

Alchemy 1731

Chapter 1731: Unforeseen

"Anytime now," Alex alerted his aunt as the pill he had just fed Hannah started activating inside of her body.

Hannah convulsed a little and let out a slow grunt while doing her best to stop herself from moving.

Liz's attention was almost entirely on the dantian, focusing all her will to stop both the poison and Qi from escaping Hannah's body. She could not focus on the energy that was flowing through Hannah's body and had to instead rely on Alex's words to know when it was the right time to stop doing what she was doing.

Alex watched Hannah's body slowly take in the energy, heal what was wrong, cure what had been diseased. Hannah's body was already showing incredible changes in just the first few seconds of taking the pill.

Her white hair was slowly gaining back its color, her face was losing its wrinkles as well. Alex could see all the changes and became hopeful, but kept his attention on the energy of the pill and followed it through Hannah's meridians.

With Hannah's just expanded meridians, the energy moved swiftly, passing through all nooks and crannies of her body, making its way down to the dantian.

He patiently followed it, knowing that his aunt struggling more and more, and watched the energy arrive upon the dantian.

"It's almost here," Alex said watching the energy go closer and closer to the dantian, waiting for it to enter.

"NOW!"

Liz stopped using her Dao just as the healing energy made its way into the dantian. By the time she pulled her senses out of the dantian, the energy had already gone in.

Now, all she could do was watch and hope that the pill did its—

"NO!" Alex's panicked scream startled her.

"Wha-what?" Liz cried out.

Alex felt terror run through him. He did not know what to do with the current situation that he had not thought of before.

Liz had been slowing down time in Hannah's dantian, and that had kept the Qi inside at bay from leaking out. However, the moment time flowed back at a normal rate, the Qi inside Hannah's dantian gushed out.

And while doing so, it swept away the energy that was making its way into Hannah's dantian as well.

While Hannah would have been capable of reversing that instantly as soon as she got control of her Qi again, that would be too late as the poison would destroy her spirit.

Alex did not know what to do at all. No, he had to do something, and there was no time to think at all.

Instantly, he used what his instinct told him was the best thing he could use. He instantly used the Dao of Space to separate the space inside Hannah's dantian such that only her spirit was caught in it.

Doing so effectively made it so that Hannah's body no longer had a spirit or a soul, so she simply fell unconscious. At the same time, the poison leaked out of Hannah's dantian as well and started attacking everything it could find.

Alex felt his head burn as though someone was dripping acid directly into his brain, the corrosive poison dissolving all that was in his head. Using a dao at such a small scale, and having himself be attacked by the poison at the same time was not something Alex could handle at the same time.

He cried out in pain, unable to even explain what was happening.

Liz didn't know what had gone wrong, only that something had. Had the pill not worked? Was it defective? Or had some other problem come up?

The pill was provided to them by an Immortal alchemist, so Liz had no doubt that it could work. So, she believed that something else must have happened for the pill to not work.

Should she slow down time again? If so, should she do it around Hannah's dantian again?

Suddenly, she felt Hannah's cultivation base grow back again and her aura return. Qi had escaped just as they had expected and it was truly rushing back.

'Qi rushing out...'

It only took an instant for Liz to guess what the problem was.

'Shit!'

Liz made a split-second decision to do something that would hopefully work. She placed her left hand on her daughter's chest, next to her heart, and then the other one on her dantian.

Then, she employed a single Dao on all of Hannah.

Dao of Temporal Acceleration.

Time sped up for Hannah, all of her body moving at twice the rate as before. Her blood pumped faster and the Qi in her body moved around quickly.

If what she thought had indeed happened, then having her daughter's Qi circulate quickly would return the medicinal energy back to her dantian.

Just as she hoped, it indeed seemed to work. Hannah's body showed a change that was very much suggestive of what she had thought. Her half-healed body instantly showed improvements and went on to be entirely healed.

Liz slowly took away her arms, breathing heavily as she did. Using two temporal dao back to back was difficult even for her. She took long deep breaths and watched her daughter's body return to normal.

Hannah's hair was now completely black and her fair skin had no wrinkle. Her body seemed somewhat scrawny and pale, but that was something that could be dealt with easily.

'What about the poison?' Liz wondered. 'Is it all gone?'

Should she check? She had been warned not to try and sense the poison as it was dangerous. "Alex, is she healed?" she asked and turned toward Alex, only to see his forehead full of thick veins and sweat, with his eyes all bloodshot.

Alex could feel the pain of the poison attacking his mind, but even then he hid his sister's soul in a fold in space. It was only when the poison stopped attacking him that Alex realized that the poison was no more.

He looked through her entire body and found no trace of any poison at all. The pill had done its job.

Liz was about to call out to Alex when he relaxed and spoke back on his own.

"She's... healed," he said and finally stopped. He took long, deep breaths and felt relief flow all through him. He had saved Hannah's soul from being attacked.

The instant he let go of the Dao, Hannah's soul returned to the Dantian.

Alex continued keeping his senses on her body and saw the changes inside of her dantian as the soul started growing. The soul first grew to be the side of the entire dantian as seemed as though it would soon be too cramped for it.

However, the soul simply phased through the dantian and grew outside of it until it was about a third the size of the entire body where it stopped.

Alex frowned when he noticed that. It wasn't supposed to stop right here. However, his thoughts quickly strayed away when Hannah opened her eyes and her body moved.

She slowly got back up, but before she could even be all the way up, Liz instantly took her into a hug.

Hannah tried to speak, and for the first time in a long time, she could form words again.

"Mother?"

Chapter 1732: Healed

"Mother~!"

"My child~!"

Hannah and Liz wept on each other's shoulders for a long time before either decided to check on Alex who had slumped on the bed with a look of relief on his face.

Liz quickly pulled him back up. "Alex, are you alright?"

Alex nodded. "I'm fi—"

"Alex!" Hannah shouted and took her younger cousin into a hug. "Thank you," she cried out. "Thank you so much."

Alex paused for a second before a smile formed on his face and he returned the hug. Tears slowly dripped the side of his face as well. "I'm happy... I'm happy that you're finally healed, sister. I'm happy I didn't fail."

"You didn't," Hannah said, a smile forming on her face. She let go of Alex and wiped her tears before giving a wide smile.

Then, she started looking around the room, at the two people, at herself. She could finally see. She could finally hear. There were so many small smells in the air that she had never noticed. Even her breathing got so much better.

"I'm... really healed," Hannah said as she took a moment to fully take in the information. She sat on the bed, remembering the time from the past, all before she had been injured and poisoned.

She let out a deep sigh of relief and the smile returned on her face. She looked up.

"Where is my Huan?" Hannah asked.

Liz immediately frowned and put on a slightly annoyed look. "Do you still want to see him?" she asked. "Even after all that he put you through?"

"Mother," Hannah spoke. "What are you talking about? I'm not the only one who suffered all these years. Huan has been suffering along with me as well."

"He suffered nothing. You're the one that was poisoned. Nothing happened to him," Liz sharply replied.

"No, but he's been with me at every step. What do you think would've happened to me if he left me after I was injured? He could've done that and he would've been burden free. Instead, he's been helping me all this time."

"You don't know how much he suffered for me, mother. He went around looking for a cure for my problem. Every day he would go out looking for pills to feed me, even when he knew there would be people out looking for him. It was because of him that I survived all this time."

