

Alchemy 461

Chapter 461 - Final Lesson

Alex was shocked after sensing the sheer difference in the quality of the energy as well as the density of it. The overall strength of the True rank ingredient's energy was starting to easily overwhelm the energy that already existed in the cauldron.

He also sensed his Qi during that time and saw that with almost half of the ingredient's energy released, he had also done about 30% of his own True Qi.

He was confident in fully turning the ingredient into power and mixing it with the other ingredients, but then he wondered what he was going to do with the other 2 ingredients that came towards the end of the recipe.

'Hmm... master did tell me not to worry about it,' Alex thought.

"Switch to normal Qi," Ma Rong suddenly said.

"Sorry?" Alex was taken off-guard by the command. He even thought he heard wrong.

"I said, stop using True Qi, and just use your normal Qi now," Ma Rong ordered.

"But master, there is still a bit of the ingredient left. It's still releasing energy," Alex said.

"I know. Just do it," Ma Rong said.

Alex was still confused a little but decided to do what she said. His flow of True Qi stopped and his normal Qi once more started releasing from his hands.

The remaining True Qi he had already sent out did what they could towards the end of the ingredient's energy-releasing process.

Everything worked fine with True Qi. But once it ended, and the normal Qi touched the ingredient, the still releasing energy of the ingredient suddenly fought with his normal Qi.

Alex's Qi was dense enough to Turn into True Qi, but they weren't as strong as True Qi themselves. So, while he struggled against releasing energy to control the ingredient, inevitably, he lost.

Suddenly, he lost his connection with his Qi, and the whole Alchemy process came to a staggering halt.

Alex panicked. He immediately sent back more of his normal Qi, but the hot ingredient was constantly releasing the energy, and his normal Qi couldn't fight against it.

The energy inside the cauldron started going into instability. Alex realized what could happen next, so he immediately sent out his True Qi to control the situation.

However, it was all too late. Even with sending in his True Qi, the energy was reaching the limit of instability and was moments away from disaster.

Just then, cold energy flowed towards the cauldron. It entered the fire, the cauldron, and the energy inside of it. Suddenly, all of the energy that acted agitated inside, had calmed down to a level that Alex couldn't even believe.

The cauldron was now as good as unused, even though it had been sitting on the fire for the last few minutes.

"Thank you, master," Alex said.

"You realized what the difference between True Qi and normal Qi has when it comes to making True rank pills?" Ma Rong asked.

"Yes. The energy in the True rank ingredients of True rank pills are hard to control, and without True Qi, I shouldn't even try. Only the True Qi can fully control the energy from True rank ingredients," Alex said.

"Yes, you've understood the most important part. Taking that logic, can you guess why a True realm person might not find a common rank pill very useful?" Ma Rong asked.

Alex thought for a moment and said, "is that because their True Qi naturally suppresses the energy in the common pill, so it becomes not very useful?"

"Uhh, you're not wrong, but you're not right either," Ma Rong said. "A True realm person does in fact show those signs, but what about if the True realm cultivator has suppressed his cultivation base? What then?"

Alex fell into thought again, only this time the answer was taking longer and longer to find out.

"Don't think so hard. The answer is actually much simpler than you think," Ma Rong said.

"Uh... it's not because their body is used to True Qi, so anything lesser doesn't affect them, right?" Alex asked. That was the first answer he had thought of but disregarded it because it sounded... simple.

"That's exactly it. Due to cultivation day in and day out, a normal True Realm Cultivator's body is used to having True Qi in his body. So even when the True Qi leaves his body, he cannot fully make use of the common pills anymore."

"If you truly want to give a pill to such a person, then make sure it's a True pill. Of course, if you have Saint pills or higher, they also work very easily," Ma Rong said.

"I see," Alex said.

Ma Rong went on to teach him about making True Pills for a little while longer. Alex attentively started listening to everything Ma Rong said.

The amount of information was honestly not even a fraction of what he had learned from the books in the capital and other libraries. However, none of them ever gave such important information directly for free.

After an hour or two of teaching, Alex's Alchemy lessons were finally over.

"That's it. That's all I can teach you today... or maybe even forever," Ma Rong said. "Come find me if you have trouble. Aside from that... I don't think I have anything else to teach you that you don't already know," Ma Rong said.

"Don't say that master. No matter if we don't have lessons anymore or if I ever get better than you, you will still be my master," Alex said.

Ma Rong smiled. "That's all I needed to hear," she said. "Sigh, alright, you can go now."

"Okay master," Alex said and got up to leave.

"Oh yeah, wait," Ma Rong said.

"Yes?" Alex stayed behind and waited for her to continue speaking.

"Your other two requests. You can go do them both today," Ma Rong said.

Alex's eyes immediately went wide. "Thank you, master. You've no idea how long I've waited for this," Alex said.

"Are you confident though?" Ma Rong asked.

"Yeah, quite a lot. I had less confidence for the second one, but with you around, it should be successful too," Alex said.

"Alright," Ma Rong said. "I will let the elders know. You can take their help if you want later on."

"Thank you, master," Alex said. "By the way, which mountain did you decide to give up on?"

Ma Rong shook her head and said, "I couldn't decide, so I went to discuss it with master. He said that it would be better to use the one on the right."

"Any specific reason?" Alex asked.

"Yes. The mountain on the left is surrounding by the Elder's quarters in between that mountain and ours, Pill testing Swine stable to the back of it, and Core disciple mountain to the other side."

"I cannot sacrifice a mountain that has such a great amount of life around there. If something goes wrong, we will need those elders and students and swine to have their home," Ma Rong said.

"I see, that's understandable. Since the one on the left is next to only Inner mountain, but that too is very far away. So, even if something goes wrong on that end, it will be safe for the others," Alex said.

"Ok then, I will go clear it out later on just in case. Goodbye, master."

Alex left. He went back to his home and after spending a bit of time understanding what he was taught, he logged out.

He was out of the game at around 9 pm. He wasn't hungry at all from the massive dinner he ate last night, so he returned back to the game after a very light breakfast.

Alex debated on whether to do what he needed to do right now or not but thought that it would be better to do it in the veil of the night when most of the disciples would be back in their houses, unknowing of what he was doing.

"Alright, let's prepare for now," he thought and brought out some formation flags and started messing with them. He checked if they had any imperfections or anything that was out of place in those flags.

Once he was absolutely sure nothing was wrong, he moved on to different things to pass his time. He made some more pills during this time.

He now had 3 Mind Elating pills, the pills he had created that gave someone increased intelligence. He had decided on naming them Mind Elating pills on a whim.

These 3 pills were some of his best works amongst his self-made pills. Two of the pills were of 54% Harmony, while the third one was of 57% harmony.

