

## Alchemy 321

### Chapter 321: Final Day

Yang Ma stood up and walked away as Du Yuhan walked back in.

"Good job, Yuhan, but did you really need to show your hand in the battle just now? You could've done that later on," Wen Cheng said.

"I'm sorry, sect leader. I did what I thought was the fastest method to win," Du Yuhan said.

"Sigh, alright. You did well nonetheless," Wen Cheng said and looked back at the stage.

The 17th match started between a disciple from a lesser-known sect against a disciple from the True Wisdom sect. The disciple from the True Wisdom sect had an easy time winning with his Wood elemental attacks.

The 18th match was? Yang Ma's. He too easily won against his opponents by throwing out a barrage of his fire attacks.

Wan Li got lucky with his opponent in the 19th match and easily won against him after a few attacks.

The 20th match was won by a disciple of a sect known as Violet Garden. The 21st match was won by a disciple of the Honor sect. The 22nd match was won by a beast tamer from the Cloud Valley sect.

The 23rd match was won by a spear user from a lesser-known sect. Finally, the 24th match was won by a disciple from the Royal Fu Academy.

Thus the Group C's matches ended.

The group D's matches ended in almost the same amount of time.

From 25th through 32nd matches, the matches were won by a disciple from Thousand Hands sect, True Wisdom Sect, Hunting Masters sect, Golden Eagle sect, Cloud Valey sect, Myriad beasts sect, Lesser Immortal sect, and Royal Fu sect.

"All right junior brother, take care. I will see you tomorrow," Luo Mei said as she and the rest of the Tiger sect left the coliseum.

Alex walked up to the Hong Wu sect and congratulated Wan Li. Everyone was very surprised with Wan Li making it into the top 32.

"Seriously Wanwan, tell me how you became so strong? I want to do so too," Fan Ruogang shouted.

"Fanfan, not the time. Let's leave," Ma Rong said and everyone left for the hotel.

Once again, it was very late, so when they all reached back to their hotel, they immediately went to their room to rest. Ma Rong called them for a meeting, and the only thing she did was congratulate Wan Li for making this far.

They didn't have many expectations for him, but he managed to reach the top 32.

"Do your best for tomorrow as well, that is all we ask. You don't even have to win. You've already made us proud by reaching where you are right now," Ma Rong said.

"I will win, sect leader," Wan Li said with determination. After coming to the competition, his timid nature was slowly being stripped away and a confident cultivator was being born.

"Yu Ming, your competition is the final one tomorrow. I don't know if they will set up the singles battle before yours or not but be prepared regardless. It's a single competition, but it may take a long time to complete," Ma Rong said.

"Yes, Master," Alex replied.

Once everything was said, Ma Rong dismissed them all and they went back to their room.

Alex and Wan Li returned to their room and went to their bed. "You should rest for tomorrow's battle, brother Wan. You don't need to read for today," Alex said.

"It's alright, I'm used to it. You should rest too, brother Yu. You have a match coming up tomorrow as well," Wan Li said.

"Very well then, Good Night brother Wan," Alex said and went to his bed before logging out.

He went to freshen up himself and then went to the kitchen to eat something light. Once he was done with that he went back to the game and cultivated overnight with Pearl.

Early in the morning he woke up once again and logged out once more to eat some food.

"Damn, I'm not even hungry. And yet I have to eat?" Alex didn't know what to do. He didn't exercise, his diet was in shambles and now he was eating even when he wasn't hungry.

'I might just gain a dozen or so kilograms at this rate,' he thought.

Once he was done eating, he returned back to his room. Just as he was about to enter the capsule, he stopped.

'Should I use the helmet today? That might be good for my body,' he thought. 'No, what am I thinking? I have a competition today. I can do it later if needed.'

He quickly opened the lid of the capsule and entered.

He opened his eyes in the game and saw that it was nearly time to leave. He still wondered if he should use the helmet after his competition was done.

He waited for the knock on the door and walked outside with Wan Li once he heard it.

"Let's leave," Ma Rong said and walked down the stairs.

Along the way, Alex realized something that he had been ignoring all this time. 'Oh no. My classes start tomorrow,' he thought.

"Master, will the competition end today?" Alex suddenly asked.

"Hmm... most likely. There are about 64 single battles and your maze run remaining until the end. Once that is done, the competition will be over," Ma Rong said.

"Will we return back to the sect immediately or...?" Alex asked.

"We will stay for a few days. At least until the rewards are passed along," Ma Rong said.

"Oh, right, rewards. I forgot there was one too. How do they choose it? I don't suppose everyone who won in a competition gets one," Alex said.

"No, not really. The winners of the Single battles will get a specific reward, but everyone else won't get any. Instead, the sects will be what get the reward."

"Depending on the ranking, we can get anything we want from the Royal Treasure vault that we will be allowed to enter," Ma Rong said.

"Oh, I see. I will look forward to it then," Alex said.

Soon, the lot was in the coliseum and everyone went to sit in the seating area.

Chapter 322: Top 32 - Begin

"Do you want to go to the Tiger sect today as well?" Ma Rong asked.

"Oh, can I, Master? I really learn a lot there," Alex said.

"Okay, sure. Go, but come back when it's time for your match," Ma Rong said.

"Thank you, Master. Brother Wan, good luck on your battle," Alex said and left.

Fu Zhen had let them know that the next match was going to be the Top 32's battle, So Alex had some time to spare before his Maze run.

"Good Morning Master, Sister," Alex greeted Wen Cheng and Luo Mei when he got to the Tiger sect's seating area.

"Oh, you are finally here, junior brother. I thought you wouldn't come since you had a competition today," Luo Mei said.

"Oh right, you are taking part in the same match as little Ma aren't you? The Maze run," Wen Cheng asked.

"Oh, brother Ma is taking part in Maze run too?" Alex asked as he looked towards the red-haired Yang Ma.

"That's a funny coincidence. Don't worry, bother Yu Ming. I will help you in the competition," Yang Ma said.

