

## Alchemy 531

Chapter 531: Keeping the Black Venom in check

Alex propped up his sword and got ready to strike. He wanted to kill, he needed to kill. He looked around at the death and destruction. Death was what she deserved.

The Black Venom was defenseless right now, and the thought did cross his mind that he couldn't kill someone defenseless, but the situation wasn't what it seemed.

The only reason she was defenseless was that Alex had knocked her out. This was the perfect opportunity.

His sword glowed yellow with a white outline on it, and he rushed forward to kill her.

He went for her neck as that was the only way he had ever known of killing anything, man or animal. The sword made an arc in the air as it fell directly on her defenseless neck.

TWANG!

A rather unfamiliar sound emerged when his sword reached her neck. A white glow appeared around her body as a golden amulet emerged from her chest.

It was well hidden in her clothes, and not easily visible, but when she was in danger, it came out to protect her.

At the same time, the large sound and force woke her up. Her head still hurt from Heaven's impact, but it wasn't so bad that she couldn't handle a mere True Disciple.

Without hesitation, she reached into her storage bag and brought out a mask. Alex's eyes went wide when he saw that. He remembered the mask from the last time.

It was a mask that blocked all mental attacks. Such a precious mask wasn't even available in any stores. If one wanted such things, they would either have to get lucky in an auction house or specifically visit a high-grade artifact maker and ask him to make one.

Alex knew that she had multiple such masks, at least she was able to replace one when the first one broke last time. He couldn't help but wonder how a bandit could ever come across something so good, and so many of them too.

He wondered if she had connections on the outside with people in high places.

"Shit! Not the time to think about that," he thought to himself and immediately used Heaven's Impact once more to knock her out.

Unfortunately, he couldn't match up with the speed of a True Lord realm expert. She had put on her mask as if it was second nature to her, and the spiritual fist dissipated when it hit the mask.

Alex frowned. He was too late.

Without a second thought, he turned invisible and concealed himself. Black Venom looked around, and once again, she couldn't locate him at all.

The both of them had come to a standstill of a sort.

Alex couldn't fight her as she was too strong for him, and the only skill of his that worked on her was blocked by her mask.

As for Black Venom, she couldn't find Alex to kill him like she wanted to, and the only way she could, which was her voice, wouldn't work on him since it was also blocked by her mask.

Neither of the parties could use their mental attacks on each other, and the match had come to a standstill.

"Come out of hiding, you coward!" Black Venom started to taunt Alex. Her voice sounded like that of a man, very hoarse and deep. "You are a weakling if all you can do is hide. And you dare call yourself a man? If you call yourself one, then fight me like one, you bastard!"

She started shouting curses at him that Alex hadn't even heard of before. Alex started thinking about what he should do as well.

"If you won't come out, then I will just do what I came here to do in the first place," she said and walked over to one of the houses that were still fine.

All the houses in the sect had soundproofing done to them, so even if Alex shouted them to run away, they wouldn't be able to. The best he could do was knock on their doors and then explain to them what to do when they came out.

That wasn't an option right now.

His sword glowed goldenly. He arched it over his head from left to right, and the sword left behind 5 phantom images of itself, all glowing golden.

The phantom swords then turned as they faced Black Venom and shot at her.

Black Venom could see the glowing swords, even if she couldn't see Alex himself. So, when the attack landed on her, all she had to do was use her defensive technique, and not a scratch appeared on her.

Alex was just too weak to do anything to her.

Just then, he saw something golden in front of him as well. He just happened to see Black Venom coat her sickle in golden light as well that she shot towards him.

Alex immediately dodged the attack and jumped to the side. He was surprised that she could see him but later realized that she had just attacked where his attack had launched from and gotten lucky.

"I can't stand around. I need to keep moving," he thought.

Black Venom went on to destroy the house, and that was when Alex struck at her once more. This time, it was a golden fist that flew towards her.

The moment he attacked he left the place and watched Black Venom attack where he had been standing before.

His attack was like a child hitting an adult. It barely did anything at all. With the adult fighting back at full strength, the child had no chance of victory.

'I need help,' he thought. "Fuck, where did those elders go?"

He spread his spiritual sense to the furthest he could and saw a bunch of elders sleeping on the ground with happy expressions once again.

"Fuck!" he thought. Black Venom had unintentionally affected them as well when she was talking to Alex. He definitely needed some immediate help right now.

He couldn't leave to wake those elders up as she would destroy the houses and kill the other disciples, so all he could do was call people for help.

Alex's first choice of contact was his master. He sent his master a message saying that there was an intruder in the sect and that he needed help.

Once he sent the message, he went back to stopping Black Venom. After a few seconds, Alex realized that his master was probably out there fighting someone, so he couldn't come even if he wanted to.

So, he messaged his second choice of contact, his Senior brother. He sent the same message as his master, but once again, he got no response.

'Dammit! He must be busy too,' Alex thought. Alex went back to fighting with Black Venom.

It was less of a fight, and more of an annoyance for Black Venom as an invisible fly kept buzzing around her while she tried to do some work.

After a few moments of conflict, Alex pulled out his communication talisman once again. He had called his Master and his senior brother, but neither were responding.

He decided to call the next strongest person for help. So, he called his senior sister. He sent a short message and immediately put it away, and went back to annoying Black Venom.

"God Dammit! You keep buzzing around. Come out and fight me, you bastard!" she shouted. Alex didn't respond. He just had to stall as much as he could until help arrived.

He stopped fighting from away and got close. The moment he was close enough to her, he disappeared. He appeared behind her and slashed at her neck once more.

However, a white barrier appeared once more that blocked the attack with a 'twang' sound like before.

Black Venom's eyes went wide when she realized that she could've died right now if not for her amulet.

Just as she was thinking that another 'twang' sound appeared. She was attacked at her neck once again.

She turned around to look at her assailant and that was when another of the same sound appeared. She was horrified now.

She knew how good her amulet was. It was one of the best artifacts her father had created, but still, it too had a limit of how much damage it could take without reducing in durability.

She couldn't have it taking so much damage that it became completely useless or worse was destroyed. She couldn't have it be that, as it was one of the only things her father had left her with when he died.

This was what she used to remember him.

She stopped targeting the houses and flew up. When she did, she realized that the attacks stopped as well.

Alex could no longer teleport around now that she was in the sky.

Black Venom waited for another attack to appear, but it didn't. She looked around carefully for any disturbances on the ground or in the air, but she noticed nothing.

"What? Are you done? You got scared that you can't beat me? Then come out and let me kill you!" her hoarse voice rang throughout the sect.

She got no response, so she decided to bait him out. "Very well, if you won't come out, then say goodbye to your fellow disciples," she shouted and charged up her sickle in yellow light.

As soon as the light peaked in maximum brightness, she attacked. However, at the same time, a sword appeared in front of her and struck her sickle right towards the end of its swing.

The flying slash of the sickle's path was changed just enough that it struck the empty land at the side of the house and not the house itself.

Alex had managed to save his fellow disciples. However, as a result, he had come right in front of the enemy.

## Chapter 532: Qi Sense

Alex wanted to fly away, as he was still invisible and concealed, and if he got far away, he could escape from her.

However, he was afraid that she would once again start to attack the houses when he tried to run away.

Just as he was thinking that he felt something pass around him and wrap him up.

"I finally found you, you bastard," she shouted.

Alex's heart skipped a beat when he realized what had just happened. He immediately turned around to run away, but the invisible force wrapping around him solidified into something stronger and stopped him from doing anything.

He was trapped.

Black Venom turned towards him with a face full of hatred. Her eyes couldn't hold still as they drifted slightly on his position as there was nothing in the air for her eyes to lock onto, but with her Qi sense, she could tell that Alex was there.

Qi Sense.

That was something Alex had never bothered learning about when he reached the True realm. To normal cultivators, learning Qi sense was something that was pretty mandatory to do if they wanted to get better at fighting or producing stuff.

