

Alchemy 1171

Chapter 1171: Empty Seat

Alex held 45 swords in the air, collectively. They moved as if they were all one sword, but they didn't feel like a single sword at all.

They were each their own thing that he had to hold with his Qi. They did not feel like they should if they were just an upgraded version of the 21 Sword Array.

This was not the technique he wanted to use.

"Qi, Pathway, and Intent, these 3 things need to be correct for a technique to work properly," Alex thought. "The Qi is fine since I'm upgrading the technique, and the Intent is there since I know what I want to do. So, the problem I am having really is just the pathway."

Alex took a deep breath and used the technique once more, this time pulling his Qi out from a slightly different pathway from before.

When the Qi flew out, it did nothing, like the previous hundreds of times. He couldn't help but sigh as he let the swords drop to the ground.

"I have millions of different path permutations to go through before I land on one that works," he thought to himself. That was going to take a very long time for certain.

He sensed someone walking into the backyard, so he quickly put away all the swords and turned around.

Qiu Jianhong walked up to him and bowed a little. "Your Majesty, the tests will be beginning at any time soon. Do you intend to watch it by any chance?" he asked.

"Oh, it's starting?" Alex asked with an excited look. "Yes, I've been looking forward to it. Who is hosting the tests?"

"I will be responsible for the Alchemy tests. Sister Liang will be responsible for the Talisman tests, and brother Huang will be responsible for the formation tests. There will be other experts that will help with the tests, but us 3 will be the main ones," Qiu Jianhong answered.

"I see," Alex said as he walked up to the elder. He brought out something from his storage ring and handed it to the old man.

"I will go change and be ready for the tests," he said. "Add this to the Alchemy tests prize."

"What... is this?" the old man asked.

"You can read it and see for yourself," Alex said and walked away. He didn't stay behind to see the look of shock that would appear on the old man's face not even a moment later.

Alex went to his father first and asked him if he wanted to see the tests.

"Sounds fun," Graham said. "I hear the entire city is looking forward to it. I will be watching it too."

Alex nodded. "I will have them prepare seats for you too then," he said and walked away. He went to his royal chambers, one that was larger than even the throne room. There was no one in the room as he didn't allow anyone to come in, so he was alone here.

He quickly changed into a robe that was laced with jade and gold. The elders called it a robe fit for the King. He didn't like wearing something this flashy, but as a King, he felt like he had no choice.

They were teaching him a bit about how to be a King, and one of the main lessons was that to be a King, you must first look the part.

If he didn't look like a King, no one would take him for a King at all.

After wearing the flashy robes, he walked out of the palace, along with a bunch of elders as he prepared to go over to the open grounds to the east of the city where the tests were being held.

"Is her Majesty not coming?" one of the elders asked him.

"No, Scarlet is busy fixing her cultivation base. She won't be coming out for a while," Alex said.

The elders said nothing and prepared a small ship with the colors of the Vermillion bird. Alex rode the ship, along with everyone else from the palace, and left.

They arrived at the test location, surrounded by thousands and thousands of people, all of whom started cheering the moment they saw him arrive.

'Time to get to work,' Alex thought and stood up. He put a giant smile on his face and waved at the many people that were all looking at him from below.

The elders saw him acting like a King and smiled. Their teachings were working.

"How long do I have to do this?" Alex asked without moving his lips.

"Just a little longer, your Majesty," the elders said, barely holding in their smiles.

The ship hovered next to where the seats were prepared for him, and Alex exited it, going straight over to where the seats were.

Alex sat down on his seat, his father seating close by too. The seat next to him was empty, however, and no one seemed to come to sit in it.

"You guys prepared a seat for Scarlet too?" he asked.

"Yes, your Majesty," one of the elders said.

"You shouldn't have bothered, but whatever," Alex said.

"We do have to prepare one, if only just for formality's sake," another elder said.

"I understand," Alex said. "Scarlet is still the real Ruler. She should have a seat prepared, even if she doesn't come."

"Ahem, it's not necessarily for her Majesty alone," another elder said.

Alex gave a confused look and turned towards the seat to his left. "If not for Scarlet, then who?" he asked.

"The Queen," the elders said.

Alex was taken aback for a second. "The... Queen? and you're not talking about Scarlet, right?" he asked.

"Are you planning on marrying her Majesty by any chance?" one of the elders asked.

"Of course not," Alex said. "I'm just bonded with her. Besides, she is a beast, I'm a human. It wouldn't work even if we wanted to."

The elders looked at each other. "Maybe not right now, but her Majesty can turn to a human when she reaches the Immortal realm," they said.

"Human? Ah! Right," Alex said. "I had forgotten that Immortals are capable of that. How do you guys know that?"

"We've seen her Majesty's human form a long time ago," one of the elders said.

"Oh, what does she look like?" he asked curiously.

"A fiery woman with a beautiful face and bright red hair that you can't keep your eyes off of. Honestly, once you see her, you will be smitten, your Majesty," the elders said.

"Is that so..." Alex thought. He imagined what she would look like as a human. Fiery personality, beautiful skin, and red... hair.

Alex's face changed from one full of imagination to one full of confusion. He quickly brought out something and looked into it.

It was the talisman that Zhu Shaofan had given him to misdirect him regarding the assassins that he would have to look out for.

One of those assassins, the red-haired one, looked exactly like Scarlet's description. Not only that, the one in the picture was even fighting with fire Qi.

'Ah, smitten huh?' he thought. 'Zhu Shaofan must've seen her face too then. He must've been so smitten by her beauty that he simply couldn't forget her and even dared put her in something like this.'

'Beauty,' Alex thought. If he was to talk about beauty, there was only one girl that he would consider truly beautiful. Everyone else, the best they could do was come second.

He didn't know who she was, or if she was alive either, but the woman in his memories, the one that had given the first Undying God the physique skill, that was the one woman that he considered truly beautiful.

No one else's beauty could compare in his eyes. 'I hope this doesn't end up becoming a problem when I do end up searching for a partner,' he thought.

After becoming someone with a very good understanding of the human body at a physical level and having dealt with a lot of women's bodies when he worked as a doctor, he already wasn't swayed by the female specimen.

Now that normal beauty couldn't affect him either, Alex wondered if he had to perhaps let himself fall to someone's charm to finally love someone.

'I hope I can find love normally,' he thought. Still, the thought of love and marriage was not something he had the luxury of thinking about right now. They were something he had to leave for the future him.

"Your Majesty, you should try and find a wife as soon as you can, so that the continent can have a Queen too. Not only that, you need to leave behind heirs so that if you had to stop being a King for some reason, there can be someone else to take your spot," one of the elders said.

Alex shook his head. "I'm not going to marry someone haphazardly just so I can leave behind an heir," he said. "What do you think is going to happen to me? I can only think of two things."

"I will either die, or I will ascend," he said. "If I die, Scarlet can choose to remove this position or choose another person as the new King."

"If I end up reaching the Immortal realm and ascend, do you really expect me to leave behind any children I would've had by then? No, I would take them all with me to the Immortal realm. In that case, you will once again have to rely on Scarlet."

He turned towards the elders. "What I'm saying is, don't bother me about finding a Queen."

Chapter 1172: Proof

"Welcome to the Royal tests," Yao Ning stood at the front of the stage and started speaking.

"We will now be holding the public tests to choose the ones that will be entering our Royal institutes. There are exactly 200 different spots for each profession, with 50 of them being for Saint realm cultivators."

"We will take in more if we get more, but our main priority will be to check your talent and potential, not your cultivation base," the elder spoke. "So everyone will have a fair chance."

"For the ones that end up being accepted, you will be given various rewards."

"For the Talisman makers, you will all receive monthly tutelage from master Liang Shufen," Yao Ning gestured to the pretty elder that was standing next to her.

"For the Formation designers, you will all receive monthly tutelage from master Huang Chen," she gestured to the man that was standing on her other side.

"Finally, for the Alchemists who manage to pass our tests today, you will all receive monthly tutelage from his Majesty, Alex himself."

Alex smiled and waved as the crowd cheered for him after hearing his name.

Yao Ning waited for the crowd to calm down a bit while reading what was written in the talisman that was provided to her by Qiu Jianhong that was next to her as well.