"For 70 years he did that, mother. 70," Hannah finished.

Liz's face turned gloomy and she looked down. "I'm just angry that because of him my daughter had to suffer. He put you in danger, and I won't forgive him for it."

"Then don't, mother," Hannah said. "But please remember that he helped me too. And I love him. Even if you don't care about him, care about your daughter's feelings."

Liz grumbled something under her breath. "Fine!" she finally spoke out loud. "I won't trouble him anymore."

Hannah let out a sigh of relief she had been holding back, before realizing something. "Have you been troubling him?" she asked.

"N-no," Liz said quickly before turning toward Alex who was trying to hide a smile. "What are you looking at? Shouldn't you let the others know about the good news? Your parents and the others will want to hear this."

"Right!" Alex left the room to tell the others the good news.

Within minutes, Liz's room became lively.

Graham, Helen, Ronron, Alex's clone, and Emily gathered in the room, along with a few elders who had come to congratulate everyone.

Helen took Hannah into her embrace and cried as though she had been returned her own daughter. "I'm so happy, Hannah. You're finally healed," she cried out.

"I'm so happy to finally see you, Aunt Helen," Hannah said while she cried as well. "And you too, uncle."

"I'm happy too, my child," Graham said while wiping the few tears that had wet his eyes.

"Sister..." the older Alex said, unable to hide his tears at all. He walked forward and grabbed Hannah's hands, placing his forehead on them.

Hannah slowly smiled. "I didn't believe it at first, but it seems it truly is," she said as she turned toward the real Alex. "You truly do have a clone."

"I'm still me, sister," the clone Alex said.

Hannah took him into an embrace. "Yes, you are."

The older Alex cried for much longer than the others did. He was the only one who had truly lost her as the clone Hannah, the only one he thought existed, had died for him.

So, seeing Hannah come back to life again was almost as momentous as seeing his mother and father again.

Emily was happy too. She had spent her university days living with Hannah, and then later met her more after marrying Alex.

She had been sad to lose Hannah as well, so seeing her alive filled her with tears.

Hannah looked around the room and her eyes fell on Ronron. "Is that you, Ronron?" she asked. She had only known the young girl by touch since her arrival and had been wanting to meet her.

Now, she finally got to see her.

"Aunt Hannah," she called out.

Hannah coughed a little. "A-aunt... right. Um, I don't think I'm going to get used to that anytime soon," she said. "Come here, Ronron."

Ronron walked up to Hannah.

"Ah, what pretty eyes you have," Hannah said. She cupped Ronron's face with her two palms and pulled her close to kiss her on the forehead. "I would've loved to meet you while you were young. You're already a young lady."

Ronron gave a small smile.

Hannah then looked around and frowned a little. "Where is my Huan?" she asked.

Liz sighed. "He's afraid of me," she said and turned toward the door. "You can come in."

Long Huan poked his head in through the door and looked inside finally. He was about to question if he had been called when he saw Hannah standing in the room, all healed.

He walked in instinctively.

"Hannah!" he called out, shocked and surprised.

"Huan!" Hannah called out as well.

The two of them fell into each other's embrace and cried while calling each other's names.

"This is not a dream, is it?" Long Huan asked, looking around.

"It's not," Graham said with a soft smile.

Long Huan clutched onto Hannah even more tightly.

Hannah had to let go of him first as Long Huan did not seem to want to do so at all. It was as if he feared that letting go would revert everything that had happened.

Hannah turned back around toward her family.

"I should have been the one to introduce him to you all first, but it seems that all slipped past me," Hannah said. "Still, this is Long Huan. My husband."

Everyone smiled and nodded.

But Liz did neither. "No, he's not," she said.

Hannah's face fell a little. "Mother, please. You can't—"

Liz put up her hand. "Let me finish," she said. "He's not your husband because you haven't been married yet. The best he is is your fiancee."

"If you want to call him your husband, do it after the marriage," Liz said and turned toward Alex. "You will need to prepare for your sister's marriage. Can you do that?"

Alex nodded. "Absolutely."

Chapter 1733: Preparations

"If I might interject," Qiu Jianhong of the elders spoke out loud.

Everyone's eyes turned toward him with a curious look on their faces.

"Elder Qiu," Alex said. "Do you have something to say?"

"Yes," Qiu Jianhong said before turning toward Hannah. "I congratulate the young lady Hannah for having completely healed, but I must let you know that you cannot have your marriage right now."

"What do you mean?" Alex asked.

"Your Majesty," the old man turned back toward Alex. "Before we think of marriage or any other thing, we need to prepare for a funeral."

"A funeral?" Alex asked with surprise before understanding. "Right... Yao Ning's funeral. I thought you guys did it already."

"We had no confirmation that she had died before you returned your Majesty," Tan Yang spoke up. "Or maybe, we were deluding ourselves into thinking there was no evidence to suggest her death. But it has been confirmed now, so we have been waiting for you to completely heal before we move on that."

"Is this about the elder who I heard died in order to save us?" Hannah asked.

Alex and the rest nodded.

"Then I agree," she said. "Our marriage can wait. It's for show only anyway. Let us give the elder the proper funeral she deserves."

Everyone nodded.

"Go make all the preparations you need to make," Alex ordered. "Tell her family about it too. Let them be the ones to do it."

The elders nodded, but they were still somewhat hesitant about it all. "Your Majesty," Hou Xinya called out. "If we hold a big funeral, the people will realize what is going on. Do you let the news spread?"

Alex thought for a moment. Was there any reason to hide the news? There would be panic and unrest for sure if the regular citizens found out that the Emperor of the Eastern Continent had killed one of their strongest individuals.

Alex shook his head. "Give Yao Ning the biggest funeral you can," he said. "As for the truth, let it spread. Tell them we'll have our revenge too. There's no point in hiding it anyway."

After all, within the next 2 years, either he was going to kill the Dragon Emperor or die trying.

'For what he did to my sister, and what he did to Yao Ning, he deserves it,' Alex thought.

"Will you all leave please," Alex said. "I have to check sister to make sure there are no more problems with her health."

People started walking out, leaving behind congratulations and well wishes.

"Do I leave as—"

"You can stay, brother Huan," Alex said and quickly closed the door when only his close family remained.

"Didn't you say you checked her already? You said she's fine," Liz questioned.

"I did, but..." Alex motioned toward Hannah. "Look at her cultivation base. I want to see what is up with that."

"What is up with what?" Hannah asked, looking at herself.

At the same time, the rest of the family checked it as well, not understanding the situation.

The only person who seemed to have realized anything was Long Huan, who gasped the moment he saw it.

"Saint Transformation 3rd realm?" he cried out in concern. "How is this possible? She is supposed to be in the peak of the Saint Transformation realm."

"That's what I wanted to check," Alex said and had Hannah sit back on the bed so he could check.

He started scouring her dantian with his spiritual senses and saw the Soul again, which was about a third the size of her entire body.

He continued looking around for any other signs of trouble before pulling back his senses with a frown.

"What? What's wrong?" Hannah asked, worried for herself. "Am I okay?"

"You are okay," Alex said. "But it seems that poison took a lot out of you. You must have been hurt by it, and your soul must've been damaged."

"Because the Saint Transformation realm is so connected with the Soul, the damage your Soul took reflects on your cultivation base too."

