

Alchemy 1141

Chapter 1141: Answers

"Join you?" Alex couldn't help but grow curious when he heard that. "Surely you don't mean your little assassins group, do you? You should know your little act is up."

"Haha!" Zhu Shaofan chuckled. "I knew you had told them the moment I heard you were alive. I don't know how you do it, but it's certainly a neat trick I must say. I mean, to regrow a head? That surely can't be done with just some pills right? Anyway, what's your answer?"

"Didn't you hear me? Your assassins group has been found out. The elders know about you," Alex said.

"And what will they do? Kill me?" Zhu Shaofan chuckled. "I thought I told you that they can't kill anyone on the continent. Every single one of them is stuck following a stupid oath they forced upon themselves. So long as the oath remains, they cannot kill me. So, what will your answer be?"

Alex frowned. His father and the others were vulnerable at the moment. Heck, even he was vulnerable. If he refused to accept the deal, he would just kill him again.

'What should I do?' he thought.

"Come on, hurry up," the man said. "I don't have the time. Those old bastards will come at any time."

Alex couldn't think of what else he could do right now. He had to accept the deal if only to save his father and himself right now. He had to delay as much as he could.

"Fine," he said. "I accept your deal."

Alex knew what was going to happen next. He was going to have to swear an oath and he was going to refuse it, and then the old man was going to get angry.

It was all plainly laid out in front of him.

But, things didn't go in the way Alex anticipated.

"Great!" the man said. "Now you are the first member of the Dark Phoenix. Do you know any other 5 I can employ as well?"

Alex frowned once more. Something weird was going on. He guessed it was a ploy to get him to lower his guard so that he could attack him at just the right moment.

But Alex couldn't understand why that would be necessary. Each moment he was given to breathe was a moment closer to him recovering. A moment closer to the elders deciding to come to save him.

"I don't have any such names," Alex said, playing along with his games for now.

"Hmm, no worries. I remember the Azure Imperium searching for someone not long ago. I should get them," the man said. "As for the rest, I have quite a few years on me to decide."

Alex said nothing and everyone around him was silent as well.

"I suppose I shouldn't be wasting any more time. We should leave," the man said.

Alex half-nodded.

"Oh right," the man stopped moving and looked at Alex. "You should know that the Dark Phoenix group is very secretive and our information can't be that easily distributed. Please kill everyone that knows that you are a part of it now."

Alex gave a disgusted look. "That was your play?" he asked. "Were you just wasting time?"

"Are you not going to kill them?" the man asked.

"What do you think?" Alex asked.

"Tsk, ts, ts. And here I thought I found another member," the man said. "Well, if you're not going to be it, then I guess you should just die."

Alex sense something move in the ground suddenly. He could sense it approaching fast.

A massive root grew out of the ground and stuck both Alex and Graham that were standing next to each other.

Suddenly, the puppet moved and appeared in front of Alex, blocking the roots from hitting him.

Zhu Shaofan gave a surprised look. "A puppet that can stop my attacks? Now that is interesting," he said. "You really are very interesting, aren't you?"

Alex said nothing as he fully focused on controlling the puppet in front of him. The opponent in front of him was faster than the speed puppet could produce with Alex at the control.

The puppet's reflexes also depended on Alex, so that was another problem.

"Seriously, how you do have it all? Such good Alchemy knowledge, a puppet of such strength, the blood of such high strength, and a body that doesn't seem to die," the man said. "Come on, tell me."

"You can kill me, but you won't get the answer," Alex said as he prepared for another fight. He pulled out a few pills and ate them to recover the best he could, but these were never going to be enough.

"Kill you? I'm not going to kill you until I have the answer to what makes you so great," the man said. "These people, however. I don't mind killing them."

Alex's eyes widened. "Fight me you coward!" he shouted.

"Oh, I don't think I will," the man said. "Let's start with your father, shall we?"

Alex noticed a wind blade flying towards them out of nowhere. His demon eyes were working overtime to notice every single movement of energy to see what his next attack was going to be.

He saw the blade and put the puppet on task to stop it. The puppet punched the blade and the blade disappeared into a bunch of green energy.

The man looked at the puppet with a slightly deeper frown. "Strong," he said. "I bet it can kill me if it can get to me too."

Alex didn't say anything, but he was feeling afraid that Zhu Shaofan had realized that his puppet was capable of killing him.

"I should watch myself, then," he said.

Alex noticed a green aura trailing beneath his feet, falling onto the ground. The man activated a technique and suddenly something grew out from the ground.

Alex was surprised that it wasn't attacking him, but rather Zhu Shaofan. It was a massive carnivorous planet that swallowed him.

Alex remembered the wood energy girl from the sanctum and knew what was most likely going to happen next.

He immediately turned around and hit his father with his palm. Waves of energy burst into his father and suddenly he teleported away.

From behind him, Zhu Shaofan appeared with a sword in hand, ready to stab his father.

Zhu Shaofan was surprised that Alex had noticed him at all. The next moment, the puppet came next to him to punch him.

The man realized he had screwed up quite badly. So, he quickly used something.

Wind burst out from him, moving in all directions around him. Alex felt the air around him grow thick and viscous as he found it hard to move through.

The puppet was also slowed down quite a lot and that gave the man ample opportunity to escape back into the sky

"That puppet is truly terrifying," he said as he took a deep breath. He had been forced to use his dao, and was thus feeling quite bad about himself.

"I suppose I shouldn't come attack in person then," he said. "You still have the chance to give me what I want, young Alex. You have enough time until every single one of these people dies."

A bunch of wind blades appeared in front of him, sending the wind blades in all directions.

Alex's eyes went wide in horror and he suddenly brought out the Blood God's Manual. Without hesitation, he pulled out as many of the beasts inside as he could and sent them all in the direction of the wind blades.

The blades struck the beasts and were destroyed. The shockwaves still hit the people below, and while some were hurt, most were just fine.

Alex felt his heart bleed watching the many blood beasts he had cultivated die just like that, but there wasn't anything he could do. Saving these men was a task he simply couldn't skimp out on.

The rest of the beasts flew out to crash onto the rest of the flying blades as well.

"Whisker!" Alex said, and Whisker jumped onto the puppet's back. At the next moment, Alex sent both the puppet and Whisker into the sky.

The moment they appeared in the sky, above Zhu Shaofan, Alex noticed where he was through Whisker's vision.

Zhu Shaofan noticed that as well and stopped to save himself. He created a massive field of wind that resisted the puppet's approach.

He noticed the rat on top of the puppet and realized that the rat had some important role to play here as well.

Without hesitation, he sent a strong attack flying toward the puppet and Whisker. The puppet was struck on the chest, and it hit Whisker as well.

Whisker died immediately and the puppet could no longer target the man as it fell freely through the air now that Alex couldn't see where Zhu Shaofan was.

"That was close," Zhu Shaofan's voice appeared from beyond the bloody mist that had filled the sky by now. "That is a very good technique you use there, that teleportation. You nearly got me."

The mist cleared and Zhu Shaofan could be seen once again. "But, what now?" he asked as he started at Alex's frowning face. "Your beasts are dead and I don't think you have any more of them. So, your only choice is to watch them die or give me the answers I want."

Alex looked at him with his frowning face and suddenly, the frown turned to a smile. "I do have one last option," he said. "I have a friend."

A massive fire blasted out of nowhere, hitting Zhu Shaofan square in the back.

From beyond the fire appeared Scarlet who flapped her massive burning wings in the black sky.

"Hope I'm not too late."

Chapter 1142: Fiery

The many people watched in awe as the Phoenix flew down next to Alex.

"You came," Alex said, finally relaxing a little.

"Of course," Scarlet said. "You made it sound so important after all. If I let you die after all the help you've given me, my Inner Demon would haunt me till the end of time."

Alex smiled, simply happy that she was here.

"But, it seems your enemy is more problematic than I imagined," she said as she turned to the sky where the slightly singed Zhu Shaofan flew up. "A Saint Transformation 4th realm cultivator... this is annoying."

Alex looked towards her. "What's your cultivation base?" he asked. He found it hard to determine her exact cultivation as she seemed far stronger than him at the moment.

"Saint Transformation 1st realm," she said.

Alex was surprised. 'So strong,' he thought. But, it was still weaker than Zhu Shaofan. "Can you beat him?" he asked.

"Depends," Scarlet said.

"On?" Alex asked.

"His bloodline," she said.

Alex didn't immediately understand how that could affect the battle, but he didn't get to think about it as Zhu Shaofan's next words caught his attention.

Zhu Shaofan was looking below him from the sky at Scarlet with wide eyes.

"You..." he said, his voice slow and deep. "How... how are you here?"

Scarlet looked up in confusion. "I am here to defend my friend," she said.

"How the hell are you here?" Zhu Shaofan shouted the question again. "You should be dead."

Scarlet's eyes narrowed this time around. "Ah, I see..." she said. "So you were there too."

"You can't be alive!" the man shouted. He tried speaking some more but he couldn't find a way to voice the words as they were stuck in his throat by the oath.

"You say that like you saw me die," Scarlet said.