She wasn't sure if this was the right thing to do or not, but since Alex had asked for it, she had to do it.

"Also, since his Majesty is generous, he has decided to add another reward for the Alchemists to motivate you all to work harder," she said as she took a deep breath to read the next part.

"Any Alchemist that ends up having the top 3 best results today, you may either request a pill recipe from his Majesty or request him to improve upon a recipe you already have," she said. "To give context to the reward, his Majesty guarantees that any of these recipes that you get will be capable of creating pills that reach 100% Harmony."

The atmosphere in the crowd shifted as it went from one of excitement and happiness to one of doubt and confusion. They could understand if the rewards were recipes that reached 90% or over, as it was evident that the King was able to do that.

However, the difference between 90%, or even just 99% and 100% was a difference between heaven and earth.

No matter how trusting the crowd was of their King, they couldn't just trust that he could make 100% harmony pills.

"Your Majesty, did you promise that reward?" one of the elders that were by his side asked him.

"I did," Alex said as he looked around. "This was not the reaction I was expecting when I thought of giving this as a reward."

"I mean... you did promise something nonsensical, your Majesty," the elder said.

Alex stared at the elder. "Are you calling my reward Nonsensical?" he asked.

"Of course not, your Majesty," the elder quickly stepped back. "I misspoke."

Alex stood up.

"Your Majesty?" the elders looked at him. He flew up to Yao Ning and the others who were speaking.

"Since it had come to this, I can't just let the people think I'm a liar or a fraud," he said.

"Your Majesty?" the 4 elders watched as Alex didn't stop by them, but rather moved onto the testing platforms that were prepared. They tried to follow him down, but Alex stopped them.

Instead, he turned towards the crowd and smiled. "I hope you are all prepared to witness something that you will rarely witness in your entire life," he said.

Sun's Womb flew out from his storage ring and it landed on one of the stoves.

"Is his Majesty going to make pills?"

"Maybe he's trying to prove us wrong."

The crowd could guess what he was trying to do, but even then they couldn't trust him. So, they simply sat and watched the show.

Alex took a deep breath as he waited for the cauldron to heat up. He smiled lightly knowing that he had seen this coming.

Had he not, why else would he have prepared the ingredients beforehand?

He opened his eyes and pulled out the first pair of ingredients. The ingredients disappeared from his hand, confusing everyone for a moment.

Only the stronger cultivators had realized that he had teleported the ingredients into the cauldron.

Alex's Qi moved the two ingredients together. Since he didn't have to bother keeping track of the powders, he didn't have to bother with separating the ingredient either. Then, he brought out the second pair of ingredients.

"What ingredients are those?"

"Where are they even going? I don't see the lid moving at all."

"Is that the start of that one healing pill?"

Everyone talked amongst themselves as they watched Alex put in the third pair of ingredients.

One after another, Alex continued putting ingredients into the cauldron, slowly turning it all into powder. Everything went fine without any problem. However, even then, none of the people in the crowd seem to trust him on his words.

In fact, he could tell that even the elders were deciding on whether to come and take him away before he humiliated himself any further.

Alex simply chuckled and shook his head.

Once all the ingredients were inside the cauldron and he had finished making them all into powder, it was time for the real show.

The Pill-splitting Qi flowed out of his body as it entered the cauldron as easily as it would through the air. The Qi landed on the powder and started separating it into two.

Once the two pills formed and the energy was drawn into them, Alex felt the result of his alchemy.

Two, perfect pills.

"Perfection cannot exist under heaven without you having to fight for it," Alex said loud enough that everyone could hear it. "To be perfect is to fight against the heavens."

"What is he saying?"

"I don't know."

"We can't be perfect?"

The regular crowd was confused. However, the stronger ones in them could see some truth in Alex's words, even though they didn't understand exactly what he was talking about.

However, as they wondered, their faces quickly changed as they looked up at the sky where the bright, open day had somehow turned cloudy in a matter of seconds.

"What's... happening?" someone asked.

"Lightning Tribulation? Who's breaking through?" another person asked.

The elders realized what was happening immediately.

Inside the dome, Scarlet's eyes opened for a brief moment as she stared in a certain direction. "That brat... he really brought out the pill cloud here, huh?" he thought. "Pill cloud in such a lower realm, even if I was wrong about what I felt from him, there is absolutely no harm in me bonding with him."

The dark clouds roiled around in the sky, occasionally shining with bright lights on the inside.

Alex looked at the sky. "My Pills are perfect," he spoke. "And the heavens can't stand for it."

The first bolt of lightning fell on the cauldron, hitting the two pills inside. However, his Qi was strong enough to stop it. A subsequent bolt fell right afterward, which he defended against as well.

"Pills with 100% harmony are perfect. As such, they can't exist at all," Alex said. "Which is why I promised a recipe that can reach 100% harmony, not make a pill that has 100% harmony, because that pill is impossible."

The crowd was transfixed on Alex to even bother looking at each other right now.

"However, as I said before, you don't have to let the heavens destroy perfection. You can fight for it too," he said.

Another two bolts of lightning fell on his cauldron, making the crowd jump in fear once again.

"Of course, the heavens aren't so cruel as to only want to destroy perfection either," Alex said. "What they do is create a trial where they wish to destroy your perfection. If you are weak, you have to let them destroy it."

"However, if you are strong, you can use the heavens to temper your pill."

Another two lightning strikes fell on his pills, which he protected. He opened the lid and pulled out the two pills.

He could've let them go through 3 more sets of lightning strikes, but he believed he had accomplished what he had come down here to do.

He tossed the pills in the direction of the elders.

Yao Ning and Qiu Jianhong both caught one of each pill. "Elders, if you would do me the honor of testing those pills," Alex said.

The elders gulped as they saw the pill in their hands. The aura they felt from the pill in their hand was nothing like what Alex had made for them before.

Had he been holding back all this time?

Whatever the situation was, the two elders quickly walked up to the testing formations in front of them.

Each of them put the two pills in a formation. After merely a few seconds of passing, the result was out for the world to see.

100% Harmony.

The noise started slow, but by the time Alex had decided to explain what was happening, the noise was so loud that he couldn't even find the moment to start speaking.

He wanted to explain how this wasn't a 100% harmony pill, but rather a 3-Veined pill, which was infinitely better, but no one seemed to care for that.

Alex couldn't help but smile and let the people live in ignorance for now.

"I hope I have proven that I can indeed give you all the recipes that can help you," Alex said. "As such, I will no longer delay the tests. Please begin."

Chapter 1173: The Tests

Alex watched the tests proceed from the seats that were prepared for him. He had advised on what sort of tests should be conducted, and some of his advice was taken into careful consideration.

Since his knowledge of competitions and tests came from the Western Continent alone, that was what most of the tests ended up looking like.

The crowd screamed in joy whenever something fun happened during the tests. Whether it was when someone figured out a formation in just 4 minutes, when someone created a talisman that could block a Saint Core realm cultivator's attack, or even if someone made a Heaven-grade pill in just 8 minutes, the crowd would go wild in cheer.

Alex could feel the excitement in the air, but somehow it didn't transfer to him at all.

"Your majesty, are you not entertained?" one of the elders asked.

"Not really," Alex said. "I mean, it's fun to watch, but nearly not as fun to be the one in the tests."

"I don't think anyone that is taking the tests right now would be able to empathize with you, your Majesty," the elder said.

"I suppose," Alex said. "There is a level of stress involved when it comes to something so important. I remember when I had problems making pills. I was sure I was going to fail back then."

"You had problems making pills?" the elders were surprised.

"External factors caused me to fail in making good pills," Alex said. "It was a long time ago now."

"I see," the elders said.

No one spoke any longer and simply watched the tests on the stage. As time passed, the people with low scores that would have absolutely no chance of winning were slowly sent away.

Even people who wished to leave could leave as well.

The sun went down, but the bright lights in the area made it no less illuminating. The night bode no problems to the tests that were happening, not slowing them down in the least.

The city was still alive even at midnight, around which the final 200 winners were decided.

The Formation and Talisman tests ended after that. However, the Alchemy tests could still go on since the reward was for just 3 people.