"In other words, the poison forced your cultivation to regress," Alex said.

"Is that... very bad?" Helen asked from the side.

"Not very bad," Alex said. "Sister's cultivation base has dropped, but that's all there is. She is still able to continue on her cultivation journey and reach the cultivation base she had before."

"That's a relief," Liz said. "As long as there are no long-lasting problems. It's fine."

Hannah nodded. "That's alright," she said. "I can get back to my original cultivation base any time I want."

"I wish I had your speed too, sister," Alex said with a sigh before leaving to do his job as a King of the entire continent.

There were many things that needed his hands that the elders couldn't decide, which had been put off for a long time.

Hannah's return to health had been spread amongst the small group of people who were close to Alex, so they had come to meet her and give her well wishes.

Zhan Luoyang arrived with old man Zhou Linfan.

"Little sister!" Zhan Louyang's eyes widened in happiness seeing the healthy Hannah. "Congratulations."

"Forgive me, child. I should have arrived to aid you much sooner. That way you wouldn't have to have gone through all that trouble in the past," Zhou Linfan said after meeting Hannah. "Still, to make up for it, let me make you some meals that will bring your body back to life. That ki— I mean, his Majesty has already asked me to do so for him, so I can do it for the both of you."

Wen Cheng, Lang Shun, Luo Mei, and her husband, Du Yuhan arrived sometime later. They were the ones most close to Alex, so they had received the news a little earlier.

Alex introduced his master, his martial uncle, and his senior sister to Hannah, and they started sharing all the stories they had about Alex.

Kong Yuhan, Wan Li, Zhou Mi, and Fan Ruogang were much later, but they still came to meet Hannah.

Hannah spent her days with her family, learning about what they had been doing the entire time. Hearing about the past made her happy and sad.

While she had already known that her father was dead, hearing how her mother had found that out had brought back the grief once again.

Liz stayed by Hannah's side the entire time, not letting her out of her sight. She had finally had her child returned to her, so she wasn't going to let her go any time soon.

The funeral preparation had been completed in 5 days, and a pyre had been prepared in the Skyfire City, in the Yao clan's ancestral ground.

This was the family that Yao Ning had been born to, so it was only right that her end was here as well. While nothing of Yao Ning's body had been present for the funeral, people had still gathered around items that they associated with Yao Ning which they were going to burn in her name.

Alex and the rest arrived at the funeral ground, and their arrival marked the beginning of the funeral.

Chapter 1734: An Unannounced Arrival

Everyone began giving some words about the late Yao Ning, whatever they could offer.

The 9 remaining elders came forward and spoke, and so did Alex. Graham said some words as well, and so did a lot of other individuals who had known Yao Ning throughout her life.

The rest said nothing and stood there, listening to everything the others had to say.

After they were all done speaking, the head of the Yao clan burned the funeral pyre, leaving behind a silence in which only the crackling sounds of the burning fire were anything that could be heard.

The somber atmosphere was occasionally broken with a few sniffs, but other than that, there was nothing anyone else said.

Alex closed his eyes, praying for a better future for the old woman who had died to protect him. 'If reincarnation truly is real, may you have a happy life in the next one and all your dreams come true.'

He could feel his eyes moistening up and his nose starting to heat up. Something seemed to clog up his throat as if it laid heavy in there.

After a while, Alex looked up with a blazing resolution in his eyes. 'I will find you justice, Yao Ning.'

Once the fire died down, the Yao clan's head gathered the ashes and put them on a small urn before taking it up to Alex.

"Your Majesty!" he bowed slightly in Alex's presence. "Do you wish to take it with you?"

Alex thought for a short moment and shook his head. "She is of your family. Keep her."

The family head nodded. "To be honest, I believe she thinks of you and the other elders as family more than us. It has been a long time since anyone she knew lived in our family, and she herself had no offspring."

Alex shook his head. "Even so, you are of her blood, and she deserves to lay with her family," he said as he turned to look at the many gravestones that jotted out from the land.

"Let her stay here," Alex said.

"As you say, Your Majesty," the clan head said.

Alex looked at the urn and bowed slightly before walking away from the Yao family's ancestral ground. The rest of his family followed him, with Helen and Liz still wiping their tears even as they walked out.

They had only gotten to know the woman for a short period of time, but they had still remembered her enough that her death affected them.

The other elders also followed Alex out of the ancestral grounds to the front of the Yao family's home where carriages were already prepared to take them all to the teleportation formations.

Everyone boarded the carriage one by one and made their way out of the Yao Family's grounds.

Halfway through their travel, Alex got a direct message from Ren Guanting who was ahead of him in another carriage.

"Your Majesty, we have a problem." An urgent tone of her's told Alex that it was no normal trouble.

"What is it?" Alex asked her.

"A ship has arrived on the eastern shores, and they carry a group of soldiers from the Eastern Continent. They are demanding that you and their prince show up."

"What?" Alex shouted out loud, surprising his family.

"What? What is going on?" Helen asked in a somewhat worried tone.

Alex shook his head. "Don't worry," he said. "It's for me."

He teleported out of the carriage and quickly called out the elders to talk to them.

"I just got the message, Your Majesty," Ren Guanting said as she arrived, along with the other elders.

"When did they arrive?" Alex asked her.

"It should be sometime around the end of the funeral. Our soldiers sent us the message within moments of their arrival and their demands just as soon as well."

"What do we do?" another elder, Hou Xinya asked.

"They want me, so I'll go," Alex said. "But brother Huan..."

Alex was perplexed wondering if it was a good idea to take Long Huan with him.

"Could we ask Brother Zhou to come and help us?" Qiu Jianhong asked. "I'm embarrassed to say, but he is the strongest person we have at the moment with His Majesty Bai Jingshen back in his continent."

"Let them know," Alex said. "See what both of them decide to do."

By the time the carriages arrived at the teleportation ground, they were all informed of the situation and had come to a decision as well.

Alex had decided to go along with Liang Shufen, Qiu Jianhong, Ren Guanting, and Kang Xuefeng.

Aside from the 4 elders, Long Huan, Zhou Linfan, and surprisingly, Hannah had also decided to follow them to the east.

While others would consider Hannah weak with Saint Transformation's 3rd realm cultivation base, Alex knew that his sister was capable of much more. With a Celestial rank body, she was capable of fighting individuals multiple ranks higher than her, and even as she was, she was one of the strongest humans they had.

Perhaps, she was the strongest human in the Southern Continent at the current moment, even stronger than Zhou Linfan.

The rest of Alex's family were sent back to the palace where they would remain safely.

Alex and the rest teleported to Watchhill City where the Eastern Continent's soldiers had arrived at.

"Have our people immediately do a thorough search of the area. Capture anyone whose cultivation base is Saint realm or higher, and have them be investigated before letting go."

"If they refuse to answer, have someone order the Royal Alchemy hall to make as many Saint Truth pills as it needs to find out where they are from. I fear that some spies from the Eastern Continent will start coming through in secret now."

"As you say, Your Majesty," the 4 elders quickly replied as one and started making arrangements on their own.

Alex arrived on the sandy beach where the soldiers of the eastern continent were gathered in an orderly group with everyone wearing the bright azure blue uniform.

At the front was a slightly older woman in a similarly blue, but somewhat darker uniform with gold and silver intricacies in her uniform, defining her higher status.