"I--" Zhu Shaofan paused as the oath grabbed his throat once more, stopping him from speaking anymore.

"Scarlet, what's going on?" Alex asked.

"I'll explain later," Scarlet said. "Let me defeat him first."

He calmed down a little and looked at Scarlet again. His eyes narrowed as he noticed something that his immediate shock had stopped him from seeing. "Wait, no. You're not her," he said. "You're too weak."

"Weak?" Scarlet asked. "Come fight me and you'll see who's weak."

"I see," Zhu Shaofan said. "You must be her child. I wasn't aware there was a child."

Scarlet scoffed at the man.

"For your mother's sake, I shall let you live. Leave now and I won't attack you," he said. "I'm sure you want revenge for what your mother went through and I completely understand why you deserve it. What happened to her was... just leave."

"I told you I came to save my friends. I am not leaving this place until I am certain they are safe," Scarlet said.

Zhu Shaofan looked noticeably agitated. "Why won't you just leave? I'm giving you a way out. Don't make me kill you!" he shouted.

"Don't worry," she said. "You can't even if you want to."

Scarlet suddenly took to the skies, moving at a speed that left afterimages for the normal people that were looking at her.

The trail of fire she left behind burned with all covers of the phoenix flame.

"Sacred flames!" one of them shouted.

"Is that... a holy bird?" another one asked.

"Son, what is going on? What is that?" Graham asked.

"That is Scarlet, a friend of mine," Alex said. "I don't think we have much to worry about now."

Scarlet sent out flame attacks from her body, all of which burned through Zhu Shaofan's plants. His wind attacks did barely anything to stop her flames, so he had to go on a retreat throughout the battle.

He managed to sneak in an attack from time to time and hit Scarlet. Scarlet's body was hurt, but her flames immediately healed her, bringing her back to being able to fight once again.

"You damn bird!" Zhu Shaofan shouted. "I gave you a way out and yet you didn't take it. Fine, you can die now."

He waved his arm around him and was immediately surrounded by a bunch of wood Qi that formed green motes of light in the night.

He then sends it flying through the air at an incredible speed.

Scarlet saw the attack and stopped. Suddenly, a fire grew out of her chest, slowly encompassing her entire body as it hardened into an illogical solid flame armor.

The attacks hit her, but the armor stopped all of the attacks. She then retaliated with her own attack, a massive fiery claw that went swooping down at the man.

Zhu Shaofan used his dao to slow down her attack, but his mere intent wasn't able to overpower Scarlet, whose Intent was most likely one of the strongest in this entire realm.

It was certainly the strongest on this continent, and as such the fiery claw landed on the man, burning him.

Zhu Shaofan managed to extinguish the Phoenix fire that burned on him, but before long another fire started burning once again.

Scarlet's Qi was just as strong as his own Qi, so the attack was hurting him quite a lot. The fire burned around him and his dao seemed incapable of helping him as well.

If this went on for too long, he would die. He needed to either beat her quickly or find a way out of there.

"What's wrong?" Scarlet asked as she flew into the sky, launching one attack after another at Zhu Shaofan. "I thought you were strong. Come on, show me your strength."

She waited for him to respond, but Zhu Shaofan simply wasn't in the sort of situation where he could do so. He was burning from the outside, his flesh cooking on his bone.

He let out his attacks all around him without a care for who he was hitting at the moment. Some went to the sky, some to the ocean, and some to the land.

Scarlet stopped however many she could that were in the general direction of the humans while sending back her own attacks that hit Zhu Shaofan.

Alex watched in surprise at the difference in power between the two fighters in the sky. He had never imagined that the bird that was nothing more than a mindless little bird just 5 years ago was now strong enough to kill the leader of the strongest assassin group on the continent.

Alex knew he had no hand in her knowledge or talent, and most of what she had achieved was on her own. The only thing he did was give her a few pills to help her cultivate, and somehow that made him feel like he had some help in her current standing.

Thinking so, he couldn't help but feel pride at the bird that Scarlet had grown to become.

Zhu Shaofan stopped attacking as the pain got too bad for him to continue attacking. His body burned, his Qi burned and even his spirit seemed to burn.

He lost his mind to the pain for a long time before he seemed to find a small gap of clear thought where he realized what he needed to do.

He needed to run away.

Using that single moment of thought, he flew through the cloudy night sky while constantly burning in Phoenix fire. His screams sounded louder than the occasional thunder and lightning.

Scarlet stopped when she noticed that he was running away.

"Oh, so he doesn't have it after all," she spoke softly. "Otherwise, he would've used it."

Alex flew to the sky next to her. "What's happening?" he asked. "Are you letting him get away?"

He looked to the distance where Zhu Shaotian had run off to. He was still burning and in pain, so his speed was slow, but he was still getting away.

"Is he going to burn to death?" Alex asked.

"No," Scarlet said. "I don't have that good control over my flames at such a distance. He will be able to extinguish it if he tries to."

"Then what?" Alex asked. "Are you letting him get away?"

"Get away?" Scarlet chuckled. "How is he getting away? He's still in my sight, isn't he?"

Alex was slightly confused. "What are you--" his words stopped in his mouth as deep fear grew inside of him in an instant.

"Oh," Scarlet looked at him. "You might want to back away for this one."

Alex quickly flew back and watched in surprise as he realized what he was watching. This was the first time he was seeing it for sure.

When someone reached the final realm in a major realm, after a certain way through the realm, their Qi would start to change.

A certain way into the Mind Tempering realm, one could start to convert their Common Qi to True Qi.

A certain way into the True Emperor realm, one could start to convert their True Qi to Saint Qi.

Now, Alex was seeing someone in the Saint Transformation realm, who had converted a tiny bit of their Saint Qi into Immortal Qi.

That was to say, this would be the first Immortal attack he would have ever seen in his life, and it was coming from his own bonded beast.

A tempestuous wind moved around Scarlet as she prepared for her attack. She had a very small amount of Immortal Qi, and even then it was causing such a phenomenon.

Godslayer watched through Alex's eyes as well and spoke in a somber tone. "It has been a while since I've seen a phoenix use this attack."

"What attack is it?" Alex asked.

"Fiery Shard of the Primordial Sun."

Chapter 1143: Run Away

A blinding white fire burned around Scarlet, one that dwarfed any other color that she could have probably used.

Alex had gotten far, as per her instruction, and somehow he was still feeling the heat. Worse of all, he couldn't do anything about it.

He had the True Fire Dao, and he could stop the heat from burning him slightly. He could only wonder how hot it actually was.

At some point, he stopped seeing Scarlet at all with all the blinding light. Even his spiritual sense was burning away when it got close to her. The power of an Immortal attack was all too much for a mortal like him.

Everyone on the ground moved as far as they could from her, and even then they could feel the heat and were blinded by the light.

They closed their eyes, but the light was still bright enough to go through their eyelids. They had to put their arms up to properly block the light.

Alex fortunately only had to close his eyes to not be completely blinded by the light.

He heard a single phoenix screech, loud and high, and then... everything returned to darkness.

Alex was the first to recover his eyesight and he opened it. As soon as he did, he saw the blinding white light flying through the sky, illuminating the sky and the water as it flew through the air toward Zhu Shaofan who was burning in the distance.

Alex didn't see what happened as the bright light was the only thing he could see in the distance. Then a second later, it exploded into a massive plume of fire that rose to the sky.

The entire world lit up as if it was daytime and even the mortals could see everything as clear as day.

A few seconds later, the bright light slowly vanished, and all that remained of light were the stars in the sky that burned bright.

Because of how hot the attack had been, even the clouds had disappeared from the area.

"Fiery Shard of the Primordial Sun," Alex thought to himself as he watched in stun. That was most definitely an attack fit for its name.

He didn't even look to check if Zhu Shaofan was alive or not at all. If he had a way to survive that, then he deserved to survive. However, it was impossible for him to be anything but ash at the moment.

Alex looked back at Scarlet whose solid fire armor had disappeared. The flames on her body disappeared as well, turning her back into a normal colorful bird.

It wasn't just that, however. She seemed weakened somehow after that attack and was hardly able to control herself.

Alex quickly flew up to her and grabbed her as she lost altitude. Scarlet let herself be grabbed and simply took the chance to catch her breath.

Alex dropped her to the ground and let her rest there. "Are you okay?" he asked.

"Yes," Scarlet said weakly. "I'm fine. I just didn't expect the attack to take so much out of me."

"It was a strong attack," Alex said. "An immortal attack would definitely be too much for a mortal like you."

"Well, it shouldn't be since it's my attack," Scarlet said. "It's just that I am cultivating too fast and my physical body isn't keeping up with my cultivation base."

"Huh?" Alex was surprised. "Are you saying your foundation is weak?"

"Pretty much," Scarlet said. "I mean, you saw me. I cultivated to this realm in just a few years. You should have known that."

"Well... I assumed that was what a Vermilion bird was able to do," Alex said. "Here, eat this healing pill. It should help a bit."

"Thank you." Scarlet quickly ate the pill and felt a bit better, but the fatigue didn't disappear so easily.

She looked at Alex and saw him staring at the stars. "What's wrong? Have you never seen the open sky before?" she asked.

