

## Alchemy 1101

### Chapter 1101: Playground

The room Alex entered on the 4th floor had a movement speed test. Whoever was the fastest got to go to the next floor.

Surprisingly only 10 people got to enter this room, out of which 3 passed and the rest failed.

Alex easily passed this room, mostly by cheating as he did not run the entire course, but rather teleported to the finish line and became the winner.

The others did not like what he did, but what could they really do? The losers were sent back to the first floor while the winners were sent to the 5th floor.

Alex appeared with the other 2 people and looked around in surprise at the lack of people on the 5th floor. Unlike the lower floors where there were hundreds of people at any given time, this floor barely had a dozen of them, and that too only because they were either resting or waiting for someone else to come join them.

Alex looked around and saw a massive black pillar at the center of the room, with no other visible rooms on any of the floors at all.

From the looks of it, there was only one thing to do on this floor.

Give the pillar your blood.

"It wants my blood?" Alex thought as he stared at the floating text next to the black pillar. The other people were somewhat surprised to read the words as well.

However, they wasted no time as they cut their palm or fingers and dabbed the blood onto the black pillar. Then, they were taken away.

"Such a simple way to go up a floor," Alex thought. There wasn't even any competition.

But why was it asking for his blood? Was there some sinister reason?

"Hey Godslayer, can you make any sense of this?" he asked.

"Hmm?" Godslayer asked. "Make sense of what?"

"This, why does this thing want my blood?" Alex asked.

"What do you mean?" Godslayer asked. "Where are we?"

"Were you sleeping again? Wake up! We're in the Sundering Sanctum, and I'm surrounded by assassins that I can't even find," Alex said. "And now this pillar is asking me for my blood. Do you have any idea why that might be?"

"How should I know?" Godslayer asked.

Alex sighed. That was a useless conversation. At least he was awake now.

"Don't sleep. I might need your help on the upper floors," Alex said.

He walked over to the pillar and a bit of his blood flowed out from his palm which he placed on the black pillar as well. His blood was absorbed by the pillar and then he teleported up a floor.

On the 6th floor, Alex saw nearly a thousand different people, all of who were waiting for the doors to open. This floor had 3 rooms in total, of which 1 seemed to have been destroyed by the crumbling space, leaving just the other 2 to go through.

As such, there were a lot of people waiting in a queue.

"How long do I have to wait?" he couldn't help but ask.

"A few hours for sure, maybe even a few days," a voice spoke from behind him.

Alex quickly turned around to see a man standing behind him. He hesitated as he looked at the perfectly dressed man with a gentle smile on his face.

He did not trust such a man, especially with the assassins running amok.

Alex got on guard, but then he noticed something. Something... was off about this man.

"What the fuck?" he couldn't help but curse when he saw that the man's body... was illusory. He was practically see-through.

"Are you... a ghost? No, a soul? What are you?" Alex asked.

"That's not a soul," Godslayer answered.

"I am the spirit of this place, master White Tiger," the man said. "I would like to humbly welcome you to this playground."

'Master White Tiger?' Alex was surprised.

"Why is he calling you a White Tiger?" Godslayer asked with a confused voice.

"Not the time," Alex said. He looked towards the spirit and asked, "What do you mean by spirit of this place? Are you like a departed soul that is still haunting this place?"

"Of course not, stupid," Godslayer shouted in his head. "He's the spirit of this artifact."

Alex wondered for a moment if he heard it correctly. "Wait... an Artifact spirit? What artifact?" he asked as he looked around. A slow realization dawned on him when he looked around.

"No way!"

"This tower is indeed an artifact created by a genius Artificer," the spirit said. "It's been passed through many owners for a long time before it came into the hand of my last master."

"Holy shit! Such a massive thing is an artifact?" he couldn't help but be surprised. How was an entire 45-floor tall tower just an artifact?

"Stop it. You're making it evident that you're a frog in a well. Such artifacts are nothing in the Immortal worlds," Godslayer said.

Alex collected himself a bit and asked a question. "Who is your master?"

"He went by the name of Guan Xi," the spirit said.

"Anything else?" Alex asked.

"My last master had neither a named origin nor an eventful life. I'm afraid anything more would not help one such as yourself, master White Tiger," the spirit said.

"White Tiger... you tested my blood," Alex said. "So you know about the White tigers?"

"Of course, who doesn't know about one of the four kings of the beasts," the spirit said.

"You have the White Tiger's blood?" Godslayer asked.

"Yes," Alex said, not able to keep the secret any longer. "Now don't go on an angry rant about how they are bad. I don't have time for that."

"But... urgh," Godslayer grumbled and didn't say anything.

Alex finally looked back at the artifact spirit and asked, "why did you test our blood? Is that relevant to some rooms on the upper floors?"

"No," the spirit said. "The blood is not relevant to the competition itself."

"Then why?" Alex asked.

"Because my last owner was adamant about not handing me over to the demons, so I wanted to fulfill his wishes," the spirit said.

"Not handing you to the demons?... what?" Alex asked.

"Yes, I am searching the blood of anyone that comes in so that I can find those who do not have the demon's bloodline," the spirit said. "I'm fulfilling my previous owner's wish by searching for a new owner that is not a demon."

Alex's eyes went wide. "This artifact is in need of a new owner?" he asked.

"I'm afraid I require a new owner so that they may fix me. If left like this for long enough, I will most likely be forever lost to the void," the spirit said.

Alex was a little surprised to hear that. He wouldn't have ever thought of owning something like this, but if he was being given the opportunity, he would definitely accept it.

"Do you show yourself to everyone or just the ones that have what it takes to be the new owner?" Alex asked.

"I show myself to neither," the figure said. "I showed myself to you because that is what I must do in the presence of someone from the White Tiger family."

"Does that mean I am eligible to take you as my treasure?" Alex asked.

"If that is what you wish," the spirit said.

Alex smiled widely. 'Screw the rest of the floors. I can just leave this place right now,' he thought.

"Fine, how do I make you my treasure?" Alex asked. "Do I give you some of my blood essences?"

"Oh..." the spirit was a little taken aback. "I cannot allow you to take me just yet."

"Huh? But you said..."

"You have to complete all the floors and activate the formation on the 45th floor," the spirit said. "That is what my previous owner wanted my new owner to be able to do."

"Wait... so I have to complete all the floors and then you will become my treasure?" Alex asked. "We can't do it right now?"

"I'm afraid not," the spirit said.

Alex sighed. He was so enthusiastic about leaving too.

"Fine," Alex said. "I'll get you soon enough. Although, tell me. What are you good at? Can you fight? Or trap people in here?"

The spirit gave him a blank look. "Master White Tiger, I am not an artifact to be used in battle," it said.

"Where are you used then? For training?" Alex asked.

"For recreational or competitive games," the spirit said. "I told you before, this is a playground. It was created by the immortals for the mortals to be used as it is being used right now."

Alex couldn't hide the disappointed feeling from his voice when he said, "That's it?"

"I'm afraid so," the spirit.

He shook his head. 'Whatever, if I can make this my artifact, this aids me in escaping early,' he thought.

He looked at the spirit and asked, "Can you help me in this competition then? To get an edge on my opponents?"

The spirit smiled. "I cannot," he said. "I have to remain unbiased."

"Can you tell me which rooms have what then?" Alex asked.

The spirit shook his head.

"Tell me where the space is crumbling?" he asked.

The spirit shook his head again.

"What can you do then?" Alex asked.

"I can wish you the best of luck," the spirit said with a wide smile on his face.

Alex sighed. "Thanks, I guess," he said.

"Please wait for your turn to come and complete the floors as quickly as you can," the spirit said. "I'm rooting for you."

Then, it disappeared.

#### Chapter 1102: Riddles

A small beam of light that fell onto Alex and other various people let them know that they were the ones that were allowed to enter this time around.

Alex could wait and go to the next room when that opened, but since he had no idea what either of the rooms was, he went into the first room he was allowed into.

The room was one meant to test one's accuracy. Each one of them was given a small rock that they had to strike at the target. Whoever could hit the center of the target won.

Being able to teleport around objects once again came in handy as his piece of rock landed on the center each and every single turn they played.

About 10 such turns, a small portion of them were sent to the next floor.

Alex waited around and went into another one of the rooms on that floor and passed it. Then, he went to the 8th floor, which he passed as well.

From the day he had entered this sanctum, about 5 or so days had already passed, and he had only just arrived on the 9th floor.

He waited around for about half a day before it was his turn to enter the room.

When he entered, he saw a few spots where he could stand in. 'What is this about?' he wondered as he walked over to an empty spot.



Once everyone was in the spot, a voice boomed through the room.