"Should we end it here and use the points they already have as a basis for the reward, or do you wish to continue this any further?" the elders asked him.

Alex thought for a bit as he stared at the people that had passed the test. They all seemed tired and would like nothing more than to stop making pills.

However, there was no better chance than when an Alchemist was fatigued to check just how well they could adjust to external pressure.

He reached into his storage ring and pulled out a talisman. "Prepare 2000 different sets of ingredients for this recipe," he said to the elder. "Also, project this recipe into the sky so that they can read it. Give them no more than 20 minutes to prepare before they have to start making that pill. They now all have a chance to earn 1000 additional points."

The recipe Alex had given the elder was one for a True rank pill. The pill itself was something all of the alchemists here would've made before, but they definitely had not used the recipe he had given them.

So, that helped make it easier to test just how quickly these alchemists could adapt to a new technique as well.

The elders got to work immediately, preparing all the ingredients as he ordered them to.

Not even half an hour later, the competition had started to see just who would be the one to get the perfect recipes from Alex.

Alex now had some time to spend, so he relaxed a bit. 'Harry didn't join huh?' he thought. 'I suppose he's doing well enough that he doesn't need to join the royal alchemists.'

"Elder Qiu," Alex called out to Qiu Jianhong.

"Yes, your Majesty?" the old man came up to him.

"Did you learn from your grandniece on when the Forbidden Orchard is opening again?" he asked.

"Ah, yes I did," the elder said. "According to her, the Orchard opened 3 months ago, so you missed it, your Majesty."

"I missed it, huh?" Alex thought.

"I can tell her to forcefully open the Orchard if there is something specific you want to get, your Majesty," the elder said quickly.

"No, there's nothing I want," he said. "I just wanted to go and gather what I could find. Maybe I should go there anyway. I can just tear open an entrance wherever I want."

The elders gave a dry smile when they heard that. They had learned about Alex's ability to manipulate space, but that did not make them easy whenever he made comments like this.

"Ahem, your Majesty," Qiu Jianhong spoke. "That probably wouldn't be a good idea. Since the orchard opened 3 months ago, most of the ingredients would have been taken away already. There's no point in going there now."

Alex chuckled a bit when he heard that. "You truly overestimate the ability of those who entered to recognize rare ingredients," he said. "Forget about it, I'm not going anyway."

"Speaking of ingredients, your Majesty," another elder spoke. "Have you made any plans for the pills that would help us in learning new Dao?"

"Argh! Don't remind me of that, please," Alex said. "I hate just thinking about how much work that is going to be."

"Is it hard?" they asked.

"It's damn near impossible. I don't even know where to start," Alex said. "Just wait until these tests are over. I will start when I have more time to spare."

"Yes, your Majesty," the elders quickly said.

"Right, when is the test for the royal army?" Alex asked.

"Um, it's half a month away. We will hold it once these production institutes are up and running," the elders said. "I hear many fighters from all over the continent are coming here to fight and enter the royal army."

Alex nodded when he heard that. "That sounds fun," he said softly.

"Your Majesty?" the elders turned toward him.

"Nothing," he said. "As you were."

The alchemists on the stage made one pill after another. They had no more than 2 hours to make all the pills, so they had to work very hard, especially since they were under stress from having worked for nearly an entire day.

The competition came to an end when the final pill was made and tested. Then the results were tallied up.

The 3 winners were 2 men and 1 woman. The men were both from reputable families that were known for being good in Alchemy. The woman, however, seemed to have learned Alchemy on her own.

If Alex wasn't wrong, then that girl was most definitely a player who had received some sort of book on Alchemy, which she had used to progress this far.

"You may come forward and request the recipes from his Majesty," the elder told the 3.

One by one, the three stepped up and spoke their demand. The two men asked for a recipe for a healing pill and a cultivation pill. The woman, however, gave him a recipe of her own instead.

"Please improve this."

Chapter 1174: Thoughts

Alex took the recipe that the girl handed over to him. He read the talisman and was a little surprised that nothing aside from the recipe itself was written on it.

His eyes narrowed as he started thoroughly reading it all.

The ingredients that were being used were some of the rarest ingredients one could find. If he were to search through the entire continent right now, he would not be able to gather more than 100 sets of ingredients.

Also, the collection of ingredients was quite unique too. He had never seen such conflicting ingredients being used in a single pill before.

The people waited quietly for Alex to speak, but Alex was lost in thought while he read the talisman.

The woman started getting a bit anxious. Had she shown her hand a bit more than it was necessary? Maybe she should have asked for some other recipes as the two men had. She worried that she had lost a chance to gain something from the greatest Alchemist in the world by giving him something that he had never even heard of before.

Alex's eyes suddenly opened with a shine to them. A strange smile hung on his lips as he turned toward the woman in front of him. "May I ask how you came in possession of this recipe?" he asked.

"That... that was one of the examples for pills that were listed in a book I got," she said.

"I see," Alex said as he looked at the recipe with obvious awe. "I never expected there to exist a pill that could make you immune to all forms of mental attack, even if it is for just a few hours at a time."

The woman quickly looked up at Alex with wide eyes. "You... can tell what the recipe is about, your Majesty?" she asked.

"Yes," Alex said. "Thank you for bringing such an amazing recipe to me. Would you mind telling me what its name is?"

The woman shook her head. "The book did not list its name, only what it could do," she said.

"I see." He handed her back the recipe. "Your reward, I will have to work on it for a few days. Please expect to obtain it in a week's worth of time," he said.

"Please take as much time as you need, your Majesty. I am in no hurry," she said.

Alex nodded. "Also, would you mind if I make some pills of my own from this recipe? I promise I won't sell them. That right will only remain with you," he said.

"Your Majesty, it will be my honor to have you make pills using a recipe I provided," the woman quickly said.

"Thank you," Alex said. "You may leave now."

The woman nodded and walked away from the stage.

Alex stood there for a few seconds before turning around to go back on stage. The elder moved forward and announced the tests over. The crowd started to scatter away and everyone went their own way.

"Your Majesty, shall we leave?" the elders asked.

"Yes," Alex said and got onto the royal ship that took him back to the palace.

"Good work today," Graham said as he patted him on his shoulders. Alex smiled and nodded to his father.

"It's late. I will go and rest. You should do the same, father," Alex said.

"Yes," Graham said.

"Come on, Whisker. Let father be by himself for now," Alex said and called back Whisker.

Whisker jumped onto his shoulders and sat there. "Now that father can read and write, you must feel like you don't have anything else to do, don't you?" Alex asked.

Whisker quickly shook his head. Alex chuckled. "I'm giving you a job anyway," he said. "The backyard of the palace is bare and empty. You will have to grow some flowers there now."

"Flowers?" Whisker asked him.

"Yes, I want you to learn about gardening and raising plants," Alex said. "Or, you can learn how to fight too."

"I want to grow flowers," Whisker quickly said.

Alex chuckled a bit. "Alright, flowers it is."

He returned back to his room but was surprised to find that someone was already in there.

"You finally decided to leave the dome?" he asked as he looked at the fiery bird in front of him.

"I'm just taking a little break," Scarlet said. "You woke me up front my deep cultivation anyway."

"I did?" Alex asked.

"The pill cloud. I couldn't focus after that," she said.

"Ah, I see," he said. "So, what brings you here? You want to know what's happening with your people and domain?"

"No," Scarlet said. "I want to know what's happening with you."

"Hm? What do you mean? Oh, if it's about being a King, then don't worry. I'm adjusting to it quite nicely," Alex said.

"No, not about being a King, but rather about being an Alchemist," Scarlet said. "You revealed pill cloud. Are you... okay with that?"

"Uhh... yeah, I'm okay," Alex said.

Scarlet looked at him closely. "Are you sure?" She asked. "If I recall correctly, you went all the way out into the ocean just so you could hide the pill clouds. And yet, now you showed it off in front of everyone. Are you sure you're okay with this?"

Alex thought for a bit. "I'm sure," he said. He looked at Scarlet and shrugged. He walked up to the bed and sat on it next to her.

"It wasn't an impulsive action by any means," he said. "I have given it some thought before."