"Huh? No, I wasn't looking at the sky," he said. "I was just checking to see if you would have to suffer from Heavenly Judgment now that you used an attack with Immortal Qi... but it looks like you're fine."

"Of course," Scarlet said. "It only comes where you are not playing by the rules. An Immortal in a Mortal world would get struck by the Judgment, but I'm still a mortal. Even if I somehow used an attack with Divine Qi, I would be fine, since it came from a mortal."

"Oh," Alex said. "I thought what mattered was the Qi, but it makes sense that it's the owner of the Qi that the heavens would care about."

Scarlet nodded. "Your troubles are over, right?" she asked.

"I believe so," Alex said as he sighed. "I'm tired as well. Let's rest a bit and we can leave this place. Although... I need to take them with me somehow. I don't know how I can do that."

"Well, can you find the way on your own? I need to leave quickly," Scarlet said. "I can't be found out. Oh yeah, make sure you don't tell anyone I was here, okay? Make those people not tell anyone either. Make them swear an oath if they have to."

"What's wrong?" Alex asked. "Why are you so worried?"

"My existence can't be known until I am stronger," the phoenix said. "Don't let anyone know I—"

Her words stopped in her mouth as she slowly turned to the side. Alex looked in the direction she was looking at and saw a massive boat, larger than anything he had ever seen in his entire life flying through the air.

It came in his direction but was still too far away for his senses to notice it. However, Scarlet seemed to have noticed it already.

"No!" she said in a somber voice. "No, they're coming."

"What?" Alex turned to look at her. "Who's coming?"

Scarlet tried flying, but she was way too weak. "They're coming for me. I need to run away," she said.

"What? Who's coming?" Alex asked.

"No time to answer, help me get away," Scarlet said.

Alex started fearing when he heard her. If Scarlet was afraid then it must have been somebody strong.

"Get into your beast space. You can hide there," Alex said. Since the two were still bonded, she could easily hide.

"No," Scarlet said. "They know I'm here. If they don't see me run away, they will torture you all to get their answer most likely."

Alex started fearing. "What can you do then?" he asked.

Scarlet's eyes moved around, trying to think of something, but she couldn't. "I'm sorry," she said. "But it seems this is as far as I can go. Run away while you can. They won't go after you since they are probably here for me."

Alex feared and turned around to look at his father and the others. "Father, take them and run away from here. Take the others too," he said.

"Al, what's going on?" Graham asked.

"More enemies," Alex said. "Please get away from here."

The others started moving the moment they heard those words, but Graham didn't move. "Can you fight them?" he asked.

Alex smiled. "Yes," he said with an assuring look on his face.

Graham looked at Alex with a complicated look. "You've grown so much since we've been separated," he said. "I can't even tell if you're lying or not anymore."

Alex's smile dropped a little. "Father, please. Save them," he said.

Graham nodded. "Save yourself," he said. "There is no disgrace in running away."

Alex nodded, but in his heart, he knew he most likely wouldn't. Not while his friend was here with him.

Scarlet looked at him and realize that he was staying. "What are you doing?" she asked. "They are going to kill you."

"You saved me and my father earlier," Alex said. "Let me help you now."

The puppet came to the front and stood before Alex. Alex had enough Qi to use it, so he wasn't very afraid.

"You will die," Scarlet said.

"Unless you are a fallen power that I'm helping restore, I don't think I have to worry about death," Alex said half-jokingly. "Sorry, not the time to be joking. That was a divined prophecy for me that I heard, which told me how I was going to die."

He turned around to see Scarlet looking at him with a stunned look on her face.

"What?" Alex asked before realizing. "Oh no... really?"

"Remember how you want to meet my parents and all?" Scarlet asked.

"Yeah," Alex said. "I'm still hoping your father won't kill me when he learns you bonded with me. Although, his oath should stop him from doing so."

"Yeah, about that," Scarlet said. "I don't have any parents."

Alex frowned slightly before remembering Zhu Shaofan's words. "Wait... is this about your mother being dead?" he asked.

"No, she's not dead," Scarlet said. "I never had one here to begin with."

Alex was confused. "What are you saying?" he asked.

"It wasn't my mother that died," Scarlet said. "It was me. I was the one that died."

Alex's eyes went wide.

"And the ones that killed me all those years ago, they are the ones that are coming here right now," Scarlet said.

Alex was stunned for a second by the information he had just heard. "You were killed?"

"By them," Scarlet said as she stared at the distance where the ship was still flying towards them.

Alex looked towards the boat which had finally entered the range of his sense. And his eyebrows widened as he realized that the ones that were coming were the 10 elders from the Council.

"You must be wrong," Alex said. "Those are the good elders. They are the ones that have been helping me all this time."

"No, I'm certain. They are the ones that killed me," Scarlet said. "I didn't remember the other one's face, but these 10, I remember very well. I am certain I fought them before I died."

Alex couldn't make sense of that still. "Why do you keep saying you died?" he asked. "You are clearly alive."

"Us phoenixes when we die, we go through rebirth. I was born again, and that is why I say that I died," she said.

Alex looked at her with wide eyes. "Why would they kill you though?" he asked. "What use can—"

Alex paused. The council elders told everyone that the phoenixes were secluded and used that opportunity to rule over the continent. Was that it?

"Are there other phoenixes in the Sunborn Sanctuary?" Alex asked.

"No," Scarlet said. "I was the only one that came here. I was the only one to rule the Southern Continent."

Alex's eyes went wide. "You were the Immortal phoenix of this land?" he asked.

"Yes," Scarlet said. "And those bastards killed me."

Alex was confused. Something about this all didn't make sense to him at all. "How did they kill you? Weren't you supposed to be an Immortal?"

"I don't know," Scarlet said. "I have very vague memories from the time right before I died. All I remember is a flash of pain and an image of those 10 standing in front of me with their attacks ready. I

remember trying to run away from the fight and then... nothing. The next thing I knew, I was born again."

"Ever since then, I instinctively knew that I had to get strong and get my revenge. I did my best to get out of the wasteland so I could cultivate, but... it seems all of it was for naught."

Alex looked back towards the boat that was approaching, but the 10 figures on it were already leaving the boat before it had even arrived.

Alex put the puppet ahead of him, ready to fight if it came to that. He waited until the 10 were up close and looked at them all.

Not a single one of them was looking at him at all. They were all staring at Scarlet. They were all surprised to see her alive.

"I can't believe it," Liang Zhufen spoke as she looked at Scarlet.

"So those texts were right," Qiu Jianhong said.

"A phoenix really can come back to life after dying," Yao Ning spoke with a shocked look on her face. "Then that means..."

Scarlet's face was angered when she saw her murderers.

Lei Zhong looked at her with a frown on her face. "Wait, wait, wait. Let's not get too hasty. We don't know if that is her or not. Look at her, she so... weak."

"Must be the rebirth," Tan Yang said. "Did the texts say anything about losing cultivation base?"

"Don't think so," Ren Guanting said. "But then again, those were written by humans, so who can really tell."

One of them turned to look at Alex finally. "What are you doing with her?" they asked. "What's with the puppet?"

Alex didn't answer. "Why are you here?" he asked in return.

"Huh?" they were confused. "We came here to save you. Why else would we come?"

"Don't lie," Scarlet shouted. "We know very well why you are here. You are here to kill me, just like you did so many years ago."

The 10 elder's faces suddenly changed.

"Wait... is it really you?" Yao Ning asked, her face pale from shock.

"Yes, it's me, the one that died, the one you killed," Scarlet said. "I have come back to kill you all."

The moment the 10 heard that they immediately moved.

Alex couldn't even react to their speed as even his Demon eyes had difficulty tracking their movement. His eyes trailed behind them, reaching them only after they had landed on the ground.

Scarlet got ready to fight with what she had left as well and got ready to attack. However, before she could attack, she stopped.

She looked in front of her with confusion and anger inside her. "What are you doing?" she asked.

Alex was confused as well.

The 10 elders had landed on the ground, but they weren't approaching at all. Instead, they were all kneeling on one knee with their head bowed toward Scarlet.

"Please kill us insolent servants for what we did, lady Phoenix," they all spoke in unison.

"Wh-what?" Scarlet didn't know how to respond at all. "What are you doing?"

"We are asking to be punished for our transgression, lady Phoenix," Liang Shufen said.

Scarlet watched them with a confused look on her face, and Alex was confused as well.

"What... what are you saying?" Scarlet asked. "Are you saying that you regret it now? You didn't seem that regretful when you killed me."

"We didn't know you would die, lady Phoenix. What we did, we have regretted all this time," Huo Xinya said.

"Hah!" Scarlet shouted. "Do you expect me to believe such an obvious lie?"

"It is no lie, lady Phoenix," Yao Ning spoke. "We dare not lie before the rightful ruler of the Southern Continent."

"Not lie?" Scarlet asked. "Do you honestly think I will believe that you didn't expect me to die when you murdered me?"

The elders finally reacted with an expression that was stoic. They were confused.

"Murder you?" one of them asked.

