile. "Yao... like the Yao family?" he inquired.

"That information is not ours to reveal," the man said.

A while later, Alex left with the man to go to the arena where he met his opponent.



Yao Bujiang was a tall man with long flowing hair. He looked young, almost as young as Alex himself, but someone's physical feature was never a good judgment of their age with cultivators anyway.

He wore blue and orange robes and brought out a sword as he got ready.

Alex looked at the man's cultivation base and smiled. 'Saint Core 1st realm. Finally,' he thought.

The man was instead surprised. "Has there been a mistake?" he asked the staff member who could only tell him that there was no mistake.

"But... he can't be my opponent, right? He's too weak," the man said.

"Worry not, brother Yao. The Hall hasn't made any mistakes," the staff member assigned to him said and walked away.

After that, only Alex and the man were remaining.

"I hope they didn't make a mistake for your sake," the man said with a sigh.

"Don't worry, they haven't," Alex said as he brought out Midnight as well.

"So, do you have any rules before you want to start?" the man asked.

Alex shook his head. "We can start as it is," he said.

"Good, let us begin then."

The man's sword suddenly lit up with Sword Qi as he slashed it in front of him with his single hand.

Alex covered his own sword with Sword Qi and targeted the incoming attack. The two Sword Qi slashes struck each other in midair with neither of them winning against the other one.

Alex realized that his Sword Qi was obviously stronger than his opponents but with their cultivation bases so high, that was going to make little difference.

The man was surprised to see the result of their match. He hadn't expected to meet someone this strong with such a low cultivation base at all.

'Is his Sword Qi very strong?' he wondered.

He used his sword Qi again and slashed, which Alex blocked again. After this time, Alex dashed forward and went on the offensive.

The man dashed a moment later and the two of them clashed in midair. Alex swung his sword with both hands, but the man only swung with one. As a result, he was on the weaker side during this clash.

He was pushed back a bit and he couldn't help but put on a surprised expression.

"You're strong," he couldn't help but say. "I'm sorry I underestimated you."

Another sword appeared on the man's left hand and he got comfortable with it as if he had been using it for a long time.

He crossed his arms and slashed the two swords, sending an X-shaped sword slash toward Alex.

Alex's sword turned green with white layered on top of it. He let go of the sword slash which struck the incoming attack, creating a massive explosion midair that made the formations around the room flicker.

The force of the explosion alone was enough to be devastating for someone that wasn't in the Saint realm yet.

Alex got ready to send out another attack only to realize that the man had moved ahead of him. He employed some sort of movement technique to quickly appear next to Alex and swung his sword.

Alex swung his sword too and blocked the first sword, but before he could realize that he had blocked the sword, another one came from the other side.

The movement of the sword was slow to his eyes, but his body couldn't keep up. He was too slow to move his body, but his Qi wasn't.

A barrier appeared next to him that blocked the sword. It was a rather weak barrier and the man's attack was definitely stronger, but that little instance of buffer allowed him to get out of the way of the attack.

Without stopping, he got back on the attack. He swung his sword at the man, who used both his swords to stop it. He was pushed back a little and Alex moved back as well, creating a gap between the two of them.

The man tried to lower the gap between them, but before he could move, Alex's sword came from above.

He wanted to stop it, but he was a little scared this time around. After all, it was nearly 10 meters long and a meter wide.

He jumped back, even more, to dodge and send some metal sword slashes to stall for time.

Alex, however, didn't give him much resting time. He used his massive sword to continuously attack the man, forcing him to use his movement skill, multiple attack skills, and a few defensive skills.

A metal barrier shattered and the man moved out of the way. He struck Alex's sword, but the sword was sturdy enough that he couldn't even put a scratch on it.

Starforged Tungsten was a naturally tough ore that was hard to mine, to begin with. Having a sword made out of its purest form, tempered to perfection, and then Blood refined would certainly create something that was impossibly strong.

Midnight shrunk instantly and then grew again as Alex swung at the man again.

The man was starting to get annoyed by the fight as it was barely even a fight for him with how frustrating the sword was.

Every attack he did would either be blocked by the sword or destroyed by it. The sword also let Alex fight from a distance away without coming victim to the man's two swords and that was causing him to slowly lose the match.

"Fine, you asked for it," the man said and jumped back away from Midnight. Alex was about to continue when his Demon Eyes saw something.

A massive amount of golden light poured out of the man's body, surprising him quite a lot.

'Golden light... metal Qi?' he wondered.

The Qi converged on itself around the man's body as it started becoming visible to the naked eye.