But, for someone like Alex who had spiritual sense, Qi sense was pretty much useless. After all, Qi sense was nothing but a worse mimicry of Spiritual sense.

True realm cultivators were more sensitive to changes in their Qi compared to self-tempering cultivators. So, when they sent out their Qi in a massive volume, they could feel the physical objects based on the Qi that they displaced.

It helped them in situations when vision wasn't really helpful. That was Qi sense.

Qi sense was only useful in situations when the thing you wanted to locate or keep track of was a small distance away from you. For example, Alchemists used Qi sense to keep track of the ingredients in the cauldron, which was much easier to do than normal Qi manipulation.

Since Alex had been using ranged attacks for the majority of the fight, Black Venom couldn't locate him at all. However, now that he was right in front of her Qi sense finally came in handy.

Alex struggled to move in mid-air, trying to fly off, but he could feel the Qi wrapped around his torso that stopped him from doing that.

Fortunately, despite the difference in cultivation, Black Venom couldn't suppress Alex as she did a long time ago. Unlike last time, Alex could move his hands and feet, however, that didn't help him a lot right now.

Black Venom held her sickle in reverse as it started glowing in yellow light. Alex had realized by now from the lack of other colors that Black Venom probably had a Superior Metal Spirit root.

"Die!" she swung the blade as fast as she could and struck at Alex.

Alex wasted no time and used every single skill he knew that could help him right now. A barrier of multicolored lights appeared in front of him to defend him. His skin shined with slight brown light and was full of marble patterns on him, making him look like jade.

At the same time, Golden lights appeared on his hands as well as his sword which he struck at the sickle as hard as he could.

At the same time, he made full use of his Supreme Metal spirit roots to push away the energy in her sickle as much as he could.

He knew that he couldn't control metal energy that belonged to someone else, but he was desperate and needed to try it in this situation.

A slight tinge of happiness arose in his heart when he realized that he could in fact push some of the stray metal energy around her sickle to fight back with the other energy.

It may be stopped some 5 percent of the total damage, but that too was a big enough number to make some difference right now.



At the same time, his Heaven's Five barriers too blocked some of the energy coming towards him.

Just then his sword struck her sickle with full force, and he expected the sword to stop some of the damage too, however, he misunderstood just how much force she was carrying.

The sword rebounded when it hit the sickle and flew back towards him. It came back to hit him with additional force, destroying the armor he wore inside. It then went on and destroyed his right collar bone as well as a few ribs.

Neither his Jade Skin technique nor his exceptionally strong skin was able to stop him from taking the damage from his own sword. The rest of the force behind his own attack at him made him fly backward towards the ground.

At the last moment, just before he was thrown back too far away, the sickle struck him. He was far enough back that his body was safe from the sickle, but his elbows that were extended from him hitting himself in the chest were not.

The sickle hit his left arm, and in a single swing, sliced it in half. Alex struck the ground with a very loud thud and sent rocks flying everywhere.

He coughed up blood as it started leaking from his mouth, his chest and now the cut-off left arm. Alex's vision darkened as he could barely see anything from all the pain. He was also starting to feel lightheaded from blood loss.

'I need to... I need to do something,' he thought with what little consciousness he had left.

He wheezed loudly trying to take a breath, but he couldn't. It turned out that his lungs had also been pierced with his own sword and was now starting to get filled with his own blood.

It was also starting to fill up his other lung. He needed to do something quickly, or he would die for certain.

He sent out his spiritual sense into his robes to locate his storage bags so he could find a healing pill from there.

Just as he did, his vision returned slightly, just enough for him to notice Black Venom drifting towards him.

"So you are still alive huh?" she asked. "However, it won't be for long."

She slashed down with her sickle, bothering to use no skill at all, and struck at Alex.

Alex looked at the falling sickle with terror in his eyes. This was it. He was going to die.

He closed his eyes, bracing for the pain.

CLANG

Alex felt something sharp cut his cheeks and some other things rain down on him as well. However, none of them felt like it was an attack belonging to that of a True Lord expert.

He opened his eyes and saw a familiar face standing in front of him. The person had serious eyes with slight hints of anger in them. Alex tilted his head to the right to see Black Venom somewhere a bit far away, looking at the new figure in shock.

"Oh no! Junior brother," a voice came from someone close by. Luo Mei ran up to him and looked down to see him in such a horrible situation.

She looked down to see his bloody wounds and missing limb and was immediately horrified.

Alex however felt relief at her sight and the other person in front of him. Finally, at least one of the person he called for had arrived.

He took the opportunity to pull out a pill from his storage bag and ate it. It was difficult swallowing when all his body wanted to do was breathe, but Alex controlled himself for long enough to swallow it.

Immediately the energy from the pill started spreading from his stomach and reached to the different locations of his body. His lung which was punctured was healed. His bones which were shattered, rejoined.

Even the cuts on his cheeks and other various scratches all over his body were healed. However, his left arm that was sliced off wasn't healed at all.

The pill he had just eaten could heal pretty much anything in his body, but limbs that were torn off were beyond it. It was beyond any of the recipes to true pills he knew.

In fact, at the moment, the pill he knew that could help him was a Saint-ranked pill, and that was impossible for him to obtain.

"Shit!" he thought. Once the pain was gone, and the need to breathe started reaching the peak, he stood up and forced his lungs to push out all the blood that was inside of it.

Black Venom looked cautiously at the new arrivals. From what she could tell, the two that had just arrived had a cultivation base of the Mind Tempering realm. However, she couldn't tell if that was correct or not.

After all, the young man that had attacked her had strength far beyond that of what a Mind Tempering realm should have.

In fact, the strength he put out could rival that of True Disciple master. She didn't know if he was hiding his cultivation base or what, so she decided to stay back for now.

She watched Alex stand up and was shocked. 'How did he heal so fast?' she wondered. She didn't see anyone of them offering him a pill, so she was very confused.

Alex, with his arm still dripping blood, looked at the man next to him and bowed a little. "Thank you for saving me, brother Yuhan. If you hadn't arrived on time, I would've died for sure," he said.

"If I had known something like this was happening, I would've come sooner, brother Ning," Du Yuhan answered while maintaining his serious face.

"However, I don't know if my coming here will be of much help to you. After all, I don't think I have the strength to fight against a True Lord expert."

### Chapter 533: Triple-Defense

"You don't have to worry about beating her," Alex said. "There are a few elders there. All we have to do is hold out until they wake back up."

Du Yuhan looked to the right and saw that there were in fact some yellow-robed figures on the ground that were barely visible in what little light there was.

"What's wrong with them?" Luo Mei asked as she got close. She worriedly looked at Alex's arm and saw that his left elbow had turned into a stub. He would now forever be missing an arm.

She then looked around at the destruction and the deaths of the many disciples, and she too started feeling the rage.

"They are sleeping," he said. "Her voice puts them in a sort of hypnosis where all they can feel is happiness and lose their mind in it."

Du Yuhan's face got a little confused. "Her voice? Is it a sort of skill?" he asked.

"I don't think so," Alex said. "She doesn't seem to have any control, so I would say it's more of a unique body constitution she was born with. As long as she wears the mask, she won't be able to hypnotize us, but... at True Lord realm, I doubt that would be necessary."

"Why isn't she taking off her mask then? Won't that make it easier for her?" Du Yuhan asked with a confused face.

"Because if she does, she will be the one that loses the match," Alex said. Alex looked down at his leg to search for his sword. That was when he found it still attached to the chopped-off arm.

"Are you okay? Does it hurt?" Luo Mei asked from behind.

"No, it doesn't hurt," Alex replied, but he only answered the second half of the question as he too was unsure about that first half.

Was he okay? He had just lost his arm, something that would normally be considered extremely important to anyone. However, it was just a game. Losing an arm meant nothing really. But was it really that simple though?

He really wasn't sure what to think right now. He looked for answers deep within him, but they just weren't there.

He took the left arm and sighed when he realized there was no use of it anymore. He had spent so much resources and time improving his body, and it got cut just like that.

The higher realm cultivators truly were very scary.