He had practically given up after that. Unless he fundamentally improved his understandings of how pills worked, he didn't think he could rely on anything other than luck to improve the pill now.

He spent the next portion of his day making different formation plates and formation flags that he still had. By the time he was done, he had a few more formations he could sell.

He even tried a few with his remaining True Qi and was very surprised with how well they worked.

Once night came around, he finally left his home and walked down the mountain to the sect valley.

The valley was as festive as ever with the people happily going about their night. Alex looked around and decided to go towards the right.

He soon found someone elders and spoke to them.

"Good evening, elders. Master must've told you what I'm here for, right?"

Chapter 462 - The Two Tasks

Alex was handed many empty storage bags at once by the elders.

"Sect Leader told us you would need these too," one of the elders said.

Alex took the bags and nodded. "I will need these for sure," Alex said. "Alright, then. I will get on with the work."

He walked into the Alchemy garden on the side of the inner sect mountain and immediately started picking up all the ingredients that were ready.

That was the only thing he needed to do now. One after another, he picked up every ingredient he could see. Whether they were roots, leaves, fruits, flowers, branch, stem, or any part of a plant that could be used in alchemy, Alex picked it.

The elders kept watching on the outside, while he worked tirelessly on the other side. It took him about an hour and a half to pick up every single ingredient in here and make sure that there were none here that could be harmed needlessly from what he was going to do.

Once he saw that there wasn't anything left, he was finally ready. He walked up to the top of the mountain at the very peak and looked around him. He looked at the sect valley in front of him down below.

He saw the sect leader's mountain on the left and the inner sect disciple's mountain on the right side.

He then slowly turned around and saw nothing but jungle for a long distance until it ended and there were no trees behind there.

'So the desert goes on for quite a long time, huh?' Alex thought. He stopped looking around and checked for a suitable spot.

'Hm, maybe master knows which spot would be better. It might be better to call her,' he thought. So, he took out his talisman and sent a message to her.

He tried to look around and figure out in the meantime, no matter what he did, he couldn't find out at all which would be a good location.

After 10 minutes, Ma Rong came to the top of the mountain, next to Alex.

"You picked up all of the ingredients already?" she asked.

"Yes, master,"? Alex said. "I need your help a little right now."

"Regarding?" Ma Rong asked.

"I wanted to know if you have any idea which spot would be better. I think we can put it in any place, but maybe you know more," Alex said.

Ma Rong kept quiet and looked around to search for a spot. "I don't see anything special around this place, so we might have to go with anything we want," Ma Rong said.

"If... if there is no special spot, then we should make one," Alex said.

"How will you do that?" Ma Rong asked curiously.

"With this," Alex said as he brought out something from his storage.

Ma Rong saw her disciple pull out a wooden box and slowly open it up. Inside it was a small flower that had 5 petals, all of which were bluish-black in color.

The center of the flower was a little white, but that was the only light color in the entire flower. The moment the flower showed up, Ma Rong felt the familiar aura that was about the same as her, but far more stable and reserved.

Her mind started churning out information until she was left with a single answer that widened her eyes in surprise.

"An Umbra Lotus. Those are incredibly rare. Where did you get one?" Ma Rong asked.

"This was one of the items auctioned off in the Pink Cloud Auction house during the break day in the competition," Alex said.

"You bought this? This should've been quite expensive," Ma Rong said.

"Oh no. I tried to buy this, but I couldn't. Zexi kept on outbidding me. But... in the end, it still came back to me," Alex said.

"I see. So, what do you think we should do? Wrap using the flower?" Ma Rong asked.

"Yeah, I think so," Alex said.

"Very well, let's try," Ma Rong said as he reached into her storage bag. There she brought out a small wooden box as well, and slowly opened it.

Alex could see a pill on the inside of the box. Only, it was not a pill. 'Finally, after so many months of waiting,' he thought.

"I hope we can do it," Ma Rong said as she stared at the seed in her hands. This was the seed to the Yin Gathering tree. It was a very hard seed to find, and even harder to grow.

Ma Rong has spend quite a lot during the first auction Alex had gone to with her to get it. The only reason she hadn't spent a lot more was due to the Yin Gathering Tree not having a great chance at germinating.

But, with the Umbra Lotus, it would now have a really high chance since it would have a head start in the quality of the Yin Qi from the very beginning.

"A seed that is rarer than the Spirit Cleansing lily, eh?" Alex thought. "I hope this works out."

"I hope so too," Ma Rong said. She slowly lifted the Umbra Lotus towards herself and wrapped all 5 of its' petal around the seed. The flower wasn't very big, to begin with, so it could only barely wrap the seed in it.

Ma Rong then lowered them both onto a small hole on the ground she had prepared and buried it. Then, she released some of her own Yin Qi and scattered it around on the soil so that the tree could have an easier time finding Yin Qi when it started.

"Do we have to keep the place away from the sun?" Alex asked.

"No, the dirt will do that for us. Once the seed has started germinating, at that point there will be no need to keep it away from outside Yang energy so it will all be okay," Ma Rong said.

"I see," Alex said. "So we're done here?"

"I believe so. I will come back once a week or maybe more frequently to cultivate here. While I try to practice containing my Yin Qi, the tree will get benefits from me doing that at least," Ma Rong said.

"Okay, since we're done. Let's go to the next one," he said.

Ma Rong nodded and flew down to the gate. Due to the formations around both of the Alchemy gardens, they couldn't just fly away.

Alex and Ma Rong then quickly went to the other side of the sect to the second Alchemy garden.

Alex stopped out of the gate and looked at the formation that was set out of the Alchemy garden. "We should set it on the inside, right?" Alex asked.

"Yeah, that's better. Although, are you sure we shouldn't call someone that actually knows about formations to set them?" Ma Rong asked.

"Do you not trust your disciple with setting a formation?" Alex asked jokingly. "Besides, it's not a formation we can reveal to someone so easily. You will understand once it has been set, master."

With that, Alex went in. Ma Rong followed behind and went on to see what he was doing but all Alex did was walk around. He reached the very peak of the mountain and looked down.

"What are you looking for?" Ma Rong asked.

"For locations," Alex said. "I need to make sure the nodes are perfectly aligned on the same altitude, or the same orientation if they're on different altitudes."

"I will have to set 3 different formations for it to work as effectively as it did back there," Alex said.

He stopped speaking and looked around to find the most suitable placements. Once he thought he had it, he walked over to the places.

He took out a formation rod and started digging a bit of the ground. The more inside the formation was in the ground, the better it would be for the Alchemy garden. After all, many of the trees and plants got their nutrients from the root.

So, if he could make the soil they grew on rich with Qi as well, then it would be a great success.

Ma Rong stayed up on top of the mountain and watched her disciple put in one after another formation flags.