"What sorts of thoughts?" Scarlet asked.

Alex thought for a bit.

"I have felt like I was alone for a very long time. I had people around me, but it felt like it was me against the world. I have been hunted multiple times for my capabilities, so I am quick to hide it from others."

"I had someone trying to take over my body. I had people attacking me so they could steal my techniques or use my blood. I even had a False Immortal that captured me and kept me captive for 10 years just because I was very good at making pills."

"Due to all of these events, I became very wary of revealing the full scope of my abilities if it wasn't needed. People might say that I was a wolf in sheep's clothing, but the truth was I was just hiding from others because I couldn't trust them."

"Even when I trusted people, it was never a complete trust. Add onto that the problem with finding father and the assassins, I could only hide my abilities here as well," Alex said.

Scarlet nodded as she listened to him. "So, what changed?" she asked.

"I can't tell what exactly changed as there were too many of them recently. Only thing I can say is that for some reason, it feels like that feeling I had of being alone is gone. I have my father, I have Whisker, and I have you. To add onto it, you made me a King, and now I have the elders, and the entire continent full of people."

"For the first time in my life, since my master died, I feel like I am surrounded by people I can trust. For the first time, I feel like I belong somewhere."

"Not only do I feel like I belong somewhere after a very long time, but now I also feel obliged to help everyone to the best of my abilities."

"After careful consideration, I decided to help everyone by using the Alchemy knowledge I have."

"I wish to not only reveal what I can do but also spread it around," Alex said. "Today was just the beginning. Slowly, I will give away my knowledge to everyone so they can improve themselves."

"I mean, what's the point of keeping all this knowledge to myself anyway? The best it can do is make me better than others or make me some money, and the worst it can do is put a target on my back for others to come after me."

"What's the point of being better or rich when I am now a King?" Alex asked. "Certainly there's no reason to continue to keep a target on my back."

"Instead, if it can help elevate the level of alchemy in this continent, it would help everyone in the long run by improving the standards of pills while lowering their price. If I can make something like that happen, I would gladly give away all the knowledge I have."

Scarlet looked at him weirdly. "I thought you were simply showing off as a King, but I did not expect you to be so thoughtful instead," she said.

"Me neither, honestly," Alex said. "But somehow being responsible for billions of lives makes you look at things in a different way, doesn't it?"

Scarlet chuckled a bit. "It sure does," she said, reminiscing the days when she had just come to this world and was starting to become a ruler. She hadn't expected to do anything big for this world but somehow had ended up helping them a lot.

"I'm happy that the burden I put on you has strengthened you instead of crushing you," Scarlet said. She quickly shook her head. "Anyway, since I'm going to be active for a few days, is there anything you want my help with?"

Alex thought for a bit. "Actually, there is something I've been meaning to do for a while now," he said. "Would you be willing to go up north with me tomorrow?"

Chapter 1175: North

Alex flew towards the north on a ship that had some concealment capabilities.

It was the ship the elders had taken to the Sunless lands, and today he had asked them for it.

Scarlet was there with him as well, as he had requested her to come with him just in case.

'Isn't this quite extravagant?' Alex thought as he controlled the ship. 'How do they even begin to think of making ships that can run using Saint spirit stones, and not True Spirit stones? Those are so incredibly hard to come by.'

He shook his head and walked up to the deck from where he watched the Wasteland fly past him.

The speed was quite fast that despite leaving just two hours ago, the two of them had already crossed half of the Wasteland. In just 2 more hours, they would be at the very north.

"Where exactly are we going?" Scarlet asked.

"You don't have to worry for now," Alex said. "I just want to test something."

"Test?" Scarlet asked.

Alex nodded but didn't elaborate. It was still morning when the two of them passed by one of the locations Alex had wanted to pass by.

"What's this?" Scarlet asked with a confused look. "Why are we in the place I was reborn?"

"You said you dragged me from somewhere else, right?" Alex asked.

Scarlet nodded.

"I want to see if there are anything that was teleported along with me by some chance," he said.

"I don't get what you're trying to say," Scarlet said.

"Do you remember where it was you dragged me from?" he asked.

Scarlet shook her head. "How could I know? I was a baby phoenix with limited intelligence. All I remember is a loud noise and sand flying in the air. Other than that, I only remember dragging you here."

"I see," Alex said. "Either way, it must be close by. Help me search for anything you can find in the sand."

Scarlet gave him a weird look but still accepted his request. Her spiritual sense left her mind like a giant ocean wave that blasted out from her.

Alex used his spiritual sense too, but in front of Scarlet's, his was barely any strength at all.

If his spiritual sense reached over 15 kilometers in range, Scarlet's easily reached past that.

It was so far away, that Alex couldn't even tell based on his own spiritual sense.

With the two of them there, they started searching for whatever they could find.

Alex remembered there being a lot of items floating around in the Qi wall of the Central continent. His swords, pills, two seeds, ingredients, ores, and many other things.

After that, he teleported here. If any of the items had come with him by some happenstance, he would be more than happy.

He didn't expect to find anything really, but even so, he couldn't help but be disappointed when he really didn't find anything.

"There's nothing here," Scarlet said. "Are you sure your items weren't destroyed in the tempestuous Qi that is supposed to be around the central continent?"

Alex's head drooped in sadness. "That must be what happened," he said with a sad look on his face. He had thought that he had come to terms with the loss, but it seemed he really hadn't.

'If nothing, I wish I could've at least saved that,' Alex thought. There was one thing he felt guilty about more than his own cauldron or the seed of World Tree or the Nine Yang Divine tree.

That was the beast core of Pearl's mother. He had received it so long ago and had kept it around for so long in hopes of giving it to Pearl, but in the end, he had lost it.

He took a deep breath and shook his head. 'Stop being sad. You have work to do,' he told himself.

"You can stop now, we're leaving," he said.

The ship started flying away from the crater which was the reason for the birth of so many strong beasts as well as the source of the Northern Lights for so many years.

"Are you done? Are we returning?" Scarlet asked.

"Returning? That was just a side trip," Alex said. "Our main destination is still ahead of us."

Scarlet's eyes narrowed. "Just where are you taking me exactly?" she asked.

Alex looked in his direction and smiled. "We're going to the Central continent," he said.

Scarlet watched the ocean in the distance come closer. Her face held a blank expression as she took in the words that Alex had just spoken.

"Wait, wait, wait... we're going to the Central Continent?" she asked.

Alex nodded.

The phoenix's eyes were wide open in shock. "Are you trying to die? Am I going to have to die again?" she asked.

"What are you talking about? Why would I want to die?" Alex asked.

"Then why the hell are we going to the Central continent? There is no way we can go past the ocean. Even if we somehow manage to cross the ocean without any strong beast finding us, how do you intend to enter through the Qi barrier?" she asked.

Alex couldn't help but chuckle at her response. "I don't," he said. "Stop worrying, I'm just trying to go as far as we can in this boat."

"As far as we can?" Scarlet asked.

"Yes," Alex said. "I don't think we can even make it very far away, but making it even just halfway there would be a huge help to me. Which is why I brought you here actually."

"In case there are some strong beasts that end up finding us, you can help me escape," Alex said. "The most I can fight are Saint Soul realm beasts, but you can fight Saint Transformation realm beasts too."

Scarlet didn't speak for a while as she thought about what he said. "Just what are you planning exactly?" she asked.

"Nothing big," Alex said. "I just want to check up on Pearl."

"Check? On that little cat of yours?" Scarlet asked.

Alex nodded. He felt a faint sense of where Pearl was in the distance. It wasn't strong enough to be significant yet, but it was much stronger than back on the Mainland. With this much feeling, he could confidently tell that Pearl was in the Central continent for sure.

"Oh, that's the continent, isn't it?" Alex asked as he pointed in the distance.

Scarlet turned around to see, but she couldn't see anything really. Not only was the continent far enough that it appeared tiny, but the diffused light in the air also made it almost impossible to make out what was on the other side.

"I don't see anything," she said.

"I do," Alex said. If not for his eyes, he wouldn't have been able to see either.

His vision changed for a moment as he checked the energy in the air. There was a white haze of sparse energy in the air, that covered his vision like fog in the morning.