Luo Mei's eyes got serious for a second as she stared towards Yang Ma. Yang Ma in return got a little timid and slouched back.

"Good Morning ladies and gentlemen, on this fine day that might end up becoming the final day of the competition. I, your host Fu Zhen, am back to tell you about today's competition."

"We will first have the Single Battles between the Top 32 followed by a Maze escaping competition and finally ending with the remaining Single battles."

"Here are the remaining fighters in the Top 32. To improve your experience of the fight, we have now decided to give you something else aside from the name and sect alone," Fu Zhen spoke.

Suddenly, a massive screen with the Top 32 names in the brackets appeared on the screen. It was all the same as yesterday since they were all separated into four groups. However, as Fu Zhen said, there was something else there this time.

"I guess that is to be expected. They did the same thing last year too," Wen Cheng said.

"In fact, I was surprised they didn't do it last time," Luo Mei said.

Alex looked at the screen with the 32 different names. Under each name was the name of the sect they belonged to, as well as their cultivation base.

'Luo Mei, Tiger sect, 6th Mind Tempering realm,' Alex read the words written for his senior sister.

Du Yuhan was in the 3rd realm and Yang Ma was in the 2nd realm. In fact, everyone was in the Mind tempering realm. From what Alex could see, the highest one was the 7th Mind Tempering realm. It belonged to a disciple called Chu Xiang of the Royal Fu academy.

"Thankfully the strongest one is in the Group D. Our disciples would have been in trouble otherwise," One of the elder said from the side.

"Yes. Luo Mei, your opponent should be an easy one. Take care of them quickly and return," Wen Cheng said.

Alex looked back at the brackets and saw that Luo Mei's opponent was a disciple of a sect called the Blue Rose sect. The disciple's cultivation base was only at the 1st realm of Mind Tempering. This would be an easy victory for Luo Mei.

And so the battles started.

The first match was between the Earth element using disciple of the Honor sect who was in 2nd Realm of Mind Tempering, and the disciple from the Myriad sect who herself was in the 2nd realm of Mind Tempering not to mention her beasts who were also in the same realm.

A lizard-like tattoo on her forehead glowed and a crocodile came out of it. The 2v1 battle went on for a while with the Honor Sect disciple attacking with as much earth element as he could, but he was never able to harm the crocodile, let alone pierce its skin.

As such, the Myriad Beast disciple won easily.

Luo Mei's match wasn't even a match. Her opponent, the sword-wielding girl didn't have any chance against her and quickly lost.

Between the 3rd Mind Tempering realm disciple of the Lesser Immortal sect and the third Mind Tempering realm disciple of the True Wisdom sect, the battle was the most fun yet. They were both elemental users and neither could get the upper hand.

In the end, the disciple of the Lesser Immortal sect had to use what looked to be his strongest skill and won the match.

The next match was between the Golden Eagle sect and Royal Fu Academy. The disciple of the Golden Eagle sect was at a respectable 3rd Mind Tempering realm, but the disciple of the Royal Fu Academy was at the 5th realm of Mind Tempering realm.

The disciple from the Royal Fu Academy didn't even have to use much of his strength before winning against his opponent.

With that, the fights of Group A were complete. Without any delay, the fights of Group B were started.

"Oh god, this is going to be a problem," Wen Cheng said as he looked at the bracket hovering mid-air. It brightly glowed the 4 people who had won previously and showed that they moved on to the Top 16.

"Cloud Valley sect... that's the beast taming sect, right? The one Elder Xian was from," Alex asked.

"Yes. Poor Yuhan is going to have a hard time. All of his opponents are in the 3rd Mind Tempering realm, not to mention the 4th Mind Tempering realm the disciple from the Royal Fu Academy. I wouldn't be surprised if he lost now," Wen Cheng said.

Alex looked at the match-up and saw Du Yuhan walk onto the stage along with the light blue robe wearing Cloud Valley disciple.

Alex remembered what Du Yuhan said and remembered his determination at the time. He remembered his will to be the strongest. Such a man losing so early on— Alex just couldn't see that happening at all.

Chapter 323: Empower

Du Yuhan walked onto the stage. His opponent was a disciple from the Cloud Valley sect with a cultivation base of the 3rd Mind tempering realm.

The moment they got onto the stage, the disciple from the Cloud Valley sect brought out a Tiger beast. Just like everyone from that sect, he was a beast tamer as well.

He also lookout a half a meter-long spider as well.

"Begin"

Du Yuhan stayed where he was with his sheathed sword, while his opponent was also a little nervous given that he knew about the sword intent from the last match.

For a few seconds, Du Yuhan did nothing, and neither did his opponent. However, seeing that they couldn't keep it up any longer, the beast tamer decided to move.

"Go," he immediately sent out the tiger. The tiger ran with incredible speed and arrived right in front of Du Yuhan. Instead of using his sword, Du Yuhan simply dodged while keeping an eye on his opponent.



The tiger turned around to attack Du Yuhan, however, he had already gotten his chance.

Du Yuhan suddenly dashed forward towards his opponent. When the opponent saw that, he immediately had the spider make spider webs to block Yuhan, but that didn't work.

Just before he reached the webs, he stopped himself and transferred all of his momentum into one single attack.

SLASH

Death flashed from beyond the webs. The beast tamer was scared for his life when he saw a white slash cut through the nets and fly directly towards him.

Suddenly, a barrier appeared in front of him, and the referee was right by his side. The Referee looked at Du Yuhan and said, "You Win."

Du Yuhan bowed a little towards the referee and left.

The audience was a little surprised. Up until now, he had won in a single strike every single match. Even the audience was now catching onto the fact that he had Sword intent in his attacks.

"See? That's how you deal with the beast tamers. Go for the cultivator himself. They are usually the weakest link," Wen Cheng said. Alex now nodded in approval after seeing what he did.

The next match was between a girl from the Golden Eagle sect and a man from the Thousand Hands sect. The Thousand hand sect disciple had 3 puppets all at the 3rd Mind Tempering realm fighting for him, so he had an easy time winning against the Golden Eagle sect disciple who couldn't use many attacks.