"There will be 5 riddles asked in this room now. The 5 amongst you that can answer each of the riddles get to leave," the voice spoke. "You will have 5 seconds to answer."

'That's the spirit's voice,' Alex thought. 'But it sounds pre-recorded.'

He quickly looked around and saw that there were 20 of them, and... most of them were not happy at all.

"Urgh! We'll have to go back now," someone said.

"Goddamn riddles."

"My grandfather says this is impossible."

Several others made similar remarks, leading Alex to believe that he might have made a mistake coming to this room somehow.

"First riddle," the voice spoke. "What comes after the Sense but before the Spirit?"

'The what?' Alex was confused. 'After sense and before spirit?'

He thought for a moment. 'Sense... uhh, spiritual sense? That starts at the Saint Condensation realm. Spirit could be referring to the Nascent soul then? That comes in the Saint soul realm. So between Condensation and Soul...'

He had two choices he could guess from, so he went along with the one that made sense for him.

"Core!" he answered, for Saint core realm.

The room gave no response at all. His answer was incorrect.

A few of the others tried their answer too, but not a single one of them was correct.

"No Answer," the voice said, letting everyone know they were wrong.

"Second riddle. If you have a Weapon, a Dao, or a Spirit, you can use me. What am I?"

Alex did not know the answer to this one either. He thought the answer was 'an attack', but apparently, that was wrong.

A few of the people in the room walked out the gate, wasting no time in this room at all. They knew better than to stay around.

The others, however, still wanted to try their luck.

"No answer," the voice said again, not to anyone's surprise.

"Third riddle. I Ascend to an Origin that Transcends to a Spirit. What am I?"

Alex did not even bother answering this one. He simply had no idea what it was talking about at all.

From what he could see, since the artifact was one created in the Immortal World, the answer it was asking was too much for someone that was from a mortal world.

He wondered if like everyone else in the room, he should walk away as well.

"No Answer," the voice spoke.

A few more people left this time around. Now that Alex looked at it, barely 10 people remained in the room. The riddles were way too hard.

"Fourth riddle," the voice spoke. "I have no start and I have no end. I am eternity and infinity itself, what am I?"

Alex tried thinking of some proper answers, but he couldn't think of one immediately. One did come to mind a few seconds later to him.

"The world!" Alex shouted along with many other people who had come to the same conclusion as him. However, the spirit didn't seem to accept the answer as correct.

"What? That's not correct?" Alex thought. "Eternity and Infinity... wait... can this be... the void?"

"That's obviously the void," Godslayer said from his mind.

"It is?" Alex thought. "The Voi--"

"No Answer," the voice said.

He was a bit too slow. The 5 seconds had already passed by the time he had answered.

"Shit! You should have told me earlier," Alex said.

"I didn't think you would be needing my help. All of those questions were so easy too," Godslayer said.

"Fifth riddle," the voice said.

Alex felt like going into his mind and punching that little sword spirit, but he didn't have the time to go into an angry fit at the moment. He needed to hear the next riddle.

"Everyone looks up to us, and wishes upon us, yet we do not exist. What are we?" the voice asked.

'Looks up to us... do not exist,' Alex thought. 'False gods? No, wishes.'

"It's obviously—" Godslayer said.

"Stars!" Alex answered.

"—stars. Yes, I was going to say that," Godslayer said.

"Correct!" the voice spoke finally.

Alex felt the energy from the room teleport him as he was sent to the next floor over.

The moment he appeared in the other room, he let out a big sigh and slumped to the ground. "That was hard," he thought to himself.

"That was so easy though," Godslayer said.

"Screw you. I know I'm from a lower realm, stop reminding me every time," Alex said angrily.

"Oh, right," Godsslayer said. "You should have asked for my help early on then."

Alex wanted to shout at him but decided not to bother with that right now. He was on the 10th floor, finally.

He looked around and saw almost no people around once again.

'Just like the 5th floor,' he thought and looked towards the middle of the room to find another black pillar standing.

"Punch the pillar without using any Qi. You will be sent back to the 1st floor if you use a single bit of Qi." Alex read the words that floated on top of the room.

"That's it? Just punch the pillar?" Alex was surprised.

"That spirit must be trying to keep the ones without any physical body from going up," Godslayer said.

"Hmm, I suppose other souls and spirits could come and take part too," Alex thought. Now that he knew it, he walked up to the pillar and punched it lightly.

The pillar buzzed a little bit and a small light fell on top of him. The next thing he knew, he was being teleported away.

The 10th floor was just that simple, and after doing what it said, he was now on the 11th floor.

'This is good progress,' Alex thought. 'At this rate, I should be on the 40th floor in the next month or so.'

### Chapter 1103: Ball Fight

Alex entered another room on the 12th floor.

He walked in to find a simple setup. 3 balls of light hung high in the air with words floating above them.

Alex found himself unable to go any further due to a barrier that surrounded the center area and he could only move around the barrier.

The 10 people that entered with him walked around as they read the simple words.

"Throw these balls at the other people whoever gets hit gets teleported out?" Alex was surprised to read that. He was expecting to grab the ball to leave, but it turned out you had to hit it. "Reflected balls do not count."

Alex looked around, prepared to catch any one of the balls. He waited for a moment and the numbers showed up for a countdown.

3,2,1. The barrier dropped.

Alex immediately teleported next to the balls and grabbed one of them. He tried to grab another one, but it moved away from him.

He didn't try to grab any other as people arrived next to him. He moved to the corner of the room, his spiritual sense looking at everyone.

And everyone else was looking at him as well.

He found one person slightly distracted as they were trying to find someone to throw their ball of light at.

Alex decided to attack that person. He used his teleportation powers on the ball of light and threw it at the person, but to his surprise, the ball didn't hit him at all.

It instead bent itself away from the person, moving in a random direction between two other people who easily dodged it.

"What?" Alex couldn't help but shout out in surprise. That was not a normal moment. Even the person himself looked shocked as if he did not anticipate what was going to happen.

"Shit," Alex thought. "Are those balls not supposed to hit the ones that hold them?"

The room said nothing about that, and now he lost one of the balls.

Someone else got his balls, and people came to a standstill. Everyone looked around worriedly as the ones without balls feared getting hit by one, while the ones with the ball didn't want to throw theirs as doing so would leave them vulnerable to one.

They all looked around for a few good seconds until one of the cultivators, a middle-aged man with a scarred face looked at one of the people with the balls.

"Either use it or give it to me if you're not gonna use it," the man shouted. The three people with the balls looked at each other, none of whom wanted to throw the ball.

The man suddenly dashed forward towards the closest person to him and struck out with an outstretched finger.

The person was surprised, but not caught off guard like the scarred man would hope to be.

The young man with the ball dodged to the side and threw his ball at the scarred man, but the scarred man had been ready for this. He suddenly stopped and moved back to dodge the ball.

He then quickly ran back and grabbed the ball that was on the floor. "Not bad, thank you," the middle-aged man said as he looked at the rest of them.

"Don't worry about me," the man said. "Have fun with the two balls. I will join you guys in a bit."

The man then turned around and smiled at Alex.

Alex looked at him, at first with a confused look, and then he realized. He had been found out once again.

"You were waiting for me to come here," he said as he looked at the man and checked his cultivation base. He slowly took out something from his storage ring while looking at the man in the eye, to hopefully distract him long enough.

"Of course, I was waiting," the man said. "We can't let you get too high without getting an answer."

Alex frowned. The man had a cultivation base of Saint Core 8th realm. That was very strong when compared to most of the people in the Southern Continent, but Alex was certain he could kill him.

Only, he was worried this man would run away before he got to do so.

"Who are you? Are you one of the twins?" he asked. "Or are you the old man that likes explosives?"

"Hehe, you sure do know about that huh," the man said. "Answering you that would be revealing about our organization, so I will keep quiet for now. How about you talk instead? It's been 7 days since we first contacted you. Do you have any answer?"

"Are you going to come to ask me that after every week?" Alex asked.

"Of course, young man," the scarred man said. "Now come on. Tell me quickly so we can be done with this."

Alex frowned as he slowly moved away from the man.

The man was surprised and looked to the side. He quickly moved and stopped in front of the gate that let one get out of the room.

"Oh, but you're not going anywhere before you answer," the man said.

"I don't care about leaving," Alex said as he brought out his sword. "I was just trying to stop you from leaving."



He rushed forward and slashed down as hard as he could.

The man was slightly surprised by his speed, but even at his strongest, Alex could barely put out enough energy to rival a Saint Core 5th realm cultivator. His sword aura and body cultivation barely raised it that high.

That sort of strength was not enough to beat someone whose cultivation base was in the Saint Core 8th realm.