Alex stood before that woman and looked at her. He didn't recognize her at all. He waited for her to talk.

The woman's face flashed a look of surprise and awe. "It really is true," she said softly before giving a grin. "I was told you had healed after being crippled, but you did not just that. You got your cultivation back as well."

Her casual tone got a few of the elders to get angry.

"How dare you speak with His Majesty that way. Get on your kn—"

Alex motioned for the elder to stop, before looking at the woman and at the nearly 200 different soldiers that were behind her.

"Is this all?" Alex asked his elders.

Instantly, spiritual senses blasted out from the elders as they searched through the sky for any more ships that were hiding in plain sight, or ever in the distance. They even checked within the ocean, but these were all there were.

Alex nodded when he received the answer and looked toward the woman. "Is this all of you?" he asked.

"Yes," the woman said. "This is all we need." She sounded confident, and it likely came from her Saint Transformation 6th realm cultivation base.

"Who are you?" Alex asked her.

"My name is Ying Weishu, and I am the Commander of the 3rd Battalion of the Talon Legion," the woman said proudly.

"Did your Emperor send a single Talon legion battalion to hunt me?" Alex asked. He took a step forward. "Does he look down on me?"

"We are enough for the task he has sent us for," the woman said, her face not changing.

"Is that so?" Alex asked as he took another step closer. "So he sent you here to just die? That sounds wasteful of him."

"Die?" the woman scoffed. "We won't die. We are strong."

Instantly, auras buffeted Alex from behind the woman as the 200 soldiers released their cultivation bases at once and created an array to empower the woman in front of them.

Instantly, the woman's battle prowess rose by nearly 3 entire levels, putting her comfortably in the Saint Transformation 9th realm zone.

The 4 elders instantly flew next to Alex to protect him and the other soldiers followed suit as well. However, Alex put up his hand to stop them.

Then, he took another step forward. "And do you think this is enough to kill me?" he asked. "Are you unaware of what happened in the sea?"

He stared right into her eyes.

The woman finally felt a hint of fear. She had heard of what Alex had done in the ocean, killing nearly 300 soldiers in total.

They had all said that Alex had used some sort of forbidden technique to empower himself, but no one was exactly sure.

"I... I'm sure I can beat you," she said quickly. "I'm sure I can beat every one of you."

Alex smiled. "Are you willing to bet your life on it?" he asked. "Then come attack me."

The woman's eyes narrowed and she felt something was wrong.

"No," she quickly answered. "We're not here to fight." She couldn't drag this out any longer. "We are just messengers for His Majesty the Dragon Emperor. We are here to deliver a message from him to you, King Alex."

Alex took a step back, finally curious.

"What message?"

Chapter 1735: The Message

Ying Weishu reached into her storage and produced a wooden chest. She put the wooden chest on the sand below her and produced two talismans.

Her eyes shifted to Long Huan in the back and she looked a little conflicted at that moment. "Your Highness, His Majesty wishes for you to return to the Empire. Will you follow me?" she asked.

"No!" Long Huan stepped forward. "Tell Father that I do not wish to aid him in his atrocities."

The woman sighed. "Then I have a message to deliver to you as well," she said and threw the talisman in their direction.

Zhou Linfan moved forward and caught the talisman, quickly checking to make sure it was not something harmful. Once he confirmed that it was not a threat, he let Long Huan have it.

"And this one is for you, King Alex," the woman said, handing off the other talisman.

Alex took the talisman and quickly made sure it didn't instantly explode on him to kill him. But of course, it was just a simple talisman to carry on a message, just as the woman had claimed she had come for.

"Is this from the Dragon Emperor?" Alex asked the woman.

"They both are," the woman said. Suddenly, her improved upon power disappeared as the array behind her fell apart.

Everyone quickly looked to see what had happened, but it seemed to have been done at the woman's command.

The woman slowly smiled and said, "That is all from me for today." She quickly flew away from the beach, flying back into the ship. The rest of the 200 soldiers followed her back to the ship as well.

"My job here is done, so I will take my leave. I think we will meet again soon, King Alex."

The large ship then took to the skies and flew off into the ocean without waiting for anyone to check the message. That didn't bode right with Alex and the others.

"Your Majesty," Qiu Jianhong quickly walked up to Alex. "You shouldn't put yourself in danger like that. Why did you try to anger that woman? What if that woman attacked? You would've most likely died."

"I was testing her," Alex said as he turned back toward the elder. "I just needed to check if they were here to kill me or not."

"Putting yourself in danger accomplishes that in no way. Will you risk death just to check if they were here to kill you? Aren't you just asking to die?" the old man asked. "You might heal from being crippled, but your healing should still have a limit."

Alex turned to the old man and gave a warm smile. "I know," Alex said. Then slowly, Alex's face distorted, appearing as though a haze. Then, from the haze showed up a blank face with no features at all.

In fact, the entire body dissolved into nothing and Alex was nowhere to be seen. All that remained was a puppet with Whisker on top of it, holding onto a talisman.

Qiu Jianhong and the other 3 elders took a step back in surprise. "Huh? What is going on?" one of them asked.

"I know not to put myself at risk," Alex's voice came out of the talisman, clear and loud. "That's why I let the puppet approach her instead of myself."

"I'm not stupid enough to get that close to a potential enemy," Alex's real voice emerged from the sky above them where he put away his invisibility technique and slowly drifted down to the ground.

"Your Majesty?" Qiu Jianhong and the other elders watched with slacked jaws. The other soldiers were the same as well.

"I... didn't sense anything," Hannah said with wide eyes.

"This kid... did he hide himself in space again," Zhou Linfan wondered. It was similar to the time back when the two soldiers had come upon him.

Long Huan had no idea what to say at all in the situation. He was sure he had scoured the area Alex had appeared out of nowhere from. Even if he had hidden, his aura should've at least been visible to the crowd.

Alex landed on the sand and pet Whisker's head. "Good job," he said. "You're getting better at mimicking me."

"Hehe," Whisker gave a silly smile and jumped onto Alex's shoulders. Alex took the talisman from the Immortal Puppet's arms and put the puppet into his Soul Space.

"Oh, so you weren't in danger?" Qiu Jianhong asked. "You should have let us know earlier. When did you even switch?"

"I've been practicing to quickly switch with my doppelganger," Alex said. "I'm glad it works."

"It... surely does," the old man said.

"Your Majesty," Liang Shufen called out.

Alex and the rest turned toward her, only to realize she was pointing at the chest on the sand. "I can't see what is inside."

Alex turned back around and his senses landed on the chest in front of him even was a little surprised to see his spiritual sense unable to enter the wooden chest.

"Heavenly Silkworm's threads?" he asked. That was the only thing he knew that could stop one's senses from seeing into objects. He recognized the wood itself to be from a somewhat ordinary tree, so that was not it.

"Must be," Liang Shufen said. "Let me open it. Your Majesty, stay back just in case."

Alex didn't bother arguing and moved back. He had the talisman to read while they worked to see what was inside.

Alex sent his senses into the talisman and heard the message that spoke directly into his mind. It was the Dragon Emperor's voice.

"My congratulations for surviving. I was afraid you would die, and thus our trade would be rendered incomplete. I have been looking forward to our final trade and how it will help me create Pill Clouds at will."