He then looked at his stub and sighed in relief when he saw that it was cut beneath the beast space where Pearl used to stay.

'Thank god!' he thought. If that part of his arm had been lost, he would definitely have lost his bond with Pearl.

He quickly looked towards Black Venom, wondering why she hadn't been attacking all this time. When he did, he stared right into her amber eyes that were very confused at the situation.

She was still wary, but her sickle was in her hand, ready for combat at any moment.

"Should we attack?" Du Yuhan asked.

"I don't think we have a chance of victory if we do," Alex said. "So, it's better to wait for now. Let's see how long we can stall."

It turned out, it wasn't very long. Just half a minute later, Black Venom started cursing, asking who the hell the new arrivals were.

After not getting any answer from them, she got angry. Her sickle glowed bright yellow as she got ready to attack.

"Sister, you should leave from this place," Alex said.

"I'm not leaving," she said.

"Sister, you have no chance of survival, please just leave," Alex said, but Luo Mei didn't listen. She stubbornly stayed as her rage was making her not think straight. She wanted revenge and she wanted it now. That only made Alex more anxious about the situation.

Black Venom sent off an attack, and immediately Alex put out all the defenses he could. Du Yuhan and Luo Mei wasted no time and put up their own barriers as well.

It was like adding another layer of thin glass in front of an oncoming cannon, but that thin glass was better than nothing.

They could've easily dodged the incoming attack. However, if they did, the house behind them would be destroyed and the disciples in them would then die. They didn't want to let that happen.

Alex marbled his skin and used everything he could to push off the stray metal energy back. Since the slash was flying through the air, rather than being attached to a weapon, there was a lot more stray energy than last time which helped him quite a bit.

Alex brought forth his sword and used it to strike at it once again. Only, this time he used the flat side of it since he didn't want the blade to strike him again.

Alex wasn't sure if he could stop the attack at all with just one hand, but he had to try.

Just then, he saw something white glow from right next to him. Even without looking, he could tell that Du Yuhan was going to attack as well.

Motes of white light circled around him before coming to his sword and glowing it fully white.

On the other side, Luo Mei was using some sort of water skill.

When the yellow slash appeared next to them, all 3 of them launched their attack at the same time as well.

A massive explosion rang out from where they struck the slash. All 3 of them were sent crashing into the buildings behind them.

Alex took the brunt of the damage as he was the closest to them, but thanks to that the other two were relatively safe.

Alex's whole body hurt as he stood up from the rubble. The disciples inside the house looked at him with a terrified face after seeing him burst in.

They had no idea what was going on outside, so this was way too sudden for them.

Alex checked himself and found that his knee was dislocated. He held the sword with his hurting palm and used the hilt of it to hammer the knee back to its place.

He wobbled a little when he finally fixed it and stood up. He hurriedly walked out to check Du Yuhan and his sister, but it seemed that they were fine as well.

"Not dead yet, huh? I thought you new brats might have been a hidden genius or something. Looks like you are just slightly stronger than your peers, not enough to trouble me at all," Black Venom said. Her sickle glowed yellow once again.

Alex felt his heart skip a beat when he realized that they were spread too far apart. They wouldn't get back together in time to protect themselves if Black Venom decided to target any of the three.

"Oh no!" Alex thought. He was in the middle so he had to run towards someone. Du Yuhan was to his left and Luo Mei to his right.

Before he could even make a choice, Du Yuhan shouted at him. "Save her," he said.

Alex lost all hesitation at that moment and ran towards his sister. He didn't care about Du Yuhan, he couldn't. He had his priorities... and so did Du Yuhan.

However, Black Venom's target was never the two anyway. Since the beginning, it had always been Alex.

When she saw him running towards Luo Mei, she realized that he cared about her and was going to protect her.

So, she decided to kill both of them at once. She brought up her sickle and threw the attack.

Another golden slash flew through the air, targetting both Alex and Luo Mei. Both of them were a bit hurt from the last attack so they couldn't muster up their full strength.

Still, they did their best to give it all they had to stop the attack.



Alex could feel that this attack was way too strong, and doubted if he could stop it at all. Still, he had to give it his all, after all, once more there were disciples behind them they had to protect.

He put all his strength into his sword and sent out an attack at the incoming slash. His attack disappeared like snow in a raging fire. It was useless. He was going to die.

The barriers they had put up crumbled like it was nothing and the slash came flying towards them, barely losing any strength at all.

Just then, something fell from the sky at blisteringly fast speed and crashed in front of the two of them.

The force of the slash striking whatever had dropped created a big enough shockwave that the two of them were sent flying back, but this time they didn't suffer any damage at all.

Alex immediately stood up to look at what had appeared in front of them and saw the backside of a shield.

"I'm sorry I arrived so late," A voice came from high above as the figure slowly drifted down. "I was busy dealing with the bandits outside, so I couldn't read your message soon enough."

The figure looked around the sect's destruction with a hint of sadness behind his eyes. "If I did, I probably would've been able to save some of them," he said.

Alex and Luo Mei's eyes started to shine as happiness and relief returned back to them.

"Are you guys alright?" the figure finally landed and brought out his shield from the ground before turning towards the two of them.

"Senior brother!" the two of them shouted at the same time. Liu Xun had arrived just in time to save his Junior disciple siblings.

## Chapter 534: Liu Xun VS Black Venom

Liu Xun looked around at the destruction of the sect. The dead disciples, the broken buildings, his own junior brother in such a horrible condition.

Rage built up inside him as his face changed pretty quickly.

"I will kill you!" he turned to look at Black Venom. A sword appeared in his hand, bloody and chipped at parts from the fight he had before coming here.

He held the shield back up. The shield was made up of wood with metal on the outer edge as well as two strips of metal making a + sign in the middle.

The shield itself was a kite-shield with 3 pointy edges on the top and 1 at the bottom. The wood was colored red, and the metal, silver.

Liu Xun got into a stance with his shield and sword and dashed into the fight.

Black Venom wasn't expecting a newcomer, and even less she was expecting him to attack her the moment he arrived.

She tried to back away, but suddenly vines grew from Liu Xun's shield that wrapped around her, keeping her from moving away.

She immediately used her sickle to cut off the vines and barely made an escape when Liu Xun's sword reached her.

She retaliated by jumping forward at him and struck with a golden sickle, but Liu Xun put up his shield that blocked the attack.

Liu Xun was pushed back a few steps but he took no damage. He pushed himself forward once more and slashed towards her again.

Black Venom couldn't run away in time, so he used her bracers to protect herself. The sword landed directly on the bracers, and she was sent back a dozen or so meters.

Her eyes narrowed when she realized that she wasn't taking much damage. Finally, she focused on the man attacking her and realized that he was weak. Much weaker than him.

While she was in the 4th True Lord realm, the man was only around the 6th realm of the True Master realm. There was no way he could ever deal enough damage to her unless she was careless.

She looked behind him and noticed only 2 of the 3 youngsters. One of them was gone. Alex was missing.

'Dammit,' she thought. She was angry that she didn't get to kill Alex like she had wanted to.

She used a movement technique and immediately sped up. Liu Xun did the same. The violent clashes between the two were sending shockwaves all around them.

Luo Mei was worried for her senior brother, while Du Yuhan was just engrossed in the fight. Liu Xun was someone he had never seen give his all in fights. Even during the challenges when he was still a disciple many years ago, Du Yuhan remembered him having it easy for the fights.

Now, watching him finally bring out his fullest, he could see just how good he was at battle.

Liu Xun weaved left and right. The Elusive Heavenly Sword technique that he had learned as well as helped him dodge most of the simple attacks. The stronger ones, he simply used his shield to block.

Black Venom was starting to lose her mind with anger watching the way Liu Xun fought. She was so much stronger than him, and yet she could do nothing to him.

She could also tell that on a technical level, his skills were far better than her own. After all, she was never a fighter, nor was she trained as one.

But the anger only grew and she started attacking recklessly. She nearly took damage a few times even. That only served to get her more reckless.