However, even through that fog, he could see the bright light in the distance that lit up like a lantern in the fog.

"Be careful," Alex said. "We're entering the ocean territory. Be sure to send anything away if it does sense us."

Scarlet nodded and got fully alert.

Alex kept the boat flying as fast as it could while keeping the concealment as well as he could.

'Should I have come by myself?' he wondered a few times as his concealment technique would most likely be enough to traverse the ocean, but he was still scared of being caught, so just in case, he had brought Scarlet along.

"They're getting stronger," Scarlet said as she sensed the beasts in the ocean.

"The bond is getting stronger too," Alex said as he spent every bit of attention on the bond. He tried calling for Pearl a few times, but he got nothing back.

So, he kept going.

"Stop!" Scarlet shouted the moment she sensed something in the distance. They were barely more than a quarter of the way to the Central continent, but even then something had appeared.

Multiple tentacles flew into the air as it tried to knock the ship. Alex controlled the ship and dodged the attack. However, he found no way of proceeding past this beast.

Scarlet flew out and started fighting the beast, but the beast was simply too strong for her.

"We need to leave," she said. Not only was her opponent strong, but the fight would attract more beasts toward them soon.

Alex hesitated a bit. He had come so far, but to just return without any result didn't sit right with him.

However, seeing as Scarlet was struggling with the beast, he couldn't be selfish right now.

"I'm turning it around," he said and quickly turned around. Scarlet fought the beast to free herself for a moment to retreat.

Alex had just that moment right now. "Pearl," he spoke through his bond. "Just wait for me. I'll definitely come for you."

Scarlet jumped onto the boat and the two flew away.

Alex felt a little sad as they had to leave without any result. However, before he was too far away, he sensed something.

It was a vague feeling that couldn't even be made sense of, but it had come from Pearl.

Alex didn't know if Pearl had heard his words or not, but his feelings had most certainly reached him.

And now, Pearl's feelings had come to him as well.

A smile formed on his face now that he knew Pearl was okay and waiting for him. With these two pieces of information in hand, Alex felt the newfound motivation to try and get stronger so he could enter the continent as soon as he could.

Chapter 1176: Jai Heiyun

After returning from the north, Scarlet went back to some more deep cultivation.

As for Alex, he was left to handle the continent once more. There wasn't anything important to handle in the next week or two, so he was rather happy.

However, after that, tests would be held to form the new royal army. He had to be there for that. At the same time, he also had to tutor the Alchemists who would have settled down by then.

'Let's just spend the next two weeks doing what I want,' he thought. What he wanted was to train without interruption.

45 swords flew in the air as Alex once again continued his task to find the best pathway to form an array of 45 swords. With Intent and Qi already fixed, he just had to find the pathway.

Alex spent what free time he could find on this array. With the 21 Sword Array as a base, he was sure he wouldn't need as much work to make it work. After all with how the array worked, adding 24 more swords was a natural progression.

If he had instead added some different amount of swords or tried to change the number of swords per layer, it would result in a vastly different pathway for sure.

'I'll have to go through it all to understand how each thing affects the rest,' he thought. 'Not only that, I will have to try out all 4 types of skills.'

He had a lot of work cut out for him, so he wasted no time practicing.

Time passed and the capital once again became a mass of cheers and celebrations. This time around, the celebration was even more fierce as opposed to people with specific skills in Alchemy, Talismans, or Formations like last time, just about anyone could join the royal army, so long as they were fit for the job.

One of the elders came up to Alex and started explaining what they planned on doing during the tests and afterward.

"There is a competition afterward?" Alex asked with a surprised look on his face.

"Yes, your Majesty. Just for the saints," the elder said.

"What's the point of the competition? Do you have rewards prepared?" Alex asked.

"We have just about everything prepared for the winners to choose from. Whatever it is that they want, they can get," the elder said.

"Including pills with 100% Harmony?" Alex asked.

The elder gave a dry smile. "We were hoping you could help us with that," the elder said.

"Sigh, fine," Alex said. "When is it starting?"

"In... less than 2 hours from now. The arena we've prepared must be getting filled up right now," the elder said.

Alex nodded. "Let me know when it's time to leave. For now, can you call over that female Alchemist from last time?" he asked.

"Yes, I will call her right away," the elder said and left.

Alex walked over to the throne room and sat on the throne as he waited. Just 10 minutes later, the girl walked into the room.

"I, Jai Heiyun, have arrived, your Majesty," the girl said as soon as she entered the throne room.

Alex looked at her deep bow with a peculiar look on his face and smiled. "Get up," he said.

The girl quickly raised her head and looked at Alex.

"Here," Alex tossed a talisman in her direction.

The girl caught the talisman and was confused for a moment. However, when she guessed what it could be, she quickly checked to see if she was right or not.

When she saw the recipe that was written on the talisman, her eyes went wide. "Your Majesty, did you improve the recipe?" she asked.

Alex smiled and tossed her a small pill bottle. The girl looked at the pill and saw various pill veins on it. However, she didn't understand the importance of the pill veins enough to make a ruckus over seeing 6 of them at once.

"Did you make this pill?" she asked.

"I made it using that recipe, test it," Alex said.

"No, no. If you made it, that's enough for me, your Majesty. I don't dare doubt your words," the girl said before quickly bowing toward him.

The elders to the side smiled when they saw that. Alex himself couldn't hide a few chuckles. "I'm not a tyrant. You can see and check if the reward is to your liking or not," he said. "You can complain if it is not."

The girl slowly looked back up. "Does that mean I can really test it?"

"Yes," Alex said.

The girl smiled and quickly brought out a pill tester to test the new pill. The pill immediately showed a harmony of 100%, surprising the girl.

"Thank you, your Majesty," she said once again. She put the pill back in the bottle and tried to return it. However, Alex let her have it as a gift on top of the reward.

After that, the girl left the throne room.

"Do you think she can make a 100% harmony pill now that she has the recipe?" one of the elders asked.

"Has there been a new 100% harmony pill made from the recipes I have already distributed?" Alex asked.

The elders quickly shook their heads.

"There's your answer," Alex said.

"Is there a reason why these people can't reach the same level with their Alchemy as you can, your Majesty?" one of the elders asked.

Alex thought for a bit and said, "I just happen to have a lot of knowledge and skills that are required for someone to properly make a high-grade pill."

Alex could pass down his knowledge, he could pass down his skills, but he couldn't pass down his Dao or his talent, two things that helped made his alchemy a lot easier.

He also couldn't give someone else the Intent that was in his mind that held most of the answers.

Not only that, even amongst his skills, there were ones that others simply couldn't use. One of them was the Supreme Elemental Accord, which required a person to have all 7 elemental spiritual roots to add energy to an ingredient.

Without that, the chances of making a pill with perfect ingredients were astronomically low.

'I can probably pass down the pill-splitting Qi, though,' Alex thought. He wondered if he should do that. Given that he had planned to not keep anything to himself, he decided to pass it along as well.

'By the time I pass it along, it will be useless to me anyway,' Alex thought, or at least he hoped.

The elders didn't ask many questions and one by one they started leaving.

"Your majesty, it's time for us to leave." The final two elders told them and with them, he went away.

Alex once again wore his flashy royal robes as he made his way to the arena that was prepared for the tests.

The people cried and cheered at his arrival, and Alex waved at them as he passed. He got off the ship and went into the tall tower that was prepared for him and the rest to watch the test in peace.

Once he was settled, the tests were finally begun.

Chapter 1177: Fun

The tests involved going through various hurdles that reminded Alex of the Sanctum.

Not only did one have to be strong enough to pass the test, they had to be intelligent, resourceful, adaptive, and most of all, courageous.

They were also tested on their knowledge as well as their past. Each individual that was going through the test had to eat a Truth Seeking pill to confess anything wrong that they had done in the past.

Depending on the truth that was heard, they could easily be failed.

The tests took a very long time, but they were all entertaining. Because most tests were made to be like a competition of sorts, with points to distribute, the crowd immensely enjoyed the show.

Alex enjoyed it quite a bit as well. Watching so many different people go through various tasks, if nothing, was entertaining. It was like watching a reality show back at home.