"Since you've survived, you should be returning to me soon enough. If my idiot son hasn't decided to return by that time, bring the sword along with you. You can use it in our trade."

"I know you will come for the trade, but I do not know if you will bring the sword. Just to be certain, I have decided to send the gift along with this message. I hope it will work to persuade you."

"Unless you want even better gifts in the future, you will bring my sword."

"I'll see you soon."

Alex frowned. "Gift?" he looked at the chest in front of him.

Liang Shufen was still looking around just in case there was some sort of danger to the chest, but no matter how much she looked, she couldn't see anything.

"Unlock it," Alex said with a somber face. "There is no danger." He was sure of it.

"But Your Majesty, I—"

"It's from the Dragon Emperor, he won't risk killing me just yet. Open it," Alex said.

Liang Shufen frowned and nodded. She undid the two wooden latch in front of the chest and slowly lifted the lid of the chest.

She had only partially opened it when immediately a thick scent of blood filled the breeze. Everyone froze in their track and looked at the chest.

Alex felt his heart beat faster. He feared that he knew what the gift was.

Chapter 1736: The Gift

The thick scent of blood overpowered every other scent in the air, causing waves of fear to spread among the people people that were on the beach.

"What is it?" one of the elders asked in a hurry, walking forward to check on the chest. Even as he did so, Liang Shufen had already opened the chest fully, revealing the contents for everyone to see.

Multiple gasps of horror ran through the small group when they saw the content. Liang Shufen stepped back in both stunned horror and anger. She turned around to say something but stopped as Alex walked up to the chest.

Alex stood before the wooden box, looking into it. Inside the chest were cut-off heads of about 2 dozen individuals.

He struggled to keep his anger in check and trembled where he stood, his hand wanting to find the Dragon Emperor and kill him right then.

"Who are they?" Zhou Linfan asked after coming to the front. He looked inside the chest and shook his head.

"Our soldiers," Alex said. "They served as guards for the Alchemists that were taken to the Eastern Continent for the Exchange event. If I'm not wrong, all of them were killed."

"Dear god..." Hannah reacted when she heard the news. She looked into the chest just once and turned away. She couldn't bring herself to stare into it more than just that once.

"Your Majesty," Liang Shufen called for him in a hurry. "What about our Alchemists? I don't see their corpse in there."

"They should be safe," Alex said. "For now."

He handed the talisman over to the elders to read, and each one of them slowly went through it to see what it said.

"Gift?" Qiu Jianhong's face twisted in anger. "That bastard! I knew he was a horrible human the first time I saw him. To think he would do something like this."

"Is this in retaliation for what you did to his soldiers, your Majesty?" Ren Guanting asked.

"I don't think so," Alex said. "He just did that to convince me to bring back the sword."

Alex turned toward Long Huan who had at some point arrived to see the horrible display of death crammed in the small wooden box.

His eyes were wide in terror as well, finding it impossible to believe that his father would stoop so low.

"What did your talisman say?" Alex asked the man.

"He wants me to return and bring the sword along with him," Long Huan said.

"That's it?" Alex asked.

"In essence, yes," Long Huan said. "But he also says that if I do as he asks, he will heal Hannah of her injuries, and subsequently... make me the Emperor when he finally leaves."

Alex's eyes sharpened at the last bit of information. "What do you want to do?" he asked.

"I don't understand why he would say that to me," Long Huan said. "My older brother is the Crown Prince. He will be the Emperor in the end. Or is my father willing to discard brother just to get his hands on the sword?"

Long Huan looked conflicted.

Hannah arrived by his side and took Long Huan's hand into her own, helping him calm down.

Alex took a long breath and turned toward the elders. "Take that away and give them all a proper funeral," he ordered. "Find their families and compensate them fairly."

"What should we tell them?" one of the elders asked. "I do not think it is a good idea to tell them that the Emperor of the Eastern Continent killed them."

Alex shook his head. "There is no point in hiding it anymore. Rumors will have already spread. I returned earlier than I should have. We held a funeral for Yao Ning. There is no stopping the rumors. Instead, just let everyone find out the truth."

"Let them know that the Dragon Emperor is a heinous man who has done heinous crimes. For that, the Southern Continent will go to war against him."

The elders started at the order. "Your Majesty, do we really..."

"Do it," Alex said. "Announce it. We're declaring war against the Eastern Continent. Prepare for it. I do not know when it will be, but it will be soon."

The rest of the people felt agitated, not knowing what they should do. Still, the elders nodded and promised to do as Alex told them.

Alex then turned toward Long Huan and Zhou Linfan.

"If the Southern Continent fights the Eastern Continent, who will you fight for?" Alex asked them.

Zhou Linfan stroked his long beard. "I do not know who I will fight for, just who I will fight against," he said. "No matter who fights in this war, I will fight the Dragon Emperor himself."

Alex smiled and nodded before turning to Long Huan, waiting for his answer.

"I... I would rather not have either side fight," Long Huan said. "I'm not for or against either side in this war."

Alex stared at him for a long second before asking a question. "So would you do anything you can to stop this war?"

"I would," Long Huan said.

"I see," Alex said. "Then please hand over the Ivory Sword."

Long Huan froze. "What?"

"The sword, please give it to me," Alex asked.

Long Huan looked confused, and so did everyone else on the beach. "How... will that help stop the war?" he asked.

"I'm not trying to stop the war," Alex said. "I'm trying to stop you from potentially stopping it. If you take that sword to your father, he will have no reason to entertain the war. He will instead simply get what he needs and leave this world. I cannot let him do that."

"I won't give it to him," Long Huan said.

"I want to trust you," Alex said. "But I would rather not have to for something so crucial and then have you betray my trust."

"Alex!" Hannah tried to speak.

"Please don't interfere in this, sister. The Dragon Emperor has nearly 2 dozen of my Alchemists hostage, and he says that he will kill them unless I bring the sword to him."

"What?" Long Huan's eyes went wide. "You want to take the sword to him?"

"I'll bring it to him along with the war," Alex said. "I will see to it that my alchemists are safe, and then kill him. Now please, the sword."

Long Huan seemed conflicted at the choice he had been given. He didn't want to hand his sword back to his father either through him or through Alex, but with Alex's alchemists on the line, he wasn't sure.

Long Huan pulled out the silver sword and held it tightly. "This sword... it's my only remaining connection to my family, to my blood. I..."

Alex sighed and pulled out a blade.

Hannah immediately stepped in front of Long Huan to protect him and brought out a sword of her own to stop Alex.

Alex gave her a weird look. "What are you doing?" he asked.

"No, what are you doing?" she asked. "Are you trying to threaten—"

"That sword!" Long Huan suddenly cried out and pushed Hannah out of the way before walking up to it.

"How... how do you have it?" he asked with his eyes as wide as saucers. "How do you have the Ebony sword?"

Chapter 1737: Preparation Begins

Everyone around Alex gave him a curious look when they saw the sword in his hands. Their haze intensified especially when they realized what was going on.

"I found this sword back when I had just started my cultivation journey in the Western Continent," Alex said. "Your father must have told you that it was lost when your mother died during her breakthrough to the Immortal realm, didn't he?"

Long Huan frowned. He slowly nodded, trying to make sense of where the conversation was going.

"By now you should know that the Azure Dragon is dead and his death happens to be on the same day as your mother's," Alex said. "You should have some thoughts about that."