The man easily dodged the slash and kicked the sword to the side. Alex felt the heaviness of the attack even when it landed on his sword, but he wasn't afraid.

He attacked once again, and the man dodged this one as well.

"You're annoying," the man said and punched Alex, hitting him right in the chest. However, by that point, Alex's blood had already covered the inside of his robe, forming an armor that could not be seen at all.

Alex felt the power of the strike, but it was muffled enough that he didn't feel much pain from it. So, he smiled instead as his blood coated his sword.

The man was surprised when he saw that.

"How are you—"

Alex's sword moved again, and the man dodged again. However, Alex had already appeared behind him and thrust his sword through the man's back.

The sword came out of his chest, but the stab was not lethal. It had struck the right side of his chest, so while very painful, a few pills could solve the problem.

However, before the man could reach for his pills, another sword appeared in his hand, one made with blood.

It cut the man's right arm clean off.

Alex felt something off about both of the wounds when he struck the man, but he couldn't immediately put a finger on it.

The man cried out in pain, but he got to his pills. He was reaching for it with his left arm after all.

His right arm, however, was the one that held the ball of light which he could have used to send Alex back to the first floor.

The man realized that Alex was too strong. They had made a mistake. He needed to run. He looked at the gate outside, but that was guarded by Alex.

So, he turned towards the other people who had grouped up away from the fight. "You! Hit me with the ball now!" he shouted.

Even with a sword sticking out of his chest, and a missing arm, the man's cultivation base demanded respect from them that these weaker cultivators could not deny.

One of them slowly lifted their hands to throw the ball at the man, but Alex spoke just then.

"If you think you can run away from me, then you overestimate yourself, assassin," he said.

"QUICKLY!" the man shouted.

Alex slowly lifted his hand as he felt his connection with his sword.

"THROW IT AT ME! QUICKL—"

"Expand!"

Midnight suddenly grew to nearly 10 times its size as it split the man's body vertically. It fell to the floor with a rather loud bang, and Alex went up to it to pick it up.

"Good riddance," he thought as he picked up the sword, but just then he noticed something.

The man's body, even when torn in half and a few other bits, there was no blood on the floor at all. Not a drop of blood had dripped from the corpse.

'That's right,' Alex thought. That was what was wrong with the wounds when he had attacked. The man hadn't dropped a single drop of blood even when stabbed through the chest or when his arm was cut off.

He lowered himself a little to look at the dead body and was horrified when he realized that the person he had just killed, had been a corpse, to begin with.

"How... how can that be?" he couldn't help but ask. But, in the back of his head, he knew how this could be.

A corpse that was walking could only mean one of two things.

Either a Nascent soul was controlling the body, which it wasn't since no nascent soul came out of the body.

Or, it was the second option, one where not an entire soul, but only a part of it controlled the body.

Looking at the dead body, Alex was sure that the assassin that he had just killed... had actually been a clone.

## Chapter 1104: Punishment

An old man sat cultivating with a woman next to him to keep guard for him.

Suddenly, the old man opened his eyes and vomited out a mouthful of blood as he groaned in pain.

The woman was surprised. "What's wrong? What happened?" she asked, but not in a very loud voice so as to not draw the attention of the people around her.

The old man wiped his face and sat straight with an angry look on his face. "My soul was a little hurt," he said.

"Your soul?" the woman asked. "How? One of the challenges?"

"No, it was our target," the man said. "I died."

The woman couldn't help but narrow her eyes in surprise. "What the hell? How could you die?" she asked.

"He's strong, very strong," the old man said. "He must have been hiding his cultivation base. We were duped."

"Are you sure?" the woman asked. "We tested his cultivation base, he wasn't really hiding anything."

"What? Then are you saying that he was fighting beyond his—"

The man paused. "Wait a minute," he said. "I remember fighting a Saint Foundation realm bastard in the Battle Hall when I went to test that new body. He was so strong that he beat my new body, even though it was an entire cultivation realm higher than his. Dammit, that must have been this bastard."

The woman didn't know what to say. "Anyway, who died? The good-looking one?" she asked.

"No, the one with the scar," the man said. "The good one is with Kun Chongren."

"And the new one?" the girl asked.

"With Mei'er," the man said. "One of the other two I'm keeping on the 2nd floor to follow him if he fails, while with the other one, I'm trying my best to go up the floor. Now, let me be. I need to concentrate on them."

"Don't overexert yourself. Tell the other two about the development. Don't let them get caught off guard," the girl said.

The old man nodded. "I will," he said. "But since you are the one in charge of this mission here, you need to make a choice now."

The girl frowned when she heard that. "What choice?" she asked.

"Unless we all manage to do the impossible and catch him as a group in this sanctum, I doubt he is ever going to agree to make the oath," the old man said. "In that case, we will have to start confronting him with the intention to kill."

The girl's frown suddenly changed to a smile, a nasty one at that. "Finally," she said. "I was getting annoyed by this farce."

The old man sighed. "So I guess I know what to tell them, right?" he asked.

"Of course," the girl said. "Let them know that we are no longer following the target. It is a hunt. The order is to kill on sight."

The old man nodded. "Just the way I like it."

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Alex wasn't aware of what had changed in the assassins, but he had some guesses.

Until now, he had killed both the Jade-Faced assassin and the Faceless assassin on his own before they could relay any sort of information.

However, because he had killed a clone just now, the main body was bound to have now learned about his strength. After all, one could only ever consciously control a clone created using a dead person's body.

If this clone had been created the other way, he would not have been a corpse. Better yet, he wouldn't even have been able to cultivate to the point he had.

Which meant that the assassins now knew everything.

'Going forward, they won't underestimate me anymore,' Alex thought. 'I can't let down my guard now.'

He arrived on the 13th floor and saw that the four different gates were darkened. So, he sat by the side, waiting.

"Master White Tiger," the spirit appeared by Alex's side, scaring him for a moment. He nearly cut the spirit because of how jumpy he was from being on guard.

"What is it?" Alex asked after calming down a little.

"I see that you've killed someone on the previous floor," the spirit said.

Alex frowned almost imperceptibly. "Is that a problem?" he asked.

"Somewhat," the spirit said. "This is a playground, where the mortals come to play and train. This is not a place for death and unnecessary violence. Please don't kill people in here."

"I couldn't help it," Alex said. "They were assassins that are after me. I can promise you that I was not the one to start that fight."

"Hmm, that man did approach you first," the spirit said.

"So, am I being punished or something?" Alex asked.

"No, I understand that it could not be helped," the spirit said. "I'm sorry to have disturbed you then."

The spirit turned to leave.

"Wait," Alex said quickly.

"How can I help you, Master White Tiger?" the spirit asked.

"What happens if I kill someone else?" he asked.

The spirit gave a slightly surprised look. "Are you planning to kill someone else?" he asked.

"In defense, yes," Alex said. "As I said, there are assassins after me, and I suspect there will be many of them who I will have to kill. Will I be in trouble for killing too many?"

"Normally, yes," the spirit said. "But if they are assassins as you say, I can give you a way out of the punishment."

Alex's eyes shined when he heard that. "How?" he asked.

"If the other person agrees to the fight before you get into one, I can turn a blind eye to the killings," the spirit said.

Alex slowly nodded when he heard that. "So... I have to turn my random fights into a duel then," he said.

"Yes, that way with both the parties agreed to the fight, there will be no repercussions to the battle," the spirit said.

Alex smiled when he heard that. "That's perfect," he said.

The spirit smiled too. "Can I leave now, master White Tiger," the spirit asked.

Alex almost nodded, but he stopped. There were a few more questions he wanted to ask. "What is the punishment for killing the participants?" he asked. "If they weren't assassin and I'm killing a random individual for my pleasure, that is when I am punished, correct?"

"That is correct," the spirit said. "If you are caught murdering for no reason, I cannot do anything but disqualify you from participating in this competition."

Alex was not expecting that sort of punishment.

The spirit saw his face and gave a blank smile. "I do not have the authority to hurt any of the participants, so the only thing I can do is disqualify them and sent them out of this playground."

"I see— wait, send them out of the playground?" Alex's eyes went wide. "Are you saying I can leave this place any time I want?"

"Um, yes. You can," the spirit said. "There's no point in keeping you here if you've already given up on the competition."

"Holy shit!" Alex thought. "Are you saying I could have left at any moment I wanted to?"

"Yes," the spirit said. "Do you want to?"



Alex did want that. He really did want to leave this place as soon as possib—

"You're misunderstanding his words," Godslayer said from his mind. "You're going to get us both killed."

Alex paused. "What do you mean? How?" he asked.

"The playground is the treasure that is this tower," Godslayer said. "It does not refer to the secret realm we are in."