"What do you think, your Majesty?" one of the elders asked. "Do any of them catch your eyes?"

"Hmm, I'm not sure," Alex said. "I once fought that young man from the Yao family in the Battle Arena. I think his unique Dao gives him quite a bit of an advantage."

"Is that so?" Yao Ning spoke as she looked at the young man from her family. "He doesn't have the highest cultivation base, but he is still one of the best."

"Right, was Saint Core 9th realm really the highest cultivation base?" Alex asked. "Some of them are hiding it, aren't they?"

"They most certainly are," the elders said. "We crafted the formation knowing that they would want to hide their cultivation base. If they believe they are good enough to be accepted while they hide their cultivation base, then who are we to tell them otherwise."

"True," Alex said. "Oh right, that guy over there is doing good just because of his items. If he loses those items, he is useless. Are the tests taking that into account?"

"Yes, your Majesty," the elders said. "There are tests where the artifacts have to be taken off, so there's no need to worry."

"Mm," he nodded.

The test continued for the entire night and through most of the morning. With how many people there were, they simply couldn't rush through all the tests.

"Your Majesty, there's still an entire day's worth of tests left. We will only be done tomorrow morning," the elder said. "Do you perhaps wish to leave?"

"No, I can stay here and watch," Alex said. "It's fun anyway. Besides, I want to make sure I am here for the actual competition to start."

"Oh, are you looking forward to the Competition, your Majesty?" the elders asked.

"Very much so," Alex said.

"You must really want to watch them fight, don't you?" the elders asked.

Alex smiled at them and went back to watching the tests. The elders didn't question his silence at all.

The unique tests continued for much longer, surprising Alex with just how much thought was put into the various tests.

"How did you guys even come up with so many ideas?" Alex asked. "It's like you tried to make another Sundering Sanctum without the Sanctum."

"That was actually the inspiration, your Majesty," the elders said. "We wanted to have unique tests that the participants had to work to get through."

"Instead of just having simple tests, we wanted to make tests that gave us the same result through a different scenario. Of course, that sounds redundant since the result would be the same, but the difference it tests is bound to cause confusion in the participants. We're testing them to deal with confusion as well," the elders said.

"I see," Alex said and continued watching the tests.

He stroked his royal robes while making random remarks about the participants or the contents of the test.

Soon enough, another day passed and the tests were finally coming to a close.

"Please wait for a while so we can announce the results of the tests," the elders said and converged to talk for a bit.

There wasn't much to talk about as they had already decided on who to pass and who to fail based on the points that the participants had received that were hidden from them.

The current meeting was only to see if there were someone exceptional that they missed, or if there was someone really bad that somehow managed to make it through.

After careful consideration, the elders released the first of the two lists.

"Here are the True realm cultivators who have passed," the elders said as they pointed to the sky.

The large screen in the sky flashed with 4 thousand different names, all of which had a number to the side, that was their registration number.

The people who had passed cheered while the ones that failed were saddened.

The elders waited a few minutes before they spoke again. "Here are the Saint realm cultivators who have passed!"

A list with 860 people flashed in the sky.

"What's going on?" Alex asked. "Only 860?"

"I'm afraid so, your Majesty," one of them said. "More didn't join, and we have to have a bottom line on who could join and who couldn't, so it ended up this way. I'm sure with can reach 1000 once we held more tests."

"Sigh, forget about it. This many is still quite good," Alex said. "Just 2 dozen years ago, I couldn't even have imagined 86 Saints in a single place, let alone 860. This number is quite nice."

"Thank you, your Majesty," the elders said.

As everyone cheered once again, Alex fell into thought.

"Tell me how you're planning to hold the competition exactly?" he asked.

"It's like this," the elder started explaining what they had intended for the competition. It was a simple competition with fighters fighting against each other to climb through the ranks like any other competition.

Alex heard everything and nodded his head. He thought for a moment and released his spiritual sense as if to search for something.

"What are you looking for, your Majesty?" one of the elders asked.

"I'm looking for someone," Alex said but did not elaborate upon it.

"Looking for who exactly?" the elders asked.

"It's better if you don't know," Alex said. "Ah! Found them."

The elders were confused, but they sensed Alex's spiritual sense go down around the arena where the competition was being held.

"What did you do, your Majesty?" one of them asked.

"You'll find out once you announce the competition. Don't forget your work just yet," he said.

"Ah! Yes," the hosting Elder said. He went up ahead and announced the next phase of the test.

"Since your tests are now complete, all 860 individuals will now have a chance to register for a competition that we will be holding. Based on the results, over a hundred of you can choose from various treasures that were taken directly from the royal treasury," the elder announced.

The crowd went into a cheering frenzy once again, and the new Royal army proceeded to get both excited and nervous about the upcoming competition.

"They will start at any minute now, so go register if you want to join," the elders said.

The group of people lined up, ready to join. Not all of them lined up, but there were enough for the competition to last another day or two.

Alex watched them all and smiled as he brought out something.

The elders noticed the pill and the formation plate that he had brought out. "What are those, your Majesty?" they asked.

"I'm going to use these," Alex said and placed some spirit stones under the formation plate. He placed the plate on the ground and looked at the pill for a moment.

"Your majesty? What are you doing?" the elders couldn't help but ask.

"Remember when you asked if I was having fun watching the tests half a month ago?" Alex asked. "Do you remember my answer then?"

"Uhh... yes," one of the elders said. "You said..."

The elder paused. He frowned a little as he remembered exactly what Alex had said. Not only he, the rest that had been there all remembered exactly what he had said.

Alex pointed at the formation plate beneath him. "That's a formation that will cause you to have intense spiritual pain," he said. "Make sure to destroy it immediately."

He then ate the pill in his hand and swallowed it. As soon as he did, his body and face slowly shifted.

"Your Majesty, you can't—"

Suddenly, the formation activated, causing all the elders in the surrounding to feel intense spiritual pain. They couldn't use their spiritual sense and had to look through their blurred vision as they saw Alex's body disappear from plain sight.

"I'm gonna go have some fun."

One of the elders managed to destroy the formation plate, but by then it was too late.

All that remained on the throne was a simple royal robe. Alex himself was nowhere to be found.

"Your majesty?" the elders called for him, but there was no answer at all. They released their spiritual sense to search for him, but they couldn't find him either.

"Where is he?" Yao Ning asked as she searched around, but there were too many to search through.

They all turned towards the crowd of saints that were registering for the competition. The various saints wore various robes of different colors and types. With such diversity, it was impossible to find someone that would be intentionally hiding amongst the group.

"He's changed his face and has mixed into the group," the elders said. "I don't think we will be able to figure out which of these is him anytime soon."

Chapter 1178: Competition

Alex registered for the fight. As for who he registered the fight as the elders couldn't guess at all.

His choice had been a middle-aged man who didn't stand out much, and with thousands of people that participated in the tests at the same time, the elders couldn't possibly remember him.

He freely moved in the crowd with a new face and clothes and went somewhere to spend time while the competition started.

'How many participated? 490?' he stared at the number where the fighters had registered. That was less than he would have expected to join, but still significant enough that there were going to be multiple rounds for sure.

'I might actually be kicked before I can go through all the rounds,' Alex thought.

He had taken up a disguise because he didn't want people to hesitate when they fought him. Neither the elders nor the fighters would ever give it their all to the match if they thought their match included the King of the continent.

However, as a result of taking up a disguise, he couldn't reveal that it was him either. Meaning, he couldn't use his signature skills or show strong daos and various other things just to be safe.

He was going to have to use his less useful skills to fight.

'This is either going to be very fun, or I'm going to regret even doing this,' he thought as he stretched while he waited.

A while later, the competition finally began. A few numbers were called out at the start to freely pass them over to the next round without fighting. They did it so due to the irregular number of participants, so they had to give free wins to a few to make the numbers even out for the competition.

They called the numbers randomly to create suspense and tension.

4 fights took place at the same time so as to get things moving. The crowd could choose to view any of the 4 matches as they pleased.

The first 8 fighters went onto the stage and started fighting.

Alex watched the atmosphere change as everyone cheered for the fighters. He smiled seeing the people happy.