"Lady Phoenix, we would never murder you," another one said. "We could not live with ourselves if we killed our own ruler."

"You seem plenty alive for someone who says that," Scarlet said.

"That is because we didn't kill you," Yao Ning said. "Our actions still led to your death, so we have been waiting for your return, lady Phoenix. We have been waiting for you to deliver the punishment on us yourself."

Scarlet didn't understand what was happening. She wondered if they were waiting to see if she was hiding her strength before they were certain they could kill her.

"You say you didn't kill me?" Scarlet asked.

"Yes," Yao Ning said.

"But you were there when I died, weren't you?" she asked.

"We were," Yao Ning replied.

"What were you doing there then?" Scarlet asked.

Yao Ning hesitated a bit before looking at Scarlet. "Do... do you not remember?" she asked.

Scarlet's heart started beating faster. "Remember what?" she asked.

Yao Ning's eyes widened slightly before narrowing as she bowed again. "Yes, it was us who killed you. Please kill us, lady Phoenix."

The rest of them realized as well and quickly repeated the same line.

Alex noticed something wrong, and obviously, so did Scarlet.

"Do I not remember what?" Scarlet asked. "Answer me!"

Yao Ning flinched a bit. "It is best if we don't answer that, lady Phoenix," she said. "If you don't remember, then it is best we keep it that way."

"You bastards!" Scarlet shouted. "Just kill me if you are here to kill me. Stop playing these games with me."

"There is no game here, lady Phoenix," Yao Ning replied.

"You keep calling me your lady," Scarlet said. "If you truly think of me that way, then answer my question. The night of my death, what were you doing there?"

Yao Ning hesitated a bit.

"This is my order," Scarlet said.

Yao Ning gritted her teeth and finally answered. "We were there to save the Southern Continent and everyone that lived here."

Scarlet was confused. "What?" she asked.

Yao Ning and the rest did not dare breathe at the time.

"What are you talking about?" she asked. "Why would be saving the Southern Continent and its people? What threat was there?"

Alex looked at the elders and realized what was happening. He slowly turned towards Scarlet as she demanded they answer her at once.

"It was you, lady Phoenix," Huang Chen answered instead of the old Yao Ning. "We were there to protect the Southern Continent from you."

Scarlet's eyes went wide in shock. "No, that's not true," she said. "Why would I ever be a threat to my own domain and people?"

She questioned them on the outside, but on the inside, she remembered the feeling, the distinct emotion she felt before her death.

She had hurt a lot of people and that was why she was chased away from her home. She had told Alex that it was done by her family, but in reality, she knew it was done by these people.

But she never understood why she would ever feel that when she loved the people of these lands so much. What reason would there ever be to hurt them?

She wondered if this was an emotion that she felt for letting down the people of the Southern continent because she had died when she should have remained to protect them.

However, deep down, she knew that wasn't true. She could distinguish what emotion she was feeling very well. She might not have kept a memory of the event with her, but she had kept the emotion.

Her body visibly shook as she realized that they weren't lying to her at all. They were telling the truth.

"I don't remember any of this," she said. "Tell me what happened back then."

"Lady phoenix, if you do not remember then it is better we kee—"

"TELL! ME! WHAT! HAPPENED! FROM! THE! BEGINNING!" she shouted at them.

The 10 collectively flinched and Yao Ning took it upon herself to follow her command.

"If we were to really tell you everything from the beginning, Lady Phoenix, you must tell us what is the last thing you remember?" Yao Ning asked. "What was your last proper memory from before your death over 5,000 years ago?"

Chapter 1145: A Recounting of Old Memories

"Five thousand years ago?" Scarlet asked with a confused look on her face. "What about five thousand years ago? I was doing nothing at the time."

She looked around and watched everyone's faces. "I came out to make some changes to the rules and help provide Phoenix flames from time to time, but that's it," she said. "I didn't do anything else noteworthy for a long time."

Yao Ning was slightly confused as well. "But... is that your final proper memory, lady phoenix?" she asked.

"No," Scarlet said. "My proper memory is one from around... I don't know, maybe a few dozen years ago? Or maybe a century or two ago. But those memories aren't very noteworthy either."

Alex tried to make sense of things but something wasn't right. The timeline was off.

"Lady Phoenix," Yao Ning spoke. "You died, not a century or two ago, but rather Five thousand years ago."

Scarlet's eyes went wide. "What? That's can't be. How could I have died Five thousand years ago when I was only reborn a dozen years ago? The most an Immortal realm Phoenix like me should have taken to be reborn was just a few dozen years or a couple of centuries at best. You are lying," she said.

"No, we're not," Yao Ning and the rest said.

"They're not," Alex said. "This continent has been missing a Phoenix for the past 5 thousand years. That much is for certain."

"But..." Scarlet looked desperate. "It can't be. It's not possible for me to have lost so many years."

"Maybe it was a special case," Alex said, thinking for a bit. "5 thousand years ago... something does come to my mind now that I think about it."

"Please let me explain to you what happened, lady Phoenix. Maybe that will shed some light on the reason why you took over 5 thousand years to be reborn," Yao Ning said.

"Yes," Scarlet said. "Explain it to me, from the very start."

Yao Ning nodded. "It all started one day Five thousand years ago... when the disaster struck. We received a bunch of distress messages as well as felt the change that had happened in the world."

Alex's eyes narrowed when he heard that. He had pretty much guessed that this was most likely the case, so now he was listening to what more details he could hear from that time.

"The Sunborn Sanctuary was alerted to something... weird happening in the Central continent and you called for the best of us to help you during that period."

"We gathered in the Sunborn Sanctuary late afternoon and did what we could to help the people that were running away through the Intercontinental Teleportation formation. Apparently, something big was happening," Yao Ning said.

"What... what happened to the Central Continent?" Scarlet asked.

"On the inside? No one but you could know that lady Phoenix," Yao Ning said. "But a ferocious Qi barrier had appeared out of nowhere on the outside, blocking off all entry and exit from that area. Even the Teleportation formations didn't work, they still don't."

"Once you realized something was very wrong, you flew away to the Central continent as fast as you could," Yao Ning said. "And then... we waited for you to come back."

Scarlet took a deep breath. "Then?"

"Then... you returned around 6 hours later. When you did—"

"Wait, 6 hours later? What about the Central continent? What happened there?" Scarlet asked.

"We don't have any reliable information, but from what we learned, the ruler of the Western Continent, the White Tiger decided to become the only ruler of the world. He apparently did that by taking over the Central continent first, where all the Teleportation formations were."

"We are told that you bravely fought against the White Tiger, along with the other two rulers of the Northern and the Eastern continent. You successfully killed the White Tiger, saving the entire world in the process, but you also seemed to have been hurt in the process," Yao Ning said.

"The White Tiger tried to take over the world?" Scarlet's eyes narrowed. "That can't be true. Why the hell would he ever try to usurp us?"

"We don't know, lady Phoenix, but that is what we heard," Yao Ning said.

"What you heard is bullshit," Alex said. "I don't know who twisted the events, but what you heard is not true."

Everyone looked at Alex in surprise, including Scarlet. "What do you know?" she asked.

"Some... thing appeared in the Central continent and created the Qi mess we see now. The distress was there and you all did leave to see what it was. Apparently, you, the Tortoise, the Snake, and the Dragon reached there around the same time. You waited for the Tiger, but the Tiger was already fighting the monster inside," Alex explained.

"Monster? What monster?" the Phoenix asked.

"I don't know," Alex said. "Senior Xuan Luhei said it was a humanoid being with no cultivation base that fought all 5 of you at the same time when you were inside. However, even when fighting together, you could not win at all."

Scarlet's eyes narrowed. "Xuan Luhei?" she asked. "He told you what happened?"

"Yes," Alex said. "And he's very angry about the misinformation regarding the White Tiger. Apparently, the White Tiger saved the four of you by letting you escape while he fought off the monster."

"Senior described the 2 minutes event they felt as being one of the most terrifying experiences of his entire life. He said he felt like the world was caving on itself. Then, 2 minutes later, the feeling vanished, and both the White Tiger and the monster were dead."

"So... that White Tiger really is dead," Scarlet couldn't believe it at all.

Alex looked to the elders. "The White Tiger saved this world, sacrificing himself to defeat the monsters, and you repaid his sacrifice by raiding his domain, killing his people, and looting what little he had," he said.

The elder's face went pale with horror when they heard that. "Th-that can't be true," they said. "That's not what we were told."

"You were told the White Tiger was behind everything," Scarlet said as she looked at the elders.

The elders quickly nodded.

"And who told you that?" she asked.

"It... it was the Dragon Emperor. He told us that and asked us to help him get revenge against the White Tigers by attacking them," the elders said.

Scarlet's face was full of disdain. "You believed some half-dragon who clearly had ulterior motives," she said. "Shame on you."

The elders dropped their faces in shame, not daring to look at her. Scarlet turned towards Alex, who was looking at the entire situation without much emotion on his face.

"When did you meet Luhei?" She asked.

"About..." Alex thought for a bit, surprising himself by the answer he had come up with. "20 years ago now. He was hiding in this domain because he's hurt and can't heal himself because of the lack of Qi."