The next match was between a disciple from the Honor sect disciple, who was fighting against the disciple of a sect called the Purple Flag sect.

Despite having the same cultivation base of the 3rd Mind Tempering realm, the disciple from the Honor sect had a much better understanding of fighting and abilities, so after an intense fight, he won without much injury.

The final match of Group B was between a disciple from the Lesser Immortal sect against a sword user from Royal Fu Academy.

The sword user was a realm higher in cultivation base. So when the two of them fought, the disciple from the Royal Fu academy had a much easier time winning.

Next up was group C.

Yang Ma walked onto the stage with his opponent from the True Wisdom sect who had a cultivation base of the 2nd Mind Tempering realm, the same as Yang Ma's.

"Begin"

Yang Ma immediately created a fireball and sent it towards his opponent. His opponent created a fireball too and sent it flying at the incoming fireball.

The clash of the two fireballs created a little bit of an explosion.

Yang Ma was surprised.

Not only Yang Ma, Alex, and Luo Mei were surprised on the seating area as well.

"He... he had a wood root last time right?" Alex asked just to make sure.

"Yes, he did," Luo Mei replied.

"Then how is his fireball stronger than brother Ma's? If I remember correctly, Brother Ma's spiritual root is the Superior Fire Spiritual roots, right?" Alex asked.

"Ohoho, It seems you will learn something interesting now," Wen Cheng said. "Yes, you are correct. He does seem to have two spiritual roots. In fact, they are the same as mine. However, his attacks are still as strong as that of a single elemental root user."

Wen Cheng looked towards Alex and asked, "Can you tell me why?"

Alex fell into thought, "Let's see, there are 4 aspects to an Elemental attack. The Element, the Elemental strength, Qi Density and Qi Amount."

"The element is fire, so same. Yang Ma wins in the Elemental strength. Qi destiny... the opponent doesn't seem to have a very dense Qi. As for Qi amount... there wasn't enough time for him."

"So, that means... something else is going on. The elements... fire and wood. Fire..... And " Alex's eyes slowly widened up.

"Empowering. That guy is using Wood Qi to empower his fire elemental attack," Alex said as if he discovered something amazing.

"Haha, yes. Took you longer than I imagined. Maybe I was keeping unreal expectations. Anyway, the man is using Wood Qi directly into the fire elemental attacks he is using to empower his attacks. So, despite having an inferior spiritual root, he is standing his ground," Wen Cheng complimented.

The fight on the group kept ongoing. Both of them sent attacks after attacks at each other. Yang Ma was having a not-so-fun time anymore.

Suddenly, he threw a massive attack and took out a spear to fight. The other guy tried to dodge a bunch, but Yang Ma seemed to be trained in Spear art as well.

He suddenly started swinging it around while also sending out normal elemental attacks. The opponent was getting attacked by both weapons and strong elemental attacks.

He got easily overwhelmed. In the end, One of Yang Ma's attacks wasn't seen by the opponent and a referee had to stop the fight and declare Yang Ma the winner.

Yang Ma returned back to the waiting area tiredly, and from inside walked out a determined Wan Li.

Chapter 324: Top 32 - End

Wan Li's opponent was a man from the Violet Garden sect, a relatively lesser-known sect. Wan Li was in the 3rd Mind Tempering realm, while his opponent was in the 2nd Mind Tempering realm.

Wan Li was sure he would win. He took out his sword and started attacking red energy slashes the moment the match began.

His opponent also tried attacking as much as he could, but Wan Li was overwhelming him.

A barrier appeared around his opponent in a sphere as he blocked one of Wan Li's attacks. The man placed his palms on the ground and suddenly spikes appeared from inside of it.

Wan Li placed his right foot in front of him and caused a fissure ahead that stopped the man's spikes from moving forward.

He then proceeded to start throwing more and more red slashes towards his opponent. Finally, the opponent caved into the pressure and gave up.

Wan Li won the match.

The next battle was between a girl in the 2nd Mind Tempering realm and a man in the 3rd Mind Tempering realm. Everyone surprisingly expected the girl to win in this case since she was from the Cloud Valley sect and had monsters with her that were stronger than herself.

However, the man from the Honor sect surprised everyone by using attacks imbued with Spear's intent. Another one of the Weapon intent users was forced to show himself.

His attacks were much stronger than the attacks of a normal spear user and thus the girl's beasts couldn't fight him at all. In the end, the referee had to step in and block some of the flying spear attacks to save the girl.

The last match was between Group C was between a disciple from a lower known sect with 2nd Mind Tempering realm and a disciple of the Royal Fu Academy with 6th Mind Tempering realm cultivation base.

It was obvious who would win. Thus, the battles of Group C came to an end as well.

For the first match of Group D, a disciple of the Thousand Hand sect fought with a disciple of the True Wisdom sect. The disciple of the True Wisdom sect was forced to show his Sword intent even though it wasn't properly established.

Thus, he wasn't as powerful as the other ones who had an established Weapon intent and unfortunately lost.

The next battle was between a disciple from a not-so-well-known sect called the Hunting Master's sect and a disciple of the Golden Eagle sect.

The man from the Hunting Master's sect was surprisingly very strong. He was in the 4th Mind Tempering realm and his opponent was a girl in the 3rd Mind Tempering realm.

However, knowledge and heritage could not be beaten so easily. The girl from the Golden Eagle sect revealed her Saber Intent and after a fierce back and forth with the man, won the fight.

The next battle was a very interesting one. It was between two beast tamers. One was a man in the 3rd Mind Tempering realm from the Cloud Valley sect, and another was in the 2nd Mind Tempering realm from the Myriad Beast sect.

However, their cultivation base would have nothing to do with the battle. The man from the Cloud Valley sect brought out two monsters, a brown bear-sized wolf, and an Ox with 3 horns.

The man from Myriad beast also brought out two monsters, one was a massive black boar, while the other one was a red-feathered Crow-like bird.