She was surprised how well he was handling the task he had put upon himself. 'So he really knows how to make and set formations, huh?' he thought with surprise. 'I wonder who taught it all to him.'

Not only was he getting great in alchemy, but his formation skills were also above average too. And that was considering he was making and setting True formations.

Alex went around the mountain to place down the formation flags in the night and occasionally went back to the peak of the mountain to check if his angles were correct. Once he made sure they were, he went back down to plant some more flags.

It took him nearly 3 hours to just plant those 24 formation flags. He might have finished it earlier if he didn't have to dig for all of them. Unfortunately, he didn't have any convenient earth technique that could move aside the ground for him.

Once they were all ready, he flew back to the peak of the mountain and looked down. "That... looks symmetrical to me," Alex said. "Don't you think so master?"

"Yes, it does seem that way, but I'm not sure how well it will work," Ma Rong said.

"I guess we will have to find out," Alex said.. "To start with, why don't you go and pour in some True Qi on that node."

Chapter 463 - Formation Set

"Which one? Any?" Ma Rong asked.

Alex looked down and pointed at 3 different nodes and said, "Those 3 nodes. As long as the Origins in those nodes are filled, and assuming I set everything properly, it should work."

Ma Rong nodded and flew down to one of the nodes Alex had pointed at. She released her True Qi onto the node and started pouring it out as much as she could.

Alex watched from above and waited for the formation to start. As for Ma Rong, she struggled to activate the node. No matter how much she tried, she just couldn't get the formation to start.

In the end, she couldn't help but be sure that she couldn't do it. "It's not working," she said.

Alex frowned. "That shouldn't be the case. These nodes seem perfectly fine," he said as he flew down next to her.

He then checked the nodes to see what the problem was and realized that the node was unusually cold, even frosted at places.

"Ah, it's your Qi, master. I think the Yin Qi is stopping the formation from running as well as it should," Alex said.

"That... so my body is at fault again?" Ma Rong softly spoke and stopped pouring in Qi. "Just how much trouble is it going to give me?"

"It's okay, master. Take your time getting used to your constitution. It shouldn't take that long now," Alex said.

"Sigh, I know," Ma Rong said. "Anyway, what should we do now?"

"Hmm... maybe we should call some other elder. We need someone to pour in more tru—"

Alex stopped speaking. He suddenly looked back and felt the air. The node had defrosted a little and Alex could start feeling the Qi in the air.

"It's working," he said under his breath.

"What?" Ma Rong asked.

"It's working," he shouted. "Haha, it's working, master. You did it."

Ma Rong looked around, but she couldn't tell anything. Everything including Qi and air came to a complete standstill when they were near her, and the only thing she could possibly feel now was auras.

She tried to feel the air, but nothing happened. "What's supposed to happen?" she asked.

"It's Qi, master. Qi is gathering in this area," Alex said. "I hope this means the other formations will work too. Let's go, master."

Alex then flew over to the next node with Ma Rong following right behind him. Once he reached there, he let Ma Rong work on it again.

Ma Rong wasn't sure what happened to the last node, but her disciple said that it was working so that was all she needed.

He put aside her hesitation and started pouring her Qi into the node and waited for it to work. But once again, despite her constant pouring of Qi, it didn't show any signs of working at all.

Alex waited for a few moments and said, "Master, can you stop for a moment?"

Ma Rong nodded and stopped pouring in Qi. She was about to be disappointed about it not working when she saw her disciples concentrated face. She waited for a moment and saw his face put on a smile.

"It's working," he said.

Ma Rong couldn't help but sigh. She still couldn't tell anything. Somehow, even her spiritual sense was cold, so she couldn't even use them to feel most of the time unless she focused on keeping her Yin Qi inside.

"I can't even tell if they work. Let's just go to the next one," she said.

"Uh... but you can, master," Alex said. "Look behind you."

Ma Rong didn't know what he was referring to and turned around. Suddenly, her eyes went wide as she visibly saw Qi and energy start gathering on the mountain.

The 5 colored Qi was moving all in front of her face, going left and right as it flowed with the wind.

"How?" she asked.

"I think I understood what is happening, master," Alex said.

Ma Rong turned to look at him inquisitively and waited for him to tell her what she had figured out.

"So, just as how all energy and attack lose momentum near you, the Qi you pour out onto the formation also suppress the formation from doing anything at all."

"However, the moment you stop using it and the Yin Qi gain their freedom, they go back to functioning normally and the formation starts working."

"Or at least that's what I think is happening," Alex said.

"I see. That... makes some sense," she said. There was still a lot of mystery surrounding her new body, but at least she was learning something.

Her eyebrows got together when she squinted a bit and started thinking. She suddenly released a lot of energy from herself and stopped her connection.

She couldn't watch the Qi in the air, but she could see the small wave of condensation in the air. The Yin Qi that wasn't under her control exhibited no similar properties to what they did when they were inside her.

She suddenly had an idea. "-ster."

"Master," Alex called repeatedly.

"What?" Ma Rong asked after waking up from her stupor.

"I said we should go to the final node and get it done with," he said.

"Oh right, let's go," Ma Rong said and moved. Alex flew behind and finally, they were at the final node.

Ma Rong was a lot more confident this time and didn't hesitate at all as she poured in her True Qi onto the final node. She poured it for quite a while before she stopped.

She looked at the slightly foggy mountain with the five-colored Qi and waited. As she did, more and more of the same Qi started appearing around them. She smiled as she watched the mountain fill with a very dense Qi.

"This is amazing," Alex said as he looked at the fog. "It's not on the same level as the one from the southern forest, but this alone is amazing."

"This is not similar to that place?" Ma Rong asked in surprise.

"Oh no, it is. It's just that since the formation there had been going on for years, there is no chance a formation created just minutes ago would compare to that. We will have to wait for a few years," Alex said.

"Oh, and how much Qi do these formations take? I hope they don't steal a lot from the True Spirit vine down below. That would be horrible," she said.

"Huh? Oh, did I not mention it yet? This is all the energy this formation needs. There is no more requirement," Alex said.

"Huh?" Ma Rong asked in confusion. "I thought all formations needed a power source, which is always either spirit stones, spirit vine, or some other ingredients that are very rich in Qi," she said.

"You are not alone in thinking that, master," Alex said. "However, the fact is different. While you do require a power source, it already has one."

"You see there are 3 different formations in this place. 2 of them are Element Convergence formations, while the last one is a True Qi Delivering formation."

Alex then pointed behind him at the multicolored fog and said, "that which you can see is the work of the 2 Element convergence formations. Its job is to gather different energy from the surrounding that belonged to one of the 5 common energies."