Scarlet nodded and turned towards the elders. "Did you really do what he said you did?" she asked. "Did you raid the Western Continent, killing its people?"

"We... we had no choice but to raid, lady Phoenix," they said. "We required the resources. It was that, or we let the entire Southern Continent go to ruin as a wasteland."

"Because of the Phoenix flames in the Wasteland," Alex said, remembering what Qiu Jianhong had told him. "You went to the Western Continent to get Spirit veins to create a barrier to stop people from coming in."

"To stop people that would bring Phoenix flames in. There is a difference there," the elders said.

"I have so many questions about the Wasteland myself, like how it came to be in the first place. Last I remembered, it was just a desert, nothing else. And now, it's nothing but a place where you can't even cultivate," Scarlet said.

The elders hesitated to answer the question, and before they could, Scarlet turned towards Alex. "Can you give me a proper recounting of what happened after the White Tiger sacrificed itself?" she asked.

"Let's see," Alex said. "Senior Luhei said he was separated from his brother when they flew out of the terrifying barrier. He was hurt and had exerted himself, so he had to hide in the secret realm. The

dragon went to the Western Continent to tell the White Tiger's family that he had sacrificed himself, before returning to the Western Continent to heal himself."

"Of the 5 beasts, you are the only one I lack knowledge of. I do not know what happened to you after you flew away from the Central continent," Alex said.

"I should be able to fill in on that," Yao Ning spoke. "Lady Phoenix, I do not know what happened exactly, but you took 6 hours to return back from the Central continent."

"We were alerted from the north that you had been seen flying through the ocean to the east. But you weren't... okay. You weren't yourself at all," she said. "You were very hurt and... we didn't realize it at the time but... you were dying."

Scarlet looked at Yao Ning, waiting for her to explain further.

"We got the report a little too late," she said. "By the time we left to intercept you, you had already crossed all the way from the desert to the mountains. That was when we saw your... state."

"What state?" Scarlet asked.

"You... were hurt and bleeding," Yao Ning said. "But it was not normal at all."

"How so?"

Yao Ning hesitated a little. "You were not only bleeding blood, but you were also bleeding Phoenix fire."

Chapter 1146: Requiem

"I was... what?" Scarlet asked.

"I can't really describe it, lady Phoenix. Your body was covered in Phoenix fire and it was dripping down from you, like liquid," Yao Ning said.

"My armor... something must have broken through it," Scarlet said. "Was it the monster?"

"We are not sure," Yao Ning said. "But... because you were bleeding fire and you were flying towards your home... everything in your path was also burning in fire."

Scarlet paused when she heard that and her eyes went wide. "You aren't saying..."

"You were burning everything and everyone on your path with Phoenix fire, one that you did not seem to have control over at all," Yao Ning said. "And since you have come from the Wasteland... it was the wasteland where everyone was suffering from your flames."

"Had you continued... you would have burned the people in the mountains and then... the capital," Yao Ning said.

Scarlet's eyes were wide, tears seemingly rolling down her eyes as the emotion resurfaced once more. The feelings she felt before her rebirth. She felt pain and guilt for hurting others, ones she did not want to hurt at all.

"And we had gone there to protect the Southern Continent from--"

"Me," Scarlet said, as she finally understood that they were telling the truth. They really were there to save the continent, and not to kill her.

"Wait, so how did I die?" Scarlet asked.

"We arrived to stop you, lady Phoenix," they said. "But you didn't seem to be in a situation where you could talk. You tried to fight through us, but... you were so very weak at the time. The only thing that was strong about you was the bleeding fire that fell from you, but you didn't seem to have any control over that."

"We fought for a while, and while we did not mean to hurt you at all, we most likely led to the reason why you were," Yao Ning said. "You see... something happened after we started fighting for a while."

"What? What happened?" Scarlet asked.

"I don't know how to explain this... but there was a storm that night. It was a starry night, and yet the storm appeared out of nowhere as if someone was trying to break through to Immortality," the old woman said. "And then... a single bolt of lightning struck you."

Scarlet was a mess already, and even then she could understand what must have happened.

"Heavenly Judgment," Alex said. "You must have used up Immortal Qi during your battle with the monster. You ended up triggering the Heavenly Judgment, just like senior Luhei."

Scarlet couldn't even speak as she quietly processed everything she had heard. She tried to process the feelings she felt, the emotions that were there again.

"Whatever it was," Yao Ning continued, "It was enough to make you run away from the place. We tried to follow you, but the attack had left us disoriented, even though we weren't the target at all."

"You flew away from us, fire raining below you once again," she said. "We followed a little later, watching you fly aimlessly. The fire... burned the people of the desert. We tried to save as many as we could, but we couldn't do much. We were in danger ourselves."

"After that, we heard a blast one last time," she said. "And then... you had died."

Scarlet's emotions were too much for her to handle and she burst out crying. "I... I killed them," she said. "I killed all of them"

"Lady Phoenix, you didn't mean to do it," another one of the elders spoke. "The blame cannot be with you. We shouldn't have tried stopping you in the first place. We should have helped you, instead of being in your way."

"That's right. We were the ones at fault. We were the ones that led you to your death. Please kill us for our insolence and forget about the past," another one said.

Scarlet didn't listen to anyone as she wallowed in her own devastated emotions.

Alex looked at her and didn't know how to help her at all. He stood next to her and softly rubbed her back.

The rest of the elders didn't know what else they could say. They were mostly surprised by how close Alex was to Scarlet in the first place. They really wanted to learn how they knew each other, but this was not the time to be questioning things.

Alex turned towards the elders and asked, "You said a lot of things today that should have been stopped by your oaths. What happened?"

"Our oaths? They are no more," one of them said. "Our oaths lasted until our ruler returned back to us. Now that she has, the oath has no hold on us."

"There were a lot of things in the oath weren't there? Even Zhu Shaofan was involved somehow," Alex said.

"Our oath primarily was made to stop people from learning about lady Phoenix's death, and to rule the Continent in her stead until she returned," Yao Ning explained. "We spoke the oath amongst the 10 of us, and Zhu Shaofan, who was not far away from the location where the battle had taken place."

"He wasn't part of the battle, but he was there," She explained. "We forced him to make the same oaths as us. He was not to reveal her death, and was to never do anything to harm the people of the continent. He had no interest in ruling, so we didn't force him to take that oath."

"After that, we returned to the Sunborn Sanctuary, where we distributed the rumor that our ruler had gone into deep cultivation and that we would be ruling. We made some more oaths when there such as never leaving the Continent or even the Capital without the other's approval, never doing anything that would be harmful to the continent, always staying there, waiting for our ruler to return."

"Now that she has, the purpose of our oaths has been completed," she finished.

Alex thought on it for a bit and nodded. 'So that was it,' he thought. Their oaths had caused quite a bit of problem for him many times, annoying him most other times. However, now that he saw the situation from their perspective, it made a lot of sense.

One could argue what they did wasn't the best way to go about after losing a ruler of your continent, but that was still better than nothing.

The Wasteland was burning and the others were without a leader. They became what the continent needed them to be.

"The wasteland," Alex asked. "Did it turn to a wasteland after..."

"Yes," Yao Ning said. "It used to be a desert with not many resources, but people still lived there, they cultivated there. After the flames got there, however, it all changed."

"The disaster caused chaos for a long time. But in that chaos, people realized that the flames healed them as well. They realized they could heal easily and thus a few started training their bodies."

"The flames were then taken around the desert to give other people the flames as well. Soon enough, the entire Wasteland was burning with Phoenix fire, including places that didn't have anyone around."

"Some people tried to bring the flame over to this side as well, which was why we needed to quickly set a barrier to stop them from coming over here. The people weren't stopped from coming, but rather it was the flames we tried to stop," she explained.

"But you still sent them back when they got there," Alex said.

"We had to," Yao Ning said. "There are a few places in the Southern Continent where the Phoenix fire still burns. It's controlled with formations and is used to heal people. Most of the people that came from the Wasteland tried to steal the flames, some nearly succeeding."

"In the end, we had to stop all of them from coming here entirely to stop any disaster from happening. It continued happening even after that, but since they were escorted away," she said. "It sounds bad, I know, but we couldn't think of any other way at all. Without a phoenix, we couldn't let phoenix fire spread around the mainland the same way it had in the Wasteland."

Alex couldn't deny that. Had the phoenix fire arrived on the mainland, he could only imagine the horror as it burned everything down.

He turned to look at Scarlet who was still a sobbing mess.

"Hey," he spoke up. "It's alright. You didn't mean to do what you did. It was all a horrible situation no one had any control over, you included."

"But... but what if I did?" Scarlet asked. "I probably had a choice between dying and killing them all while trying to save myself. And yet I still chose to go down that path. I, of all, chose not to die."

Alex thought for a bit.

"Don't you guys have to make an oath or something before coming here, how you can't kill anyone?" Alex asked. "Does that oath trigger a lightning strike?"

"That's..." Scarlet paused. "No, it doesn't. Oaths just silently kill you."

"Then you didn't kill anyone intentionally," Alex said. "You probably weren't even in your right mind at the time."

