

Alchemy 311

Chapter 311: Damage Tests - Finale

"Yang Ma from Tiger sect," Fu Zhen called out.

By now, an hour had passed and around 100 disciples were done with their tests. Amongst the latter 50, only 2 had been a mind tempering realm expert. In total, there had been around 5 right now.

The red-haired, 3rd ranking disciple of the Tiger sect walked out. Alex knew that he had a 2nd Mind Tempering realm so he expected his damage output to be around the same as well.

He walked up to the Elemental puppet and threw a fireball at it. Words soon popped up on top of it.

Alex looked at it too but was a little surprised. "Huh?"

The words on the puppet were <Mind Tempering - 1st Realm>

"That's not right," Alex said. He thought for a moment and finally realized what was happening. "These guys are trying to hide their strength," Alex said as a peculiar smile appeared on his face.

"That means... the previous 5 that only had 1st Mind Tempering realm... might actually be way higher in cultivation," he thought.

People kept attacking the puppets and their damage information was recorded. The two disciples from the Hong Wu sect didn't have the luxury to hide their cultivation base as they weren't very strong in the first place.

"Hmm... He will probably get accepted, but she is still debatable," Ma Rong said looking at the two disciple's results.

Everyone else who had a high enough cultivation base was hiding their cultivation so Alex couldn't tell just how high their cultivation base was from the screen.

Finally, Wan Li was called forth. Wan Li took out a simple sword as he walked forward and stood in front of the puppet. Once he was given the go, he slashed the puppet right on the chest.

<Mind Tempering - 2nd Realm>

He didn't hold back as much as the others did. "Is brother Wan talented in cultivation as well?" Alex asked.

"Hmm... He isn't... or rather he wasn't. After his parent's death last year, he seemed to have not only taken Alchemy, but also cultivation as a method of coping."

"Before any of us knew, he went up a minor realm and even crossed 3 realms," Ma Rong said.

Alex looked back at the competitions. There were more Mind tempering realm cultivators appearing now.

One of the Mind Tempering results came from a participant that wasn't even the person themselves. They had let their tamed beast attack the puppet.

There were other folks who used their puppets to attack the puppet. That too apparently counted since they were considered weapons just as any sword and spear.

Alex was really surprised when he learned that. 'I wonder if next year around I can have Pearl fight for me as well,' he thought. But he also thought how it would probably be too late for him since he at this rate,? he would reach the True realms in just a few months.

There were about 50 more people left when Fu Zhen finally called someone he had been waiting to see for the last 3 hours.

" Tiger sect, Luo Mei," he called.

Luo Mei walked forward in the yellow robes with red linings. As soon as she came up to the elemental puppet, she swirled her hand around a few times. Blue Qi escapes from her hands as they quickly turned into a blob of water.

Without much thought, she threw the water at the puppet and got a reading that said <Mind Tempering - 2nd realm>

That was a very simple attack, and yet it got such a high result. 'I wonder how far her cultivation has advanced,' he wondered.

More people came and went after her; Few were in the mind tempering realm, most close to it. Some were quite low as well.

The remaining participants were thinning very fast until only a few remained. Finally, the last member of the Tiger sect was called forth.

"Du Yuhan of Tiger sect," Fu Zhen spoke out loud.

Du Yuhan walked forth with a sword in his hand. He was holding it with his left arm and it was sheathed at the moment.

He walked up to the physical puppet and took a deep breath. In a single sweep, he pulled the sword out of the sheath and hit the puppet. It happened so fast that Alex could barely see it at all.

<Mind Tempering -2nd Realm>

"Woah," Alex thought. A simple attack from all 3 of the top-ranking members in the Tiger sect had amazing results.

"How come all the disciples from Tiger Sect are so strong and yet they haven't even reached the 1st grade yet," Alex asked.

"They've always been strong due to the intense inner competition of the sect, but this batch has been astoundingly fierce."

"I knew Luo Mei and Du Yuhan were good, but it seems even the Yang Ma fellow is good as well. I didn't see him last year," Ma Rong said

"As for the reason why they didn't reach the 1st grade yet is that most of the years, they didn't bother taking part in the production segment of the competition. Even in the battle segment, there weren't that many taking part due to the 3 per competition constraint."

"However, they will surely reach the 1st grade this time. That is as long as the 3 do well... and they don't have to fight against the Royal Fu Academy early on. That would be a disaster for them," Ma Rong said.

"Are... they that good?" Alex was a little surprised.

"Perhaps better," Ma Rong said as not even she really knew how strong the disciples from the Royal Fu Academy were.

Alex wondered if his senior sister could perhaps have a chance at winning. But for that, he would have to know just how strong these Royal Fu Academy folks were.

The rest of the participants delivered their attacks the test ended. Fu Zhen revealed the results after a few minutes. All 3 members of the Hong Wu sect had surprisingly passed. Even the female disciple passed at around 230th rank amongst the 256 people that passed.

Chapter 312: Race

"5 spirit stones on the red robe guy with the horse."

"Cheapskate put in more. 62 spirit stones on the blue-robed girl with the red bird."

"I'm going 70 spirit stones on the green-robed girl with the jaguar. You guys are picking some stupid monsters really. Jaguars are very fast. Ah, MeiMei, Wanwan, you guys come to put in spirit stones too."

"You skipped out on the last one, but not this one," Fan Ruogang shouted at the 3 who were staying away from gambling away their money.

"I... don't really know who will win Fanfan, So I will stay out of it. I don't want to lose my money," Zhou Mei said.

"I— I don't like gambling," Wan Li said.

"I am low on money, sister Fan. So I will stay out of it," Alex said when he was called to gamble.

"What? You all are cowards. Elders, you guys wanna bet?" she asked the elders to bid on the winning beast for the Beast race.

"Fanfan, stop being so rowdy. It doesn't reflect well on the sect," Ma Rong scolded her for standing out too much in the audience.

"Oh, sorry sect leader," she said and tried to get quiet when the race started. "Oh, it has begun," she immediately started screaming again.

"Go Jaguar," she cried out.