Her fit of anger disappeared when she heard a 'twang' noise from behind her. 'That bastard,' she thought and turned around to grab Alex. However, the person who had attacked her was someone else.

She didn't recognize the person at all, nor did she have the time to since behind the man were other men, all running towards her.

Her heart skipped a beat and she immediately flew away from the fight. She instinctively reached to grab her mask on her face but stopped.

'That bastard is still hiding around somewhere,' she thought. She deliberated for a moment, but now was not the time for that. There were too many opponents for her to remain safe.

She immediately opened her mask and shouted, "GET AWAY!"

It wasn't a normal shout since the sound was quite extreme. She was definitely using a skill to amplify her voice.

Alex wanted to launch his own attack at her, but she had been careful. After she spoke, she immediately put her mask back on, not letting the Heaven's Impact that Alex did launch at her affect her.

Everyone around her fell unconscious at the same time, with faces of bliss on them. She wanted to kill them right away, now that they were all down.

However, when she started getting close, she could see 2 of the bodies start moving a little.

Alex was the first to open his eyes and look towards her. Seeing that others would be waking up at any moment as well, Black Venom decided to leave.

Alex walked her leave without a way to stop.

A few moments after she left, Liu Xun got up as well. He looked around but was unable to find her.

"She's gone, brother," Alex said. "She ran away."

"Dammit!" Liu Xun shouted. "I couldn't kill her at all."

"It's okay... for now. At least we managed to protect the others," Alex said as he looked back. Some of the houses had been destroyed with quite a few disciples dead, but at least they had been able to save a lot of them.

Alex curiously turned around at Liu Xun and asked, "do you have a mental protection artifact on you?"

"Hm, yes," Liu Xun said as he brought out a necklace from his robe. "Why?"

"Her voice is a mental attack. I was just surprised to see you wake up so fast after she knocked you out," Alex said.

"You woke up sooner than me though," he said and looked towards Alex's arm. "Will you be alright?"

Alex grabbed his left arm and put on a solemn face. "I will be alright," he said.

Liu Xun then turned around at the elders who were asleep again. "Good thinking waking them. While I could've held her back for a while, eventually, I would have ended up losing due to me not having more Qi than her," he said.

"I will go wake them up. The city should still be in danger," Alex said, and Liu Xun nodded.

After the elders woke up, they all went out back to fight. Alex helped Luo Mei and Du Yuhan wake up and sent them to take care of the disciples.

Soon enough, they were knocking on every door, making the disciple leave towards the back of the mountain to hide them.

Alex on the other hand didn't stay with them. He too wanted to go help out in the city. He didn't know how much help he would be with a single arm, but he would give it his all to protect the sect and the city.

#### Chapter 535: Black Venom defeated?

Fu Wen took a few minutes, but he managed to kill off a leader of a bandit group called the Yellow Devils. The leader was in the early True King realm, but Fu Wen was still able to kill him.

He flew down from the sky towards the many soldiers of his that were still fighting, and shouted, "Protect the mortals. That's your primary task. Protect them however you can."

"Yes, Lord," the soldiers shouted. Fu Wen then flew over to where Mo An, his wife was fighting and helped her defeat the bandit too.

"Have you figured out why they are attacking us yet?" she asked, wiping the blood off of her face.

"No, maybe the sect leaders had more luck," he said. Mo An nodded. Then, the two of them flew off to help the others, while trying to find answers to the reason behind this disaster.

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Wen Cheng was struggling to win his fight against the Silver bandit, but so was the Silver bandit. Neither of them could get an upper hand at each other, nor could escape away either.

The Silver bandit couldn't leave because he was being attacked by Wen Cheng relentlessly, and Wen Cheng couldn't leave because he was sure that if he left, the Silver bandit would go attack the sect.

Wen Cheng had tried taunting the Silver bandit into explaining their motive, no matter how much he was taunted, the Silver bandit just smiled and said nothing.

The battle was going nowhere, and Wen Cheng was still worried about that message he had received from Alex.

'They have already reached the sect. What the hell am I still doing here? I need to go save them,' he thought. But he couldn't move. The Silver bandit wouldn't let him either.

Their bout lasted longer than it was meant to. Wen Cheng was starting to get frustrated from the battle. His worries reached high enough that his will to kill the bandit started increasing in intensity as well.

They clashed and clashed and clashed. The Silver bandit was smiling during the entire time, but slowly, his smiles started to fade away.

'He's getting stronger somehow,' he thought. The clashes were becoming more violent and he was being forced backward a lot.

He was surprised and couldn't help but wonder what was happening. During one of the clashes, he noticed something.

Every once in a while, a flash of white light would shine from the otherwise red or green flashes of Wen Cheng's sword.

"No way," the Silver bandit got scared. "How did he learn it? Dammit, did I help him hone it?"

Wen Cheng himself was surprised. He thought he didn't have talent. He thought he would never be able to. He was sure that he had already peaked in cultivation and there was no way for him to improve.

But here it was. A white outline in his otherwise mundane-looking sword. Wen Cheng gave a bright smile.

He had acquired Sword Intent.

In the midst of battle, in the midst of danger, in the midst of his will to go protect others, and in the midst of his will to kill the one standing between him and his sect, he had manifested Sword Intent.

The Silver bandit watched in horror. Sword Intent wasn't easy to come by. Even if it was in the early stage, it would still make Wen Cheng's attacks stronger by at least a realm. That alone would be enough to defeat him, which would probably lead to his death.

"No, I can't die here. Screw this mission," the Silver bandit cried out and tried to run away. But suddenly, in his moment of carelessness, he was attacked from the side.

Something flew right at him and wrapped around him. Wen Cheng was surprised and got ready to fight back, but when he saw what it was, he calmed down.

He recognized the beast that was constricting the Silver bandit's movements.

"Now you die, bandit," Wen Cheng said. In an instant, a very intense green slash left his sword as it flew towards the Silver bandit.

"No! Let me go! Let me—"

The Silver bandit's jaw dropped, while whatever was supposed to be above it was no longer there.

Half of the bandit's head, along with his signature hair fell off from the sky. The constrictions around the bandit loosened, and his body fell from the sky.

Wen Cheng took quick breaths to calm himself and looked at the beast in front of him with a smile. "So she finally decided to come out, huh?"

\* \* \* \* \*



Black Venom flew away as far as she could away from the sect. "Dammit!" she shouted out loud. "How the hell is there someone who can deal so much mental damage while at the same time not taking much in return? Does he have some supreme artifacts as well?"

She was speaking out loud, and along the way, everyone who tried to come to fight her kept on falling to the ground before they could even reach her.

Her mask was off her face as she no longer needed it anymore. Rather, she needed her voice right now to put everyone in a lull while she ran away.

'He's probably not chasing me right now. I should be able to make it out,' she thought.

She kept flying, moving towards the western side of the city. She had already seen corpses of her men and felt saddened about it, but her survival was more important than any of the others.

"Move away," she shouted at the people that came to attack her. Without exception, all of them fell to the ground with a large thud.

She flew some more and closer to the city walls when she saw practically no light coming from the city below her.

Something felt wrong. Something was missing. Her eyes widened when she realized what it was. "The fire... it's all gone?" she asked herself in surprise.

She hadn't expected them to put out all the fires already. 'What happened to the fighting. Did they win?' she thought.

She knew she was getting close to the wall as the chillness in the air increased. It was only this city that was warm, while the rest of the empire was living in winter.

She didn't understand why not that she cared. She smiled as the air got chillier. The freedom was right around the corner.

However, the more she moved, the more chilly it got. It was getting to the point where it was abnormally cold.

Still, she flew, not minding the cold. Up ahead, she saw a woman flying in the air, alone.

"Move, you bitch!" Black Venom shouted.

The woman turned her head towards her. Once she saw her, she then turned her whole body towards her.

"What?" Black Venom looked at her with a confused expression. "Move!" she shouted once more. That only served to make the woman angrier.