Their match was probably the most fun to watch as it was a 3v3. The audience never knew who was going to get the upper hand.

In the end, the disciple from Cloud Valley couldn't handle the aerial attacks and thus succumbed to defeat. Thus, the Myriad Sect disciple moved on to the next round.

Finally, the Lesser Immortal sect's disciple was truly unfortunate. There was no way he was going to win a fight against Chu Xiang, the strongest participant of the Top 32.

As such, the Top 32's fights came to a close as well.

Once the fights were done, the competition holders started changing the stage.

Suddenly, a large opaque barrier appeared around the stage and Fu Zhen's voice sounded from inside of it.

"Please bear with us while we prepare the stage for the next competition."

Alex stood up and said, "I will return later after my match." He then walked to the Hong Wu sect's seating area and sat next to his master.

"Mingming, good luck on your match. Go beat them a-- wait, it's not a fighting match. It's a Maze Run so... yes, Beat them all still makes sense. Hehe," Fan Ruogang said from the side.

"Sure, Sister Fan, I will do my best," Alex said.

"Are you truly prepared?" Ma Rong asked.

"Yes Master," Alex spoke with confidence in his voice.

"What are you prepared to do to win?" She asked.

Alex thought for a moment and said, " Anything."

"Good, but you can't just do anything," Ma Rong said as she looked towards the northern end of the coliseum. "Unfortunately, there will be some things you will have to hide."

Alex knew exactly what she meant. "I know master, I will try my best to win without those techniques," he said.

"Good. When you went to the Tiger sect, I told you to hide your abilities because you were too weak back then to show off your skills. To be honest, you are still too weak, but you have come far enough that not everyone will be a problem to you."

"So, go ahead and do whatever you want and whatever you can. I am lifting the restrictions. No need to hide anything," Ma Rong said.

Alex felt himself get lighter as if something had been lifted from his shoulders. He smiled and said, "Yes, master."

"Participants for the Maze Run. Please gather in the waiting room," Fu Zhen's voice appeared from inside the opaque barrier.

"I'm going now," Alex said and left towards the waiting area all alone.

#### Chapter 325: Maze Rules

Alex reached the waiting room and stood around looking at his opponents he would have to fight against.

Honor Sect, Golden Eagle sect, Royal Fu Academy; All the different big sects as well as the small ones had sent in some people to take part in the competition.

Alex was the only one from the Hong Wu sect to come here.

'Maze Run... it can't just be a simple maze clearing game right? Even mortals can do that. The most cultivators would be able to speed up the game. There has to be some other twists to the game,' Alex thought.

"Oh, Brother Yu, you are here too," A voice came from behind him. Alex turned around to see Yang Ma and 2 other disciples of the Tiger sect. Judging from the orange linings on their yellow robe, they were core disciples too.

"I guess we are going to be opponents for now," Alex said.

"Don't be like that, Brother Yu. Just ask us for help if you need it; we will give it to you," Yang Ma said.

"Sure," Alex said.

"Everyone, please gather in front of the stage," Fu Zhen's voice sounded from outside.

One by one, everyone started leaving the waiting room. Alex passed the familiar barrier that checked his participation in the entrance. Once out of it, he stopped where everyone had stopped outside of the stage's opaque barrier.

He thought he would have to wait around a lot, but as soon as the participants gathered, a little space in the barrier opened and Fu Zhen walked out of there.

"Green?" Alex thought when he saw a glimpse of the color behind Fu Zhen.

"Welcome everyone to the Maze run. As this is the final non battle competition, we will try to make it the most fun."



"Before I show you or the audience the maze, I will now relay some of the rules of the competition," Fu Zhen said. A group of people walked from either side of Fu Zhen and made their way towards the participants.

"Please lock away all of your storage bags inside the boxes. You will not be allowed anything other than your clothes inside the stage," Fu Zhen said.

Alex was used to it so he brought out his storage bags and locked them away without hesitation. Within half a minutes, everyone was done locking away their bags.

"The staff will now place 3 talismans on your back. Please do not take them off," Fu Zhen siad.

PAT PAT PAT PAT

Sounds appeared from all over the area as the staff members started slapping on talismans behind their back. Alex also felt 3 light slaps on his back. He reached behind to feel his back and found 3 talismans exposed for the world to see.

Then the staff members handed them another talisman. While the ones on the back were yellowish brown in color, the one they were handed were red talismans.

Everyone was confused.

"The purpose of the competition is to enter the maze and come out of the other side the fastest you can. You are not allowed to fight inside the maze or use your cultivation and abilities to make it hard for others to move. "

"If you attack another competitor, one of your talismans on the back will burn away. If you lose all 3 talismans, you will be disqualified."

Everyone got a little anxious. If a competitor was disqualified based on the talismans lost, then... one could simply steal away other's talismans.

"You are not allowed to touch the talismans of other people. Each talisman you touch will result in the same number of talismans burning on your back."

A lot of people sighed in relief when they heard this.

"However, that is where the red talisman comes in. Any talisman that you touch with the red talisman will fall from the other person's back. At that moment, you can take it. After that, the red talisman will not work for a minute," Fu Zhen said.

"Each talisman you have at the end of the match will result in a 10 second reduction in the final time. There are other random talismans inside the maze that will have up to 1 minutes result time reduced."

Everyone was agitated. If stealing talismans were just to screw with the other person's run they wouldn't worry about it except for a few people that didn't want others to have fun. However, now that it was revealed that stealing would actually help you, everyone was going to do that.

Thus, everyone was your enemy now.

"A few more rules. Flying above 1 meter off of the surface is not allowed. If you don't move for over a minute, you are disqualified."

"Touching another person is allowed only if they've given you permission."

"Also, you can choose one of these Common Mortal grade weapons and armors. Choose wisely," Fu Zhen said.

'Weapon? But we're not allowed to attack others... So why?' Alex wondered.

Everyone else chose something that they liked; Alex chose a sword.

"Alright, now that you are done with this, please come and choose a number from this box. It will help choose the order you will enter in," Fu Zhen said.