The bird, the jaguar, and the horse were the main 3 beasts that everyone expected to win. However, when the beasts did reach the other side, a result that nobody expected occurred.

The winner for the beast's race was actually a tiny little squirrel.

"What? I lost again" Fan Ruogang couldn't believe it. She had lost during the cultivator's race just before this as well.? The rest of the disciples who bet were also disappointed. The lucky guy who started the bid now took all of their money.

"Hey, don't keep that yet. The next race is happening right now," Ma Rong said as she pointed the various disciple who came out with their own artifacts.

Ning simply shook his head and looked at the stage. 'I wonder how well I would've done on the cultivator's race,' he thought. His cultivation wasn't very high, so he couldn't really tell how good he was compared to them, but if he had taken part in the race, he would've lost without a doubt.

'Those guys were so fast,' he thought and subconsciously looked towards the southern side of the coliseum where the big shot was staying. Suddenly, his eyes got cold and a hint of anger appeared in them.

But then he controlled himself and looked away from them. The artifact race was starting. Everyone sat on some kind of a small boat and once the horn was blown, they flew away. The stage was expanded to be around a kilometer long in length, but it was no time for the participants.

In a matter of seconds, they all crossed that distance. "Woah, that is so fast," Alex said. Ma Rong's boat was a little faster, but that was because she was in the True Realm. These Self Tempering realm cultivators reaching close to her speed was already very amazing.

More races occurred after that some of which were the Beast and Cultivator riding race, Puppet race, and a flying race where the cultivators had to fly the whole way through.

Once this competition ended, it was around 2 pm in the day.

"This is taking a lot longer than I had expected. How long does it usually last, Master?" he asked.

"Hmm... they should end it by 5 pm, regardless of if the competition ends or not. Either way, this is the last event of the day," Ma Rong said as she stood up.

"Come with me," she said as she walked away from the seating area. Alex didn't understand what was going on, so he followed her.

Surprisingly, she had taken him to the seating area of the Tiger sect.

Wen noticed Ma Rong walking and looked back. "Why are you guys here?" he asked.

"You are better at the upcoming stuff. Teach him," Ma Rong said and pushed Alex forward. "Learn something," she said and turned back.

"Come, sit Yu Ming," Wen Cheng said and made him sit beside him.

"Where's senior sister? Did she leave for the competition already?" Alex asked.

"Yeah, the 3 of them already went down," Wen Cheng said. "By the way, why did you change your face?" he asked.

Alex thought for a second and decided to tell Wen Cheng the whole story. "What? You will be staying with me now. I will see what that troublemaker can do after this," Wen Cheng said.

Alex smiled and said, "It's a fine master. With my face changed he shouldn't be able to recognize me."

"Yeah I guess that is true," Wen Cheng said.

Fu Zhen walked onto the stage and started speaking.

"We will now begin Single Battles. There are a few rules the contestants have to follow before taking part in this competition."

"First of all, you cannot use anything that is above the Common Rank. No weapons, armors, artifacts, formations, nothing."

"Secondly, you are considered to have lost the battle in 3 scenarios. Either if you forfeit the battle, if you faint, or you get thrown out of the stage, you will lose the battle."

"If you fail to show up to the battle in the first place within 2 minutes of me calling, you will automatically fail as well."

"So, please everyone come down up to the stage, we will choose your opponents now," Fu Zhen said.

Everyone walked up to the stage and was made to draw numbers from a box in secret.

"Keep that number with you. That will be what chooses who you are going to fight. There are 2 pairs of the same card for a total of 128 pairs."

"For the first match, we will start with numbers 1 through 4. Everyone else, please return back to the waiting room," Fu Zhen said and made the others leave.

"Come, the stage will be set for you soon."

Chapter 313: The Royal Family

High in the coliseum, on the southern side, were the royal family of the Crimson Empire.

"Urghh... this is so boring," a voice rang out in the group. Nobody even had to look to know who was speaking right now. "Why don't they make those in the True realm fight. What's so fun about watching these kids fight?"

"I told you, Uncle, it was going to be boring. It's not like we didn't warn you," the second prince, Fu Yuhan said. He was a thin man with short hair and a clean-shaven face.

"That's right, Brother. We told you the competition wasn't for you, why did you even come? You never came before," Fu Zemin, the second brother of the Emperor said. He looked the eldest of the bunch, despite being the second brother due to his lack of talent in cultivation. Still, he had managed to get where he was thanks to all the resources that came with being a prince to an empire.

"I— I have something to do," Fu Zexi, the third brother of the Emperor said.

"Well, you can't blame anyone else then," the second prince said.

"Tsk. I wish the battles get a little bit better, otherwise, I will die of boredom," Fu Zexi said.

"Zexi, those down below are the future of this empire. We are not here to watch normal battles. We are here to search for talents that can go on to be the pillar of the empire. So either leave or shut up and watch," An authoritative voice came from the center.

The Emperor, Fu Zexian had finally decided to speak after listening to his younger brother babble on forever. The Emperor was a man with a cultivation base high enough so that despite being nearly a hundred years old, he looked like he was in his 30s.

His build was the same as his third brother; he had broad shoulders and big muscles. But he did not have a scruffy face and instead had a clean-shaven one. His hair was still all black surprisingly.

"So— sorry brother," Zexi said in a meek voice.

"Ah, Dear Husband, don't scold brother-in-law, after spending days in the illegal fighting den for days on end, obviously this would look boring in comparison," the empress said.

The Empress looked older than the Emperor in general, but even the Empress looked like she was in her 30s at most. Adding on to the fact that she had no wrinkles and could generally be considered a beauty, she was a perfect match for the Emperor.

"Pfft" a few people laughed after seeing the empress not so subtly call out the third brother of the Emperor.

"Tsk. Even sister-in-law is starting to tease me now," Zexi said.

"Xi Xia, you are hurting Zexi's feelings now," the Emperor said.

"Huh? And your scolding doesn't hurt his feelings?" the Empress asked.

"Uhh... that's different. He is used to my scolding since he was a child, so it's fine," the Emperor said.

"Hmph, you scolding him is fine, but me teasing him is not? Why do I feel like you are choosing your brother over me," the Empress said.