'What's going on?' Black Venom got worried. She instinctively put her hand on her face to check if the mask was perhaps still there. It wasn't.

The green-robed woman moved forward towards her.

"Get away from me!" Black Venom shouted. She couldn't tell how strong the woman was. For some reason, the person standing in front of her wasn't giving auras that a normal cultivator would.

"I SAID MOVE!" she shouted, but that did nothing to the woman. Black Venom was scared at the prospect of the woman perhaps being stronger than her.

Immediately, she brought out her sickle which started glowing yellow without a single second wasted.

"DIE!" she shouted and sent a slash flying towards the woman. However, something incredible happened.

When the slash got closer to the woman, it started slowing down. It got slower and slower, while at the same time getting dimmer and dimmer. In the end, right before it reached the woman, it vanished as it had never existed before.

"What?" Black Venom looked in horror. She didn't understand what happened. She sent another slash flying and the same thing happened once again.

"Wh-what's going on?" she freaked out.

Ma Rong was looking at Black Venom with both a curious as well as an angry face. She was angry not because of the words she had said, but rather the clothes she wore.

She was a bandit, and she deserved to be killed. As for curiosity, it stemmed from whatever mental attack she had been doing for the last couple of times. It was similar, yet more frequent than Alex's Heaven's Impact. This made her really surprised.

Still, as a bandit, Ma Rong would rather kill her than have her curiosity fulfilled.

Black Venom dashed at her with her sickle in hand and directly hit Ma Rong with the weapon.

However, when it got close to Ma Rong, the color faded, and frost started appearing on the sickle. As she got closer, Black Venom could feel her momentum fade as well.

Her body grew stiffer and the cold was getting to her. When she did reach close to Ma Rong, she was completely frozen.

Without even doing anything, Ma Rong had defeated her. Black Venom tried to move, but her body wouldn't listen to her. It remained where it was, waiting for Ma Rong to kill her.

"I was quite interested in learning how your mental attacks work, but unfortunately, you will have to die," Ma Rong said as she brought out a sword of her own and got ready to slash at Black Venom.

Black Venom could see her death approaching, but just then someone else appeared.

"Wait, don't kill her."

## Chapter 536: Hei Dan

Ma Rong heard the cry to not kill, but her sword didn't stop. It directly fell on Black Venom's neck.

A bright white light appeared from her neck as the amulet sprung forth to stop Ma Rong's attack. But even that was unable to stop Ma Rong.

The white light dimmed and the barrier shattered. The amulet itself cracked into pieces, unable to block Ma Rong's attack at all. However, what it did manage to do was deviate Ma Rong's sword just slightly that it changed direction.

Ma Rong's sword slanted upward and cut through Black Venom's cheeks while cutting her left eye, leaving a massive wound on the left side of her face.

Black Venom groaned in pain as she wasn't even able to move her mouth to speak with Ma Rong's aura freezing her in place. The pain was too much for her to handle.

Not only had she just lost an eye, she had also lost one of the objects that she used to remember her father with. Both the physical and the emotional hurt was bearing down on her as she lost all hope for life

Ma Rong was slightly surprised to see that her attack was blocked by the amulet. But now that it was destroyed, she would be able to kill her.

Ma Rong brought back her sword and slashed it again.

Just then, Alex appeared right in front of Ma Rong. "Master, stop!" he shouted.

Ma Rong's heart skipped a beat as the sword stopped mere inches away from his throat.

Alex breathed heavily, both from the fear of nearly dying and the aura Ma Rong was giving off at the moment.

"What the hell are you doing?" Ma Rong shouted. She asked with fury in her eyes. Alex could feel the fury and be even somewhat scared deep inside.

"Don't kill her master," Alex said.

Ma Rong frowned when she heard that. "Why are you protecting a bandit?" Ma Rong asked. She angrily looked at Alex, wondering if he was a fake, but the complete lack of aura he gave off was impossible to hide.

She was just wondering why he was doing that when she saw his left arm. Her eyes went wide as she gasped in shock.

"Where is your arm?" she shouted.

Alex held his left arm and sighed. "She cut it off," Alex said, pointing behind him.

Ma Rong's fury burned hotter than the sun itself. "You dare hurt my disciple!!" she shouted. "Move away, I will kill this bitch."

"No, master. We need her," Alex said. "She's no ordinary bandit. She's a leader of one of the groups. She's Black Venom."

Ma Rong's anger was still high, but she also felt surprised. "She's... the one that killed off Wan Li's parents?" Ma Rong asked.

"I'm afraid so," Alex said. "But let's not talk about that for now, master. We don't know why the bandits are attacking the city, and since she is a leader, I thought she might have some answers."

"Trust me, master. I wouldn't have suggested this if I didn't see you handle her so easily," Alex said.

Ma Rong heaved heavily and tried to calm down. She was still angry about her disciple's cut arm, but the information was more important right now.

Ma Rong suddenly looked to the side and a green snake flew up to her. "You're back, little green," she said as the snake disappeared onto her beast space in her neck.

Wen Cheng flew up close to her, following the green snake that came to its master.

"Thanks for sending the snake to me. I probably couldn't have killed the Silver bandit if not for that," Wen Cheng said.

Black Venom's eyes went wide when she heard that. The Silver bandit was stronger than her, and even he was dead.

"What are you doing here with this bandit?" Wen Cheng asked.

"Trying to find out the reason behind this whole thing," Ma Rong said. She reached into her bag and pulled out a pill.

Alex looked at it and recognized it. It had been a long time since he had seen it again.

"The Truth-Seeking pill?" he asked.

"Yes," Ma Rong said. "Only then will we know she is truly speaking the truth." Ma Rong got close and fed Black Venom the pill.

Black Venom couldn't resist getting fed and had to eat it despite not wanting to.

Alex turned towards Wen Cheng and said, "You should leave master. Once she starts speaking, we will start falling out the air like flies."

"No you won't," Ma Rong said, chilly white mist appearing from her arms around Black Venom's face.  
"Her mental attacks won't land on you now."

"Let's start."

\* \* \* \* \*

Hei Dan came from a small family in the town of Lionspring. It was a small town that barely ever appeared on the official maps of the Crimson Empire.

It was located in the northwest region of the empire, never close enough to any of the big cities.

COUGH! COUGH!

A man violently coughed from a room filled with metals and leather and other various materials. There was a furnace in front of him, one that forever burned with very hot fire.

The man seemed to be in his 40s but was somewhat ill. He coughed for a while and only stopped when the blood in his lungs was coughed out.

He watched the blood on his hand, sighed, and got back to work.

"Father?" Hei Dan was barely 14 years old at that moment. She walked into the workshop, as always wearing a simple black mask on her face.

"What are you doing father?" she asked with worry in her amber eyes. "I told you, you are sick. Please don't work on these useless artifacts, you can't even sell them," she said.

In front of her, her father was in the midst of making some sort of necklace.

The man coughed once again and looked back at his daughter's face with a small smile.

"I'm not making these to sell, my gem. I'm making these for you," he said. He brought out bronze-colored bracers and handed them to her.

"How is it? It's not my best work, but definitely high above," he said as he started to cough once more.

"It's good, father. But you need to stop," Hei Dan said with tears forming in her eyes. Her father coughed once more and blood pooled in his hands again.

Hei Dan felt a chill go down her spine when she saw that. "Father, please stop!" she said. "If you won't, I will go ahead and accept his offer."

"NO YOU WON'T!" her father violently turned around. "I will not let that bastard lay a single hand on my daughter. I would rather kill him myself before he can have you."

"Then please, stop working on these, and take care of your health father," Hei Dan begged.

The Hei family was a long lineage of artifact crafters. They weren't the best at it, but they could get by fine with the artifacts they learned to make.

Hei Dan's father was the most genius artifact crafter that had yet been born to the family. However, due to the lack of resources, as well as just being in a poor town, he could never learn much in his early years.

So, throughout his life, he had to struggle by himself to even get by daily. Fortunately, what he made sold well in the town, and he had a good business going.