Under normal circumstances, Alex would have attacked the man to stop him from using whatever skill he was using, but now wasn't such a case. Since he had come here to fight strong individuals he couldn't otherwise, he decided to wait and see what the man was going to do.

The golden light formed some sort of spherical prison around the man and out of that sphere came 4 different appendages, all of which looked like flexible arms with swords instead of a normal palms.

The man was now controlling 4 swords instead of two and his body was giant enough that Alex couldn't just stay away and fight with his giant sword.

Alex swung his sword and sent a sword Qi slash toward the man when he thought the object was done forming.

The man saw the incoming attack and swung one of the 4 arms of the sphere which stopped the attack with rather ease.

Alex frowned a bit and sent out a few more slashes, but each one of them was stopped by the 4 arms. Not a single one got anywhere close to the sphere at all, let alone the man.

"What's that? Some sort of defensive technique?" Alex asked the man. He was genuinely curious about it.

"Huh? Do you not know about our family's signature skill?" the man asked.

"I'm afraid not," Alex said. "But that does make it all the more fun."

He sent out a few more attacks, but every single one of them was blocked by the giant arms.

'How can I beat him?' Alex thought. There had to be a way for sure. He looked around with his Demon Eyes and saw something.

There was Metal Qi coming out of the man constantly which was aiding the sphere. Each time he attacked or was attacked, the Metal Qi in his body would reforge it.

If Alex wanted to win this thing, he need to attack so hard that either the sphere broke, or attack so much that the regeneration couldn't keep up at all.

"I've been meaning to practice this for a while, anyway," he thought as he threw Midnight into the sky.

The man watched in confusion for a second and was surprised as Alex brought out 20 new swords that also flew in the sky.

There were 3 at the front, 6 at the back, and 12 behind them.

The 21 Sword Array was his strongest normal attack. He had stronger Dao and Blood Aura based attacks, but amongst the ones that anyone could use, this was the strongest skill.

Not only was it a sword-based attack, which meant that he could use his Sword Aura on it, but there were also 21 different swords in this attack, each adding onto the damage enough to make a difference.

The swords started spinning in the sky like a drill as Alex prepared to attack the man and his spherical encampment with arms coming out of them.

He poured in Sword Intent to start with and sent it forward to attack.

#### Chapter 1070: Terrifying Combination

Yao Bujiang prepared for the attack. He didn't know how strong it would be compared to the previous attacks, but for some reason, the current one looked stronger.

Alex threw the swords at the four-armed metal Qi barrier and attacked it.

One of the sword arms moved to block it, but Alex's swords ground through it, destroying it rather violently.

The man flinched at the sudden destruction of one of his arms and used the other arm to strike back.

Alex ground through it as well, but by the time the first arm had reforged itself. The arm attacked back along with a third arm and the 21 swords were pushed back.

Alex controlled the swords, making sure to feel every single thing he could about them. The way they moved, the way they amplified each other's powers, the way his Qi made them work together. Everything.

He kept the offensive on the sword arms while trying to understand it all. If he got good at it at some point, he could get closer to understanding how any of the various cultivation techniques worked.

The man was frustrated with the attack's strength on Alex's side. He had added 3 arms to his attack and yet he couldn't destroy them at all.

All he could do was force them to stay at bay. At some point, he knew he was going to lose all of his Qi and that would be the end of the match.

He didn't want to lose.

In what could only be considered an idiotic move to most people, the man stopped defending the attack and left himself wide open to Alex's swords.

Alex was surprised. His sword arms were clearly there, yet the man had for some reason given up. Was there some sort of technique he was going to use now? Or was he going to attack at the cost of his own safety?

Even as Alex thought those things, he let the swords fly onto the man. The spherical barrier that protected him would certainly bear the majority of the damage, leaving the man safe in the end.

As such, Alex slammed the 21 swords onto the spherical barrier and—

The swords were suddenly thrown backward towards Alex in a disarray. They flew towards him so fast that he would have believed they were his opponent's swords, had he not felt his Qi connection to them.

He quickly moved both his hands, separating the 21 swords that flew towards him before merging them together to form the 21 Sword Array.

'What happened?' he thought. He couldn't make sense of the situation just now. Had his attacks been hijacked by the man? Were his swords under his control for a moment? What had happened?

Alex reached out and grabbed onto Midnight before using the Penta Sword strike. 5 illusory swords flew away from him, attacking the young man in the distance.

At the same time, he placed the sword onto the array and sent it flying again.

The man moved his sword arms, cutting away the illusory swords before the rest of the 21 swords appeared next to him.

Just like last time, the sword's arms tried to stop it, but not even a few seconds later, the man let go.

The swords flew onto the man and struck the barrier again. However, once again, the swords were sent back at him.