Everyone walked up and grabbed a paper. Alex looked at his and saw the number 124; there were around 170 people in this competition.

"Number 1 through 10, please come forward and stand at the marked locations," Fu Zhen said, gathering the 10 people ahead of the opaque barrier.

"Ladies and gentlemen, we will now hold the Maze run. However, before that, please lay your eyes on the magnificent Maze we've created," Fu Zhen shouted as he pointed towards the stage.

Suddenly, the barrier slowly got undone and what was inside was finally visible.

Tall green grass walls were staring directly at Alex and the rest. The walls were nearly 10 meters tall and about half a meter thick.

There were 10 paths of entry on the green wall, each for a single participant to enter.

Fu Zhen looked at them and shouted, "Go."

Chapter 326: Maze Run - Start

In the seating area.

"What the hell? I... I thought it was going to be a normal Maze run. Dear Lord, look at the size of it," Luo Mei exclaimed.

"It certainly is ... unique. I hope little Ma and the rest, as well as Yu Ming, will be fine in this," Wen Cheng said. Even Du Yuhan at the side was a little surprised.

Fan Ruogang stood up from her seat. "Sect Leader, what the hell is that? That wasn't what it looked like last time. It was just a simple maze back then. What is going on?" she asked.

"I don't know, Fanfan. It seemed the boredom of last year's Maze run forced them to make this one more... interesting," Ma Rong said.

"Master, is Yu Ming going to be alright? That looks a little dangerous," Zhou Mei said to her masters.

The Third Elder pat her back and said, "I'm sure he will be okay. Look, the staff is already flying above the Maze. They are ready to save the participants when they need it," she said.

Ma Rong looked at the maze once more and got a little worried. This was not what she had expected when she sent him there.

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"Oh, This is interesting," Emperor Zexian said when he saw the Maze finally show itself from the barrier. "It wasn't like this last time, was it?" he asked.

"I don't think so. I remember being very bored last year during this maze run and couldn't help but want the battles to begin," the Empress said.

"It's actually all second brother's idea for them to change it. He remembered how boring it was too," the princess said.

"I did... but, not even I could've expected them to make this many changes," the second prince said.

"Oh look, the first batch of 10 went in. This is going to be a little more interesting for sure," The Empress said with a curious smile.

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"30 seconds later. The next group will leave. Number 11 to 20, please come forward," Fu Zhen called the next group forward.

'30 seconds per 10 people. So me at 124... that's 6 minutes later. I will start 6 minutes later than the rest. I hope that doesn't make that much of a difference,' Alex thought.

More and more participants of the Maze run went in, and finally, after over 5 minutes, Alex walked forward when his name was called.

Fu Zhen waited for the 30 seconds to pass and said, "Go."

Alex immediately walked through the 4th of the 10 openings in the maze that belonged to him. He was now inside narrow walls of tall plants. He took the path straight ahead and walked.

At the same time, he started thinking.

'Remember what are the rules. What am I not allowed to do?' he thought.

'I can't attack another player. I can't touch the talisman of another player without this red talisman. I can't obstruct another player's path, and finally... I cannot stop moving,' Alex thought and kept on walking.

When he came upon a fork in the road, he had no idea where he was supposed to go. "Screw it," he thought and walked straight ahead.

After a minute or so, he came across a dead end. This was not the correct path.

"F\*ck"

He turned around and walked back to the intersection once more. However, this time, there was a woman there contemplating where to move.

When she saw Alex walking towards him, she suddenly took out a bow and arrow and aimed at Alex. Alex could tell that the woman was at least in the Meridian tempering realm, thus he was not her match.

"You will get disqualified if you attack me. Why don't you choose a path a go first? I won't stop you," Alex said. He slowly started circling around the woman.

The woman was frightened even more as she couldn't see Alex's cultivation base and kept the bow and arrow at him at all times.

"You— You just want to get behind me and steal my talisman, don't you? You think I'm stupid. Why don't you go first?" she said.

"I'm afraid I can't do that. You will steal my talisman," Alex said. "I guess we are both in the same dilemma then."

Alex was desperately trying to come up with things to say. "First of all, please just put the bow down. You know obstructing me from leaving this place will get you disqualified, right?" he asked.

"I'm not obstructing you at all. You can leave if you want," the girls said. "Besides, you keep telling me to drop my bow, yet you still hold your sword. You're quite a hypocrite, aren't you?"

Alex slowly looked at the sword on his right hand and sighed. "You are right," he said before throwing away his sword.? "Happy?" he asked.

The girl finally accepted that he wasn't after her and decided to lower the bow for now. Just then, Alex walked forward and grabbed his sword once again.

The girl immediately pulled her bow back and targeted him as she asked, "What are you doing?"

Alex simply looked at her and smiled, "Time's up."

"What?" the woman didn't understand what he meant when suddenly, she felt her body lift without her volition. She looked up to see that the staff was pulling her out of the maze field.

"You are disqualified for not moving for a minute."

Alex immediately started walking down the path once more. He didn't want to be the next one disqualified. He walked on and found another intersection.

This time, however, he seemed to have chosen the right path as he didn't encounter any dead ends.

However, he did encounter it next. Free, dead-end, dead-end, free.

After walking on for nearly 10 minutes, he finally came across a long stretch of thin walls that seemed to lead... outside.

"That can't be true. It's too soon," Alex thought.

Still, he had to try, so Alex took a step forward. Suddenly, something grabbed his foot.

Chapter 327: Stolen

Something suddenly grabbed Alex's leg. "What?" he looked down to see that it was a vine extending from the bottom of the right wall.

SLASH

He didn't waste any time and cut it immediately before walking forward. However, in the next step, there were two vines. One that grabbed his left leg and another that grabbed his right arm.

Alex pulled out the vine on his arm and cut away the one on his legs. However, after moving one-step move, 3 vines grabbed him.

Then 4, then 5. No matter how much he pulled, every next step, there was another vine added to the pile that pulled at him. Thankfully, he had a strong body and a sword, so he cut all the vines as he moved forward.