"How can you say that, Xiaxia. You know I love you very dearly. I even refused all those concubines for you," the Emperor said.

"Right kids. Tell your mother how much I love her," the Emperor asked his children.

"Yes, Father. You love mother very dearly," the second prince said in a monotone voice as if that was a daily thing for him.

"Wuying? Are you not going to say anything?" the Emperor asked.

The princess was currently focused down below, but her eyes didn't seem to match the direction of the fights.

"Where are you looking, Wuying?" the Emperor asked, but the princess did not respond. She didn't even hear the question.

"Wuying?" he called to her once more.

The second prince nudged his little sister a bit to catch her attention. "What?" she looked at the second prince who just pointed at his father.

The princess turned around and asked, "What is it, father?"

"Where is your head at? Weren't you listening to anything?" the Emperor asked.

"Uhh... I found someone interesting a few days ago who I think is a disciple of a sect participating in this competition. Except, I can't find him anywhere," Wuying said.

"You found someone interesting?" the Empress asked curiously.

"Yes. It was a boy who noticed one of my shadow guards," Wuying said.

"Someone found your shadow guard? That too a disciple? Impossible. They are the best at hiding. Even I would have a hard time finding them if I wasn't looking for them," the Emperor said.

"But that is the truth, Father. Which is why I am searching for him right now," Wuying said.

"Tell us more about this boy," the Empress said, and Wuying fully explained everything. They all listened curiously and nodded.

'Long hair, clean face, moderately tall build... they all match, except for the robe. The one he was wearing looked really bland, so it probably wasn't even his real robes,' Zexi thought when he heard the descriptions.

The Emperor made the rest of them search for such a boy, he started searching too. There were a few ones along the way he found, but none matched.

"That robe looks correct," Wuying said.

"Hm... that's Hong Wu sect, an Alchemy focused sect. I doubt someone like that is from them. Let's keep searching," the emperor said.

'Alchemy?' Zexi thought. 'Alchemy... Spirit Cleansing Lily... it would make sense if he was from there but... the flower showed up in an auction in the capital. Did he leave— where is the Hong Wu sect again? Scarlet City?' His eyes went wide.

'Scarlet city has a branch of Pink Cloud auction house as well,' he thought and immediately started looking through the disciples of Hong Wu sect but couldn't find any.

Just as he was about to look away, however, he noticed something peculiar. 'Why is that one disciple staying away from the group?'

Chapter 314: Teaching

"I can't find him," Wuying said after searching for about 5 minutes.

"Maybe he is not here. I can get the guards to search for him if you want," the Emperor said.

"No, need. Maybe he already left the capital," Wuying said while sounding a little disappointed.

"Big brother, I will leave now. I need to go check on my wife," Zemin said as he stood up to leave.

"How is she by the way? Any improvements?" the Emperor asked.

"No, not really. Lai Qing is still trying to find new pills that might work for her, but nothing is really happening. It seems not even he has any idea what to do in this situation," Zemin said with a sad face.

"Sigh, I will do something to search for people that might have some idea. Don't lose hope," the Emperor said and watched his brother leave. He then looked at Zexi and asked, "Don't you want to leave too?"

Zexi looked outside the arena with a curious smile and said, "No, No I don't think I will."

CLANG

Swords clashed on the stage as both of the fighters pushed each other back. One of them threw out a golden slash towards the other, while the other one parried it to hit a barrier behind him.

Alex and the rest of the tiger sect were upon the seating area watching the fights.

"Sigh, I guess we won't see interesting fights until around 64 people remain. Two more rounds of Single Battles to go, I guess," Wen Cheng said.

"Are people doing nothing but hiding their abilities to not give away their advantage?" Alex asked.

"Yes. So the battles are very straightforward and easy to get bored of," Wen Cheng said. "Still, you should learn a few things from today's battles."

"First of all, as you can see, cultivation base isn't everything. Look at that guy named.... Macks? Maks?"

"Max," Alex helped Wen Cheng with the pronunciation.

"Yes, that guy. His cultivation base is at 9th Meridian Tempering realm, Yet he is barely keeping up with his opponent that has 8th Meridian Tempering realm."

"From that name, I can tell he's one of the new cultivators that have popped up recently around the empire. He has so much cultivation base, but because he rushed to where he is now, it's not properly stabilized, and thus he can't use the full capabilities of his cultivation base."

"Sigh, I don't know what sort of idiot let that guy into the competition," Wen Cheng said.

Alex knew these things already, but he had never seen a rushed cultivation base be this bad. It was like the player couldn't even release all of the Qi in his body at once.

'Well, I'm glad I didn't rush,' Alex thought.

Max was throwing out attacks, but none of it were landing on the opponent. Soon, he was overwhelmed by his enemy's attack and got defeated.

As soon as one match was over, they immediately called out the other 2 pairs. With 4 pairs fighting at once, the competition holders could continuously have multiple battles going on without any downtime.

"Oh, it's brother Wan," Alex said looking at the stage. It turned out Wan Li had the number 9, the next pair going to the stage.

His opponent was someone who Alex remembered had gotten 9th Meridian Tempering in the Elemental puppet.

"Brother Wan doesn't have time to learn how to fight, so he shouldn't have much fighting experience. I wonder how he will fare up against his opponent. He should be fine through just his raw strength right?" Alex asked.

The referee made the two stay on the opposite side of the stage. Wan Li took out a sword while the opponent took out a quarterstaff.

"Begin," the referee said.

ZZZZOOOMM

A red-colored attack immediately flew off of Wan Li's sword the moment the competition began.

"Wha— " the opponent couldn't even say anything as the attack hit him directly in the chest and threw him out of the stage.

"Match Over," the referee said and gave Wan Li one of the 9 paper slips that he had taken from both of them.

"That was fast," Alex thought.

"Your first ranking disciple is not bad when it comes to fighting I see. Much better than when you came to me," Wen Cheng said.

"Shame we didn't get to see his actual fighting style," Wen Cheng said. "Guess, we will have to wait for tomorrow."