"Oh... right," Alex thought. "Someone put this thing inside this secret realm. I keep forgetting that there was more to this secret realm than just this tower."

"Yes," Godslayer said. "And if you are sent out of this tower, you're still in this secret realm. However, by now the secret realm has already crumbled up, and all that's remained of it is—"

"The void," Alex answered with a terrified look on his face. He gulped a little and took a few breaths in. "Holy shit, I really did nearly kill all of us."

"Tell the spirit the outside is all void so that he stops throwing others out after they give up," Godslayer said.

Alex quickly turned around to the spirit. "Have you been sending people out of this tower because they have given up?" he asked.

"No, not lately," the spirit said. "I've only been getting demon-blooded individuals for a long time, so I've stopped caring about them for the most part, as per my late master's orders."

"Good," Alex said. "The outside is all crumbled space and is most likely a void now. If you send the people out, they will die. Don't do that anymore."

"Understood," the spirit said. "Although... I have been doing that with the corpses. Is that alright?"

"That should be fine," Alex said. "There's been a lot of deaths here?"

"Yes," the spirit said. "Most are unintentional, which I don't punish."

"What about the intentional ones?" Alex asked.

"They do get punished," the spirit said. "Except for the ones that happen in the rooms I cannot see."

"The crumbling ones?" Alex asked.

The spirit nodded.

"Well, you cannot tell whether it was intentional or not, so I don't blame you," Alex said. "So the clone I just killed was thrown into the void outside, right?"

"Yes," the spirit said.

"I see, thank you for telling me all that," Alex said.

"Anything you want, Master White Tiger," The spirit said. "May I leave now?"

"Yes, go on. Don't let me keep you," Alex said and the spirit disappeared.

Alex turned around and looked back at the gates in front of him. It was time to wait for a while longer.

## Chapter 1105: Illusions

The room Alex entered on the 13th floor was one where a massive formation diagram hovered in the air. There was a simple description of the formation to the side, and the challenge was to figure out what was wrong with either the design or the description.

Alex got lucky with not many there having any knowledge about formations, so he managed to answer the 2nd one correctly and moved up a floor.

On the 14th floor, he waited for his turn and entered a room where the challenge was dueled between two people randomly chosen by the room. To Alex's surprise, half of the 20 people that entered this room were allowed to go up.

Depending on the lottery, some of them could move up without having to break a sweat. Unfortunately for Alex, he wasn't so lucky.

His opponent was a 2-foot-tall woman with a Saint Core cultivation base. Unlike many others before him, he couldn't just swing an arm and be done with the fight.

"Are you not giving up?" the tall woman asked him when she saw him preparing to fight.

"Of course not," Alex said. "I'm here to win."

The woman smiled and brought out an axe of all things. Alex was surprised but he brought out midnight as well.

The two of them clashed for a while, with Alex on the defense for the first half of the fight.

This battle was too coincidental to be with an assassin, but he still defended for most of the fight to see if she was one or not.

Once he was sure that she was not, he went on the offensive. With his cultivation base, he barely edged her out in the battle. The woman was very surprised by his fighting capabilities and she couldn't help but try to learn more about him.

"What's your name?" she asked. "Do you want to join our sect? Our Rising Phoenix sect is one of the best in the continent. You should join us."

Alex rejected her proposal each time she asked, and then beat her in the end. Then, he was teleported to the next floor.

The 15th floor.

He stood in front of yet another black pillar. "Is there going to be a black pillar every 5th floor or what?" he couldn't help but ask.

Most of his knowledge regarding the sanctum had been from the elders who had never come here since long before the space had started crumbling. The only thing they could tell him was hearsay in the first place.

As such, there was a lot of information that Alex didn't have. While he was fine with it for the most part as he had the important information on how to stay safe, his knowledge on how to proceed through the floor was quite lacking.

"Use some Qi on the black pillar," Alex read what was written next to it. He couldn't help but sigh after reading it. "Let's get this over with."

He walked up to the pillar and poured a little bit of Qi into it. Then, he was teleported to the 16th floor.

The number of people on this floor was almost negligible. With only a hundred or so remaining and 3 usable rooms, Alex was sure his turn would come within the hour.

And as he expected, he did get to enter very quickly. 20 people including him, entered one of the rooms and were given the challenge of the room through a voice.

"The challenge of this room is to find the human amongst you," the voice said.

'What?' Alex thought and looked around. Almost all of them were just as confused as each other, but some of them seemed to know what was up.

"Your image will be copied to create 10 different illusory clones, who will all be walking around as realistically as possible. Your task is to figure out which one of them is not the illusion."

"You will have 3 chances in total. If you guess the human, you will be teleported away to the upper floor, but if you guess the illusion, you will be sent back to the first floor."

Alex thought he understood what was up.

"For this challenge, you will not be allowed to use your spiritual sense," the voice spoke. Suddenly, everyone found themselves unable to use their spiritual sense anymore. That made a few people nervous as they didn't know what to do anymore.

"And you are not allowed to attack the person at all," the voice said. "To choose, simply place your arm on the person you think is real."

"We will begin in 5 seconds."

Everyone got ready and 5 seconds later, they were teleported. Suddenly, they arrived scattered around the room with other various illusions of themselves walking around the room.

There were 11 of them each, and with 20 people, there were enough to fill the whole room and to massively confuse everyone.

The people looked around, trying to figure out who was the illusion and who was real. Without their spiritual sense, it was a little hard, but they were sure they could find someone.

One of the girls looked around, trying her hardest to act normal. He walked around, as everyone did, and fit in the best she could.

As she walked, one of the people in front of her looked slightly agitated. Then, she saw him move and place his hand on someone, but his hand fell through the illusion.

'Yes!' the girl thought and grabbed that person instead, however her hand fell through that person too.

'Shit!' she thought as she realized that she had been found. Someone else grabbed her behind and that person won.

Everyone in the room saw what happened and couldn't help but be surprised that the illusions were playing tricks on them.

After the person that just won was teleported away, the girl and all of her illusions suddenly teleported all across the room, and people could no longer tell which one of her was real again.

Alex watched from the edge of the room, sitting on the floor as the people walked right past him.

He used his eyes to see who was who, but everyone had the same aura around them so it was impossible to discern. Still, he was sure they would give away some sort of hint. If not, he could make them give some hints.

For now, he just watched to see if there was something other tricks these illusions could play.

'How are they all acting so real?' Alex wondered. 'Are they perhaps copying someone from the past that went through these?'

It was either that or the person who created this tower was so talented that he could add such real, human intelligence to these things.

His 11 illusions walked around the room, confusing people as much as anybody else. He watched each reaction he could see, each minor movement. And from time to time, someone stood out or they moved to grab someone. But he just didn't want to risk it.

He waited for a little longer, and by now 3 people had left for the upper floor and 6 were sent back to the first floor.

So, there were 10 people for him to find.

'No need to wait anymore I guess,' he thought.

As everyone looked around, one of the Alex there moved his hand and grabbed onto the person closest to him. The people waited for just the faintest moment to see how he would react, but instead, that Alex turned around and grabbed someone else.

His hand passed through that person as well. Then another, and another.

People were surprised and confused. They didn't understand what was happening at all. Either the illusion was going out of control, or the room had stopped working.

Alex grabbed 5 more people. For the first 4, his hands passed through their body. However, in the 5th person, the man's body moved through his hand.

Alex's face turned to a grin as he found the person and the illusion that he had created vanished.

Instead, a hand grabbed onto the person from behind as Alex came out of invisibility.

All this time, he had been using his Yang clone to not get caught while he himself had been sitting to the side, invisible to the eyes and senses.

This was the perfect place for him to do so with people not being able to use their spiritual sense, and so he took the chance easily go through this match.

The other 10 Alex suddenly vanished, and he was sent onto the next floor over.

"Agh!" he stretched a bit when he arrived on the 17th floor. "I should have done that from the beginning."

He looked around as the not many people once again, and after an hour entered one of the open rooms.

The task for this floor was simple on paper. One had to walk around the room in a circle around the edges while a formation put pressure on them with its aura.

The more they walked, the more pressure they would be under. The 3 people of the 10 that moved the furthest would be the ones to win this challenge.

With how his body worked under pressure, giving him power from deep within to fight against it, Alex easily won the challenge and moved on to the 18th floor.

His speed was quite good now, and he was nearly halfway through the tower. But, the challenges were certainly going to get harder from here on out, so he was ready for it all.

After an hour or two, he was allowed entrance to another room on the 18th floor and he went in.

#### Chapter 1106: Insects

When Alex entered the 18th floor, he was a little surprised to see cracks in space at the end of the room and was worried that he would have to turn back.

However, it turned out that the main portion of the room that made the challenges possible hadn't been damaged, so the climb was still on for him.