"But, I still feel the guilt. I've felt it all this time, and now I know why I do," Scarlet said. "That either means whatever they are saying is not true... or, that I really did know what was happening and I still chose to let it happen."

Alex didn't know what to say to that. He couldn't understand her feelings at all. There was no way anyone could.

He thought for a moment and asked, "Why did your rebirth take 5 thousand years?"

"Wh-what?" Scarlet turned towards him.

Alex gave her a look, asking for answers.

"I... I don't know," she said. "Maybe it was because I was killed by a Heavenly Judgment, or maybe because the desert had lost all of its Qi."

"Wait... you didn't die to a Heavenly Judgment," Yao Ning said. "There was no thunder at all when you died."

Both Scarlet and Alex looked toward her at the same time. "But you said there was a blast," Scarlet said.

"Not a thunderous one," Yao Ning said. "It was a fiery blast that radiated light all around. The aura was also... strangely warm."

"Warm aura?" Scarlet looked confused for a second before her eyes went wide. "Requiem of the Phoenix Song."

Her words made everyone curious, but Scarlet didn't explain herself. Thankfully, someone within Alex could tell him exactly what it was.

"Requiem of the Phoenix Song," Godslayer repeated. "If I recall correctly, it is one of the forbidden skills used by a phoenix to burn its body, Qi, mind, and its very essence in order to heal as many people as they can."

"Only a few phoenixes ever dare use this technique as using it is a suicide with very little guarantee of rebirth."

Scarlet felt a sense of relief that almost made her feel guilty again, as she didn't feel like she deserved to not be hurt by the guilt she felt over the death of the people she killed.

However, she couldn't deny the relief she felt as she realized that in her last moment, she had decided to help everyone around her and maybe die forever in the process, instead of saving herself while everyone died.

She had used the forbidden technique, the Requiem of the Phoenix Song, which meant that she had absolutely done the most she could.

"You were in pain and desperate," Alex started speaking. "Most likely out of your mind. You instinctively wanted to go back home to protect yourself but you were stopped."

"Then, you were struck by the lightning and ran away. In the process, you gained a moment of clarity. You saw what was happening around you and felt the pain and guilt of having killed everyone. It consumed you."

"You don't remember the desperation you felt, you don't remember the fear of dying, but you do remember the pain and guilt, that's because that was the only emotion that truly stuck you."

"The fear and desperation were no longer with you, as you cared more for the people that were in pain than yourself. Then, you sacrificed yourself for them, killing yourself so you could heal them."

"You saved a lot of people from dying that night so many years ago," Alex said. "You should focus on that, and not the emotions you feel. Separate the fact from the feeling."

Scarlet nodded slightly, and even while she felt a bit better, the pain was still there. A dull, numbing pain that made her feel like she deserved the pain.

"I did something bad," Scarlet said. "Even though I did not intend for it, I did. I hurt a lot of people in the process. But I can't let that bring me down."

"Yes," Alex said. "For your sake, for the people's sake, you need to keep moving on."

The other elders spoke in the same vein, trying to revitalize the phoenix's will at the moment.

Scarlet nodded and slowly stood tall. "I'm done wallowing around," she said. "I have been missing from my domain for the last 5 thousand years. I shall return now, so the people can know that they can live in peace."

All the 10 elders immediately smiled, happy to see that their lady had returned.

"Will you punish us now that you are going to return back, lady Phoenix?" Yao Ning asked. "We deserve to be punished."

"Punish you for what?" Scarlet asked. "For trying to protect my people? For trying to do the right thing? Do you think of me as someone so cruel as to help the only ones that truly care about me?"

The elders quickly shook their heads. "But it was because of us that you had to die," one of them said.

"No, I killed myself," Scarlet said. "I gave up my life to save as many as I could. It's a good thing I was lucky and managed to go through rebirth. Otherwise, you would have been stuck here without another ruler for the next 6 thousand— wait no, for the next thousand years, maybe less."

"Oh," the group was surprised. "Another Phoenix would have come in the next millennia?"

"Yes," Scarlet said. "I think I'm right with how much time has passed now."

"I believe you are," Alex said. "Anyway, I think it is about time we leave this place."

He took back the puppet and put it into his storage ring and spread his spiritual sense to find his father and the rest who had gone into the caves to protect themselves.

He called them all back now that the trouble had ended.

"Right, what happened with the Kang family head? Wasn't he coming here?" Yao Ning asked.

"He's dead," Alex said. He pointed around the few remains of their bodies that had been scattered throughout the fields.

"Oh, you... killed them already?" the elders looked around in surprise. "Did lady Phoenix help you?"

"In the end, yes," Alex said.

"I see," they said. "Then that attack in the ocean earlier, that must have been you right, Lady Phoenix?"

"It was I," Scarlet said as she slumped a bit. Now that she knew there was nothing to worry about, she let the fatigue take over her.

"Then that bastard died the way he deserved," Yao Ning said. "For what he had done, he deserved to be burned by the lady."

"Oh," Alex said. "The Kang patriarch didn't burn. I killed him myself. Scarlet actually killed Zhu Shaofan."

"Zhu Shaofan?"

"Scarlet?"

The different elders latched onto different pieces of information.

"Why are you calling lady Phoenix, Scarlet?" Yao Ning asked.

"Well... uhh..." Alex didn't know exactly how to explain the fact that he had given a new name to the ruler of the Continent that had once been an Immortal that had lived for tens of thousands of years.

"He gave me that name," Scarlet said herself. "He found me when I was weak and helped me. I didn't have much memory or intelligence at the time, and he gave me the name."

"Oh," the elders didn't say anything.

Alex turned towards Scarlet and asked, "What's your real name?"

"My parents named me Nuanhuo," Scarlet said. "My family name is Feng, so my real name is Feng Nuanhuo."

Alex nodded as he heard that. "Feng Nuanhuo, huh?" he spoke softly.

"I would much prefer if you continue to call me Scarlet, however," Scarlet said. "I've grown somewhat attached to it."

"Oh, sure," Alex said.

"So... little Zhu really did come here trying to kill you, huh?" Yao Ning asked.

"Yes," Alex replied. "Had it not been for her, I would've died."

"Oh, uhh..." Yao Ning hesitated for a bit. "I don't think it is right to refer to lady phoenix that way, you know. She is the ruler of the continent."

"Right," Alex said slowly. He was wondering about the same thing for a while now. Since he had now learned that Scarlet was the ruler of the continent, was it right for him to keep the bond?

Or was he actually supposed to get rid of the bond? Maybe he didn't even need to care about it at all. After leaving this place, he assumed that Scarlet herself would bring forth the idea.

He wondered if he should be the one to start the conversation about it when they all noticed the people walking the down the mountain, coming towards them.

Alex's father was way ahead of everyone, running as fast as he could to come toward Alex. He arrived as close as he could before stopping and looking at everyone.

He wondered if they were enemies.

"It's alright, father," Alex said. "They are here to help us."

Graham walked up to Alex and hugged him. "Thank god you're alive," he said. "I have never been more worried in my life than today."

Alex smiled. "I was very worried about you as well, father," he said. "But it is all over now. We can all get away from here."

Chapter 1148: Father-Son conversation

Everyone was made to get on the ship while the elders went around the island to look for what else they could find.

They would be taking a few hours as they planned on going through all 9 major islands and the smaller ones to search for what other problems could be in the Sunless lands.

This would take them some time, which they could be using to go back, but Alex was actually thankful for this. Thanks to the extra time, he could talk with his father, without all the other headaches that would come with having to deal with the aftermath of this battle.

Even if he wouldn't have to do much, he would still have to explain them as much as he knew. So, this free time was very much appreciated.

Alex not only talked with his father, but he also treated them all at the same time.

"Are you really a doctor?" Graham asked.

"Yes, I am," Alex said as he took his father's hand. He placed his fingers on the wrist and checked his pulse. They felt fine on touch alone.

"How did you learn to be a doctor? Did you go through a course or something?" Graham asked.

"Uhh... something like that, yes," Alex said. He found it hard to explain that he simply learned a few books and was now very good at being a doctor. His father might not trust him to heal him if he told him to go to be a doctor without working as hard as others would.

"I knew you would make it big in life," Graham said. "A doctor. My son is a doctor."

Alex found it comical that after everything that had happened, his father focused on the fact that he was actually a doctor.

He sent a bit of Qi through his father's body and along with it his spiritual sense. "Hmm, there is quite a bit of the dust from the lead ore in your system," he said. "How long did you have to work here?"

"I don't know," Graham said. "They took me from the tribe I was in around 20 years ago."

Alex stopped and looked at his father. "You've been here for 20 years?" he asked, rage building up in his eyes and voice.

"Yes," Graham said. "But you don't need to worry about that now. It's all over."

"Still..." Alex found it hard to quell his anger.

Graham looked at his son solemnly for a second and asked, "You killed so many people today. Do you... feel nothing?"

"No," Alex said. "It's hard to feel something about it when I've had to kill to survive for a long time. To live in this world, having a kind heart usually gets you killed."