"How many competitions will take place tomorrow?" Alex asked.

"Hmm... Given that we end on the Singles battle, tomorrow's might also start with a Singles battle, since that is what they want. After that another set of competitions, followed by another Singles battle that should bring the number down to 32," Wen Cheng said.

The fights weren't very fun to watch, but Alex didn't have a problem with that. Wen Cheng was steadily explaining anything and everything he thought Alex should be aware of in combat.

When he saw puppets or beasts, he explained how one should fight against multiple opponents at once.

"Always go for the weaker one first. If you don't they will end up being annoying, and hamper your battle a lot. If you ever come across a beast or a puppet that is weaker than its master, beat it first."

"However, if it's the master that is weaker, then you have an easier chance to victory. As long as you defeat the master into unconsciousness, unless the beast is very intelligent, the puppet will be unresponsive and the beast will just be a normal monster," Wen Cheng explained.

Alex nodded when he heard this information and kept them in his mind.

"Your best chances at fighting users with long-ranged attacks like that guy with the bow with to get in so close that he can't use his weapon anymore. See, that's what his opponent did just there," Wen Cheng explained while looking at the fight between two people end.

"Oh, the next contestants are both focused on elemental techniques if I remember correctly. This should help me explain something important that I didn't have the time to previously," Wen Cheng said.

Chapter 315: Elemental Theory

The two new fighters got onto the stage and stayed on either side of the stage. Once the referee gave the go, the man immediately made a fireball in his hand and threw it towards the other man.

The other man created a veil of a large amount of water that worked as a barrier. The fireball was snuffed out by the water. He then sent a blast of wind towards the other man.

Up on the seating area, Wen Cheng started talking to Alex.

"You know the elemental theory, right?" Wen Cheng asked.

"The elemental theory?" Alex asked in confusion. "The same one as the one in Alchemy?" he asked.

"Oh right, you know Alchemy, so you must understand it easily. When two people that use elemental abilities instead of physical fight, if their skill and cultivation base is the same, the one that wins will mostly depend on their element of use."

Alex felt like he could understand what he was saying but was still generally confused.

"Wait, I'm getting ahead of myself. Let me explain from the beginning. Remember when I told you about the spiritual roots, and how one is? compared to the other?" Wen Cheng asked.

"Yes. The ones with lesser elemental roots are perceived as better," Alex said.

"Yes, exactly. Perceived as better, not are better. As I explained last time, The lesser the spiritual root, the stronger the effect of the spiritual root becomes. However, the more the spiritual roots, the more elemental affinity one has."

"So, keeping this in mind, I want you to tell me. Who is stronger of the two, A cultivator with Metal and Water roots, or A cultivator with Wood and Fire roots?" Wen Cheng asked.

This was a very strange question Ning had never encountered before. He tried to think but he wasn't used to elements interacting with one another.

Even during alchemy, he only did what the recipe said, and never truly learned the elements themselves. That was one of the reasons why Ma Rong wanted him to buy disposable cauldrons and learn the interaction between elements alone.

With no choice, he thought back to the first lesson with Ma Rong where she taught him the elements.

'Metal and Water, Fire and Wood,' he thought.

"Um, if they have the same cultivation base then the one with Wood can Weaken water, and Ruin Metal. Even with Fire, he can Ruin Water and, and Control as well as Overwhelm Metal."

"I think the man with the Fire and Woo—? wait, But Metal can Ruin Fire as well and Control as well as Overwhelm Wood, while Water can Control and Overwhelm Fire."

Ale looked up to Wen Cheng and said, "I am very confused right now, Master." It was very hard for him to make sense of what he was learning.

"Don't be. I asked that question especially to make you confused," Wen Cheng said. "The reason you are confused is that you know what Elements the two cultivators are using, but you don't know anything else."

"There are 3 things aside from elements alone that influence a fight between cultivators of the same cultivation base," Wen Cheng said.

"The first is the Elemental Strength. This all depends on what type of spiritual roots you have. The lower the spiritual roots, the stronger the Elemental Strength gets."

"The second is Qi amount. This is how much Qi the cultivators use during an attack. As you might imagine, the more Qi one uses, the more damage they can deal."

"The third is Qi density. The denser your Qi is, the more power you can pack behind it."

"Their order of importance would be Element, followed by Elemental Strength, followed by Qi Density, followed by Qi Amount."

"So, every elemental attack has these 4 things that will influence the result," Wen Cheng continued explaining.

Alex was fully engrossed in the explanation. He felt like he was seeing stuff he knew with a completely different eye.

"Now, each Element interacts with other elements in one of the 5 ways. They can Empower, Control, Overwhelm, Weaken or Ruin the elements."

"The thing you need to learn is not what element interacts with what elements. You already know that from your alchemy probably. The thing you need to learn is how one of those 5 interactions can occur," Wen Cheng said.

Wen Cheng started explaining a very lengthy topic about elemental interaction. Elemental Strength, Qi Amount and Qi Density, when all of these things were combined, whoever had the better one would be the winner.

Say a man had wood spiritual root, and another man had metal spiritual root, regardless of whatever else spiritual roots they had, and they both attacked each other with an elemental attack.

If the man with the wood spiritual root had a better combination of Elemental strength, Qi density, and Qi amount than the man with the Metal Qi, then the Wood attack would destroy the metal attack thus inducing Ruin.

However, if the man with the Metal spiritual roots had a better combination, then the Metal attack would either control the wood attack or overwhelm it.

If Control was induced, the controlling element would regulate the other element and stop it from advancing.

If Overwhelm was induced, the overwhelming element would rip apart the other element and go past it.

If Weaken was induced, the element being weakened would slowly exhaust until it was no more.

If Ruin was induced, the winning element would violently destroy the other element, most of the time leading to explosions.

Empower was a weird one and normally wasn't induced. The only way to induce it was when helping an ally attack by adding the element and Qi to the forming attack.

One of the 5 was always induced in one way or another, except on a single case. That was when both the opponents had the same element.

In that case, it would be a pushing battle, and whoever had the stronger combination of the other three aspects, won.