"It converges Yang and Yin energy as well, but just as night comes along, the Yang Qi disappears, and just as the day comes along, the Yin qi disappears, so it's not possible to see them getting gathered," Alex said.

"Not like they are that freely available out in the open without certain circumstances."

Ma Rong looked at the fog. Now that she was looking for it, she did in fact notice certain bluish-black Qi floating in the air. 'So Yin Qi is there, huh?' she thought.

"Oh right, what about the single formation? What's its job?" she asked.

Alex sighed and shook his head. "This is one of the reasons I was so vehemently against getting formation setters, master. This is one of the main reasons," Alex said.

Ma Rong started getting curious. "What does this one do?" she asked.

Alex took a deep breath and said, "It's a True Qi Dellivewring formation. It gathers True Qi from the air and uses it to sustain whatever formation is created inside of it.

"The formation this formation makes is a little different from the rest. Instead of spanning across a large amount of land, it only works in a certain... circle," Alex said.

"Or maybe saying just around the outer circumference would be better. Since that's all where it works. It gathers True qi just on the circumference."

"If you happen to have a formation working in that circle. It works as the power source for that formation," Alex said.

"Wait, so it's a formation that powers other formations?" Ma Rong asked in surprise.

"Yeah, and that's not even the best part," Alex said. "Normally, if you use this, you would have to constantly put in more True spirit stones to keep them working."

"However, there is a neat little trick that one can do," Alex said. "If you make it so that the formation's outer circumference is the same path is where the formation itself is, then you can keep the formation running forever."

"That is what is happening here right now. I've set the 3 formations in the same circle and set the formation to work in that circle as well."

"So, not only will it automatically fuel the other two formations, but it will also fuel itself for eternity."

Chapter 464 - Improvement

"So, it's a self-sustaining formation that will also sustain the other 2 formations forever?" Ma Rong asked with her eyes wide open. She was in absolute shock from the information she had just received.

She tried making sense of what her disciple said, and while it did make sense, she still had a hard time believing it.

"It's one of those 20 formations then?" Ma Rong asked.

"Yes, master," Alex said. "You can see why I tried to do it all by myself, right?"

"Yeah, this would've led to a lot of serious question and answer if other people found out we knew about this," Ma Rong said.

She turned back to look at the formation and took a deep breath. "I will have to remake a few rules regarding the Alchemy gardens," Ma Rong said as she started contemplating a bit.

Alex flew back to the top of the mountain and looked down, but he couldn't see anything clearly. The fog was starting to reduce his visibility by a lot. Still, he could tell how rich the Qi in the air was and knew for sure that most of these ingredients would grow with a lot better output rate.

He then tried to think of everything he'd done and anything that he had missed. Once he made sure that there were no problems with the formations, he happily flew down next to his master.

He waited for a few moments before Ma Rong was done talking into her medallion.

"Master, I believe we are done here," Alex said.

"Oh, let's go back then."

Alex nodded and walked out of the gate of the formation. There were a few people curious about the fog in the alchemy garden and were gathered around.

Alex turned one last time to check the garden and started feeling pride in what he had done. The level of ingredients that they would have now would be amazing.

He beamed with happiness as he turned around and went back to his house. Now that both of the Alchemy gardens were fitted with different things, given that the seeds they put in the right first alchemy garden grew, the Hong Wu sect would have a better grade of disciples.

He walked back into the courtyard and sat down, thinking what he had to do next. He had 4 tasks in his mind when he first went to Ma Rong.

He wanted to help her germinate the Yin Gathering tree using the Umbra Lotus that he had.

He then wanted to use the formation flags that had been in his storage forever.

He wanted to make the Mind Elating pills and eat them soon enough, and finally, he wanted to reach 100% with his Yang Purity.

Now that he thought about it, he had mostly done all of it. The only thing remaining was to eat the Mind Elating pills.

Alex brought out the 3 pills and looked at them. "I currently have a 25-meter wide spiritual sense. If the same increment is to be had, then my next 8 breakthroughs will increase me by about 24 meters, bringing me to 50 meters."

"Woah, isn't that equal to what master has right now?" he thought. "So if I eat these pills, my final spiritual sense will go farther than master's."

He still deliberated if he should eat the pills right away or not. He didn't know if it was better to eat them now, or later.

In the end, he decided to separate them by 3 realms. Every 3rd Mind Tempering realm, he would eat one.

So, he kept back the pills into his storage and stopped thinking about them for now. He looked at his storage bags and saw the many ingredients he still had.

'I need to make some more pills. Should I directly go for True pills now? For that I will have to have more than just 5% True Qi,' he thought.

So, he decided to cultivate for the few coming days and focus less on everything else. However, before that, he had something he needed to do.

Alex opened his status page and looked at it. Since it had been a while, he already had quite a few Qi he could use.

He was about to click the button when he stopped. 'Can I not breakthrough on my own?' he wondered.

He had thought about it for a while but always stopped thinking about it. Now that he had come to this spot, he finally tried wondering about it himself.

"How do people break through again? By cultivating was it?" Alex thought. That was something impossible for him. Even if he knew how one broke through during cultivation, that was not something he could do himself.

'What is wrong with me?' he wondered. 'Everyone in the real world can cultivate without falling asleep, except me.'

He had tried finding the answer to that, but no one else suffered the same thing as he did.

"Whatever," he thought and hit the button.

Suddenly, his body convulsed as a massive amount of Qi went through his body, improving it all at once. Some of the Qi also went through his brain to improve his mental ability.

He was now on Mind Tempering 2nd realm.

"If I couldn't compete with Mind Tempering 7th realm now, I can be called nothing but a waste," Alex thought.

He could tell that he should be quite close to Mind Tempering 8th realm in terms of fighting ability too. After all, his Qi density was definitely there.

Alex then sent out his spiritual sense and saw that it was between 28 and 29 meters in terms of the distance he had. 'One more realm and I will eat that pill,' he thought.

He was not starting to think about focusing solely on cultivation for the next few days.

At the same time, Ma Rong was also in her home improving herself.. After starting the formations successfully, she had gotten a new sense of motivation as well as some ideas on what she could do next.

Chapter 465 - True Pill Making

Ma Rong had realized that it was not her Qi that was the problem, but rather her connection with the Qi. Yin Qi was naturally cold and dark,? but never to the level as what Ma Rong was showing.

Which meant that the main problem lied with her body and not her Qi. So, instead of reeling in her Qi and not letting it overflow, she should be trying to reel in what her body did.

Meaning, she had to find a way to suppress her body enough to keep it on the same level as when she had it unawakened.

There were ways she could do that, but none of them felt as good as the most dangerous one she could think of.

Ma Rong sighed and looked back towards the Forbidden Fields, for that was the only thing that could truly suppress her.