\*\*\*\*\*

A man with a spear saw that his leg was grabbed by a vine. He stabbed the spear in the vine and cut it away. But then, he took another step, and 2 more vines appeared.

The space was narrow and he couldn't move his spear. He used his left hand to use the spear and cut the vine, and then used it to cut the vine on his right hand.

As he walked more, the harder it was to move. At some point, 7 vines appeared. 1 for each of his legs, 2 for each of his arms, and 1 for his spear.

He couldn't move anymore, but he struggled. He used his entire cultivation base and managed to tear away the vines on his left leg before moving forward.

STEP

8 more vines suddenly appeared, grabbing the man at every location. The man tried to move, but 14 vines were too much for him. After 1 minute, the staff flew down and cleared the vines before declaring that he was disqualified.

\*\*\*\*\*

"Burn, B\*tch, Burn," Yang Ma cried as he burned everything around him. The walls were surprisingly fireproof and didn't take any damage, however the vines were plenty charred.

\*\*\*\*\*

A girl moved water as a rotating blade on either of her sides which cut away all the vines.



\*\*\*\*\*

Another participant realized that it was stepping that caused the vines to appear, so he stopped stepping and flew the rest of the way.

\*\*\*\*\*

Different people found their own way to complete the pathway full of vines.

Alex finally escaped the Vine nightmare. Now he was staring at another nightmare that was probably just as nightmarish.

Ahead of him was wetlands that he would have to walk in. There were wires hanging from everywhere that seemed to be tied to some sort of mechanism that he didn't dare invoke.

He stepped forward and put his feet into the wetlands. At first, he didn't feel anything, but then, his feet sunk very quickly.

"Sh\*t, Quicksands," Alex realized. "Why the F\*ck is there quicksand in a Maze run? Isn't this supposed to be a normal Maze run," Alex asked. He tried to move his legs out and barely got it out after a lot of force. He stumbled backward and fell on his butt.

'Sh\*t. So I can't walk, and I can't fly?' Alex thought as he looked at the hundreds of hanging threads. He absolutely didn't dare to touch them.

'I'm on a quicksand. Think fast, Alex,' he said to himself. "The only way to not get dragged into quicksand is to flop down on your back. In that way, your body has enough surface area to not drown."

"Can I flop down here?" Alex thought, but the answer was no. "Wait, what if I imitate it instead of actually flopping down."

Alex slowly got down on his knees and took a deep breath. Then suddenly, he placed one of his arms on the surface. Surprisingly, it felt like solid ground to him.

He placed another arm and it too was very solid.

"Yes! Fluctuating Friction Dance works. Increasing my friction does help me from drowning," he thought.

PING

Suddenly, he heard something. He heard it from his backside. Alex quickly turned around to see a lady catching the talisman that was falling off his body.

Somebody had managed to sneak up to him while he was distracted and stole his talisman from his back. The girl immediately started running sideways, but Alex wouldn't let her.

He immediately disappeared from where he stood and appeared right behind the lady and he used his own red talisman to touch one of her talismans.

PING

The woman had a horrified face when she realized what had happened. Alex caught the falling talisman and jumped into the quicksand. Only this time, he had the proper techniques ready.

He crawled on his hands and knees and tried his best to stay lower than the bells.

"Stop," the lady cried and followed after him, but as soon as she jumped in and saw her palms disappeared inside the ground. She too realized what it was.

"What? Quicksand? Why?" she couldn't understand. She tried to pull her arm out but that was very hard. As she tried to pull her arm out, more and more of her body was swallowed by the quicksand.

"What's going on? Help!" she cried out, but nobody came to help. Alex looked right at her but decided to do nothing.

She was halfway deep into the quicksand when a staff flew down and brought her out of it. "You are disqualified for not moving for more than 1 minute."

The girl tried to beg, but the staff heard none of it. Alex turned his head from her to the other ones who were crossing this part of the maze.

The people were far away and he couldn't see what was happening very clearly, but he could see almost all of them flying without any delay.

Alex could finally focus on his quicksand crossing right now. Once again, he got onto his arms and knees and followed the way out.

This time, he didn't have any disturbances to account for his distraction, so he easily crossed the entire section of the quicksand by himself.

Chapter 328: Am I Pretty?

The quicksands were open and thus after Alex came out of the other side, he stood up and finally saw how long the width of the maze actually was.

'That's almost 500 meters long,' he thought as he looked from left to right.

Just as he was looking at the length, he saw a person accidentally hit one of the strings above the quicksand.

TIRRRRING

Suddenly, mud from either side of him flew up and fell on top of him, dragging him to the surface. The man got stuck, but he was able to think quickly and started using some technique to pump out water from all around him, very soon the quicksand diluted into nothing but a mud lake around him and he started flying once more.

Somewhere else, a disciple created a bridge made up of rocks and walked on top of it. Some other person made a bridge with vines and leaves.

Yang Ma burned the quicksand until it was hard enough to walk.

People came up with their own methods to cross, but most of them simply chose to fly. It had its risks but was the easiest of all.

After each of the participants crossed, the staff came down to reset the ground so that the next one would have to make way using their own idea.

Alex looked at the nearly hundreds of openings in the tall bushy walls. These ones were a little thicker than the ones he walked through last time.

He couldn't waste time here so he randomly chose one and walked in. Thankfully, there were no more vines blocking his path here. He kept on walking through the maze, reaching dead ends multiple times.

He had his senses on max right now and was even going as far as to release his spiritual sense in a very small area. Just as he was walking, he heard a sound.

PING

Someone just had their talisman stolen. Alex walked a little forward and saw a girl in an orange robe picking a talisman that fell off of the back of a person in red robes.

Alex walked a little forward to see that the person in red robes was on the ground.

'Did she force him there? How is she not disqualified yet?' he wondered. He couldn't make heads or tails of the situation.

"Move back," the lady said and the man in the red robe stood up a little before moving to the right. They seemed to be in cahoots or something and didn't want to get disqualified.