He looked around, wondering what he was supposed to do here when a voice spoke and told the all to walk over to one of the spots marked around the edges of the room.

There were exactly 20 different spots marked, but 4 were not accessible at all due to how the spatial cracks had formed in the room. Fortunately, the spirit had realized that and had only allowed 16 people to enter.



Alex walked up to the spot and suddenly, something changed about the room. Something so imperceptible that he couldn't tell from just a glance at all.

His spiritual sense was being suppressed by something, allowing him no more than 3 meters of vision around him, so he couldn't tell that way either. But, he still had one more trick up his sleeves.

He used his Demon Eyes and suddenly everything became crystal clear. In front of him was a massive maze that spanned the entire room. The colorful maze was made up of Qi, so he could see it.

However, simply seeing it didn't help him. He couldn't find a solution from where he stood.

"In front of you is an invisible maze that you will have to get to the center of. You may use any tricks you can that do not touch the walls of this invisible maze. If you touch the walls or another competitor, you lose. The first 5 to get to the center of this wall will win," the voice said.

"You may begin!"

Alex ran in head first while others used their limited spiritual sense to search for the walls. The invisible walls were not invisible to him at all, so he ran through the maze faster than anyone else.

He wanted to teleport, but the spatial crack was making it hard to use any dao for some reason. He could teleport close with his own Qi, but not to the center of the room, that was for sure.

He got lost a few times and had to backtrack a bunch, but in the end, he managed to get to the center before anyone else.

"Nice!" he thought to himself as he was taken away from this room to the next.

On the 19th floor, Alex arrived to see only a handful of people waiting around. It seemed Alex's turn would come rather fast this time around.

He decided to sit down and wait for his turn when he sensed something.

'Killing intent,' Alex realized as he quickly turned towards a corner of the room where a person was looking at him with a massive grin on his face.

The man was wearing a different hat, a different set of clothes, and was even hiding his face as much as possible, but Alex would recognize his father's face anywhere.

He had found the damn imposter.

The man lifted his head, revealing his face fully as he threw off his hat to the side. He made a gesture for Alex to follow and walked over to another room.

Alex frowned, not knowing what to do. That was an assassin for sure, but was following him a good idea?

Just then, one of the doors opened, and Alex was allowed to enter, but... his heart simply didn't want to go there.

He wanted to kill this man that was impersonating him.

So, without caring if this was a good or a bad idea, Alex walked over to the room the man had gone to and entered through the gate.

On the other side of the gate were a single person and a room full of spatial cracks that stayed there like spider webs.

The man still had his father's face and he turned around to look at him.

"Son, I have missed you," the man said, but he could not hide his killing intent at all.

"Cut the crap," Alex said. "How did you know what my father looks like? Where did you get that information?"

"Oh, do you really think I'm going to tell you?" the man asked.

"If you won't tell me that, then you can die," Alex said. He reached for his sword in his ring, but he noticed something.

Another killing intent.

He spread his spiritual sense just in time to see a young man behind him that was slashing his sword at him.

Alex dodged, but he was slightly cut in his arm. Without hesitation, he quickly drew the blood he just lost and turned it into a dagger before throwing it at the man.

The two of them tried to stop the attack but were blown away when the attack hit them. The young man moved barely in time to take the entire attack, instead of letting the one with his father's face get hit.

He died instantly, but once again, he didn't bleed.

Somewhere else, an elderly man coughed up blood again. "Goddamn, his blood is strong. We have to be careful of his blood," he said.

"You died again?" the girl next to him asked.

"Yeah, I tried to save Kun Chongren," he said.

"Is he safe?" she asked.

"For now," the old man said. "I will relay the information to everyone."

The girl nodded. "Let's just hope he can get the job done."

Back in the shattered room on the 19th floor, Alex finally brought out midnight as he looked at his father's imposter.

The man was down, and Alex used this moment to attack him.

However, before he could do anything else, the man opened his robes and a thousand different insects flew out from in him, filling the room entirely.

They were insects of various varieties. Some were hornets, some were bees, and some were even flying beetles.

Alex stepped back, slightly confused. He had never fought insects before, so he wasn't aware of what he was supposed to be doing here.

He slashed, sending out a golden sword attack toward the insects.

Suddenly, the beetles amongst the insects got together to form a sort of defensive array that protected the other insects from the attack.

"What?" Alex couldn't help but shout in surprise when he realized that his attack had actually been blocked, by a bunch of insects at that. That had never happened to him before.

"Hehe, people always discriminate against these poor little fellows just because they are weak," the man said. "But they too can show you that they are strong. They too hold power in numbers that you can't comprehend."

Alex frowned. He had already covered his body with his blood and now he was coating his sword as well.

The man didn't hesitate to attack at that moment. Even as the beetles were separating, the hornets flew towards him. Alex threw out various attacks, but the hornets managed to dodge them all and came to sting him.

Suddenly, Alex lifted his left hand and threw out fire from it like a flamethrower. A fire that burned with such high heat that most of the hornets were either burned or flew away.

The man pulled back his insects when he saw that fire.

The burning hornets still flew close to him, but they were too weak now to attack.

Just then, Alex heard something that made him stop. Some of the insects were beating their wings at a specific frequency that was causing his head to ache.

He was finding it hard to concentrate on the attack and using this opportunity, many of the hornets had come to attack him.

The hornets stuck him in many places that weren't covered by his armor. While his skin was strong, the hornets were stronger and managed to easily penetrate it.

Alex wasn't worried about any poison, but it turned out that the hornets were actually draining his Qi from the various places they were stabbing him in.

Alex moved around, attacking without looking, but the buzzing sound was still too mind-numbing to fight against. His body continuously cleansed the headache that was being caused by the sound, but somehow the sound was still reapplying the headache.

Alex felt the hornet draining more and more Qi, and at some point, mosquitoes had come to drain away his blood. If he let it go on any further, there would be some major danger.

Alex stabbed his sword onto the floor and use his fire again. This time, instead of targeting any of the insects, he targeted himself.

His body burned so hotly that his skin started getting charred. Alex cried out in pain, but his body was also being healed in the process.

The insects on him either died or flew away, and even the man controlling them frowned. "How goddamn hot is that fire? Normal fire shouldn't be doing this," he said.

Alex finally took his sword and stood up again. The buzzing was annoying for sure, and he couldn't tell where it was coming from.

So, he roared loudly.

Shockwaves moved out from in front of him and attacked everything in the area in front of him. The attack itself was very weak compared to what else he could use, but this was the best one that could attack an entire area, especially right now when he couldn't use any dao.

However, that was enough to send the insects out of the symphony.

Alex finally lost his headache entirely and glared at the man. It was time for his counter attack.

#### Chapter 1107: Finishing the Fight

Alex finally stopped hurting from his own fire now that the disorienting buzz was gone. The fire still burned around him, but he controlled the heat from transferring onto himself.

The insect-controlling man looked fully in shock at what he was witnessing, and Alex used this opportunity to burn the insects that were in front of him.

He barely singed the wings off a few insects before the man moved them from harm's way. At the same time, the beetles formed a barrier that stopped the fire from burning them.

The man realized that he was in trouble, so he made the insects start buzzing again, but by that point, Alex had made two small earplugs with his blood which he put into his ears. Without any sound, the buzzing noise could no longer affect him.

He let go of the fire around him and showed his fully unhurt body. His hair was burned off all around his body, but he didn't mind that. He had a pill for that anyway.

His blood had lost a lot of its aura, so he needed to finish this fight quickly, or else he would have to run away.

He tried to call for the Blood God's Manual. With the help of his blood beasts, he could win these fights. However, no matter how hard he called for it, the book never came out.

'What the hell?' He was worried now.

The spatial cracks had taken over more than half the room, so he couldn't run around to try and disperse the insects either.

'What the hell is happening?' he thought. He could use his Dao, couldn't bring out his blood god's manual, or even use normal teleportation here.

He had tried the Flickering Shadows technique, so teleport to the man's shadows, but that hadn't worked at all.

'Space here is weird,' he thought. 'I need to be careful.'

The hornets and mosquitoes attacked, and at the same time the man brought out a sword of his own.

Alex stepped back, dodging the insects as he sent out a yellow palm attack. The attack barely did anything to the insects, but he used this opportunity to pour out some blood from his body.

He couldn't use the blood armor as that wasted too much of his blood aura at once. So he reluctantly resorted to simply using a little bit of his blood to preserve the rest of the aura.

The blood bead shot out at incredible speed, going through the beasts to attack the man on the other side, but the man dodged in time. The beads embedded themselves into the wall, and could not be brought back in time.