A week had passed in the blink of an eye and Alex opened his eyes after cultivating for the entirety of the night. He now had around 20% of his total Qi as True Qi.

He had also learned that after 20%, his Qi wouldn't change to True Qi no matter what. Meaning, that even if he cultivated forever, his Qi wouldn't turn to True Qi if it was already there.

The next thing he had learned was that if he did not cultivate, and instead let his body gather Qi passively, then he wouldn't get True Qi at all.

So, if he ever spent all the 20% of the True Qi he had, he would have to go back and cultivate all over again to gather it. And given how he was using it, he definitely needed to do that.

For the last week, aside from cultivation, he had also started making True pills. While he wasn't really good at it due to having not as much True Qi, or due to energy in the pills being too strong to control with his barely formed True Qi.

Alex stood up and went back to the alchemy room to make the pills once more.

He put the cauldron down and started putting in his ingredients. He started with pills that had recipes where barely any of the ingredients were in the True rank so that he didn't have to worry about it much.

He put in his first ingredient and started stirring it. Since it was a common rank ingredient, he didn't have to worry much for now.

He did the same thing for the second ingredient, which was also a common rank ingredient, and soon the energies from those two ingredients were started to mix with each other, resulting in another energy.

The third ingredient was the one Alex needed to care about. It was the first True rank ingredient of the bunch.

Alex put it in and immediately sent out his True Qi to control it. Since he wasn't even in the True realm yet, the amount of True Qi he had could be considered to be barely any.

And that was enough to maybe make 2 pills with it all. So, Alex had to be extra careful not to overuse it.

He started moving the ingredient around and soon it released its energy. He continued moving it around until it released all of its energy, and only then did he finally get to go back to common Qi.

Once the energy was released, it very quickly overwhelmed the rest of the energy in the cauldron and dominated them to become the final resulting energy in the cauldron.

Alex then went on to put the rest of the ingredients. The next 3 ingredients were normal ones and only required his common Qi. So, he easily finished turning them all to powder and the energy released from them mixed together with the energy in the cauldron.

The 7th ingredient was also a True rank ingredient, so once more he had to use his True Qi to make a powder out of it. The 7th ingredient has particularly strong energy, so he had to fight it to not let it use up all of his True Qi while making sure he didn't lose control of them either.

He could feel his True Qi drain at an abnormally fast speed and by the time he was finished with this ingredient, almost 8% of his original 20% true Qi was gone.

The energy from the 7th ingredient was the one that gave the current energy in the cauldron the most change. The two energy collided with each other and threatened to destroy the cauldron.

To stop them from being so volatile, he had to use his True Qi once more to control them. With that over half of his True Qi was gone.

Alex sighed thinking just how much True Qi was required to make a single pill. However, once he remembered he wasn't even in the True Realm yet, he got happy again.

So, he focused back on making the pills.

Fortunately, there were only 4 more ingredients remaining and every single one of them was common ingredients.

So, Alex quickly turned them all into powder and the energy released from them mixed together with the other energy and quickly formed final energy that would go onto the pill.

Alex formed the pill using his normal Qi but then used his True Qi once more to use Elemental Guidance. Elemental Guidance using his normal Qi wouldn't be able to move the energy at all.

Suddenly, his pill-splitting Qi escaped from his body started splitting the pill into two. Once they were done, a vortex appeared from the pills and started devouring the energy.

Unfortunately, since they used common Qi, they couldn't devour the energy at all. So Alex had to keep using his Elemental guidance to keep making the pills.

Once he was certain that he couldn't force any more Qi into the pills, he sighed and stopped.

He barely had 5% of his True Qi remaining now, so he simply sighed and shook his head.

Chapter 466 - Elder

The cauldron lid opened and Alex pulled out 2 different pills and looked at them.

[Skin Smoothing pill: 14%]

[Skin Smoothing pill: 15%]

Alex chuckled a little when he saw that. Even when he tried so hard and did everything right, he could barely make Mortal grade pill. Even if the pills did not split, he doubted he could reach above 20%.

"Sigh, I have a lot of ways to go with making True pills," he thought. Since he was practically out of Qi, it was time to stop.

So, he took back his cauldron and properly stored his pill. Then, he logged out.

It was early in the morning of a Sunday, and he had nothing to do today. The only thing he planned on doing was going to the Tiger sect today since it had already been 2 weeks since he came back.

He went out to get his breakfast and met with the other girls. Since he didn't have much else to do that day, he decided to go on a date with Emily.

They went to a theater to watch a new movie and watched whatever movie was out at the time. The movie they watched wasn't as good as they had hoped it would be, but the time they shared was fun for both of them.

They went to a cafe next and spent some time there too. Then they went around the city just roaming, having a fun time.

Around 3 pm, they returned back home and Alex went back to his room to log into the game.

Once he was back, he stood up from the alchemy room and went over to Ma Rong. He sent out his spiritual sense to check for her, but couldn't find her anywhere.

"Master?" he called out, wondering if he missed her somewhere since it wasn't like he could see her with his spiritual sense.

He got no response, so he turned around to leave. Just then, he saw his master walking up to the house.

She looked tired and not very well. Her face was pale, and the stride in her feet gave away her fatigue.

"Master, are you alright?" he asked as he ran up to her. He grabbed her by the arm and helped her walk.

"Yes, I'm fine. I'm just a little tired," Ma Rong said. She continued walking to her house, and Alex brought her there.

During the entire time, there was just one thing that Alex couldn't understand at all. 'Why am I not feeling scared?' he thought.

Ever since Ma Rong awakened her constitution, Alex couldn't help but feel scared around her, but now, he didn't feel anything.

In fact, he really didn't feel anything.

"Master, what happened to your cultivation base?" Alex asked worriedly. To him, she was nothing but a mortal right now.

"Don't worry about it. It will be back in just a few minutes," Ma Rong said. After Alex took her to her room, he could finally not feel cold in this place.

Ma Rong sat down and immediately started cultivating. Soon, tiny bits of Qi left her body, followed by a rush of Yin Qi escaping through.

The feeling of fear immediately returned back to Alex, so he once again stepped back so as to not get affected by it.

Ma Rong took a deep breath as all of her tiredness and fatigue disappeared as well. Her cultivation was back with full force and she could finally feel at peace again.

Then, she took another breath, and all the Yin Qi that came out rushing went back inside her.

Alex could still feel her aura, but it wasn't to the same level as when she wasn't in control of her constitution.

"Master, you started getting better at it?" Alex asked in awe.

"Yes," Ma Rong said. "Or at least I'm getting there. Which is working."

"So, you can make pills again now?" Alex asked.

Ma Rong put on a sad smile and shook her head. "Not yet, but I'll get there," she said. "It's just a matter of time."