Long Huan remained silent, saying nothing. Still, his thought went through all the possibilities, and some he simply did not like.

"Pearl's mother was brought to the Azure Dragon's realm as a servant from the Beast Paradise," Alex said for everyone to hear. "There she had Pearl, but she happened to get caught in the crossfire between the Azure Dragon and whatever it was that the Dragon Emperor was trying to do."

"She was attacked there, and it was this sword that attacked her. I don't know why, but this sword must have somehow activated, sending her to the Western Continent, where she died while saving Pearl."

Alex lifted the sword in his hands. "For years, I have wondered who the owner of this sword is, and the only hint I had to go with was the emblem on the sword. I knew only that it belonged to the royal family of the Eastern Continent."

"That was why I accepted the request regarding the Alchemy exchange. That, and to find Sister, if I could. I found sister, of course, but I believe I also found the person who killed Pearl's mother."

"No..." Long Huan spoke in a hoarse voice. "My mother, she..."

"She was the last person to hold the sword. And she went into the Azure Dragon's domain with this sword. I do not know what happened inside, or who killed who, but this much is obvious."

"Pearl's mother died, and it's your parents that are to blame."

Long Huan felt his throat go dry. He was simply incapable of forming any words to speak.

"I..."

"This has been a symbol of my search for Justice for Pearl's mother, and I have yet to find it. And still, I am handing this to you in exchange for the Ivory sword. Because that is how much my Alchemists mean to me."

"Pearl's mother, while I care for her very much, is dead. But the Alchemists are alive. If there is a chance I can get them back, or a chance to not risk their death, then I will do it."

"So, will you trade this sword with me or not?" Alex asked.

Long Huan stared at the black sword for a long time, thinking about something, and finally spoke, only to ask a simple question.

"If my father gets his hands on the sword, he will get what he wants," Long Huan said. "How will you or anyone stop that?"

"I plan on saving my Alchemists, but I also plan on not letting the Dragon Emperor have all that he wants," Alex said. "Don't worry, brother Huan. I will only do what is right. Your father will not get what he wants. I will do my best to make that happen."

After a long consideration, the young prince finally pulled out the white sword and handed it over to Alex.

Alex took the Ivory sword and handed back the Ebony sword.

Long Huan stroked the side of the Ebony sword, feeling its slickness. "My brother was supposed to keep this with him until he became the Emperor and then he would give it to his children. I was supposed to hand the Ivory sword over to his next son too."

Alex patted the man on the shoulder. "Don't worry, everything will be alright," he said and looked back at the now-closed chest sitting on the sandy beach.

"Let us return."

The Southern Continent boiled into chaos and panic following the declaration of war against the Eastern Continent. The regular civilians feared war, while the soldiers prepared for it.

The military that Alex had prepared after his succession to the throne had now grown to be nearly 30 thousand soldiers large, with 1 in every 5 soldiers being in the Saint realm.

Most of them were newly ascended to the Saint realm, but the older ones had still made steady progress. However, this much would not be enough at all for the war.

Alex knew he too needed to go train, but he didn't have the time for it. There were things that he needed to put into motion before he got back to training again.

He started making pills all day long after returning, leaving the capital in a constant thunderstorm that never rained.

He passed along the pills to all who needed them so they could become stronger faster. He made all sorts of pills, from Healing pills to spirit pills.

He even made a pill using the Fire Coral that he had found in the ocean. He had been very worried when making that pill, but thankfully, it had come out with 9-veins as well.

Of course, Alex alone could not do everything either, so his family started helping as well.

Helen had grown to become a capable alchemist in the time that Alex had been gone and was now capable of making pills with Pill Veins as well.

She was the perfect person for Alex to transfer his skills to as not only did she have the highest talent out of anybody he knew, but she also had the Five Elemental Yin-Yang spiritual root, making her the only person who was capable of learning Supreme Elemental Accord technique.

At the same time, Liz helped him slow down time so he could recover faster.

Graham trained in the Mountain Crushing artifact, showing tens of times better results with the same amount of time put back into the artifact compared to everyone else.

Hannah cultivated on her own, improving rapidly, despite her foundations requiring her to spend time developing it. She had skipped through realms rapidly to arrive where she had before and now she needed to take her time.

The elders took the pills Alex provided as well and started going into deep cultivation in preparation for the war as well.

The different guilds that Alex had created started working harder to provide more pills, talismans, and formations as well.

Everyone else worked hard in preparation for a war that was imminent.

Still, the chaos and panic continued to grow, with everyone wanting answers left and right. They wanted peace for their lives and that was not something Alex could give them right away.

He reassured everyone that war wouldn't envelop in the Continent and no harm would fall upon them, but that didn't work for these people.

They needed something better, and Alex could not give it to them.

Thankfully, Alex didn't have to.

Tranquility would soon befall their land again for their Queen had graced the continent with her presence. And she did so amidst a show of thunder and lightning.

Scarlet had finally left the dome and was now finally going to break through to the Immortal realm.

Chapter 1738: Scarlet's Lightning Tribulation

Scarlet flew north, away from any human settlement to break through to the Immortal realm. She had fought through her Mental Demon, so all that was left was for her to deal with the Lightning Tribulation.

For that, Scarlet went to the wasteland, way in the north where no humans lived. There in a small crater, where she had gone through her rebirth, she was going to break through the Immortal realm as well.

Alex and a few of the others arrived in a large ship and stood far enough away to watch, for the first time in their entire life, see someone break through to the Immortal realm.

Scarlet had been holding back her breakthrough for a while to reach this place and now that she was finally here, she let go of it.

Immediately, dark clouds formed in the sky, sparking with lightning inside, quickly turning the entire area dark with them.

The atmosphere was surreal and the aura chaotic. The heaven seemed to gather overhead, scaring all the humans that stood on the deck of the ship.

"So this is what a tribulation lightning cloud looks like," Qiu Jianhong said meekly.

"The aura... it scares me," Ren Guanting spoke.

"This is very much scarier than the time I broke through to the Saint realm," Alex said softly. "It's as if the heaven is purposefully trying to stop you and not just because it's something it must do."

"Your Majesty, did you give Her Majesty the lightning pills?" Tan Yang asked. "That should help her a lot during the tribulation."

"I thought so too," Alex said. "And I offered it to her, but she claimed that she didn't need it." He turned back around toward the people. "Don't worry, she has already once broken through to the Immortal realm, so she knows what she is doing. Have some faith in her."

Everyone slowly nodded and looked to the front as the first tribulation lightning made its arrival.

The giant bolt of hot white lightning with an aura of purple surrounding it flew down into the desert where Scarlet unfurled her giant red wings and took the brunt of the attack.

The sudden boom that followed seemed the rock the world with even the air forcing Alex and the rest to step back. They had remained nearly 2 kilometers away in the sky, and somehow even at this distance, the lightning bolt was giving them quite the shock.

"That... was strong," one of the elders said behind Alex.

"Just 2 more realms and this is what I have to face in my next breakthrough?" Zhou Linfan asked, staring at the sky. "I will die."

"I'm sure you aren't meant to face the lightning with Saint Qi at all," Alex said. "At this point, all of Scarlet's Saint Qi has evolved to become stronger. While they aren't at the level of Immortal realm, they are much closer."