Chapter 316: Proposition

The fights went on, but none of it were much interesting. The ones that were interesting somehow didn't entice the audience since they knew the ones fighting weren't strong fighters and would likely get stomped next match.

Still, it was fun to watch, and people enjoyed it. Everyone watched it, except Alex. He tried to watch it, but he couldn't do anything but analyze what Wen Cheng had said and quickly learn it.

"Oh yeah, what about the 2 elements, Yin and Yang?" Alex asked.

"Those? Yin and Yang are always better than the other 5, but due to the fact that they don't induce any of the 5 effects, they will interact in the same way as when 2 of the same elements interact. Whichever one is stronger overall, wins," Wen Cheng said.

Alex fell into another deep thought as his one query was answered. But he couldn't keep that for long as Yang Ma took the stage, followed by Du Yuhan in a few more minutes and finally Luo Mei.

The three of them had easy opponents and couldn't show off their full strength. Yang Ma simply showed off his aura to make his opponent get scared into forfeiting.

Du Yuhan attacked the opponent with his sword and made him faint without cutting him.

While Luo Mei fought like a normal weaker girl and found like one before winning in a few minutes. She was still hiding her abilities, everyone was.

Once more of the matches ended, Alex stood up and bid farewell to Wen Cheng before leaving.

"Oh, you are back. I was about to ask someone to get you," Ma Rong said. "So, how was it? Did he teach anything regarding the fights?"

"Uh... Yes? No? I don't know," Alex said.

"Hmm? What do you mean?" Ma Rong said.

"He taught me the Elemental theory during a fight between elemental users," Alex said.

"Ah, that! That was what I wanted you to learn by yourself through trial and error, but it seems he already taught you that. Well, whatever, it was barely going to help you what ingredients to put in and what not to. Not that it matters since you will have to understand how that affects the usage of a pill," Ma Rong said.

Alex nodded. The elemental knowledge was still weighing heavily on his mind. "Let's leave", Ma Rong said once Wan Li and the rest had come back.

Unfortunately, the girl had lost in the 1st round, but everyone still consoled her for trying. They also congratulated Wan Li and the other guy for winning their matches.

"Alright, let's leave," Ma Rong said and took her sect's people with her. It was a long day, and it was nearly 5 pm. So no one really wanted to do anything but simply go back to the hotel and rest.

After reaching the hotel each of them went back to their rooms. Alex went straight to his bed and sat down to think about what he had learned today.

He tried thinking of each scenario and started devising what the result would be. He analyzed as much as he could before and after the meeting at 7 pm.

Even halfway through the night, he kept on learning about it. Only after then did he think that he truly learned everything.

Overnight, he cultivated with Pearl but it was not a lot of time. In the morning, he woke up at 6 am. He quickly logged out and went to get something to eat.

Surprisingly, Hannah was up this early as well.

"What's going on sister? Why are you awake so early?" he asked.

Hannah stopped drinking her coffee and looked at him. "Oh, I... uh got a message from Sarah and Emily this morning. It's regarding their moving into our place," Hannah said.

"Oh," slight nervousness entered Alex's heart. "What did they say?" Alex asked.

"They... it seems that Emily really can't pay any bill for the house, so she couldn't join at all," Hannah said.

"Oh," Alex was disappointed this time.

"Then I made a proposition," Hannah said.

"A proposition? What sort?" he asked.

"I told her, that we could split the bill in 3 ways so that us 3 could pay her part as well," Hannah said.

Alex was a little taken aback. "Why do that sister? Isn't that profitable for us?" Alex asked.

"Yes, but we gotta take the loss somehow," Hannah said. Alex got a little confused. "Why?" he asked.

"For you, silly. You like her right? I'm trying to set you two up. Can't you understand that?" Hannah said. "And guess what? They said yes. Apparently, their friends were thinking of changing rooms soon too, so when they brought up the idea of moving, their roommates found one too," Hannah said.

"... oh." Alex was so dumbfounded that that was all he could say. His heartbeat rose a few dozen and his stomach started feeling funny.

Hannah saw his face and asked, "Aren't you happy?"

"Oh, uh... Umm... I am. I was just not expecting that," Alex said.

"Whatever. They will move in after a week or so. Don't worry about it now, focus on your game and earning money. We have no idea how long the game will last for. It's entirely possible that the game's money will collapse within the month. So, it's better to earn as much as we can right now," Hannah said.

Alex nodded and sat down to eat. Their conversation had taken a little longer than expected, so he chomped through his breakfast and quickly returned back to his room.

Then, he logged back into the game. He opened his eyes as Wan Li was shaking him.

"Huh? What's going on?" he asked as he stopped Wan Li from shaking him even more.

"Brother Yu, why were you so asleep? It's time for us to leave," Wan Li said while pointing at the door. It seemed everyone was ready for the day.

So, Alex and Wan Li quickly walked out and joined the group.

"All here? Let's move."

Chapter 317: More Clarification

Alex was once again sitting with Wen Cheng. It was a little while before the competition started, so everyone was there.

"Maser, I had some questions regarding yesterday's teaching, as well as some things I want you to clear up for me," Alex said.

"Sure, ask," Wen Cheng said.

"You said that Elemental Strength, Qi amount, and Qi density affect the fight between two elemental users right? But that was only if their cultivation base was the same. What about when they don't have the same cultivation base? I had some thoughts regarding this, " Alex asked.

Wen Cheng smiled and said, "Let's hear it."

"Elemental strength never changes regardless of one's cultivation base since it's related to the spiritual roots. The only thing that does is the Qi Density and amount."

"So here was my confusion. Qi Density increases as one reaches higher realm, but since Qi amount affects a battle as well, can't a lower realm cultivator just pump out more Qi and win against a higher realm cultivator's attack?" he asked.

"Hmm... technically, yes. You are correct. However, there is more than just theory in a fight. A higher realm cultivator doesn't just have a denser Qi, they also have a higher Qi quantity. So, when it comes to pumping out Qi, they won't ever lose."

"On the case, they don't pump out more Qi to fight than required, there is also the condition of Qi density being much more important to an attack than just Qi amount. So the lower realm cultivator would have to use an abnormal amount of Qi to overpower their opponent's attack," Wen Cheng said.