"I know," Graham said. "I've had to kill a few too, but... I hoped at least you wouldn't have to. Sigh, I guess what is done is done."

Alex stopped checking on his father. "Your body needs to be treated properly. There is a lot of toxin building up in your system. If you don't do something about it, it will be harmful to you in the future," he said.

"Of course," Graham said. "I know that. That's why those bastards made me do it in the first place. Those cowards couldn't get in there themselves and made us do it. I was the strongest of them all, so I was the one forced the most by them as well."

Alex thought for a bit and asked, "how strong are you?"

"How?" Graham gave an inquisitive look. "How am I supposed to answer that? Is there a way to even quantify your strength?"

"Of course," Alex said. "You just compare it to your... cultivation base... of course."

His father didn't have cultivation, so of course he wouldn't know how strong his body was. He would only know that it was stronger than someone else.

"Well, let's test it then," Alex said. "Let's see if you're stronger than me or not."

He placed his left arm up and asked his father to hit it as hard as he could.

"Hard?" Graham was appalled by the suggestion. "You've just had a very hard battle to go through. Of course, I'm not hitting you."

"It's fine, just hit me," Alex said. "It might even help in the diagnosis of your condition."

Graham hesitated for a bit.

"Look, I'm a cultivator. It's fine," Alex said. "Just hit me. Even if you hurt me, I can heal."

"Well..." Graham thought for a bit and sighed. "Fine."

Alex smiled and let his father hit him.

Graham didn't have much technique for his punch, but it still came at him very fast. Alex felt the strike land and was surprised at how strong his father was.

His hand was sent backward, nearly breaking at the elbow.

"Wow," He said as he shook his hand a bit as it healed. "That's not bad. That's... about Saint Core 3rd realm or 4th realm from what I can tell."

"Oh," Graham said. "Is that good?"

"Good? That's very good," Alex said. "Most people would go their entire life and their body would never be this good. Now, all you have to do is cultivate a bit and you'll be fine."

"O-okay," Graham said.

"Your body must have stopped you from feeling the effects of the toxin. Here, eat this and we can go check up on the rest of your people," Alex said as he handed his father a pill.

As Alex checked on the people, the father-son duo talked about various different things.

"I'm happy that I finally found you," Graham said. "Now, if only we can find your mother too, our family can be reunited. I hope she's fine."

"Oh, I know where mother is," Alex said. "She's fine, don't worry."

"You do? Is she here?" Graham asked.

Alex shook his head. "She is in the Western Continent, far across the ocean. I found her 5 years or so after the game ended. I stayed with her for another 7 years before I was forced to leave."

"Oh," Graham said. "Is she fine?"

"Yes," Alex said. "I'm sure she's doing fine. Although, it has been over 20 years since I last saw her as well."

"Oh... can we go meet her? Across the ocean?" Graham asked. "You can fly now, right? Can you take me there with you?"

Alex hesitated a bit. "I'm not sure I can do that," he said. "The ocean is way too dangerous. This place around the lands isn't as dangerous, but the further you go, the stronger the beasts are there that roam the sea floor."

"It is impossible to go there unless you are very strong, or have a ship that can properly conceal itself from the beasts," Alex said. "I am not strong enough to do that myself at the moment. As for the boat... I'll ask around and see what they have. Hopefully, we can go back."

Graham nodded. "I can't wait to see her. I hope she hasn't thought of me as dead already," he said.

"Haha, don't worry, she wouldn't have," Alex said. "I'm sure she knows both of us are alive. Speaking of alive, I met aunt as well."

"Huh? You met Liz?" Graham asked.

"Yes, she's in the Northern Continent," Alex said. "It's been 15 years since I've seen her, but I'm sure we can meet her again if we can go back to mother. Also, sister Hannah is apparently in the Eastern Continent, but I haven't met her, so I'm not sure what's going on with her."

"We can go there after we meet with your mother and Liz," Graham said. "What about Rob?"

"No clue," Alex said. "I'll try and see if he's in this continent, but if not, we'll have to search the other continents."

"You've been to so many continents, huh?" Graham said. "How many are even there?"

"Five, in total," Alex said. "We're in the southern one. There's one in east, west, and north, and a last one in the center of the map, kind of like this."

Alex made a simple map with his fire in front of him. "Don't look at the shapes, I'm sure they are not accurate, but this is about right."

"I see," Graham said. "And... where are we right now?"

"Uhh... somewhere around here," Alex said as he pointed to the southeastern portion of the Southern Continent, around the waters where the Sunless lands were."

"So, we have to go here, here, and then... here, right?" Graham asked. "If we can, yes."

"Good," Graham said. "Let's go there as soon as we can."

Alex agreed as well. He would want nothing more than to meet with them all. "We will also have to go there," he said as he pointed at the Central continent.

"Why there?" Graham asked.

"I have a friend there," Alex said. "I lost him there more than 5 years ago, and I need to find a way to go in there to save him."

"Okay, then you should go there too," Graham said.

Alex nodded. He continued checking the rest of the slaves for toxins in their bodies and stopped after going through everyone.

It took some time, but in that time, he found at least 2 dozen people that were a step away from being at death's door.

There was some death aura building up in them already, so he got rid of it, and gave them some healing pills and an antidote pill.

He didn't have many antidote pills, so he was planning on mass-producing them once he got back to the mainland. After that, he could heal every single one of the people here.

Chapter 1149: Returning

The elders returned not long after and the ship took off. The ship had some concealment capabilities, but not enough to hide it from the senses of the beasts below.

Of course, the beasts here weren't strong enough to threaten a ship full of Saint Transformation realm cultivators.

Scarlet was towards the front of the deck and was speaking with the elders, and Alex was a little behind, talking with his father.

"It took you 5 days to find someone?" Alex asked with a surprised look. "You must've been incredibly hungry."

"I was," Graham said. "Had the Goldflame tribe members not found me, I would've most likely become unable to even move if it had been a few days later. Given how many beasts there were around, I would have died."

"But the Goldflame tribe found you," Alex said. "You stayed with them for long?"

"Yes," Graham said, getting slightly sad in the process. "I had no idea what was going on, so I lived my new life as well as I could. I thought of going out to look for you, but... I didn't know how I could even start."

"And then... about 7 years later, those bastards came and took me away," Graham said. "And they killed everyone else in the tribe."

Alex stayed quiet. He could feel his father's rage, so he let him be angry. At that time, he thought about something.

"You must have been very strong at the time for them to take you," Alex said.

"Huh? Oh yes," Graham said. "I was one of the best in the tribe."

"In only 7 years?" Alex asked.

"Yeah," Graham said. "I don't know how that is possible, but everyone in the tribe was surprised at my improvement too. They joked around about how I would soon be the leader of the tribe and stuff. Now that I think about it, they might not have been joking."

"Did you improve after coming here?" Alex asked.

"A bit," Graham said. "But I don't think I improved a whole lot since I didn't get to train."

Alex wondered if that was true. There was a suspicion in his heart that had grown in him after what Shen Jing had told him all those years ago.

"Father, after I was born, did you ever try to have another child?" he asked. "A brother or sister for me."

Graham looked at him. "Why are you asking that?" he asked.

"Just curious, I guess," Alex said.

Graham sighed. "We did," he said. "Of course we did. We had to. Out in the middle of nowhere, you would be lonely. And we also wanted another child. There was nothing much to do for us in the farm, so we had the time to care for another."

"However, fate didn't have such plans for us. After you were born, we were never successful at all," he said. "Hell, it took us so many tries to even get you conceived. Father was worried he would die without a grandchild. He was less irritable after Hannah was born though."

Alex nodded. 'So he was right,' he thought. His father and mother both had such incredible talent and constitutions that heaven didn't want them to procreate.

Which was to say, his father was special too.

'I'll have to check later on,' Alex thought.

He stood up and stretched a bit. It had been such a long day today that he almost forgot how long it had been.

It was only today that he had gone into the void. It was only today that he had come back from the void. It was today that he came out of the sanctum, killed someone in the Kang family, and then killed so many more in the Sunless lands.

'I will have to rest for a long time after arriving,' Alex thought.

"I'll go talk to them for a bit," he said as he walked towards the elders and Scarlet. He arrived next to them and sat down as he heard tidbits of what they were talking about.

The elders didn't show many reactions to his arrival and kept talking. Alex realized that they were talking about the major events that had happened in the Southern Continent while Scarlet was away.

Alex listened to most of it and found that most events they talked about were political in nature. Very few were actually related to non-political events, one of which was the Sundering Sanctum.

"The sanctum has been getting worse and worse over the years. The space inside is crumbling way too much. We're afraid that a few centuries down the line, it won't even be usable," one of the elders explained.

"What can we do?" Scarlet asked. "I don't have much knowledge of secret realms and formations. I can't help you with that. If it can persist for another thousand years, the next phoenix that will arrive might bring some helpers of her own to aid you all."

The elders were dejected at the answer, but it was understandable.

"Oh, don't worry about the Sanctum," Alex spoke from the side. "I've fixed it already."

"You've... fixed it?" the elders looked at him weirdly.