Alex remembered the madman from the Northern Continent who was halfway done with his Immortal realm breakthrough. Even without being an Immortal, his Qi was so much stronger that not a single one of the elders or a group of them could defeat him.

"As you survive the lightning, your Qi gets stronger too," Alex said slowly. "Allowing you to be much stronger and ready for the next lightning bolt."

As he said that, the sky rumbled with the heavens preparing the next bolt.

Alex looked at Scarlet, worrying slightly. Even if he knew she had gone through this once already, he still couldn't help but feel the need to worry.

After all, with the lightning tribulation in progress, there was only one of two outcomes.

Either Scarlet was going to become an Immortal, or she was going to die.

While there was the chance of her becoming a False Immortal by failing, because she was a Heavenly beast, the heavens would not be much lenient on her.

The second purple lightning struck down from heaven with a resounding boom and this time Scarlet let out a phoenix cry before it even hit her.

A fiery shield of multicolor appeared before her, bearing the burden of the lightning bolt, completely stopping it.

She stood taller once the second lightning bolt disappeared. She looked to the sky, ready for more.

When the third lightning strike fell, Scarlet created the fiery shield again, protecting her from the lightning bolt once again. However, this time the shield hadn't done its job as well as it had the last time.

She needed to change her tactics for the next one.

As the 4th lightning bolt prepared to fall, Scarlet flapped her wings just once. Nearly a hundred different feathers of colors ranging from yellow to red to purple flew around Scarlet, forming a whirlpool of feathers around her.

When the lightning bolt finally fell, the feathers instantly burned with phoenix fire and combined into a large, singular fire that took the shape of a burning phoenix and flew into the sky.

The attack struck the lightning, dissipating it even before it could fall all the way through.

The people watching on the ship cheered for Scarlet, even though she couldn't hear them. They were happy to see their Queen doing well, but this wasn't all. There was much more to be done now.

The feathers flew around Scarlet again as she prepared the same attack as the last time, known as the Phoenix Feather Storm.

The attack flew into the sky and struck the 5th lightning bolt, but this time it was the lightning bolt that destroyed it instead, but had difficulty doing so.

The remaining energy in the bolt was not even as strong as the first bolt, and that Scarlet had handled with just her body.

When the 6th lightning bolt was ready to fall, Scarlet used both the fiery shield and the Phoenix Feather Storm at the same time.

The two techniques together managed to stop the lightning bolt from falling all the way through.

Scarlet breathed somewhat roughly. While only 6 lightning bolts had fallen, she had to use multiple techniques, back to back, causing her a bit of trouble.

She was still mostly fine, however, and could continue easily.

Only, for the 7th lightning bolt, she couldn't do with the Phoenix Feather Storm or the Fiery Shield. She needed something stronger and better.

Scarlet took a deep breath and used a technique. It was a difficult technique to use as it required some time. But thankfully, there was enough time between the tribulation lightning that she had the time for it.

Instantly, 8 different balls of Phoenix fire appeared around Scarlet, each of which caused a tempest of hot air to move around it. It wasn't just hot air, but heat reaching temperature so high that it caused the air to ripple, creating mirages all around.

Scarlet quickly became the center of a tremendous sandstorm as sparkling shards of glass formed from the melting sand that were quickly cooled down once they buffeted outward.

Alex and the rest quickly parted the sandstorm carefully and looked inside.

The balls of fire had now transformed into certain egg-like shapes and they continuously rotated around Scarlet herself who burned with Phoenix fire.

And then the 7th lightning bolt fell.

Chapter 1739: The Dao Lightnings

The 7th lightning bolt came crashing down from the sky, leaving behind a pillar of light. It arrived upon Scarlet, but even before it could hit her, one of the eight eggs flying around Scarlet immediately flew toward the lightning bolt.

The moment the egg struck the lightning bolt, the two attacks exploded. A massive amount of energy was released from the clash, sending shockwaves to spread for dozens of kilometers.

Alex and the rest were buffeted by the energy as well, and each one of them was surprised that Scarlet now had the power to stop something like this.

"Just 2 more," one of the elders said, his prayer in the words clear to everyone.

"She can do it," another one said.

"Not two more," Alex said. "There's many more to go."

A few of the people showed surprised expressions. It appeared that they weren't aware of how a lightning tribulation worked.

However, the ones that did, the elders, nodded. "2 more and she can be free from danger," the first elder said.

Just as they were talking, the 8th lightning bolt prepared to fall.

Scarlet had her 7 eggs floating around her that she prepared for the next 2 lightning bolts. She was starting to feel the tired feeling she remembered having the last time she did this as well.

The lightning tribulation asked a lot out of the body for how short it relatively was.

A person could go on for hours fighting someone else, but when it came to lightning tribulation, just a few attacks left everyone tired and weak.

Scarlet's Qi constantly moved inside her body, absorbing the energy left behind by the Tribulation lightning bolts. The absorbed Qi slightly improved her Qi, sending her closer and closer to the Immortal realm.

When the 8th lightning bolt fell, she sent the next 2 eggs into the sky, both of which landed on the end of the falling lightning bolt and instantly exploded.

Another explosion sent a force of air and energy crashing down on Scarlet and she had to protect herself from it. Not only that, she also had to maintain her technique and the 5 other eggs she still had floating around her.

This was a technique she could only use once in a fight, and she could let the eggs get wasted just from some shockwaves.

She felt the remaining energy from the lightning bolt flow into her body, making her Qi slightly stronger. She felt even more tired now like all she wanted to do right now was go to sleep.

But not yet. She had more to go through.

She screeched loudly, letting out a melodic phoenix scream. The fire around her burned brighter and so did the eggs.

All 5 of the eggs started revolving around her even faster as Scarlet prepared for the final of 9 tribulation lightnings.

The moment the final purple lightning flashed in the sky and streaked its way down, Scarlet sent all 5 of the eggs flying into the sky at once.

The five eggs met the 9th lightning bolt, and the world lost its colors. The explosion from the crash nearly broke the fabric of reality itself as space cracked all around the explosion.

Everyone was forced to look away as the bright light that formed from the explosion nearly blinded them all. The sound of the explosion echoed back from the dunes in the distance, and the sand in the air slowly settled.

When the dust was mostly gone, everyone saw a ragged Scarlet standing firmly on the ground with the sand underneath her molten from the heat of her body.

It was still bright red and slowly turning to glass, but no one's eyes remained on it for long. They all looked at Scarlet and worried for her.

She seemed tired, but there was more to come.

The sky rumbled in a warning. Purple lightning flashed within the clouds and slowly an aura gathered in the sky.

No one dared to send their senses up there, but Alex could see the aura that gathered, or more precisely, he could see its color.

A bright yellow aura filled the sky, slowly coalescing together to converge on a single point in the sky.

Alex frowned a little at the sight of the aura as he understood it to be something related to the Yang aura. However, he couldn't tell what aura it was. It was not one of the regular ones that everyone knew it seemed.

The aura took some time to get together and when it finally converged into the one small spot, it slammed onto the ground with a thunderous noise.

Scarlet was ready.

She took flight, streaking directly into the air, and she used a technique.

Unyielding Prominence Spark.

Her beak grew bright red, shining like the first ray of light at the dawn, and she struck the lightning bolt with it.

Another round of wind and aura buffeted the audience in the distance who had to protect themselves. They quickly searched for Scarlet and found her back in the crater where she had begun.