"Oh right," Alex said as he understood more and more.

"So, a person with a 5 elemental root like me doesn't necessarily have bad spiritual roots, right?" Alex asked.

Wen Cheng's face changed a little as he hesitatingly said, "uhh... I guess? They have an easier time fighting off the different opponents, but you have to remember, the most important aspect of an elemental battle aside from the elements themselves is the Elemental Strength. So those who had lesser elemental roots usually fare better."

'Yes, but we can offset that with Qi density. And my Qi density is one of the highest, isn't it?' Alex thought. Because of that, Alex now had an advantage against everyone fighting as long as they were around the safe cultivation realm as him. He just needed to know what element to use on the go.

"There is something else you should know," Wen Cheng suddenly spoke. "We talked about all of this yet I didn't mention one thing. That is, Not every attack is imbued with elements."

"An attack is usually either entirely an element, entirely Qi, or mostly in between. It's considered an elemental attack as long as it has the slightest hint of the element in the Qi."

"Your spiritual root is capable of changing Qi into elements, usually at not a very high amount. But when you use techniques, you can go as far as completely change Qi into a different element."

"However, at the end of the day, every person is different and every technique is different. You can never guess what attacks they may have or what spiritual roots they may have. So, having a 5 elemental does help one in adapting to every fight."

"But no matter how many hand tricks you know, a person with a strong arm can always punch you right in the face."

"Just look at your senior sister for example. She has a superior water elemental root. From what we learned, you would assume that she would be weak to Wood, clash with Fire, unresponsive to Metal and be strong against Earth elemental attacks. But at the end of the day, because she has the stronger elemental strength and a strong cultivation base, nobody can match up to her." Wen Cheng said.

Alex contemplated for a second. 'So at the end of the day, strength is what matters, huh. Just like Du Yuhan said, As long as I am strong, nothing else matters,' Alex thought.

"Thank you, Master," he thanked him.

"Haha, don't thank me. It's my job to teach you those things," Wen Cheng said.

The competition finally started. The Royal family had already come back today to watch the fights and Fu Zhen called for all the contestants to arrive onto the stage.

They were once more made to collect pieces of papers from a box. Everyone picked their and Fu Zhen said, "Number 1 and 2 pair, stay back. Everyone else can leave,"

The Singles battles were now going to reduce 128 contestants down to 64, so only 2 stages were prepared to have 32 different matches on a single stage.

"Oh, it's little Ma's turn first. His opponent isn't that strong, so it should be fine," Wen Cheng said. Alex looked down to see the red-haired Yang Ma get ready to fight with a big smile.

His opponent had around 9th Meridian Tempering realm from what he had revealed in the damage test.

Alex could suddenly see the opponent shiver slightly and his grip on his quarterstaff loosen a bit. 'Is he using his cultivation base aura again?' Alex wondered.

Yang Ma must have expected his opponent to give up and forfeit the match like his last one, but this one had more heart to him than that.

The opponent immediately tightened his grip and got into a stance with his quarterstaff. Yang Ma's smile faded for a second when he saw this before a wider one replaced it. He was happy to fight.

The opponent was a close combat fighter, so he suddenly dashed forward and slammed his staff at Yang Ma. However, just when he was about to reach him, Yang Ma suddenly threw out a fire blast that sent his opponent flying to the barrier on the other side before he plopped down on the floor.

Yang Ma had won the match and he advanced to the top 64.

A few more fighters came up to the stage and fought. Alex watched them all and saw how their attacks reacted to each other. Just from that information, he was now able to tell who probably had a higher cultivation base or a single spiritual root.

The more elements they used, the more accurate Alex's guess would become.

Chapter 318: A Few More Competitions

After 10 or so different matches, Wan Li finally came onto the stage. His fight was very simple. He would throw out energy blasts of red colors to the opponent and did so until he won.

His opponent had a water elemental root too from what Alex could see, but since he was weaker, Wan Li's fire element attacks easily won against him.

After a few matches, Luo Mei walked up to the stage.

Alex wasn't worried about his senior sister. That was until Wen Cheng said, "Sh*t." Alex didn't understand why he said that. Her opponent was a man with a violet robe with white linings.

"Is he strong," Alex asked.

"His sect is. It's called the Lesser Immortal sect. It's one of the first 5 sects to reach the 1st grade. Hopefully, this opponent isn't a problem for her," Wen Cheng said.

Her opponent was a tall man that took out a bow. The bow looked expensive and was probably a Common Heaven rank item.

Seeing her opponent, Luo Mei brought out her blue, rapier-like sword as well.

"Begin."

As soon as the words left the referee's mouth, the man pulled back his bow, and a brown arrow formed on his bow. He released it and the arrow immediately flew towards Luo Mei.

Luo Mei wasn't any slower either. She made a simple slash and blue energy flew forth and hit the arrow.

BOOM

A violent explosion rang out that shook both of them.

Alex's body jerked a little from the surprise of the explosion. When the dust settled, a brown barrier could be seen in front of the man.

"Ah, so we have nothing to worry about, right master? Her water attack destroyed his earth attack," Alex said.

"Yes. It seems that she has an upper hand. Thank god, he must be one of the weaker ones to join the singles battle," Wen Cheng said. Alex concurred.

Luo Mei's and the other person's fight lasted a little longer, but Luo Mei had no real trouble winning.

Few more matches took place after that. Du Yuhan's match ended in a single blow. The other remaining guy from the Hong Wu sect unfortunately matched up with a disciple from the Myriad beast sect. He had to fight against both man and beast in the 1st Mind Tempering realm, which was impossible for him.

By the end of the competition, only 64 disciples remained and the audience was starting to realize what sect they had to keep an eye on.

Some of these sects were Tiger Sect, Royal Fu Academy, Golden Eagle sect, Honor sect, Thousand Hands sect, Cloud Valley sect, Myriad Beasts sect, True Wisdom sect, and Lesser Immortal sect.

Thousand Hands sect was a sect that dealt with puppets, and the Cloud Valley sect, as well as the Myriad Beasts sect, dealt with beast taming.