He fell in love with a girl and had a child. However, not long after Hei Dan was born, her mother passed away.



It didn't take long for her father to know that she was special. Every time she cried as an infant, her father would have a headache.

As she got bigger, the headaches became more potent. So, her father used what resources he had left to try and refine something that could help her.

It took him a few years, but he managed to come up with a blueprint for a mask-type artifact that blocked mental attacks on his own.

He crafted multiple of those artifacts and made Hei Dan wear them since then. As such, almost no one in the town had ever seen Hei Dan's face.

She and her father had lied about the mask, saying she was disfigured behind the mask due to an accident, and while many accepted that reasoning, there were a few that didn't.

The town lord's son, who was in his early 20s, could see her every day in her shop, and despite the mask, he was attracted to her.

He believed, based on her body and her eyes, that the father-daughter duo was spreading lies and telling them she was ugly, when in fact, she was really pretty.

The son proposed to her right away in her shop one day, and when she refused him using the excuse that she was ugly and not fit to be married to him, he had left saying, "Your lies won't work on me. I know you are very beautiful behind the mask. I will wait for you to accept my offer."

When her father learned about this, he himself went to the town lord's manor to refuse the proposal. Not only did he not want her daughter to marry this bastard whose reputation was one of the worst, but there also had an age gap of nearly 10 years.

When the son heard all of this, he had made the guards beat him up, resulting in his current illness.

The town lord had then made the town not interact with them, and forced the Hei family to have no income. They also were made to not help them at all.

Fearing the town lord's fury, the town had started to shun the father and daughter since that day.

The town lord had also told the guards to not let them leave the city. Unless they accepted the marriage proposal, her father would likely die from his injuries.

Hei Dan was worried about her father's injuries. Every day, it was getting worse, and he was getting no medicine.

Despite being in the True realms, her father was getting closer and closer to dying.

"Leave me be, my gem. Go tend to the shop for now. Maybe someone will come," her father said.

Seeing her stubborn father, Hei Dan sighed. "Please don't overexert yourself, father," she said and left the workspace.

She walked to the front of the house where the shop was and went in, waiting for people to come to buy something, knowing on the inside that no one would.

As if to betray her expectations, someone finally arrived at her shop, after nearly 2 months.

"Welc—" her words stopped when she saw the customer.

"Since you refuse to come to me by yourself, I decided to come to you." The town lord's son had arrived in front of her once again.

## Chapter 537: Hei Dan 2

Hei Dan feared the men in front of her. She was only at Muscle tempering realm at the moment, so even if it was the trash son of the town lord, he could easily overpower her.

"Young lord, why are you here?" she asked with a serious face.

The lord's son looked at her mask and could see the eyes behind them, making him elate at the prospect that he was likely going to take her as his wife today.

He put on the most amiable smile he could, which still made him look like a creep, and said, "I came here for you, of course. I still haven't gotten your answer."

Hei Dan was starting to get angry just seeing his face. This was the man who got her family to where they were now, the person who hurt her father, the reason why her father couldn't seek medical treatment.

Feeling emerged deep inside of her that she herself didn't know she had. The anger, the rage, all of it was telling her to just kill the man standing in front of her.

However, when she saw the two guards behind him in bulky armor with spears on their hands and a wildly stronger cultivation base, she lost all courage to do so.

"Young lord, I told you. I am ugly behind this mask. You do not want me," Hei Dan said. Her voice was particularly loud in the hope to gather the people in the town so that the lord's son couldn't do something publically.

People quickly gathered around, wanting to see what the commotion was about. Hei Dan got happy when she saw them.

"Young lord, please... my facial scars have distorted my face. You really don't want me," Hei Dan insisted.

"No, I don't believe you," the young lord said. "If it is as ugly as you say, then just take it off and prove it."

"What?" she got anxious. There was no way she could open her mask, especially given how much of a problem it gave caused to everyone around her.

It would've been fine if it was the headache that happened when she spoke as a child. But lately, especially after starting cultivation, it was like her constitution had awakened, and it started making things more problematic.

The lord's son got a little irritated. "Will you die if you just show me your face? Are you trying to defy me?" he asked.

"What, no young lor—"

"That's right, girl. Just take off your mask."

"Show us your ugly face then."

"The young lord is right. If your face is just ugly then you have nothing to hide."

The townsfolk started speaking against her. The people she had gathered for her safety were now speaking up against her.

"Enough!" the town lord's son shouted. "Guards, take her mask off."

"What? No, please no!" she cried out. Even as she did, the two guards went into her shop and started manhandling her.

She tried to run away, but they were too strong. "Please, no! Father, help me," she cried out with tears flowing down her eyes.

One of the guards grabbed the side of her mask and tried to take it off. Just then, a sickle appeared out of nowhere, chopping off his arm in half.

When the other guard looked up to see what was happening, another sickle entered his head through the opening in his helmet.

"Young lord, run away," the guard with his arm cut off ran out of the store. Hei Dan's father walked out of the store too, with two bloody sickles in his hands.

"I will kill you today," he said.

The lord's son was scared, so he let the remaining guard delay her father while he ran away.

Hei Dan's father was already weak from the illness. Exerting so much strength to fight the guard only made him weaker.

Hei Dan walked out, trembling from what she had just gone through. "Father, don't leave me," she cried out, but her father wasn't there anymore. He had run after the lord's son to kill him.

She struggled to keep herself standing with how much she was trembling. The other townsfolk that were watching everything had already run after her father to see what he would do.

Hei Dan prayed that her father was safe and slowly made her way forward, following the path her father took.

It didn't take her long to reach the location where her father was, but when she did, she saw a big crowd of people, surrounding a smaller crowd of guards, all of whom were fighting her weak father who was all alone.

The lord's son was protected behind some guard with nothing but a mere cut in his cheeks. He demanded death, shouting at the guards who were fighting.

"Don't hurt my father, please. I beg you. I will go with you, stop!" she shouted, but the sounds of the clashes were just too loud for her voice to make any impact.

The lord's son saw her amongst the crowd. With her black mask, it was pretty easy to spot her in a crowd.

The lord's son made the other guards go grab her and bring her to him. Hei Dan didn't resist.

"Please, young lord. Forgive my father. He... he was just trying to protect me," she said.

"No, there is no saving your father now. He cut my beautiful face. All you can do now is say goodbye to your old man and be my wife," the young lord said.

"No, please," she started to beg again.

"Before that, however, let's see your face. After all, I can't take you in as my wife if you aren't beautiful," he said and moved towards her.

Hei Dan turned around and tried to run away, but two guards grabbed her. She was now directly watching her father barely manage to hold himself with so many wounds on him.

The sickle on his left hand was broken, and he was forced to use his right one only to fight.

When he saw the bastard come up to his daughter from behind and grab her mask, his rage flared as if someone poured oil on the fire.

In his rage, he put his guards down. Someone attacked him from behind.

Hei Dan couldn't hear anything anymore. The young lord's hands crept on her mask, but she couldn't feel it either.

All she could do was feel her heartbreak into a million pieces as she watched a sword getting pushed through her father's back.

Her father vomited a mouthful of blood and fell onto the ground. He shakily put his arms forth, trying to reach for his daughter, but before he could do so, another sword dug into him.

He breathed his last breath.

At the same time, the lord's son ripped off her mask.

"NO!!!!" the harshest and most painful scream she had ever screamed came out of her. She felt the clutches of the guards loosen, and she ran up to her father.

She immediately got on her knees and grabbed her father's hand, calling him to answer her. But he wasn't there anymore.

She held her father in her embrace and looked up to the sky as she cried. The loudest, most hurtful screams escaped her mouth.

As she sat there in the pool of her father's blood, crying her eyes out, everyone else in the surrounding was on the floor, smiling from one ear to another, happy, like they were seeing the best of dreams.

She cried for hours. Anyone who heard her would fall onto the ground, asleep with a smile on their face, so she was able to cry for as long as she wanted.

After a while, she finally stopped crying, and instead of tears, there was rage building up in her eyes.