Alex frowned. What else could he do? These insects were too many to use his blood, the hornets and mosquitoes stole his Qi and blood, and the beetles stopped his attacks too easily.

On top of that, the location he was in, he couldn't fight to his full potential at all.

'Should I run?' he thought. That was the only way out of this fight for him at the moment.

The buzzing got louder suddenly, and even through his plug, he could start to hear it. The headache was slight this time around, but he could feel it.

"Screw off!" He shouted and searched for exactly where the noise was coming from. He saw the stationary bees and dragonfly in the distance that was causing all the buzzing.

Alex thought of attacking them, but the beetles would stop it. He thought of roaring, but instead, another thought came to his head.

'It is the man that is controlling these insects,' he thought. 'I need to make him stop.'

His eyes moved towards the man. "Do you think you are the only one that can cause headaches?" he asked.

The man frowned and suddenly he felt a splitting headache. "Argh!" he cried out and fell to the floor.

When he fell, the symphony of the bees and dragonflies also stopped as they got out of tune.



Alex saw the opportunity and struck again. "Stop it!" the man cried out as his head hurt again. "Defend me!"

The beetles suddenly moved away from the rest of the bugs and landed on the man, covering him entirely with their body.

Alex used Heaven's Impact one more time, but this time around, the beetles buzzed slightly, but nothing happened.

"Not bad," the man said. "But if that is all you have, then you will have to die."

Alex looked at the man and smiled. "If your defensive insects are gone, how are you going to protect the rest of them?" he asked.

He took his sword and jumped into battle. With his right hand, he burned anything that came before him, and with his left, he cut any insect.

With the beetles gone, his Sword aura was now hurting the weaker insects.

The insects in the air were either hurt by his sword aura or burned by his fire. The man wanted to help his insects, but he couldn't remove the beetles from around him, or else he would be attacked.

In the end, he was forced to call back his remaining insects, and then he was face to face with Alex.

Fear grew in his heart. He had thought that he could win against Alex, as he had done with all of his previous targets by making them unable to move and then sucking their Qi and blood dry.

However, that didn't work for him at all.

The man readied his own sword, but he knew that would not be enough. His eyes moved toward the gate and decided to make a run for it.

However, he was too slow.

A small tongue of fire appeared in front of him which immediately exploded. The damage from the explosion wasn't strong, but it sent him flying backward into the wall.

He was disoriented for a single second, and Alex used that opportunity to put a sword through the only part of his body that wasn't covered in the beetles.

His eyes.

The sword came out of the other side and struck the wall behind the man. Alex swung it to the side, destroying the man's skull and killing him right there.

As soon as the man's body fell, the insects on his body started wandering aimlessly. The beetles also left him, many flying into the spatial cracks and easily getting cut in half.

Alex slumped down and sighed.

"That was annoying," he thought to himself. This fight could've ended a long time ago if he hadn't been fighting in this room. Sadly, he was so he couldn't do anything about that.

"Should I wait here... or should I leave?" he wondered. On one hand, there could be assassins waiting for him on the first floor, but on the other hand, someone might be coming here right now.

Alex looked at the other corpse in the room, the one that did not bleed at all. 'Another clone,' he thought. 'How many are there?'

He looked at the blood flowing from the other corpse. "I can't waste that," he said as he sat down to absorb it all.

He had to make it quick though, so he wasted no time and started his absorption technique.

While he absorbed the blood, he took the dead man's storage bag and looked through it.

He found some spirit stones, some pills, poisons, and a bunch of food for his insects. At the same time, he also found a bunch of talismans, which he looked through.

Most of them were talismans where he had recorded his understanding of earth dao that Alex did not want to read through, and the others were communication talismans, one he could use, but there was no point since they would already know he was dead.

Still, Alex kept it all just in case, and while he did, he found another talisman that he could tell what it did by looking at the runes on it.

It was similar to a bunch of talismans he was carrying himself.

Without hesitation, he activated it and found the talisman pointing toward him. This was a talisman that was meant to find him through his aura.

Alex frowned. "So that is how they have been finding me despite my changed face," he thought. "Changing face was useless, to begin with."

However, he was still confused. "How did they get my aura? Was it the Faceless assassin?" he thought. With how close to Alex the assassin had gotten, it was possible that he was the one that did this, but it didn't make sense to gather his aura if they never knew he was going to be changing faces.

"Who else could it be though?" he thought.

Since just thinking wouldn't give him any concrete answer and would only make him suspicious of the people that were already suspicious, he decided to stop thinking about this topic for now.

"I should leave," he thought and became prepared to be attacked when he returned.

Before he left though, he turned to look at the corpses and the many insects that were in the room.

He threw the corpse into the shattered space where they were easily cut apart and vanished from the normal space. As for the insects, while he was curious how they could help him, these insects just weren't good enough for him.

He would rather learn to control better ones if he ever found any. For now, they would have to stay behind.

With everything done, he turned around and left through the gate, and arrived on the first floor.

#### Chapter 1108: Information Sharing

Alex was surprised at how crowded the 1st floor was. He couldn't use his spiritual sense, so he couldn't tell how many people there were, but there had to be at least a third of the people that had entered the sanctum.

That made sense too, given that everyone who failed was dumped back here.

He looked around and saw dejected people who had failed once again. Nearly 10 days had passed since they had come here, and they were still on the first floor.

Compared to the person that was said to have completed the entire thing in just 15 days, they were too slow.

Still, when compared to the average time taken, they were barely getting started.

Alex looked around carefully. Without his spiritual sense, it would be hard to tell if someone was looking at him or had a talisman in their hand. If they got the jump on him while he was distracted, it would be very bad.

He thought of leaving, but someone approached him. Alex nearly took out his sword before he realized that this was a very weak person.

"Hey, little brother. What floor did you drop from? I don't think I've seen you here during the past few days," the Saint Condensation realm female cultivator said.

"19th floor," Alex said. "Why?"

"Woah! 19th? That's tough, little brother. It must suck to reach so high and have to come back down here," she said while she shook her head. "What sort of challenge did you lose to?"

"None. I entered a room with spatial cracks. Had to leave," he said.

"Dear lord, that's even worse. At least losing would mean that you did something wrong, but having to come down with no fault of your own is just... sigh," the woman shook her head. "Anyway, let's talk about the floors below the 19th floor."

Alex was very confused by why the woman had approached him and was even going to ask her about it when 3 other people approached him at the same time.

He took out his sword this time, just to be safe, and the three people stopped in their tracks.

"Woah, Woah, Woah, we mean you no harm brother," one of them said while holding their hands up.

"What do you want?" he asked.

"Please don't answer her. I will pay you 200 True spirit stones for the information," someone said.

"What?" Alex looked confused. Just then, he saw one of the women in the group of three was someone he had seen outside in the group with Zhu Shaofan.

"You're someone from the Insight Pavilion, aren't you?" he asked. "What are you doing here? Aren't you supposed to be finding information on your target?"

"Oh, senior brother knows about me?" the girl said excitedly. She quickly brought out a talisman and waved it around. "I've already done what I needed to do."

Alex looked at the talisman for a bit and asked, "does senior Zhu Shaofan find the target for you or do you do it on your own?"

"The other times we did it on our own, but this time around he found our target. Since you know about us so much, brother, does that mean you'll answer me?"

"Tell me what you want first," Alex asked.

"Brother, we are gathering information about the rooms and challenges on each floor. Do you think you can tell us what you know?" she asked.

"AH!" Alex spoke out loud as he finally understood what was happening. "Selling information huh? Even in such a place. Why aren't you guys going up to find out yourself?"

The group looked at each other and shook their head. "That's a bad idea. We know we will fail, so there is no point," one of them said. "We came here to make money in the first place."

Alex nodded when he heard that. "Well, I can't tell you what to do or what not to," he said. "What information do you have?"

"Uhh... we have most information until floor 22," the girl from the Insight Pavilion said. "People from further above have come down, but they don't share that information with us at all."

"That's understandable," Alex said. "Alright, give me what you have information on and I will tell you all the floors I've been through."

The girl's eyes went wide with happiness and she thanked him while bringing out talismans to record.

Alex stared at her for a bit while the others reluctantly left, knowing that they wouldn't get anything out of there.

The girl took out another talisman. "This costs 2000 True spirit stones, normally, but I will give it to you for free since you are going to tell me everything," she said.

Alex nodded and started explaining all the rooms he had been to. He didn't really have any reason to hold back, so he explained everything.

The girl recorded it all, some of which were new to her. She thanked him profusely and gave him the talisman before leaving away to sell her product or to gather some more information.

Alex looked at the talisman in his hand and read it a bit. From what he could see, 19 seemed doable, and 20 seemed special enough that he didn't need to know about 21 and 22.