The fighters on stage weren't fairly chosen, so most of them had a large gap in their cultivation base, causing the fights to end rather early.

Within an hour, over a hundred people went through their fights, surprising Alex. The swiftness of the competition was something he hadn't expected at all.

Of course, there were some battles that lasted minutes upon minutes, but those were rare. Even when they did last that long, a victor would be determined rather quickly.

As the fights continued, his number was finally called.

He walked onto the stage, along with his opponent. He looked at his opponent and realized it was a Saint Condensation 8th realm cultivator.

The girl looked like she was the 40s and seemed rather nervous about the fight. She could already sense Alex's cultivation base and was determined that she was going to lose.

Still, she would give it her all.

The battle started with the woman sending a saber slash in Alex's direction. Alex dodged the attack with barely any effort and created metal lines from his fingers that he sent in the girl's direction.

The entrapment wires didn't hit the woman, so she wasn't captured by his skill at all.

Alex then created metal daggers which he sent flying in the girl's direction.

Since he was making techniques on the go with his Supreme Metal roots and his Metal dao, the techniques could never reach the potency that a normal technique would have if it was perfected over a long period of time.

Still, those attacks were currently too strong for the woman in front of him.

The daggers flew through the air with surprising speed, catching the woman off guard. The woman stopped all the daggers with her saber, but she was pushed backward with each attack.

Any more and she would go out of bounds.

The woman stopped the last dagger and immediately moved forward. Her saber glowed bright white with Saber Intent, which she used the moment she saw that Alex wasn't attacking.

Alex dashed when he saw it too. He didn't dodge the attack, but rather dashed into it.

The saber slash flew at him with incredible ferocity, but he didn't show any fear. Instead, he coated his hand in metal Qi and punched the incoming attack.

The Saber Intent was destroyed at once, sending the light scattering in all directions. At the same time, Alex punched once more.

The punch created a fist-shaped metal energy that flew through the air toward the woman who hadn't expected another attack to be coming her way.

She couldn't even dodge the attack as it was very swift. The only thing she could do was hold up her saber to block it, but that wasn't enough at all.

The blast sent her flying through the air until she landed outside the boundary.

Alex stood straight and bowed toward the elder after his victory was announced. He walked down the stage and went to one corner to wait for his next fight to come around.

'That was easy,' he thought. He wondered if the others would be the same. 'They didn't realize it was me, did they?'

From the looks of it, they weren't aware at all. But who could tell really?

The remaining fighters fought over the course of the next 4 hours, and finally, the next set of fighters was determined.

They took a small break to look over everything before starting the next fights.

Alex waited for his turn, and by the time he was called, the sun was already shining brightly in the sky to the east.

He walked onto the stage to find his next opponent was a Saint Foundation 8th realm fighter.

The man looked young in the face and seemed to use a spear.

Alex stood in front of him with a slight frown on his face. He was sure the elders couldn't tell exactly what his cultivation base was right now, but it should definitely not appear as strong as the man in front of him.

He couldn't help but wonder if he could win this match, while not appearing suspicious at all.

The battle started at once, but neither of the two attacked.

Alex didn't attack because he wanted his opponent to take the first move. Since he was definitely not going to be defeated, he wanted to see how he would approach.

As for his opponent, he couldn't figure out Alex's cultivation base, so he was just being cautious.

In the end, the two of them ended up doing nothing. So, the two of them attacked at the same moment they realized they might have an opening.

Alex used his Iron Fist Punch at his opponent who had used a spear attack. The two attacks clashed in midair, creating a momentary explosion, the shockwaves of which hit both of them.

Neither of them could get the upper hand in the clash at all.

Alex sneaked a glance at the elder that was refereeing the match. 'He hasn't suspected anything,' he thought.

His opponent stabbed in the air 15 times, sending 15 different illusory spears flying in his direction.

Alex put his two palms in front of him, both of which touched the wrist. Water energy swirled around his palm like a ball which he quickly spun in front of him.

The blob of water energy spun out to become a thin mass of swirling Qi that was in fact a barrier technique of great defense.

Alex's Water Spiritual root had become good enough now that he could rely on Water techniques too, just as much as he could rely on Metal and Yang techniques.

The 15 illusory spears landed on the swirling barrier and were sent flying in random directions instead of simply being blocked. So, even after the attacks had landed, the barrier was still active and strong enough to block many more attacks,

'Nice,' Alex thought. This was one of the techniques he had picked in the treasury that he had managed to learn. He had guessed how useful it could be at the time, but he didn't expect the result to be better than he imagined.

His opponent realized that his attacks were blocked and was surprised. He showed some anger and attacked again, this time using Spear Qi with his attacks.

Right around the same time, water Qi gathered all around Alex, forming small blobs of water that froze immediately. There were over 20 such ice blobs that floated around him. The ice grew to become icicles that pointed in his opponent's direction.

The moment his opponent attacked, he sent the icicles flying as well.

With so many icicles, the attacks easily destroyed his opponents' attacks and forced him to use his defensive techniques.

He felt the force behind the ice spears and was surprised. However, this was not the time for that. When he looked back up, he saw many of the same ice spears in the air around Alex

The Infinite Heavenly Ice Spear art wasn't named as such for nothing. As long as he had Qi and the ability to do so, Alex could keep sending icicles at his opponent without ever stopping.

The ice spears sprayed through the battlefield, forcing his opponent to use every single skill and treasure he had on him, and even then he couldn't see a way to victory at all.

In the end, he was forced to give up as he had been thoroughly beaten.

Having passed another match, Alex was sent through to the next round.

Chapter 1179: More Fun

Alex arrived on the stage for his 3rd match. With 128 remaining candidates, the 64 different matches were now being held 2 at a time.

Alex's opponent this time around was a weaker man who he easily beat after a few rounds of attacks. His Ice Spears was too strong for the man to handle and as such he lost entirely.

He went back and waited and was finally called onto the 4th match.

Alex paused when he saw his next opponent. He couldn't help but frown a little when he saw the person's cultivation base.

'Saint core 6th realm,' he thought. 'That's... tough.'

He could certainly fight against someone like this with his blood aura, but using that would be certainly a dead giveaway of who he was.

'I will be fine,' he thought and got ready.

His opponent brought out a sword and started attacking the moment the match began. He sent slashes flying at Alex with quite a bit of ferocity.

Alex was surprised at how aggressive the man was with his attacks. He immediately used his Ice Spears and shot down the sword slashes.

He was still on the losing end after the clash, but he had stood his ground against the man.

The man was surprised that Alex didn't immediately lose at all. He had assumed Alex was weaker, so even if he stopped the attacks, the shockwaves and feedback from those alone should have knocked him back.

However, he was still standing as if nothing was bothering him at all. 'Did I mistake his cultivation base?' the man wondered.

Alex continued attacking with his icicles, sending them all in the man's direction. However, the man used his defensive skill to block all the attacks.

The two of them went back and forth for a bit before the man realized that he had to actually give it his all if he wanted to win here.

He took a deep breath and sent a strong sword slash in Alex's direction.

Alex could sense the strength of the attack and targeted it with his icicles. The many icicles landed on the single slash and the energies in them caused an explosion.

Alex prepared for the shockwave from the explosion, but before that could come, the sword slash came flying in his direction.

At the last second, he dodged to the side to get out of the attack's path. "What?" he couldn't help but be surprised.

'How was that slash suddenly so strong?' he wondered.

The man saw that his attacks had become successful and smiled. He immediately started slashing once again, sending multiple sword slashes flying in Alex's direction.

Alex sent his own icicles to strike them down, but once again, the sword slashes still flew in his direction. He managed to dodge it once again, but the situation wasn't looking good for him.

Each one of the slashes not only was strong due to Qi and Intent but there was something else in them that improved their strength.

'Dao of Cutting,' Alex realized. The sword slashes were exceptionally sharp and thus were far stronger than he had imagined they would be.

'He's going to cut through everything I can throw at him with how weak my Qi is,' Alex realized. If he wanted to win, he had to use a Dao of his own.

A sword flew out from his storage, not Midnight, and he quickly used it to send a slash of his own. The slash hit another attack the man had sent flying and stopped it cleanly.