She looked around her. As tragedy befell her, the people around her were smiling as if it were a comedy to them.

She grabbed her father's remaining sickle and gritted her teeth as she stood up. The first thing she did was walk up to the young lord.

Seeing him with a happy face only served to fuel her rage. In one swift motion, her sickle separated his head from his body. Once that was done, she then went on to cut off his arms and his legs.

When that was done, she then stabbed every single inch of his body with the sickle. Still, the fury in her wasn't gone in the slightest. No, it was only beginning.

She looked at the guards, the townsfolk, all of whom did nothing but only acted against her and her father. Her fury targeted them next.

Man, woman, child. She saw nothing but enemies in front of her. In a matter of minutes, every single person in the crowd was dead, in their own blood. Most of them held their smile even as they died.

Once she was done and there was no one else to divert her anger to, the anger was replaced by the horrifying realization of what she had done.

She had never ever even hurt a single soul, and yet today, she had killed so many. "No! These monsters deserved it," she told herself.

She carried her father's body back to the house, making everyone who saw her fall asleep on the ground. Every time she saw their happy face, the rage would return again.

She killed who she could to satisfy her vengeance, but she couldn't ever satisfy it.

She buried her father behind their house, along with her mother. Then, she understood that she couldn't remain in the town anymore.

She started packing stuff to leave. The items from the store were just too many and she was forced to leave those behind.

She looked for what else she could pack and as she did, she entered her father's workplace.

It was there on the table. Her father had finished making it. The amulet. His last gift for her.

Before she even knew it, Hei Dan had the amulet around her neck. As she realized that this was the final keepsake of her father, she clutched it against her chest and cried again.



She became a sobbing mess once again and cried for hours. Only around the dead of night did she finally stop.

She took her stuff and escaped the city while death created the commotion.

She moved town, went to a different city. But the rumors of a girl with a mask killing everyone in a town started floating around.

She couldn't stay there anymore and changed cities once again. However, no matter where she went, the news followed her like the ghost of the young lord she killed.

With no other choice, she was forced to go into the forest to protect herself. There, she met other bandits, who took her in and accepted her.

Slowly, she built up a reputation for herself, known primarily for her black mask, and became the well-known bandit she was today.

Black Venom

Chapter 538: Distraction

As Ma Rong asked questions, Black Venom told them everything. She told them everything without hiding anything.

Alex and Wen Cheng who heard just parts of her story couldn't help but feel bad for her. However, that poor, tragic girl was no more. She was already changed, twisted to what she had become now.

"Why did the bandits attack the city? What do they want?" Ma Rong asked.

"Survival," Black Venom answered, as she gritted her teeth. The coldness she felt had gone away considerably, and she could finally emote again.

He could no longer feel her father's amulet on her chest. The pain she felt inside was enormous, coupled with the fact that she couldn't herself from speaking the truth, which only served to make her feel worse.

Once again people were forcing her to do something she did not want to.

"Survival?" All 3 of them looked at her in surprise. Someone came from a little away at the same time. When they looked at the person, they saw the City lord approaching.

The City lord came to the group with a weird look on his face. "What are you guys doing here?" he asked. Behind her was his wife, Mo An, who was also curious to see them.

"Kill the bandit already, you guys need to go help the others," the City lord said.

"Not yet, city lord," Ma Rong said, her eyes not leaving Black Venom. "She is a captain and we are questioning her reasons to come here."

"Oh?" the City lord was finally attentive. "Let's hear it then."

"Explain. What did you mean by you came here for survival?" Ma Rong asked.

"We were threatened to do it. If we didn't do what he said, we would've been killed," Black Venom explained while she kept grinding her teeth.

"Threatened? By who?" the City Lord asked.

"He's known as the Bandit killer. He's been killing bandits for the past couple of months. They were all the bandits who refused to do what he wanted," Black Venom said.

"Bandit Killer? I've never heard of someone like that. What's his name?" the city lord asked.

"He never gave us his name, nor does he use anything to call himself," Black Venom tried to keep as much information to herself as she could, but her body spoke on its own and she had no control over it.

"This bandit killer, why did he tell you to attack the city?" the city lord asked.

"For distraction," Black Venom said.

Immediately, all of them frowned. "For distraction? What is he distracting us from?" Wen Cheng asked.

Everyone's heart started beating faster. If such a massive attack on the city was just a distraction, then what was that person's actual purpose.

Did he want to steal someone important or something important? Did he want to kill someone? Destroy someone? They had no way of knowing.

"Wait, was your attack on the Tiger sect a distraction too?" Alex asked. Wen Cheng's eyes widened when he heard that.

"She attacked the Tiger Sect?" he asked.

Alex's face grew serious as he answered, "Yes master. And she killed a few disciples as well."

"You bitch!" Wen Cheng brought out his sword to attack, but just then, he felt all the energy in his body disappear as he started feeling cold.

"Control yourself, Wen Cheng, we are still questioning her," Ma Rong said.

Wen Cheng looked at Ma Rong with a face of awe and fear. He had never known this was how strong she was and couldn't help but keep away his sword after that.

"Our attack on the Tiger sect was a direct order from the Bandit killer. Only us leaders got the order, and we were told to destroy the sect as much as we could," she said.

Wen Cheng was angry, so was Alex. But the others didn't care about the Tiger sect enough to let their confusion be clouded by their anger.

"Was it a distraction or the actual purpose?" the City lord asked, not to Black Venom but rather to everyone around him.

"This Bandit Killer," Mo An spoke. "He should also be doing something on his own right?"

"What could he be doing though? We have no idea," the City lord said.

"I understand that. What I mean is, if he were to be doing something and it was in the Tiger sect, I don't believe why he would send the bandits to destroy it since it would cause people to go there."

"The last thing he would want is to distract us with the bandits outside the sect and then bring attention back to the sect, right?" she asked.

"Hmm, Lady Mo isn't wrong about this," Ma Rong said. She then turned to look at Black Venom and asked, "Do you know anything else about all of this?"

"No," Black Venom said.

"Very well. You have no more use then," Ma Rong brought out her sword again to attack.

"Wait, master," Alex said.

"What is it now?" Ma Rong asked.

"She's the one who killed Wan Li's parents. I believe he would want to learn more about it," Alex said.

"We don't have time for that anymore," Ma Rong said, and tried to kill her again, but she found herself unable to swing the blade.

She understood that Wan Li would never go back to his old self without learning about his parent's death.

"Dammit! Alright, let's bring her to him. He should still be in his home under house arrest," Ma Rong said.

Alex nodded. He looked around the city and found that the city no longer had many fights. The bandits had brought on a lot of destruction to the city, but even after that, they didn't win. They never had a chance.

"You should go manage the city, city lord. Us 3 will take care of this bandit later," Ma Rong said.

"Okay," Fu Wen said. "I will talk to you guys later."

He and his wife left the area and went towards where their soldiers were heavily concentrated.

Ma Rong, Alex, and Wen Cheng went together towards the center of the city where the elders of both the sect should have been gathered for now.

Black Venom saw the bodies on the ground, all scattered throughout the city, reminding her of the day when she killed all those people in her town.

She hadn't regretted it then, but now, there were her men, her people that had given her food, clothes, and shelter. To see them all die, she couldn't help but cry once again.

As they got closer to the city center, Alex got a weird feeling like someone was watching him. He turned around to see if anyone was there but saw no one.

Not only that, but he also got a feeling that something was off with the city. "What is it?" he asked himself, but he just couldn't find an answer.

The closer they got to the elders, the greater the feeling got. However, he quickly ignored the feeling when he saw the elders in front of him.

All of them were wounded, bloody from all the cuts they had received. Some of them even had multiple lost limbs, making Alex look fine in that regard.

"Are there elders in the sect?" Wen Cheng asked his men.

"Yes, sect leader. We have already sent half of the elders to protect the sect in case we got attacked again," someone answered.

"Is there no bandit left now?" Ma Rong asked.