Alex put on a sad smile too. 'I'm not sure we have any,' he thought. There was still one thing on his mind that was nagging him at the back of his head, but he wasn't concerned about it since he hadn't taken the time to think it through.

"So, why did you want to find me?" she asked.

"Oh, right. I was coming to let you know that I'm going to the Tiger sect now," Alex said.

"Oh, it's time, huh?" Ma Rong said. "Although, before you go, I had something to discuss with you."

"Sure, master. What is it about?" he asked.

"Since you are already so good at making pills, and are already in the Mind Tempering 2nd realm, it's nothing but a few weeks before you reach the True realms."

"At that time, whether you want to or not, you will have to become an elder, or graduate from the sect and leave," Ma Rong said.

"What? Leave? I don't want to, master," Alex said.

"Yeah, I guessed that," Ma Rong said. "So, I had a suggestion for you."

"What is it?" Alex asked and waited for her to continue speaking.

"Do you want to just cut the line and become an elder now?" Ma Rong asked.

Alex was surprised. "Right now?" he asked.

"Yeah, what do you think?" Ma Rong asked.

Alex fell into contemplation. He would just have to hand over a single Heaven grade common pill and he would become an elder just like that.

However, he wasn't sure if he wanted to do that right now. 'But what else do I have left to do here?' he wondered.

'Besides becoming an elder, I really do have nothing. But then the responsibilities...' he started worrying.

"How about this, master?" Alex said. "I will think about it after I return from the Tiger sect."

Ma Rong smiled. "I didn't want to make you an elder right now either. Go and come back.. We will have plenty of time to talk about this."

Chapter 467 - Back Again

"Ok master," Alex said and stood up.

"See you in 2 weeks."

With that, Alex left her home. He went back to his house and changed his clothes to wear the Tiger sect's robes. After that, he left the mountain.

He went down to meet the other elders and disciples before he left the sect.

He didn't immediately go to the Tiger sect, however, and instead went to the sect's pill store. He found an elder and handed him some pills he had made over the course of the past few days and told him to sell them.

The earnings were once more going back to Ma Rong for stay. When the elder realized who he was speaking with, he finally understood why there were such amazing pills being sold by a random disciple he hadn't seen before.

After confirming everything, Alex left the store as well and walked away. Finally, he reached the small market outside the gates with tiger statues on it.

He was back in Tiger sect.

Alex walked in and asked a guard to call his elder brother. However, it turned out that he wasn't there.

"Did he go somewhere?" Alex asked.

"No, he's posted on the wall, like almost everyone else," the guard said.

Alex didn't understand what he meant, so he left there. It had been 2 weeks since he left so he started wondering just how low he was sent by the people here.

So, he took out his badge and looked at it.

"Oh, 177 huh? That's not too bad. That... makes me an inner sect disciple, but I can live with that, I guess," he thought. The disciples along the way kept on staring at him, understanding who he was.

They pointed fingers towards him, surprised that he was finally back.

"Right, I've been gone for over 3 weeks now. I forgot about that. I did cause a commotion and then disappeared so it's only right that they are surprised," Alex thought.

Then, a smile crept up on his face. "Should I target someone tomorrow?" he thought. However, then he remembered that he was very strong and there were maybe two people in the sect that were his genuine match.

First was his sister who should have been back by now, and second was the strongest young person he had ever seen, Du Yuhan.

"Is sister even back yet?" Alex wondered. She was supposed to have stayed in Rubyroad city for 2 weeks after he left, but the two weeks had already passed. So he wasn't sure if she had time to leave and return in time.

Alex walked up the mountain and at the same time messaged his master that he was back.

Wen Cheng replied back saying he was a little busy and that Alex should wait around in his house for a bit before he returned.

Alex felt that was okay, so he walked all the way up. He was about to reach his master's manor when he stopped.

"Oh, if sister is back then she will get angry if I don't tell her I've returned," Alex thought. But then he remembered about the problem they faced.

'Is Du Yuhan the prime disciple now?' he wondered. Since his sister was available for target when she couldn't defend her rank, he could only think how many vultures would jump at that.

And no one was stronger or more troublesome than Du Yuhan. 'Oh god, I hope he isn't one yet. I don't know how Sister will ever beat him,' Alex thought.

So, to check if he was or not, Alex went to the house for the 2nd ranked disciple of the sect. He walked up the steps and took a deep breath before he knocked on the door.

The seconds when the door didn't open felt like eternity for him.

'Is he gone?'

'Did he really take the first spot?'

'Is sister not back?'

'Who's in this house then?'

'Is this empty?'

Many questions ran through his mind. He was starting to accept their worst case scenario as true when he heard a clack on the door.

His eyes widened as he watched the door slowly open. 'Who is inside?' Alex thought and watched as a figure slowly walked out.

The figure was surprisingly a female and it wasn't his sister. It took him a moment to recognize the figure and when he did, he couldn't help but be confused about why she was here.

"Huh? You're back? What are you doing here?" the girl asked.

Alex woke from his stupor and asked, "What are you doing here?" he couldn't believe for a second that she was the 2nd strongest disciple in the sect right now.

"What? I'm in my senior brother's house. Why are you here?" she asked.

Just then another person walked from behind her and came out. Alex finally understood what was happening when he saw Du Yuhan with her.

'Ah, right. I forgot Su Min was Du Yuhan's junior sister. Stupid me, thinking she was the 2nd strongest,' he thought. 'Then that means he didn't take sister's spot, or that she took it back.'

"Hello," Alex said. "I'm back from learning Alchemy, I hope you will teach me this time."

"It's good that you are back, but can you stop bothering me, I told you to find me when you are in the 3rd rank, didn't I? Little Su, let's go in. He's a maniac who will drag me into battle if we talk too long," Du Yuhan said and walked in.

"Eh?" Su Min looked back and forth between her brother and Alex and slowly closed the door. As she did, Alex could hear the words, "But it's Sunday."

Alex almost laughed out loud seeing Du Yuhan go back in a hurry. 'So that means our worries were for nothing, thank god,' he thought.

After learning that Du Yuhan was still the 2nd place, Alex was really surprised how his sister managed to even secure her place back.

'Did 2 weeks of handling other people's Qi increase her own ability somehow?' Alex wondered.. He couldn't see how else she could beat Du Yuhan with his True realm equivalent of Sword Qi.

Chapter 468 - First Rank

Alex's mood was a lot better after learning that his master wouldn't have to leave his spot for a while now. At least 5 months from what Luo Mei had told him would take her to become a True realm expert.

'I will enter True realm way earlier than her though,' Alex thought. He soon reached her house and knocked on the door.

"Sister, I'm back," he said out loud. However, nobody answered. He knocked a few more times, but his sister didn't open the door at all.