These three sects were considered the most annoying to fight due to having to fight multiple fighters at once.

Unfortunately, the Little Dawn sect and Spirit Song sect didn't make it to the top 64 despite their explosive talismans and pills.

Once the Single Battles were done, it was time for the next set of competitions.

The first one was a flying competition. Everyone started by hovering 1 meter off of the ground. Once they were told to start, the contestants had to fly as high as they could in 10 seconds. Then they had to stay flying for another 10 seconds. The final position was regarded as the highest height one flew to.

The second one was a weight-carrying competition. A person had to hold a weight in midair above a meter in height. The host would slowly add more and more weight until the participants caved under the weight and couldn't hold it above the meter line. The one that could carry the most weight for more than 10 seconds won.

The third competition was the Multiple Attention competition. The competitors had to carry objects, in this case, small balls, one by one and keep them hovering in the air at least half a meter distance apart from each other. This forced them to use individual Qi connections to carry objects instead of collective.

The one who could hold the most midair without dropping any or having them get closer than half a meter won.

The fourth competition checked the total quantity of one's Qi. This was naturally skewed towards those in the higher realm. The contestants were made to pour in as much Qi as they could in a metal ball that changed color based on the amount. It started from being a black sphere and got whiter as the Qi was poured in. The one whose ball was the most white won.

The fifth competition checked the Qi density of one's Qi. This too was naturally skewed towards those in the higher realm. The contestants were once more made to pour in Qi, but not a lot this time. The black sphere that took in their Qi and got whiter the denser it was. The person whose ball was the most white at the end won.

These 5 competitions took around 3 hours to end. Those that took part in the competitions were given a single spirit stone and allowed to cultivate inside a Qi Gathering formation as well as given a Qi restoration pill to get them back on their feet in case they had another fight competition coming up next.

Alex watched all of these competitions and wondered if he could do well in these competitions. The one about Qi amount was a no for him due to his cultivation base. But the other ones he was quite hopeful about.

He had a good Qi density, he could fly pretty high, he hadn't checked how much he could carry, but that should be a lot as well, and he was very confident in winning the multiple attention competition.

'I wonder what cultivation base my Qi density compares to,' he thought.

Once all the five competitions were over. It was time for the final competition of the day. The Singles Battle between the top 64 contestants.

Chapter 319: Top 64 starts

"Now, for the final event of the day. The battle between the Top 64 strongest cultivators amongst the current generation will now begin," Fu Zhen announced.

"This time, the participants won't get to randomly choose their opponents. Instead, we have made a placement chart for you to see who you will all be fighting against. Here it is."

The moment Fu Zhen stopped speaking, a massive chart with the fighting brackets appeared in the sky.

There were 4 different groups in the chart. There were 2 groups on each side and each group had 16 participants.

"As you can see, we have separated the participants based on a few different secret criteria. The one we can reveal is that we made the brackets so that no two participants of the same sect will ever have to fight prior to the semi-finals."

"Please look at the brackets for a while. In the meanwhile, Group A, please gather down below. The matches will start very soon," Fu Zhen said.

"I'm leaving junior brother, I will come back later," Luo Mei said and left the seating area.

"Good Luck sister," Alex said and looked back at the brackets. Luo Mei was 5th on the list. Thankfully, Wan Li wasn't in that group. He was in group 3 with Yang Ma.

'At least he won't lose immediately,' Alex thought.

"Arghh, this is bad," Wen Cheng started to worry about something.

"What's wrong, Master?" Alex asked.

"Group 2 is bad. Group 2 is horrible. So many strong participants are in group 2. Yuhan, you think you will be fine?" Wen Cheng asked.

Du Yuhan looked up at the brackets once more and looked down. "It doesn't matter, sect leader. I will try my best," he said.

"Sigh, I know you will. Little Ma doesn't have it any easy either. I guess none of the groups are easy anymore. There are so few participants now that every battle you fight might be your last," Wen Cheng said.

The first battle was starting between a cultivator wearing a golden robe and another cultivator wearing a dark blue robe.

"Oh, the first one is a disciple from the Honor sect. Against a random sect, they should win easily," Wen Cheng said.

"So the golden robe what Honor sect wears, huh. Honor sect... where did I hear the name before? Hmn...Ah right, their sect leader came to the bi-annual auction a month ago," Alex said.

"Huh? Lu Chun was in the auction? How do you know?" Wen Cheng asked.

"Oh, Master told me when she noticed him," Alex said. "Is it weird?"

"No, I'm just surprised he was even there in the first place. Since they are a 1st-grade sect, they usually don't enter a sect without another first-grade sect," Wen Cheng said.

"Oh, so then why did he?" Alex asked.

"Probably because the city is close and he had free time. Rosewood city is just 3 to 4 hours of flight for him, you know," Wen Cheng said.

"Ah, yes," Alex said as he recalled the map of the empire.

The golden-robed man started the attack. He suddenly placed his arms on the ground and various spikes made up of earth appeared on the other side of the stage.

The other man sent out a golden slash, but the man from the Honor sect brought forth a wall of earth from the ground. It easily blocked the attack.

"He...is using pure elements to fight, right?" Alex asked.

"Yes, he is mostly just using elements without the Qi. Still, it is so strong that the other kid's metal Qi can't weaken it at all," Wen Cheng said.

Quickly, the man from the Honor sect finished the match by sending a barrage of fist-sized stones towards his opponent.

The next match was between a disciple from the Myriad Beast sect and a disciple from another normal sect. The competition holders had made sure that the strong never met at the start.

This was an easy battle for the Myriad beast sect disciple.

The next one up was Luo Mei. Her opponent was a disciple from a random sect she didn't know at all. Her match was pretty simple as well.

All she did was throw gushes of water at her opponent until they couldn't handle it anymore and gave up.

The next match was between two relatively unknown sects. The fight was between a woman with a sword and a man with a spear.

In the end, the woman with the sword won after a long, intense battle. She was heavily wounded at the end of it, but a single pill from the referee helped her heal a lot.