"Hmm, that was handy," he thought to himself and left the 1st floor.

He quickly walked towards the 1st room to his left and grabbed onto a floating light the moment he entered. He was sent to the 2nd floor where his spiritual was usable once more.

He spread his spiritual sense around, but he didn't look for anyone or anything. Doing so would alert anyone that was trying to find him.

Instead, Alex looked towards the door that was darkened and thought of waiting for it to open up.

That was the room with the tug of war, so he believed he could pass it easily. But, he also needed to cultivate, since he was lacking in Qi.

He could eat a pill to restore his Qi reserve, but it would not be as good as normal cultivation, which would make the Qi he had gathered to be crystallized.

So, he decided to cultivate for a bit. He went to the edge of the massive room and sat down as he closed his eyes and cultivated. He let his spiritual sense linger around, but he didn't consciously look for anyone.

After a while, he even took his spiritual sense back as if he had fallen into a deep cultivation session, one that would only usually happen in closed cultivation.

He sat there in a deep cultivation base for nearly half a day, during which time many people came and left.

Alex was getting the rest he deserved.

As he continued cultivating, one man in a corner moved his eyes towards him from time to time. Until now, he had expected Alex to continue on to the upper floors in which case he would follow him, but it didn't look like he was going to.

He was just a clone, so the main body had already given out the information to the leader of their group. So, all he had to do was for her to make a decision before doing anything.

And she had made one.

He was to take the opportunity to poison him. There was a poisoned needle with him that he could use to prick Alex. As long as he could stop him from going for some antidote afterward, he was set.

He looked around a bit and then stared at Alex as inconspicuously as possible. He then slowly stood up and walked around the room, never going directly in Alex's direction but moving closer nonetheless.

When he was as close as 10 meters from Alex, he made his move. With this distance, Alex wouldn't be able to stop him after being caught off guard. And with him being in deep cultivation, this was going to be easy.

The man suddenly dashed towards Alex as quickly as he could, but before he could reach him, a hand grabbed his throat, stopping him in his tracks.



"Such obvious bait and you still bite," Alex spoke with disdain in his voice. Something landed on his shoulders just then and Alex looked toward it.

"Good job, Whiskers," he said.

While Alex was presenting himself as the bait, Whisker was high up in the ceiling with his cultivation base concealed. He was looking down on all of them on the 2nd floor, and through his eyes, Alex was as well.

For the past 12 hours, he had been tracking every single person that came and left. But more than them, he was tracking those that simply did not leave at all.

This man had been one of them, so when he started moving towards him, Alex knew he was an assassin as well. The attack in the end wasn't even needed.

Alex felt the man's throat. "No heartbeat," he said to himself. "Can you even be considered a human being without a heartbeat? You're more a puppet than a clone."

The man struggled, but he really wasn't the fighting type. His cultivation base was very weak, and he was kept here just as an observer.

"Come on," Alex said and dragged him away. "Killing you here will only make the spirit angry."

He took the man through the open gate to the crumbling room and tossed the man to one corner.

He crouched and looked the man in his eyes as he asked, "You can hear this, can't you?" he smiled. "I'm coming for you all."

That was the last thing the clone saw and heard before its head was caved into the tower's wall and its body tossed into the infinite cracks in the room.

## Chapter 1109: Skipping Floors

Alex arrived on the 19th floor again.

It took him exactly 8 days to get here without stopping. The upper floors were faster to get through, but the lower floors took way too long because of how many people there were.

It took half a day most of the time just for his turn to enter the rooms.

He followed the same path as before as that was easier. He had some idea about what the other rooms had, but going there would be too risky as he couldn't necessarily win in those rooms.

Surprisingly, he got to skip floors 5, 10, and 15 as the things he had to do on that floor were a one-time task. The spirit itself explained that to him.

Now that he had gone through all the lower floors and was back on the one he had first had to go back from, he continued on his journey.

He knew what the next room was, so he entered it without hesitation.

This was a room where they tested one's reflex.

All the people were made to stand on one side of the room that was split by a barrier. On the other side of the barrier was nothing.

"Stand next to the barrier," the voice explained. "In a few moments, a ball of light will appear on the other side of the barrier. Touch the barrier as soon as you see it. This will be done for the next 10 minutes. The 5 with the least average time taken to touch the barrier will get to move on to the next floor."

Alex nodded and got ready, his vision moving rapidly as he looked for the balls that would appear on the other side.

"Begin."

No ball appeared immediately, but everyone was on their toes waiting for it.

The moment the ball appeared, everyone's hands moved. They were all already close to the barrier, so everyone touched at practically the same time.

The sanctum of course had the finer details of what had happened. The ball of light disappeared and everyone returned to waiting again.

When the light returned, they slammed against the barrier.

This happened for the next 10 minutes and finally, the winners were revealed.

Alex was easily one of the winners. With his dynamic vision being as good as it was, his hands moved before others even registered the fact that the light ball had appeared in their vision.

He was the first one to touch the barrier each time, and each time he won. So, when he was sent to the next floor, he wasn't surprised at all.

Alex looked around the 20th floor. The first thing he did after coming to any floor was search for the assassins. He looked for people's expressions when they noticed he had come.

No one seemed to be emoting anything at all in this room.

"Let's get this done with," he thought and turned towards the many rooms that were around the floor.

It seemed that about 3 of the 10 rooms had been destroyed by the crumbling space, but the remaining 7 were fine.

People waited for the gates of the 7 rooms to open up, and so did Alex.

As was the case with every 5th floor, floor 20 was unique as well. It was easier to pass like every other 5th floor, but this time around, it was not so simple.

Only one person could enter each of the rooms, so Alex had to wait for a long time before he got to enter.

When he entered, he saw that it was a rather small room, with a glowing wall in front of him.

A voice spoke, "Attack the wall with all you've got. If your attack is strong enough to match your cultivation base, you can continue moving up."

"Hmm," Alex thought and sent out a simple attack that landed on the wall. His attack was easily stronger than his cultivation base.

"You pass," the voice said. "But you have a chance to skip the next floor. If your attack is stronger than the cultivation base by a realm, you skip the next floor. If you fail, however, you will be sent back to the first floor. Choose."

"I will attack," Alex said.

"Go ahead."

Alex attacked once again, easily passing.

"Would you like to try again? This time around, you will have to attack with something stronger than your cultivation base by 2 realms. You can skip the next 2 floors."

"Yes," Alex said and attacked again.

Once again he was successful. With his Saint Foundation 3rd realm cultivation base, he could bring out a strength that was equivalent to the Saint Core 3rd realm cultivation base.

As such, these tasks were very easy for him.

"Would you like to try again?" the voice asked. "This time around, you will have to attack with something stronger than your cultivation base by 5 realms. You can skip the next 3 floors."

"Woah, 5 realms?" Alex was surprised at the sudden jump in requirements.

"You can choose to skip the next 2 floors if you don't want to," the voice said.

"No, I will attack," Alex said and attacked once more. Since his attack was stronger than Saint Foundation's 8th realm, he easily passed.

"Would you like to try again?" the voice asked one more time. "This time around, you will have to attack with something stronger than your cultivation base by 10 realms. You can skip the next 4 floors."

"10 realms..." Alex paused. "That's... Saint Core 4th realm."

That jump in requirement surprised him once again.

"I can do it," he said and attacked once again. This time around, however, it was no simple attack. He put his body, sword, and Qi into one attack as he struck the wall in front of him.

He passed the requirement by just 1 realm and passed the challenge.

"Would you like to try again?" the voice spoke once again. "This time around, you will have to attack with something stronger than your cultivation base by 20 realms. You can skip the next 5 floors."

"Okay, no, I can't do that. I'm fine with what I've achieved," Alex said. 20 realms higher than his current cultivation base was Saint Soul 5th realm. He would not try that even if he had a fraction of his current intelligence. Even if he added his blood aura into the equation, he would still come a few realms short of the requirement.

"Congratulations on skipping the next 4 floors," the voice spoke and Alex teleported away. When he reappeared, he was on the 25th floor.

He looked around quickly to search for any assassins he might catch in the act. Unfortunately for him, everyone turned around to look at him. There were barely a few dozen people here, so everyone turned to see when a new one came around.

This was an unfamiliar place for him since his recent start, so he wasn't sure what he was supposed to do there. He looked towards the front and saw a single room that was occupied.

There were two other rooms, but they seemed to have been damaged. So, he sat down and looked around at the people that were there as he waited for his turn.

Every single one of them was strong by comparison, each well into their Saint realm. Not a single True realm cultivator had made their way up here, even though there wasn't anything actively fighting against their way.

The gate opened up and a single person entered.

Each 5th floor was a solo challenge, so Alex wondered what this one was. A few people trickled into the 25th floor while a steady line of them left the floor.