'Huh?' Alex thought. "Why is she not opening the door? Is she not back by some chance? Maybe she's gone somewhere. Master will let her know later I guess."

"Searching for your senior sister, are we?" a voice came from behind him. Alex felt that the voice was familiar, so he turned around.

Behind him was a young man in a yellow robe with a red outline. The robe looked great on him since the outline matched his red hair a lot.

Alex could feel a cultivation base of the 3rd Mind tempering realm, close to the 4th Mind Tempering realm from this person.

He started to have a sour feeling in his heart when he saw him but didn't let him show on his face.

"Maybe, what are you doing here in my sister's house," Alex asked Yang Ma.

"Haha, your greetings lack a bit of respect, brother Yu," Yang Ma said. "You shouldn't talk like that to a prime disciple now, should you?"

"What?" Alex was surprised when he heard then. Only then did he realize that he was staring at a Yellow robe with a red outline, the robe of a Prime disciple.

"How did you..." Alex's confusion was at an all-time high.

"Get the first rank? It's quite easy actually," Yang Ma said. "Since sister Luo Mei isn't back yet, and Du Yuhan didn't show any attempts to make it his, I decided to take it for myself for now."

"Sister Luo Mei will probably ask it back when she returns, but I can have some fun as rank 1 until then," Yang Ma said. "Who knows, maybe you will fight me to take it back too."

Alex was still surprised, but his confusion was going away. "Oh, I see. So sister isn't back yet, huh. No wonder you got it, brother Ma. Don't worry, I won't come for your rank. Rank 1 doesn't appeal to me as well as rank 3 does," Alex said.

Yang Ma immediately showed signs of anger in his face, as if Alex had just said something that offended him.

Alex didn't understand what was wrong with what he had said, however, he could see through Yang Ma's expression that it struck a bone for sure.

"Anyway, I'm leaving. Have fun with your 1st rank" Alex said and walked away. If Du Yuhan didn't want the 1st rank then Alex had nothing to worry about. When Luo Mei did come back, she would have an easy time getting back her rank.

"I wonder why Du Yuahn didn't take the spot though?" he wondered. That reminded him of the semi-finals in the Annual competition too.

'Hmm... he didn't fight sister at that time either. Could it be...?' he was just thinking that when another thought struck his head.

"Oh, so that was why he suddenly got angry, haha," Alex thought as he chuckled remembering Yang Ma's reaction when he said he would get the 3rd rank.

Alex said that because he was looking forward to having Du Yuhan teach him about sword intent and such.

However, to Yang Ma, it sounded completely different. Ever since the maze run when Alex took his talisman, Yang Ma had thought of Alex as someone he needed to put in his place.

He was just an Organ Tempering realm cultivator that managed to win the whole thing when he himself barely got any points there. Not to mention, Wan Li beating him so bad in the competition stung him a little too.

Two alchemists got the better of the grandson of a Saint realm expert. That had made Yang Ma unreasonably angry.

Now that Alex said that he was going to take the 3rd rank, that meant that when Luo Mei did return and easily took back her place, Yang Ma would then have to challenge Alex to take back his original spot.

And that felt like an open invitation of duel to him, which he didn't like.

Alex didn't care about Yang Ma enough to worry about him attacking him. For now, he was simply going to focus on himself getting stronger.

'Should I go to 3rd Mind Tempering realm today?' Alex wondered. 'Although, I do want to learn from Du Yuhan as well as I can.'

Alex contemplated for a bit and decided to wait on it. It had only been a week since he broke through to the 2nd realm and he definitely needed some more time to stabilize that cultivation base.

The bigger the realm he would go to, the longer they required to stabilize. He sighed and made his way to Wen Cheng's manor.

He stayed there for a few minutes before Wen Cheng returned.

"You're back, huh? Good. What do you plan on doing now? I don't really have anything left to teach you. Maybe a couple of fighting techniques but that's it," Wen Cheng said.

"It's alright, master. I can take care of myself now," Alex said. "Oh right, did Sister not return yet?"

"No," Wen Cheng said. "I can't communicate that far away so I don't really have any information. But, she should be returning at anytime soon now. Didn't you say she had to stay there for 2 weeks?"

"Yes," Alex said. "If they were successful, it should be right about now. Although, she may choose to stay around for a little while with her father."

"No, he will send her here for sure," Wen Cheng said.

"Huh? But it should have been a while since she was back there. Why would he send her back immediately?" Alex asked. He didn't think Luo Keng was a heartless father at all.

"Because it's dangerous there," Wen Cheng said with a serious face.

Chapter 469 - Plan To Evade The Saint Beast

Alex got serious too when he heard that. "What do you mean master?" Alex asked. As far as he remembered, Rubyroad city didn't look that different from Scarlet City, other than being maybe a step down in quality.

"The beast hoard," Wen Cheng said. "They can't handle the beast hoards that well, and Luo Keng would never keep his daughters around during something so dangerous."

"So... you think he'll send them back to they have the safety of the sect behind them?" Alex asked.

"Yes. That only makes sense given how he is," Wen Cheng said, reminiscing the past.

"Oh right, I heard that senior brother was at the backside of the sect too. What's up with that? Is that because of the beast hoards too?" Alex asked.

"Yes," Wen Cheng said. "Did you realize by now that they attack every month? It may be off by a day or two, but every attack has been with a month of interval."

"So, since the last attack was 3 weeks earlier..."

"... They will be attacking in a week from now," Alex finished the sentence and the dread he had in his heart for a while was brought forth.

He had been worrying about it in the back of his mind but had never consciously thought about it. Now that it was brought forth, he didn't know what to do.

"How do you know the beasts are attacking, Yu Ming?" Wen Cheng asked out of nowhere. He had been thinking about this for a while now. He remembered Alex saying something to that effect the first time, but the beasts had already attacked by then.

The second time around, they believed he was dead.

However, the third time, Alex accurately let them know that the beast hoard was coming and that was what saved a lot of people from unexpected death.

"I don't know, master," Alex said. "It's like a feeling I have. Every time they come for me, I have this feeling like something is calling me towards the south. That was how I was able to know they were coming for me."

"Nothing more?" Wen Cheng asked.

"I do know that every time there is a beast hoard, a Saint beast comes after me," Alex said.

Wen Cheng's face went pale. "That's right. There was a Saint beast in the capital too," he said.

"Yes, and there was one that followed me during the last beast hoard attack as well. I don't know why it stopped though," Alex said. "I did feel it come to search for me a little later, but by then the feeling was gone."

Wen Cheng didn't know what to think. "This... this is quite dangerous. What do we do when they come by again?" Wen Cheng thought.

"I don't know, master. But we will surely think of something. I have a fast boat that I can maybe run away in like I did last time," Alex said.