The next few matches were relatively fun to watch, but still very simple.

The winner for the 5th match was a disciple from the Lesser Immortal sect. The winner for the 6th match was the True Wisdom sect. The winner for the 7th match was the Golden Eagle sect. And finally, the winner for the 8th match was a disciple from Royal Fu Academy.

This concluded the matches of Group A.

The next one was Group B. Once called, Du Yuhan and 15 other people walked to the waiting area. Luo Mei returned back to her seat.

"Congratulations, sister. You did great out there," Alex said.

"Thank you, but there is a lot more to be done. Master, I'm really worried about that guy from the Royal Fu Academy," Luo Mei said.

"Sigh, I know. Thankfully, neither you nor Yuhan will meet your opponents from Royal Fu academy until the final match of your group, which will be the top 8," Wen Cheng said.

"Yes. Hopefully, the others aren't surprisingly strong and have more up their sleeves. I really don't want to reveal everything I have until the final match," Luo Mei said.

"I wish the same for all three of you," Wen Cheng said.

Finally, Fu Zhen called for the first pair of Group B.

Du Yuhan walked out from the second area, along with his opponent from a random sect. It was his turn to fight next.

Chapter 320: Intent

Du Yuhan walked onto the stage, along with his opponent from a random sect. Du Yuhan still held a sheathed blade in his left hand as he walked to his spot at the other side of the stage.

"Begin," the referee shouted.

Du Yuhan didn't do anything but stayed there. His opponent on the other hand started using his techniques to send out attacks. The first one was a spiraling ball of metal energy.

The opponent shot it out towards Du Yuhan. However, due to the small size of the energy, he easily dodged it.

Seeing that small attacks didn't work, his opponent sent out a ball of fire instead that was too big to dodge. In response, Du Yuhan swiped his hand in front of him creating an illusory barrier of multicolored lights.

Once the ball of fire landed on the barrier, it suddenly got incredibly smaller which didn't pose any threat to Du Yuhan at all.

"What?" Alex was surprised up in the seating area. "That's... that's the Heaven's Five Barrier technique. How does he know that too?"

"Does that mean that he..." Alex looked at Wen Cheng with a questioning look.

"Yes, just like you, Yuhan is also a person with 5 Elemental Spiritual roots," Wen Cheng said. "So, just like you, he too has learned the Heaven's Five Barrier technique."

Heaven's Five Barrier technique was a technique that allowed users to create a 5 colored barrier that blocked all attacks, reducing their elements by a certain amount depending on the cultivator's cultivation base.

This was the 2nd defensive technique that Alex had learned in the Tiger sect.

"He has 5 Elemental Spiritual roots and yet he is the 2nd ranking disciple of the sect. That is quite a great feat," Alex said.

"No, his spiritual root has nothing to do with his success," Wen Cheng suddenly spoke. "Once he learned that his Spiritual roots weren't very helpful, he gave up on learning different techniques and started learning the sword. Every achievement he has had until now is due to that sword. His spiritual roots have nothing to do with them."

"Oh, does that mean... he doesn't use any techniques?" Alex asked.

"He uses a few here and there, but his techniques aren't very strong due to his spiritual roots, so he only uses them when the technique compliments him. Otherwise, he sticks to simply swordsmanship," Wen Cheng said.

Du Yuhan finally unsheathed his sword and his entire aura changed. He went from a dull person that looked uninterested in the fight to a person that would kill at the slightest movement.

His opponent felt fear like never before.

Du Yuhan took a deep breath and suddenly swung forward. A white slash escaped his sword and flew towards his opponent.

His opponent brought out a metal barrier but before the sword attack could even reach the barrier, another sword attack landed on it from the side destroying it completely.

The opponent looked at the side and saw that the referee had taken out his sword to attack.

The referee looked at Du Yuhan and said "You win."

Du Yuhan bowed and little and sheathed his sword before walking away.

"Wh— What? But the attack never reached me. I could've blocked that attack," the opponent told the referee.

The referee instead just shook his head. "If this were a real battle and I didn't stop him, You would die right now." The opponent shook a little when he heard that.

"Tsk. He's still so strong," Luo Mei said from the seating area.

"That white slash... is that not an elemental attack?" Alex asked.

"No. That's just pure Qi he released from his sword," Wen Cheng said. "However, it also had something else mixed into it that made it so strong."

"A sword intent," Luo Mei said from the side.

"What is a sword intent?" Alex asked. He was never taught anything about them or read anything that mentioned it.

"It's... very high attainment of the sword. After practicing the sword for years, or being attuned to it, you end up slowly becoming one with it. The sword just becomes another part of your body and it follows your intent. In return, your body also becomes just another part of a sword, deadly and sharp."

"Due to practicing with the sword for so long and not training the other techniques as much, Yuhan has managed to do that same thing," Wen Cheng said.

"Hmm... what about spears? Or bows? Or any other weapons. Do they have intents too?" Alex asked.

"Of course. Every weapon has an intent. However, since Sword, Sabers, and Spears are the most used weapons, you will usually only find weapon intents of these 3," Wen Cheng said.

"I wonder if there are other intent users in this competition," Alex asked.

"There are. There definitely are. However, they are keeping this card close to their chest until the last moment to surprise their opponent. Yuhan just revealed his only card to everyone. I hope he knows what he is doing," Wen Cheng said.

The next match started and ended just as quickly. The opponent of the man in a light blue robe with cloud robes immediately gave up when he saw the man bring out a Tiger beast companion.

The 11th match was won by a disciple of the Golden Eagle sect. The 12th match was won by a 3 humanoid puppet user from the Thousand Hands sect. The 13th match was won by a disciple of the Honor sect.

The 14 match was between two random sects. The fight was quite intense, but in the end, one of them managed to beat the other without being too injured.

The 15th match was between a random sect and a disciple from the Lesser Immortal sect. The disciple of the Lesser Immortal sect had an easy victory.

Finally, the final battle was between a disciple of the Royal Fu Academy and a random disciple of the other sect. The Royal Fu Academy's disciple didn't even have a hard time winning against the other one.

And as such, Group B's single battles were over as well