Alex controlled the sword again and frowned. 'What the hell is going on?' he thought. Was there something he was missing?

He prepared the 21 Sword Array again, but this time he was going to test what the man was doing.

His senses were ready to sense anything abnormal, and so the swords flew at the arms again. This time, the man didn't even bother blocking at all.

He just let the swords attack the body directly.

The swords fell onto the young man's barrier, but before they could reach it, they stopped. Alex stopped it just before they reached the barrier.

And then, he sensed what was going on.

Alex couldn't make sense of exactly what was going on, but he could sense in general what exactly was happening in this match.



"That is some interesting Dao you have there," he said. At the same time, he sent out just one sword on the barrier, which was sent again, but very weakly.

"I see," Alex said. "Whatever and however I attack, you send it back with the same force and speed. It's almost like... you're reflecting the attack back onto the opponent."

The other man looked surprised and annoyed. "I can't believe you guessed my Dao of Reflection so easily," he said. "But guessing won't help you much at all."

"A defensive barrier that not only protects the user but also reflects back the attacker's own attack. That's some terrifying combination for sure," he said. "But, I wonder what sort of limitations it has."

"You've made me quite curious now." He brought back the sword and put them down. Given that the man could reflect all attacks, his swords were only going to be problematic to him.

He needed to use some other ways instead.

He moved his hand in front of him and 10 different tongues of fire hovered where his hands went. The man looked confused and got on guard.

Alex took the first ball of fire and shot it at his opponent. The ball of fire landed on one of the sword arms, but before it could get anywhere, Alex used his own dao.

"Explode!"

A violet explosion sent ripples through the man's spherical barrier. He put on an unhappy expression as he had lost two of his sword arms at once and had to regrow them instead.

Before they could grow back, however, another ball of fire arrived in front of him which went on to explode as well.

Another 2 arms that had moved forward to stop the attack had been broken. Then the next fireball came. Only, it didn't come alone.

Right behind it was another. Alex had sent them one after another. The man got ready to absorb the damage and maybe even reflect it if he got the chance, but before he could do anything, the first ball of fire moved over his head outside of the barrier and reached behind him.

At the same time, the first one reached in front of him.

"Explode!"

Two explosions sent shockwaves through the man's barrier from either side. The barrier turned illusory and even almost disappeared completely.

The man looked at Alex and realized he couldn't fight him with a skill where he became the sitting target instead of the attacker.

The Yao family's secret technique was meant to make a person a one-man army. With a barrier for defense with multiple sword arms coming out, you were supposed to be able to fight multiple people at once.

However, that came with the condition that you had to stay in one place without moving and fighting. If there was ever an opponent that was strong at all, he would only be limiting himself.

In his current case, it was.

"You have some fine Dao yourself," he said annoyed. He was already annoyed that someone with such a weak cultivation base could fight someone so high up their league, and now even his Dao was strong.

"Thank you," Alex replied. "Your's is not bad either. It could be better if you could use it at different places at the same time, but that probably needs a much better Intent than what you have."

The man grunted. He didn't know much about Intents, but what he did know, he knew that Alex was right about the problem.

"Shall we continue?" Alex asked.

"No, your explosion skills are way too strong for me to fight against," the man said.

"What if I promise not to use my explosion skills? That was only for testing your Dao, I came here to train so easily that beating you with my own Dao won't help me if the rest of my skills can't carry along," Alex said.

"Certainly," the man said. "Especially in places where Dao won't aid you."

Alex frowned a little when he heard that. "A place where Dao can't be used? Does that even exist?" he asked.

Even in a place like the Wasteland, where there was absolutely no Qi, one could still use Dao so long as they have Qi within them. It certainly wouldn't be as strong as a place with Qi, but it was still usable.

"Of course it exists," the man said. "Have you never been into the Sundering Sanctum?"

Alex's eyes narrowed. "You can't use Dao in the Sundering Sanctum?" he asked.

"Amongst other things, yes," the man said. "Anyway, let us continue the battle. I came here to fight, so I will return after I've had my fill."

"Sure," Alex said as he held onto Midnight. "Come at me."

The two of them fought for another half an hour, using different techniques at each other and learning from them.

Once it was all done, Alex decided to take the loss for today. He had come here to learn and win battles without Dao or Blood aura, so since he had certainly lost in that aspect, he let the other man have his win.

"Thank you, brother Yao, I hope to get matched up with you again," Alex said and walked away.

He left the Battle Hall without setting up his next match as it would take some time for sure.

Instead, he now needed to start on his journey back to the City of Many Flowers. But before that, he decided to make a small visit to the Phoenix.