After about an hour of waiting around, it was his turn to enter.

Once again, there was a wall in front of him in the small room, similar to the one from the 20th floor.

The voice spoke once again.

"If you can endure the upcoming spiritual attack that is meant for someone around your cultivation base, you pass," the voice said. "You cannot use any of your tools for this."

Alex gave a look of understanding when he heard that. 'That is simple enough,' he thought and got ready for the attack.

He strengthened his mental defenses as well as he could by keeping his spiritual energy active and ready to fight back.

Suddenly, without any warning, the attack landed on him. It felt like Heaven's Impact, only stronger for some reason.

It was definitely a better skill than Heaven's Impact, that was for sure.

The splitting headache lasted for a few seconds before Alex was back on his feet, ready for another one.

"You pass."

He was taken aback when he suddenly felt the teleportation aura that sent him up the floor.

He arrived on the 26th floor, very surprised by the fact that he could not skip the next 5 floors, as he had done on the 20th floor.

Given the way the last challenge was constructed, he was sure that was the case. However, it had turned out to not be the case.

Since there was nothing he could do about it, he decided not to give much thought to the whole thing at all.

"So, how many people are—"

He teleported away just as a sword passed through where he was standing before. Alex reappeared and attacked with his own sword.

However, the man easily blocked his attack.

'Saint Core 9th realm,' Alex thought as he quickly checked the cultivation base of his attacker.

He looked at the person who attacked him and was surprised to see that he had a very pale face and body.

"My god, just how many clones are you guys using?"

Chapter 1110: Duel

The man attacked once again, but Alex teleported far away enough to easily dodge him.

"Don't run, bastard!" the man shouted.

"Are you really a clone? You sure do look like it," Alex said. "But then again, you could just be naturally pale."

"So what if this body is not my real one? I can kill you even with this," the man said.

Alex smiled slightly. "What's wrong? Why are you so angry towards me?" he asked. "Are you angry because I killed your other bodies?"

"If I can kill you, losing those bodies will be worth it," the man said.

Alex's smile got brighter. 'So it really is just one person controlling all these bodies,' he thought. He wondered how much of his soul he must have hurt to put into these bodies.



And since he killed those bodies, he wondered just how much damage the main body's soul had taken.

"Do you really want to kill me?" Alex asked.

"Of course!" the man said viciously. "At any cost."

"Then let's have a duel," Alex said. "Come attack me if you agree to it."

The man suddenly charged towards Alex, but Alex wasn't worried.

"Spirit, you heard that, right?" Alex asked.

"Yes, Master White Tiger," the spirit appeared out of nowhere, surprising the man.

The man tried to move back in caution, but a teleportation power took over him, one that he could not stop at all. Alex felt the same power and was teleported away.

The three of them appeared in a different area of the tower, one Alex didn't recognize at all.

"Where is this?" Alex asked.

"The 43rd floor," the spirit said. "No one has come close to this floor, so I brought you here to have your duel. Please continue. I will return after one of you has died to bring you back to your floor."

Alex smiled as the spirit vanished away.

"Now, we can fight without any worry," he said.

The man looked worried, but now was not the time for that. He readied his sword and prepared to attack.

Before he could move, however, an attack landed on him out of nowhere. A fist made up of spiritual energy hit him directly in the head, making his head hurt for a second.

As he was recovering, another Heaven's Impact landed on him, with the same effect on the man. He could not even move at all.

Alex sent one Heaven's Impact after another, making the man completely useless and unable to fight at all.

"Stop this!" the man shouted when he could finally catch a break, but Alex's unrelenting attacks continued with barely any of those breaks.

Alex didn't know much about souls and connections to clones. He had had one, but he never got to control it at all.

So, he didn't know just how much of his attack was hurting the main body at all. However, since this was a 'puppet' clone, the main body had to be controlling this. Thus, he wondered if his attack was hurting the main body. If not the main body, at least the connection between the two.

To his surprise, he was doing something. The man in front of him would go from having a pained expression to none at all for a few seconds, before coming back with a pained one.

The main body's mind must have been in pain, which was causing him to be unable to focus on the clone for a few seconds at a time.

The clone completely lost its expression and seemed to have been abandoned at some point.

Alex shook his head and walked up to the man before stabbing him in the chest. Suddenly, the man's eyes came awake as he looked at Alex with the most fury he had seen in a while.

"I... I told you," the man said with a grunting voice. "I will kill you... at any cost."

Alex frowned for a second, not understanding what he meant. However, at the next moment, his eyes went wide as he teleported away to a corner.

"Spirit! Come save me," he said.

"The duel is not over, Master White Tiger," the spirit's voice spoke from somewhere.

"Fuck you!" Alex cried out as he brought out a few talismans and sent it in front of him. Now that he wasn't fighting in a location where he had a problem accessing his storage ring, he could freely use the talismans that had been given to him by the elders.

At the same time, he brought out a few formations plates and threw them in front of him. Then, he used every single defensive technique he had.

And then, the explosion came.

The talismans were torn to shreds, the barrier shattered in a flash. His own techniques were torn down like a house of cards as he took the rest of the explosion directly.

He was already next to the wall, so he was instead crushed onto it.

His Blood armor was the only thing that managed to survive the blast, which he had focused all on his head and torso.

The rest of his body was... not there anymore.

He fell to the ground, as just a torso with a head. Even the blood armor slowly dripped away from his body as he lost his consciousness.

\* \* \* \* \*

Somewhere on a different floor, an old man collapsed on the ground.

"Hey! Hey! Are you okay? Get up!" the girl next to him spoke, but the old man seemed to have fallen unconscious.

At the same time, on another floor, a woman fell unconscious as well. The girl next to her tried to wake her up, but the woman would not wake up no matter what.

Back on the floor with the old man and the leader of this assassination mission, something small and blue rose up from the old man's body.

The girl looked at it with wide eyes as she realized what had happened. A soft and weak voice entered her mind.

'My... my soul is very weak. Take me... to the girl,' the nascent soul of the old man said.

The girl looked at the Nascent soul with disdain, not wanting to help this weakling who couldn't even kill a Saint Foundation realm brat. However, if their leader figured out that he could be saved and she didn't, she would be in some big trouble.

So, she quickly brought out a jar of some sort and placed the small, blue soul into the jar. At the same time, she ransacked his body for everything he owned and stood up from the floor.

She looked at one of the rooms in the distance that had just opened up and finally, after so many days decided to enter it.

On the other floor, the girl held the collapsed woman and kept her to the side. Until further instruction from the leader, she would keep the girl here with her.

\* \* \* \* \*

When Alex regained consciousness again, his body had healed. His arms and legs were back to normal, completely restored. The Undying physique had done its job.

Although, he wasn't sure how much time he had lost here.

"Goddammit! Another Core Explosion," he thought. He had now been victim to two Core Explosions, each one from two different assassins. This one was even more violent than the last one despite Alex's preparation.

The difference in cultivation base meant the explosion would hit harder.

Alex looked around and found Midnight in a corner. He couldn't help but chuckle when he saw the sword.

"At least you are sturdy enough to handle the damage from the explosion," Alex said as he picked it up. "Maybe I should have made you larger and used you as a shield."

Alex got a faint feeling that the sword was rejecting that idea of his.

"Alright, alright, I won't do that," he said and put it back into his storage ring, which too was to the side.

"Master White Tiger, now that your duel is completed, are you ready to leave?" the spirit appeared suddenly and asked.

"Why did you not save me when I asked?" Alex asked.

"You were still in the middle of the duel, as your opponent hadn't given up," the spirit said. "Protecting you would mean showing bias, and I am trying my best to be as unbiased as possible."

Alex sighed. He took a deep breath and released it. He couldn't get angry at the spirit for that. "Fine, I get it."

"Then, are you ready to leave?" the spirit asked.

"Let me dress up first," Alex said and brought out a set of clothes. Having to change his clothes after every fight was starting to get annoying. He was going to have to find a rather strong set of robes sometime soon in the future.

Once he was dressed, he was returned to the 26th floor where there was no one in the area at all.

"Hmm, have people not passed the last floor?" he wondered. "To be fair, that was quite a strong attack, so you have to have a good cultivation base to endure that."

He looked toward the rooms in front of him and one of them was open. Wasting no more time, he walked into the room.

A couple of people turned to look towards him when they noticed him enter. They were a little surprised by his cultivation base, but they didn't show it on their face at all.

"Welcome," one of them said as they sat on one of the 8 different platforms that were laid out around the room.

Alex looked around and sat 3 of those platforms was still empty.

"I hope you're not in any sort of a hurry," the young man said. "Because you will have to wait for a while before we get started."