"Alright, I guess that should work if it did last time," Wen Cheng said.

"Is that why the security at the front is so bad? All of them are posted at the back?" Alex asked.

"Yeah, we have to do something," Wen Cheng said.

"What about the sect activities? Any changes?" Alex asked.

"Nope, no changes there. You will probably get 10 different challenges tomorrow so get ready," Wen Cheng said.

Alex nodded and stood up. "I will go back and rest for now master," Alex said.

"Alright, go back," Wen Cheng said.

Alex bowed and left the manor. He had said words of confidence to Wen Cheng, but he himself was worrying a lot.

'Where do I run off to though?' he thought. The entire northern section of this area was nothing but the forbidden fields where Qi didn't work. The only reason more people didn't know was due to the massive mountains that blocked the view of the desert.

Going east or west didn't work either since the Saint beast would catch him in no time. Obviously, going south wasn't a choice anyway.

'What should I do?' he started worrying. 'Should I run away from the sect so that I can keep them safe?'

Many thoughts ran across Alex, but no place seemed any safe. "Oh wait," Alex thought. "The Saint beast didn't come for me during the second time right?"

"I was even helpless during that time since I was back at home. Why didn't it?" Alex wondered. After a few moments, he thought he had the answer.

"Did the Spirit Disorienting formation and the Barrier formation that made new space block my aura?" Alex wondered. "God, I hope it wasn't the one that blocked Images and sounds."

"That's my only hope, I guess," Alex thought. Finally, he had a plan. He would now open a formation and trap himself in so that the beast wouldn't find him.

He thought the plan was perfect. All he needed to do was make a formation, hide in it for a while, and once the feeling went away, he could come back.

Hopefully, the Saint beast wouldn't find him in there and leave this place alone. The people in the Scarlet City could certainly handle a normal beast hoard.

Thinking that he had a perfect plan, he happily walked to his house numbered 177.

It was nighttime, and he had nothing to do, so he decided to make a few bits of formations with what little formation plates he had. After that, he would go back to cultivate.

It didn't take him very long to finish what little formation plates he had remaining. He would have to go sell those in the market tomorrow morning.

For the next hour or two, he tried to understand how the formation that Song Zun made on dirt even worked. He couldn't understand it no matter how much he thought about it.

"Sigh, do I really have to find an expert on this?" He wondered. "I wish I could talk with sister Xing once more. Maybe she could help me with that.." After that, he called out Pearl to cultivate together.

Chapter 470 - Going For 3

Once more before cultivating, Alex wondered if he really shouldn't just go to Mind Tempering 3rd realm. "Better be cautious," he said and closed the panel.

It was all ready, so he could go anytime he wanted either way. "I will see how well my battles tomorrow are. Based on that, I may break through tomorrow," he thought.

He took out a beast core and flicked it towards Pearl who jumped in the air and caught it with his mouth. He immediately munched on it and started getting sleepy.

"Come, cultivate," Alex said.

"Meow," Pearl cried out and got on his lap before finding himself a perfect place to lie down on.

Alex chuckled and shook his head as he got ready to cultivate once more. He took a deep breath and soon the world around him turned silent as he slowly drifted into a trance and fell asleep.

Early in the morning, Alex opened his eyes and looked at the time, it was 6 am in morning. He told pearl to stop cultivating and soon sent him back to his beast space.

He was in the Tiger sect and couldn't spare to show Pearl to anyone for even a single moment.

Alex logged out and went to the kitchen to find that Emily was already awake and cooking their breakfast.

She had a crappy body and talent in the game, so she didn't have a very fun time in the game at all. She could barely remain as an outer sect disciple of some mid-tier sect.

So, she liked spending her time in the real world, rather than the game. Alex stayed with her and talked for a bit as she finished preparing breakfast. Once she was done, Sarah and Hannah arrived as well and ate their breakfast.

Once they were done, Alex returned back to his room and logged in to sell his formation real quick before getting ready for his classes.

He walked over to the marketplace and got his formations checked out. It turned out that his recent formation flags that he had been purchasing himself and carving the origins onto them were actually barely Earth grade at best.

He couldn't help but chuckle when he realized how bad he was at making the formation flags.

Some of that problem definitely lied with the metal he carved them on, but most of the problem was definitely with the angle he carved the formation on. His strokes were probably not straight either with how the formation rods were curved.

Still, he managed to at least make back what he spent on them, so he was quite happy.

Once he returned back, he logged in and got ready for his classes.

"Are you going to keep using my car? Why not buy one for yourself?" Emily asked.

"Eh? But sister has one, so I'm fine for now," Alex said as he drove towards his classes. "Besides, I won't really be needing them for a while after I drop out from university."

"Huh? You're going to drop out?" Emily asked with a concerned face.

"Yeah, I'm not really getting out of the university. Still, on the off chance that I need to go back, I will at least finish the first semester," Alex said.

"Sigh, I guess I can understand what you mean, but it's still sad that you won't continue it. I guess I will have to start considering the idea of going back to university classes alone," she said.

"It's not all that bad. I will try to make some time for us," Alex said. However, he didn't let go of the idea of dropping out of his classes.

His exams would start in just 2 weeks, and after that, he would drop out of college to focus on earning more money.

The two of them started talking about other things as they went to their classes. After their classes were over, they returned back to their home.

He was quite happy to learn that his classes for the semester were ending after this week. 'I will have a lot of free time for the game,' he thought. The game was all he could really think about at the moment.

After he went back to the game, Alex felt a vibration in his storage bag and realized that he had been challenged.

'Are they really that desperate that they think I will go high so fast?' he thought. He wondered if he wanted to go up or not, but in the end, thought...

"Maybe I should just go for the 3rd rank right now' he thought. If he got the 3rd rank he could immediately start with his Sword Intent training. That way, maybe he could reach the realm of what a proper Sword Intent was like.

Alex walked out of his house and went along the side of the sect crater to go towards the fighting stages.

He checked his badge and went to stage number 15 where his first match was. His number was soon called out, and he went up.

His opponent was a young man that seemed terrified of him. He was most likely simply fighting him because he was told to.

Alex shook his head and quickly beat this man before moving on to the next one. He was still keeping his cultivation base hidden, so people didn't really realize how high his cultivation base was improved.

They kept on coming for him regardless and regardless of who they were Alex beat them.

His final opponent was a man in rank 163 who was using water abilities against him. Since the water wasn't as deadly of an element in the hands of someone so weak compared to him, Alex didn't need to worry about it at all.

He dashed forward, going in a zig-zag pattern dodging all of the attacks. Once he was next to the man, he lightly pushed him with an open palm. The opponent flew through the air and fell out of the stage.

Alex was finally done with all 10 of his challenges.. Next up was his own challenge.