"Yes," Alex said. "The problem with it was that one of its space-stabilizing formation poles was slightly leaning in the wrong direction. Once I fixed that, it stopped destabilizing. It might even be properly usable in just the next 2 decades, although the rooms that have already been destroyed won't be."

The elders looked at him in shock. "You fixed the problem of the crumbling space?" they asked. "Why did you not tell us?"

Alex simply pointed behind him toward his father. "Priorities," he said. "Besides, the information isn't very important to you anyway, because I'll be taking over the sanctum very soon."

The group looked at him weirdly, not understanding what he meant. Even Scarlet was somewhat surprised.

"I'll explain it to you when I have done what I say I will do," Alex said, not bothering to explain everything just yet. "Anyway, you don't have to worry about it."

"O-okay," the elders said, trying to think of what else they could mention.

"What about the barrier?" Alex asked. "It can go down now, right?"

"Uhh... can it?" the elders asked. "If we can get rid of the Phoenix fire from being spread, then yes. But, I'm not sure if the current her can—"

"I could do it when I didn't even have any cultivation base," she said. "Making every single one of the flames go out is within my ability. In fact, even he can do it if he chooses to."

The elders looked toward Alex with a surprised looks on their faces again. "You can get rid of the Phoenix fire?" they asked.

Alex nodded.

"How?" they asked.

"Fire Dao," Alex said. "No wait, it's actually because of her."

The elders looked at Scarlet for a moment, before turning back to Alex. "What do you mean?" they asked.

"Oh, haven't you told them yet?" he asked her.

"Haven't had the time," Scarlet said.

"What... are you two talking about?" the elders asked.

"I have bonded with Scarlet," Alex said. "She's my bonded beast."

The elders looked at Alex with almost no change in expression at all. It was hard for them to understand what Alex was saying as they weren't expecting that to be the case at all.

However, as time passed and they gathered each of the words' meanings, they finally understood what he meant.

"You can't do that!" one of the elders said.

"This isn't right," another one said.

"You must end the bond right now," another one said.

The elders spoke one after another, about how this shouldn't have been done, and how Alex should immediately free Scarlet from her bonds.

However, before Alex could even answer, Scarlet spoke up. "Shut up, you lot. I did what I did myself. No one forced me to," she said. "The bond stays up."

They all looked at Scarlet in awe. "But lady Phoenix, you—"

"No one is allowed to talk about this matter again," Scarlet gave them the order.

The elders wanted to still talk about it, but they didn't want to go over her orders.

Alex looked at Scarlet with a weird look as well. "I thought you would want to get rid of this bond now that you've got your wish of going back home," he said.

"I have," Scarlet said. "But that doesn't mean everything is over."

Alex looked curiously. "What else is remaining?" he asked.

"There's still the mystery of why I am bonded to you," she asked. "There has to be a reason I felt the need to bond with you, a reason why I felt safe doing that, and it most definitely isn't because of your White Tiger's bloodline. There's something else going on with your body."

"There's actually quite a lot going with my body," Alex said. "I'm afraid you'll have to specify."

"I don't know," Scarlet said. "There's something up with your body and it's familiar to my very being. I'm sure I'm not crazy, so until I find out what is going on, I have absolutely no intention of breaking this bond."

"I see," Alex said slowly. "How long do you think it will take you to find out?"

"A thousand years," Scarlet said without hesitation.

"A thousand ye— wait, isn't that when you're going back to your other world?" Alex asked.

"Yes, I am," Scarlet said. "And I plan on taking you with me. If I can get my elders to look at what's going on with you, I'm sure I'll find my answer."

Chapter 1150: Rebirth

"Are you sure I will go with you?" Alex asked.

"Of course you will," Scarlet said. "I'll drag you with me even if you don't want to."

Alex chuckled a bit. "That's not what I meant," he said. "Do you know how old I am?"

Scarlet looked at him for a bit. "Uhh... 2 thousand years old? No, wait, 1,500," she said.

"Lady Phoenix, young Alex is one of the players we told you about earlier," the elders said. "He can't be older than a century."

"What? No way," Scarlet shouted. "That sort of cultivation speed is considered decent even in the higher realms."

"All the players are like that," the elders said. "They are terrifyingly talented."

"Most of us are, for sure," Alex said. "Which is to say, I will probably reach immortality before it is your time to leave."

"But why?" Scarlet asked. "Why are the players suddenly so talented?"

"Because we're humans," Alex said.

The elders looked at him with a slightly confused looks. "What are you talking about?" they asked.

"You probably won't understand, and I don't want to tell you for your own sake," Alex said. If they learned about how being a hybrid was very bad for one's talent, they would most likely grow some sort of complex, which would hurt them during their breakthrough to Immortality.

"Scarlet will understand," Alex said and turned towards her. "Don't you?"

Scarlet looked at him for a bit before speaking through their bond. "Are you saying you do not have demon blood in you?" she asked.

Alex nodded. "Absolutely none," he said.

"But how?" she asked.

Alex thought for a bit and sighed. "For that, I'll have to explain to you about players, which will take some time. Let's talk about it later," he said. "I might even have an idea about why you want to remain bonded to me, but I don't want to talk about it out here in front of them."

Scarlet was curious, but she let the matter go for now. "Sure," she said.

"So, what else is left for you to tell me about?" she asked the elders.

The elders looked around and shook their heads. "I suppose there's nothing that pops out in our heads. Do you have any questions you want to ask us about?" they asked Scarlet.

Scarlet shook her head as she had no more questions, but Alex did.

"I have something," he said. "What was up with the Northern lights? It was a big deal in the Wasteland, but no one seems to even care about it here at all."

"The northern lights?" the elders looked around at each other, looking for some answers. They shook their head as they had no idea what he was talking about.

"It was apparently in the desert in the north, and every night it glowed bright like a second sun. It disappeared some dozen or so years ago, sending the beasts that were gathered around it in a fury to attack the tribes there."

"Ah!" one of the elders realized what he was talking about. "Is that what the tribes call it?"

"You know about it?" Scarlet was curious as well.

"Of course," the elder said. "It was your dead body, lady Phoenix."

"What?"

"Oh!"

The two people gave two separate reactions to the old man's answer. Scarlet understood what was going on, while Alex was very confused.

"That makes sense," Scarlet said.

"What makes sense?" Alex asked. "Can you elaborate?"

"I was going through a rebirth," Scarlet said. "The light everyone saw was my burning body, which took thousands of years to burn fully, because of how weak my flames most likely were."

"Your body was burning for five thousand years?" Alex couldn't believe it. "How are you reborn if your body continues burning? Actually, tell me how rebirth works entirely."

"Sure," Scarlet said. "It's simple. When I am dying, I can choose to go through rebirth. If I don't choose it, the chances depend on how much Qi or blood essence I have remaining. Most of the time, it's enough to go through rebirth."

"When I start the process, my body starts burning and fueling the rebirth process, slowly reverting my body to what I was long ago. The more of the fuel I have, the faster it gets."

"The process is supposed to be not more than a century or two, but this time around, I probably had very little blood essence to burn, so my body had to spend a very long time reverting itself back to the point where I was just a young little chick again."

"Those people probably saw my burning body from afar and called it the light that you were talking about," Scarlet said.

"I see," Alex said as he thought for a moment. "I suppose that makes sense now that I hear it. Then, does that mean you were reborn there in the desert and were there for so many years?"

"Yeah," Scarlet said. "Fortunately I can thrive off of the sun, so I was fine. If I needed actual food for sustenance, I would've most likely died."

"I hadn't even realized that your body had stopped burning, Lady Phoenix," one of the elders said. "Had we known, we would have most likely gone out looking for you."

The others nodded in agreement.

"Whatever, it's fine," Scarlet said and looked toward Alex. "What's wrong? Did you not like my explanation or what?"

"Well, more like I am confused by your explanation," he said. "When you said rebirth, I assumed you would randomly be born to some other beast or your soul would escape and a body would grow around your soul. But what you said was completely different. Your body reverts back, is it?"

"Yes," Scarlet said. "It reverts back to how it was when I was just born."

"Okay, so are you becoming a new one, or are you turning back your time?" Alex asked.

"That's the question, isn't it?" Scarlet asked. "Even we don't know what it is exactly, but popular belief is that we're turning back time, instead of growing a new body, if that is what you're asking."

"Popular belief amongst the phoenix?" Alex asked.

"Yes," Scarlet said.

"Can you tell me why they believe that?" Alex asked.

"Simple," Scarlet said. "Because us Phoenix have the ability to sense Time aura."

Alex was stunned for a moment. "What?" he asked in surprise.

"You heard me right," Scarlet said. "Phoenixes have the ability to sense the Time aura, so we believe being able to revert time back for our body at death's door is a blessing given to us. It works in line with what the other 3 beasts got as well."

Alex was too stunned to say anything. 'Sense Time aura,' he thought. "Do you think I have a chance at learning how to sense the Time aura too?"

"It's... possible, but highly unlikely," Scarlet said. "To be able to sense Time aura or Space aura, you need to be born with the talent to do so. If not, you will have to spend thousands of years trying to sense it in a place that is thick with Time aura. Even then, there is no guarantee that you can actually sense it."