Alex didn't know if the two of them would gang up on him to steal his talisman or what, so he moved slowly and cautiously. He also kept an eye on his back at all times. He did not want a repeat of the previous times.

Ping

The girl touched the man's talisman once more, making it fall off. Now the man only had a single one remaining.

Alex didn't know what was happening, but he wasn't going to waste time here. She has just used her Red talisman and it was going to be in cooldown for a minute.

He immediately disappeared when he got close to 10 meters and touched the girl's talisman

Ping

Alex immediately caught it and moved back. The girl was surprised and looked back as well.

She finally realized that her talisman had been stolen as well. "How did you get so close without me noticing?" She asked with curiosity in her eyes. But after seeing Alex not answer at all, her curiosity died.

"Move back," she said and moved a little towards Alex. Alex in turn moved a little back as well. The man in the red robe scooted a little back as well.

However, even with Alex taking his friend's talisman, he didn't turn around.

"You look rather young. Why doesn't the handsome little brother just hand senior sister her talisman," the girl said.

"No way," Alex said with a dry chuckle.

The girl was surprised and a little taken aback. She placed a finger on her cheek and tilted her head a little before asking, "Aren't I really pretty, little brother?"

'The hell?' Alex thought.

"So what if you are?" Alex asked.

"So why won't little brother hand me my talisman?" she asked.

"I already said No," Alex said.

The girl tilted her head once more. This time her face had a very confused look. "What's going on? You are not very strong, so why won't it work?" she asked.

"The hell are you talking about la--"

"GIVE ME BACK MY TALISMAN," The girl said with a furious but calculated voice.

Alex felt his mind grow a little numb. It felt like he was severely sleep-deprived and wanted to sleep. However, a second later he lost all of that feeling and got awake.

He moved a little back and checked his behind as well.

"Mental attacks." He looked at the red-robed man that was standing on the ground. "No wonder he isn't moving. You charmed him, didn't you?" he asked.

"What's going on? How are you so weak and yet have such a strong mind. You not only resisted my charm but also my directed attack.

Suddenly, a staff dropped from the sky and said, "You are disqualified by obstructing another participant's progress."

The staff took her and flew out.

"What? So, charm is accepted, but mental attacks are considered obstruction huh? Thank god I didn't use heaven's impact on her," Alex thought.

He looked at the red-robed man and saw that he was starting to get his wits back now that the woman was gone. Alex looked down onto his Red talisman. The 1-minute cooldown was up.

"Sorry dude, everyone looks out for themselves," he said and walked up to his back before touching his last talisman with the paper.

Ping

A staff dropped down from the sky and spoke to the guy just as he recovered his wits. "You have been disqualified for losing all of your talismans, "

The guy started crying about not knowing what was happening, but nothing could be done. Alex just walked forward without looking back.

Chapter 329: Snow Field

Alex encountered a few people but usually went in a different direction, so he didn't interact with them. Sometimes, a few of them followed him to steal his talisman, but he simply teleported behind and stole theirs instead before running away.

As he was walking forward, he started noticing slight whiteness on the leaves of the plant making the wall. He went close to it and checked, "Frost?" he said in surprise.

The further he walked, the more snow there was. During intersections, there was usually a patch that had more frosts than the other one. Alex chose that and never encountered any dead ends.

Finally, he came across a small, but frozen land. "So much ice," he said in surprise. Snow was a very rare occurrence for him even in his home that was towards the north. There were a few mountains where it snowed, but they were far from his house.

"What do I do now?" he thought. The moment he moved and stepped into the frozen land, a gust of wind appeared and his face directly. He instinctively closed his eyes and very soon his eyes were shut from the snow.

He forcefully opened his eyes and removed the frost that had got it to shut. He needed to see to walk upfront, but the gust with the snow wasn't helping it.

He took a deep breath and moved his Qi until it enveloped his whole body and moved forward. The gust made ice stick to him, but they simply melted when they touched his hot Yang Qi.

Now, all that remained was for him to have a way to see where he was actually going on. 'Should I do it?' Alex thought. He was already doing it on small scale, but he didn't want to tip any of the staff off just in case.

'Argh, f\*ck it,' Alex thought and sent out his Spiritual Sense in a 20 meters area horizontally. He acted like he was using his eyes to see, but really he just used his Spiritual sense.

'There's someone there,' Alex thought and walked towards the person. The man was trying to walk forward in the snow with near 0 visibility. With their Qi, no one had to worry about the snow, but visibility was still a problem.

PING

Suddenly, he heard something and looked back. However, he couldn't see anything. He didn't know what had happened, so he kept moving forward. After a while, another PING sounded.



"What's going on?" the man asked while turning back, but still couldn't see anything. In the end, he turned around and kept on walking.

PING

He heard it once more and wanted to turn around but he was suddenly pulled up and got out of the snowfield.

The staff who pulled him up looked at him and said, " You have been disqualified for losing all of your talismans."

PING PING PING

Alex walked around searching for people to steal their talismans off of. At some point, he stopped.

"What the hell am I doing?" these talismans barely take 10 seconds off and I am wasting a minute for this. He was lost in the allure of the talismans and forgot the main purpose of the competition.

He immediately started walking in the correct direction, when he sensed something.

A talisman was floating through the air a few meters away from him on the right. He walked in that direction and caught the talisman.

'Is this?' he thought and read it.

-50 seconds subtracted from the result-

"Oh, that's nice," Alex thought and kept it before walking towards the front. He finally crossed it and came across another plant maze.

'Is there a pattern? Maze, followed by a difficult place to trek?' Alex thought.

He walked through it once more. He still had no idea how to navigate it properly and came coming across dead ends. 'There must be something. Otherwise, it will all just be a game of luck for the most part,' Alex thought.

Suddenly, he came across a disciple wearing a light blue robe with a cloud pattern on it. He wasn't moving at all and was looking at Alex with a slight smile.

'What is he up to?' Alex thought. Just then, he saw something behind him. He suddenly turned around and slashed his sword behind him.