Her feathers were in disarray and she seemed slightly hurt but was otherwise fine.

Alex looked to the sky as another aura started gathering. If the first one was yellow like a midday sun, this one was bright red like an evening sun.

'True Fire Dao,' Alex thought. It took him no trouble to recognize this one. 'So... whatever she had learned previously was weaker than this?'

That told him nothing as the True Fire Dao was something clearly at the peak of what Dao could be. He hadn't yet known of a Dao that could be stronger.

The red aura in the sky converged onto a single point and then streaked down from the sky once again.

Scarlet had her talons out this time, both talons glowing bright white with light, and then she flew to the sky once again, striking the lightning bolt with her talon.

The force behind this lightning bolt was clearly much higher than the previous one and even Alex felt the fear flowing through his and Scarlet's bond. She was scared this time around, maybe even a little hurt.

But the good news was that she was alive. That was all that mattered.

The dust settled and Scarlet was on the ground, tired and hurt from the breakthrough.

"That's weird," Alex said when he saw that. He turned toward one of the elders and asked, "Isn't the individual who breaks through to the Immortal realm supposed to be healed of all injury at the end of it?"

"They are," one of the elders replied.

"Then why is she—"

Alex's words stuck to his throat when his gaze turned to the sky and saw the dark clouds with lightning still hovering in the sky above them.

And he didn't see only the clouds.

He saw aura gathering in the sky once more. A multicolored cloud of aura formed in the sky, swirling with red, yellow, and purple energy like the colors in a Phoenix fire.

Alex frowned at the sight. He remembered something similar happening during his breakthrough when heaven produced all the Daos he was about to learn and created an aura surrounding it to threaten him.

Was this that?

The answer arrived as soon as the question formed in his mind.

The aura started converging into one point, ready for a third lightning bolt.

Chapter 1740: The Immortal Queen

There was another lightning bolt forming in the sky. A third Dao lightning was ready to strike down on Scarlet at any moment.

Alex looked to the sky in utter shock.

Dao was not something that was easily learned by anyone. For a regular person. Learning a single dao was considered amazing. Learning two was considered brilliant. Learning anymore made people think the individual was a heavenly genius.

In Scarlet's case, while she had only technically had 2 Dao Lightnings, the second one was for the True Fire Dao, which meant she had learned enough Fire Dao that she had managed to piece together every other Dao related to Fire and learned the entire concept.

So, in a sense, she hadn't learned one dao, but multiple. As such, Alex had found it acceptable that only two Dao lightning would fall upon her and not more.

However, upon seeing the third Lightning bolt, he was surprised that Scarlet had learned even more than that, making her quite exceptional. It contradicted the information that Scarlet had said about herself from time to time in Alex's presence.

The Heavenly Beasts that came to rule the world for 10 thousand years were actually individuals of average talent. The real geniuses of the family were never sent away on such a useless venture outside. They were kept hidden and trained so they could become a robust pillar for their family.

Had Scarlet just fallen through the heavenly beast's net and considered untalented, when she actually was quite talented? Or were the heavenly beasts just such great creatures that even this much talent was considered average at best?

That was very surprising for Alex, but one thing that surprised me more right now was the aura in the sky.

The Dao lightning was supposed to fall in order of just how difficult they were to understand and just how much stronger than Heaven considered the dao to be.

If this Dao lightning was falling after the True Fire Dao then... was there a Dao that Scarlet knew which was better than True Fire Dao?

Scarlet's body suddenly started burning again with bright light, and the world seemed to dim in response to her brightness. A mass of aura buffeted the surroundings around her, causing a tempestuous storm to spread away from her.

Scarlet's body started to glow bright white as the fire burned even more. The heat from her body reached to the people on the ship, forcing them to use their cultivation to stop it.

At the same time, Scarlet's body grew bright to the point that no one could keep their eyes open anymore. Everyone shied away from the light, waiting just for what happened next.

The light dimmed and little and then grew again. Then an explosion followed it.

The strongest explosion that anyone had ever sensed just yet shook the ship that everyone stood on, sending the entire thing backward with a lot of force.

At the same time, the sound from the explosion was strong enough that it sent everyone's ears ringing.

It was a long time before anyone opened their eyes again. Alex was the first of the few to do so and he looked at the aftermath of the explosion.

The dark clouds were parted by the explosion, leaving a small opening in the sky through which rays of sunlight fell to the ground.

One such beam fell on the center of the storm in the ground, falling onto Scarlet, who was now bloodied and weak. She was hurt and in extreme pain, but she was alive.

She struggled to stand up and looked to the sky again.

The clouds rumbled a deep roar and lightning flashed some more. Aura gathered in them once again, but this time around Alex was very much sure that this aura was just a show.

He could sense Dao of Yang and some sort of separate time aura that was its own thing. There were a few other very much weaker aura, signifying just how far away Scarlet was from understanding those Dao.

The sky continued to rumble some more and then started parting away subsequently. At the same time, everyone felt as though the heavens swooped down from the ground to embrace Scarlet's wounded body.

Immediately, her body began to heal, her strength returning. At the same time, her body automatically started cultivating and they absorbed the energy that came down to her.

Her Qi grew stronger and stronger until a point was reached where in a single moment, they jumped from being Saint Qi to Immortal Qi.

A sonorous ringing sound rippled out from Scarlet's body and she let out a deep phoenix cry that harmonized with the first sound, making a beautiful melody.

Scarlet's body erupted with power, and she took the sky immediately. She flew around the wasteland, letting out her phoenix cries as she did so.

"Let us return," Alex said and the ship quickly flew back toward the Sunborn Sanctuary.

Even though they were nowhere fast enough to catch up to Scarlet, they could hear Scarlet's deep cries all the way through.

Alex looked down from the ship and saw people stopping to do everything they were doing so they could look to the sky in bright surprise.

Alex could hear their cheers all the way from the ship. They cheered for Scarlet and her strength, whether they were from the wasteland or from the mainland.

People praised their Queen and what she stood for. Everything that Alex had been trying to prevent for the past month or so and had failed to do was now done by Scarlet with just one flight.

Her presence gave the peace of mind everyone needed to go about their day even though they knew that War was right around the corner.

Alex and the group soon lost Scarlet due to her speed and returned to the palace. They had only been back in the palace for just a few minutes when they heard Scarlet's sonorous cry once again.

Everyone felt the aura of an immortal approach them in the palace as Scarlet walked through the hallways.

Every man, woman, and child that was in the palace at that time couldn't help but gawk back at her in absolute disbelief.

She walked with her own two feet, her delicate white arms swinging rhythmically at her sides, while she held her beautiful face up high.

A red robe fluttered around her body, seemingly tailored for her exact body. Her red hair curled down to her shoulders, framing her face, and accentuating her glossy red lips.

She arrived before Alex and the others as they were making their way to the palace hall. Everyone had stopped in their tracks now, and they were staring back at Scarlet and her divine beauty.

To some, it was a nostalgic sight from a past so long ago that even memories seemed vague to them.

To others, it was an entirely new sight, one that they had not expected to see at all.

Every single human in the hallway fell to their knees as soon as Scarlet arrived before them.

"Long live the Queen," Qiu Jianhong said out loud.

"Long live Her Majesty," the others followed.

The Southern Continent, after 5 millennia, had finally gotten back their Immortal Queen.