'What?' the man looked surprised for a second.

He sent flying more sword slashes, but each one was stopped by Alex's own slashes.

"No way!" he blurted out as he realized that Alex was using the same dao as him. The Dao of Cutting. 'Damn him, he still had more to show.'

The man continued attacking, but none of them were able to do anything. In fact, as Alex started adding Sword Intent to his attacks, they got stronger.

The man finally felt a resistance that he hadn't since the start of the fight. Then the resistance increased when Sword Intent changed to Sword Qi.

He was now the one blocking instead of attacking. Each attack forced him back step by step. He tried hard to use other defensive skills or movement skills, but he couldn't get away from the attacks.

Then, Alex used his Sword Aura, and that marked the end for the man.

The elder himself had to show up to block the attack, as not only was the attack strength, but it also had the Dao of Cutting in it, which would've killed the man, instead of simply sending him flying.

Alex stopped once the man had lost and smiled a little before bowing toward the elder. He turned around to leave the stage, but before he did, he heard the elder's voice in his head.

'Are you having fun, your Majesty?' he asked.

Alex quickly turned around to look at the elder and realized he had been caught. He paused for a second as he didn't know what to do now. Did he give up? Was he going to be taken back to the stage?

'You can have some more fun if you want to,' the elder said. 'We won't stop you.'

Alex felt a smile form on his face on its own. He nodded toward the elder in thanks and walked away.

Once he was away, he looked toward the elders on the stage and saw a few of them looking toward him.

'How did they know it was me?' he wondered. He had definitely not used any skills that were in his regular repertoire.

He wanted to know, so he decided to ask. He went invisible and teleported back on stage.

"How did you recognize me?" he asked. "Was it my sword skill? My concealment skill? How did I give myself up?"

The elders were surprised at his sudden arrival and had to look for him for a second before realizing he couldn't be seen.

"Your majesty," one of them said. "I think you forgot where we are right now."

"Where we are?" Alex looked around. "The arena?"

"No, the city," the elder said.

Alex was confused. "How does that—"

"Do you remember what you needed to do when you first came to this city?" the elders asked.

"I..." Alex's eyes widened. "Wait, wasn't the Aura Detecting formation around the city already deactivated?"

The elders smiled. "It was, but we reactivated it. We couldn't let our King disappear without our knowledge, so we had to know. Since the formation holds your aura, it was easy to find you."

"Tsk! And here I thought you used some great logic based on limited knowledge of what I was showing. Turns out you just used the formation," Alex said. He sighed for a bit and shook his head.

"Forget about it, I'm going back to fight," he said.

"Have fun, your Majesty," the elders said.

Alex looked back at them for a second before shaking his head and teleporting away. He arrived back in the crowd and waited for his turn to arrive.

With the number of people that were still fighting, that would be any time now.

Chapter 1180: Rewards

Alex's fun didn't last very long.

He managed to go through the next round just fine, but on the round after that, he ended up fighting against someone with a high Saint Soul realm cultivation base.

That person was strong enough to be the leader of the entire royal army, and as such Alex had to finally give up.

He returned back to the stage, as Alex, and sat down on the throne.

"Did you have your fun, your Majesty?" the elders asked.

"Enough," Alex said. "You guys didn't purposefully put me up against such a strong person, did you?"

The elder gave a dry smile. "We had to, your Majesty," the elders said. "While it was fine when there were many people, with only 16 remaining now, your fake identity would cause a lot of problems."

"I see," Alex said. "I should have thought about that before going headfirst into the competition. Thank you for getting me back."

The elders smiled and returned to watching the competition.

The competition went through its rounds very quickly, and in the end, the winners were decided.

The top 3 included 3 men, each from one of the 10 major sects and families.

"Finally, it's over," Alex said. "Let them have their rewards, and we can leave after that."

The elders nodded and prepared for the rewards to be distributed. The winners would go in order and pick what they wanted for themselves.

"Oh right, the person I told to not participate, he will come looking for this later. Can you hand it to him?" Alex said as he took out a small pill bottle.

"What's this?" the elders asked as they opened the pill bottle and found two pills inside of it.

"It's a pill that accelerates your cultivation speed," Alex said.

"It has those pill veins you talk about, your Majesty," the elder who took the bottle said. "How much does it improve your cultivation speed?"

"Hmm, it has 5 pill veins, right?" he asked. "Then around 50 times."

""50 TIMES?!!""

All the elders cried out in surprise at the same time.

Alex looked at them and smiled. "Why? You want it?" he asked.

The elders gulped and looked at the pill. "Th-therere must be something wrong with this pill. What's the downside of the speed?" the elders asked.

"It overwhelms your meridians for 2 entire days, so you end up with about a week afterward where you can't cultivate at all," Alex said. "Unless you have some other cultivation technique where your swollen meridian pathways won't be used."

The elders watched him in absolute shock. "That's it?" they asked.

Alex nodded and chuckled a bit. "I'll make some for you all later, don't worry," he said. "This time, they will even be better."

"Thank you, your Majesty!" the elders all bowed toward him. Alex smiled and told them to get back up.

Once the winners took their rewards, everyone was sent their own way. It was late into the day, so it was time for everyone to return.

Alex returned back to the palace with the elders and decided on what immediate work needed his attention.

"I'll address the Royal army tomorrow. It would be better if Scarlet was here, but she's still busy," he said. "After that, please alert the Alchemists that I will be giving them their lesson tomorrow as well. It would be better to do that as soon as possible."

"After that..."

Alex mentioned everything he had thought of doing the next day and even the following days to the elders.

The elders nodded and left, leaving Alex by himself.

Alex returned to his royal chambers and immediately started cultivating. It had been a while since he had entered the Saint Foundation 3rd realm, so he was preparing for another breakthrough, although that seemed quite far away still.

He woke up the next morning and after spending some time training his sword skill, he went over to the training field where the entire 5000 different royal army soldiers were stationed.

As soon as he appeared with an elder, the entire crowd of 5 thousand got quiet and orderly.

"I welcome you all to the Royal Army. From today onward, you will be the first line of defense for the continent against any external or internal threat that may come its way."

"As someone who still has a lot to learn, I won't lecture you on what you should and shouldn't be doing. I'm sure you all have already spoken the oaths, so I will skip directly to what matters."

Whisker appeared on his shoulders, which Alex showed in front of the entire army.

"From today onward, you will be split into 40 different groups, each with 125 different soldiers in it. 25 of them will be Saint realm cultivators, while the remaining hundred will be the rest."

"And this little friend right here will be your leader for the time being."

The army looked around with confused looks on their faces. They couldn't understand possibly what Alex was talking about.

How could they? There was no way for any of them to guess exactly what Alex had planned on doing with the 125 soldiers in each group, as they had no idea about Hell Emperor's Divine Battle Array.

After thinking a bit, Alex had decided that he wanted to teach the army the array. The army itself didn't need to learn the technique, they only needed to practice it.

The one who needed to learn the technique was the main controller of the array. For now, only Alex or Whisker could possibly be this controller, but with so many Saint realm cultivators, Alex wanted to have them be the controller as well.

He could imagine 125 individuals in a group with 2 cultivation realm worth of energy added onto them all.

In fact, he could even imagine 5000 individuals as a collective, all of whom had 3 cultivation realm worth of energy added onto them. Alex truly looked forward to it all.

Whisker was already told what he had to do and how he had to teach it, so he left Whisker with the army.

His father would be by his side at all times, so Alex wasn't very worried about Whisker being cowardly in front of so many faces. Not to mention, Whisker was showing signs of getting more confident in himself. Although that confidence never showed itself when it came to active battle.

After the talk with the army was done, Alex went over to the new building where the royal alchemists did their work.

All 200 people were here and ready for him to teach them his understanding, so they had been waiting for his arrival since early morning.

Alex found himself being taken to a large garden with enough space to handle over a thousand different people.

He sat on a podium, while 200 alchemists sat on the meadow in front of him.

They all excitedly watched him as they waited for him to start giving away his teaching.

Alex hadn't planned much on exactly what he was going to teach, so he simply decided to teach them exactly what they were curious about.

How to make a pill with 100% harmony.