CLANG

The sword hit the talons of an eagle beast. On its talon was a red talisman stuck to it. 'Smart,' Alex thought. He then immediately rolled away from the bird and disappeared.

"Huh? Where did he— " the man spoke a single word when heard a sound.

PING

He turned around just in time to see Alex catch his talisman and run away. "Stop," he shouted, but Alex wasn't going to listen to him. By the time he got to an intersection, Alex had disappeared in one of the two, and he couldn't find Alex at all.

The Flickering Shadows technique was truly amazing and useful in this competition. He could easily steal the talismans of an unguarded person.

Alex ran into a few dead ends again and finally found his way into another location. He looked at the part in front of him and said, "Swimming pool?"

A large patch of the land in front of him was water. It was still 500 meters long and the distance was also about 100 meters wide.

He could see the various disciple taking part in the competition. They were all flying over the water as expected. That was after all the correct choice.

"But that seems wrong," Alex thought. It couldn't be that the competition holders made such a massive piece of the lake just to have the participants fly over it.

A few other disciples also seem to have the same idea and they jumped inside the lake. Alex too jumped in without hesitation.

During the quicksand part, he had used Fluctuating Friction dance to increase friction and stay above the wetlands, but now, he was using it in the opposite way to reduce friction and easily maneuver in the water.

#### Chapter 330: Sleep

The Qi was being used up much faster than normal inside the water, but he was okay with that. As long as he knew what was inside the water, he would be fine.

He ran around at full speed with his spiritual sense looking at everything.

After a few seconds, he saw something ahead of him. He walked forward hoping it was a talisman, but instead it turned out to be a key.

It looked very new and looked slightly blue underwater. He quickly kept it with him and search around a bit more. He found 2 extra talismans.

One gave him a 40-second reduction, and another gave him a 24-second reduction.

Finally, he brought back friction and swam up before flying out of the lake. He took a deep breath and immediately flew to the other side without any delay.

He then entered another maze. He was walking forward when he suddenly met Yang Ma returning back from another pathway of the intersection.

"Oh Brother Yu, I can't believe we meet here,"? Yang Ma said.

"Hello, brother Ma. Did you come from a dead end?" Alex asked.

"Oh yeah, that direction is a no-go. Let's go here," Yang Ma said.

Alex nodded and started walking. As he passed by, Yang Me made a smirk that seemed to match his face. He slowly walked forward and got directly behind Alex.

He took out his red talisman and quietly brought it next to Alex's talisman. However, Alex disappeared. In the next second, Yang Ma heard a PING from behind him and saw Alex catch his falling talisman.

"You really aren't a very good person, are you? Sister was right about stopping me from interacting with you," Alex said.

Yang Ma smiled and said, "there is nothing good or bad. There is no fairness in this game. I do what I can to win."

"Well, I can't argue with that. Keep doing what you are doing then. See you later," Alex said and immediately disappeared.

Yang Ma looked around and couldn't find him.

Alex was now 10 meters away from his original place on a completely different part of the maze. He had appeared right next to a girl who was frightened out of her wits and immediately got into defense position.

Alex saw that and thought nothing. Without caring about the girl, he immediately ran towards an intersection and chose a path. He made his way through many intersections, stealing a few talismans along the way, and finally made it out of the maze.

"What?" he thought when he finally saw what was in front of him.

"A flower field?" he thought as he looked at the land filled with yellow flowers and green grasses all around. "What are they?" he thought and went forward to check.

[Soothing Orchid]

[Dreaming Thorns]

"I have never come across these flowers have I?" Alex thought. He checked his memories and found that they were used in a few pills in the True rank that helped with insomnia and anxiety.

"What the hell is this place?" he thought and started walking through it. The plants were nearly a meter and a half tall and flying didn't make sense.

As he kept on walking, he really did feel himself soothing. It was like all worries in his mind had been stripped away. He felt calm. He felt really tired and just wanted to rest.

However, that feeling disappeared very quickly and he was left gasping for breaths. "What was that? I—I nearly fell asleep," Alex thought.

He quickly stepped back from the yellow flowers.

"Ow," he screamed. He looked back to see that the Dreaming Thorns had stabbed him. 'But I'm a body cultivator,' Alex thought. Then, his body started getting lethargic, as if he was ready to sleep.

<Toxic Substance detected>

<Sun God's Divine Yang body disintegrates everything>

<Toxins have been destroyed>

<You have received 20,000 Qi>

Alex immediately got awake. "What... happened?" he said with fear in his eyes. "What do these things do?" he thought.

'Damn, I really need information on what each ingredient does by themselves and not just what they make,' he thought.

He sent out his spiritual sense and tried to search for the talismans he could find. Unfortunately, he did not, but that also meant he didn't have to stop anywhere.

He quickly reached the walls on the other side and saw something written on top of the entrances.

- Once you choose an Entrance, you cannot choose another—

"Okay," Alex thought and entered one of the 10 openings. Once he was inside and had gone past a few intersections, he met some people. Only this time, Alex was sure they were a group.

They were 2 men and 1 woman standing on either side of the wall with their backs to it. They were holding their red talismans in their hand.

'Sh\*t,' Alex knew what was happening.

The 3 looked at him with sinister smiles. Alex frowned. He wanted to teleport to the other routes but wasn't sure if that was allowed or not. After all, the rules said, you could not change the entrance after choosing once.

He thought for a few seconds and immediately ran away leaving the 3 in laughter. But after a minute or two, he returned, and in his hands were a bunch of flowers and thorns.

"Wh— What are you doing?" the girl asked.

Alex smiled and dropped it all near their feet. Without touching, the thorns didn't do anything, but the flower surely did.

With so many at the same place, they all started getting sleepy. The man handled himself and slapped himself to keep himself awake.

But while he was doing that, Alex ran past him. The man's body was too lethargic to stop him. After failing to get Alex, he decided to get his comrades and switch places.

At the same time, he heard a sound.

PING

He didn't even have to look back to know that his talisman had just been stolen away by Alex.