"Yes, sect leader. We have already gone through the whole city. After you defeated them, there weren't many left. Those who were, we already got rid of them," the elders from the Hong Wu Sect said.

"Go back to the sect," Wen Cheng ordered his people.

"Yes, Sect leader," the elders replied and left.

"Sigh," Wen Cheng finally took a sigh of relief. "So much tragedy, but at least, it's over, finally."

"No it's not," Alex said from beside them.

Ma Rong and Wen Cheng turned around to look at him. Alex was frantically looking around him.

"What's wrong, Yu Ming?" Wen Cheng asked with a serious face.

"Look around us, master," he said. Wen Cheng looked around, but he wasn't sure what he was supposed to be looking at.

"What are we supposed to be looking at?" Ma Rong asked.

"The city. Look how much damage the southern half of the city suffered, yet the northern half barely seems to have suffered any damage," Alex said.

"That's obvious. The bandits started from the southern half, and probably couldn't get very far," Wen Cheng said.

"Exactly, master. They started from the southern half, which we now know, thanks to her, was a distraction."

"What if that bandit killer's target was north, so he sent the bandits to the south?" Alex asked.

Ma Rong's heart skipped a bit as a deep chill went down her spine. "The sect must be in danger," she said.

"Lang Shun!" she cried.

"Yes, sister?" Ma Rong's junior brother appeared from the group, his leg missing. Alex felt a tinge of sadness looking at his Martial Uncle look like that.

Lang Shun felt the same way seeing his Martial Nephew like that.

Ma Rong took Black Venom's storage bag and took out 2 masks from it. She also took out a pill and fed it to her. Black Venom slowly fell into a lull and fell unconscious.

"Wear this. Her voice is a mental attack and only this mask will protect you. Don't interact with her without the mask."

"Keep her with you for now. I will ask her questions later," Ma Rong said. After that, Ma Rong flew off to go look at the sect and see what sort of danger it was in.

The elders followed, along with Wen Cheng and Alex as well.

When they reached the sect, they found nothing abnormal happening there at all. Alex looked around and was equally surprised and glad to see nothing happening there.

The second elder and third elder flew up to them and asked, "is it over?"

"Yes," Ma Rong said seeing that nothing was wrong with the sect. "It's over."

The elders flew off towards their place to take care of themselves, while Ma Rong flew towards her own as well. Alex and Wen Cheng followed her, and so did the second elder and the third elder.

"Did you learn anything, sect leader?" the second elder asked as they flew towards the sect leader's mountain.

"Not really, only that this was meant to be a distraction," Ma Rong said.

"Distraction from what?" the third elder asked.

"We... we don't know," Ma Rong said.

They landed on the mountain in front of Ma Rong's house. They were about to walk in when Alex got the feeling that someone was watching him again.

Without wasting any time, Alex spread out his Spiritual sense as far as he could, and suddenly, he noticed someone flying high in the sky.



"Who's there?"

#### Chapter 539: The Name

120 meters away from him, at the very edge of his spiritual sense, there was something... someone floating high in the sky above them.

The only reason Alex even noticed the person was due to the nothingness of everything around him. If he had been on the ground, he doubted he could've caught him.

The man had been looking at him this whole time, which was where Alex had gotten a strange feeling.

Ma Rong and Wen Cheng immediately turned around at Alex's call and searched for people around them.

"What's wrong?" the 2nd elder asked, searching for around him as well.

"There, someone is there," Alex pointed up in the sky. The moment he did so, the person in his spiritual sense disappeared.

Ma Rong and Wen Cheng obviously couldn't see someone that was so far away. Wen Cheng only had some 50 meters of spiritual sense range, while Ma Rong had about 70 meters now after her constitution awakening.

Still, with that, they were nowhere close to seeing what Alex had seen.

"What did you see?" Ma Rong asked.

"There was someone in the sky above us. He just walked out of my sensing range," Alex said.

"Are you sure?" Ma Rong asked.

"I... I think so. It had a humanoid shape for sure, but... I'm not sure if it was a person or not exactly," Alex said. "It didn't really have any aura to it."

"Is it possible you were seeing things?" Wen Cheng asked.

"I definitely wasn't seeing things, Master," Alex said. "But... I might have been a little too—"

Suddenly, Alex sensed something flying towards him at an incredible speed. He had no time to put any strength into his legs to jump away, so he did what he could in the split second he had.

His Qi moved and his vision changed. He started seeing the world in patches of white and black. The white parts represented the shadows on the ground, while the black part represented the light.

He chose one in his mind and at that moment, he disappeared.

Ma Rong noticed something enter her spiritual sense as well and immediately turned around to catch it. But even she was too slow to stop it.

A loud explosion rang out at the thing crashed onto right where Alex was, throwing up a cloud of stone and dust.

Wen Cheng only managed to bring out his sword after the thing had already landed.

Alex reappeared next to Wen Cheng. At the same time, Ma Rong pushed out her Yin towards the thing that landed to keep it there.

When the dust settled, there was nothing there at all. The second elder looked at the empty space and was surprised. "What the hell did this?"

"No, he's still there," Alex said. Wen Cheng had his sword glowing red and ready to attack, while Ma Rong was keeping the thing there with her Qi.

Slowly, a layer of front appeared in the air around the crash location that made a humanoid shape.

The second elder looked with wide eyes when he realized that the person was actually invisible.

"I've got him," Ma Rong said with a serious face that has hints of anger behind the cold eyes. She brought out a sword and was about to strike when suddenly her layer of ice melted and the person ran away from her.

Ma Rong looked at him with wide eyes, clearly surprised that someone actually managed to get away from her coldness.

"Tsk. I knew you got a Yin-type body, but I never realized how potent it was," a voice appeared from the air, as a figure appeared from inside of it. The figure was a brown-robed old man with gray hair and some gray beard flowing beneath the mask he was wearing.

"That's... Black Venom's mask," Alex said from the side.

"I know about your mental attacks, boy. I'm not going to let myself be caught off guard," the old man said.

"Are you the bandit Killer?" Ma Rong asked him, pointing her sword straight towards him. She couldn't tell the old man's cultivation base at all, but from what she could tell, he was very strong.

"Yes, I believe that's what the bandits call me," the old man said.

"How are you here?" Ma Rong asked. Alex and Wen Cheng were a little confused at the question, but the 2nd and 3rd Elder understood what she meant.

"Why am I here? Hehe, well that would be because of this of course," the old man quickly took out a nameplate belonging to the sect and put it back inside.

Ma Rong's eyes went wide. "Where did you get the nameplate from, intruder," the 2nd Elder asked from the side. He brought out his sword and pointed at him too. He wasn't much of a fighter, but he still could fight at a basic level to protect himself.

"That's not very important right now," the old man said. "What's important is that you guys die."

The old man dashed towards Ma Rong at incredible speed and slashed at her with a thin, black sword.

Ma Rong's yin aura released to stop his attack, but even as she did, she realized that it wouldn't stop it. The slash went through the aura, cutting it in half and even almost reaching Ma Rong herself.

"What?" Alex looked surprised from a little away from her. He couldn't understand how his master could possibly not be able to stop him at all. After all, Ma Rong was able to stop all forms of energy around her.

"All forms of... no," he thought. Ma Rong couldn't stop all energy. There was one element she had trouble stopping.

"Master, be careful," he shouted from the side. "He is using Yang Qi."

It had taken until the second attack, but Ma Rong had understood that as well. The old man in front of her was using Yang Qi, which was why he was able to cut through and escape her Yin aura.

Even Alex when he was only in the Meridian Tempering realm could send out attacks that reached her if they were Yang elemental attacks, so it was obvious that Yang attacks would be the only thing that can fight against her so effortlessly.

"You can't win against me at all, little girl," the old man said. His blade glowed yellow as he dashed ahead once again.

"We'll see about that." Suddenly, Ma Rong let go of anything she was holding back. The amount of Yin Qi that flowed out of her body was incredible.

The whole front yard of her house started to get frosty, while the rest of the 4 people there were starting to feel the cold.

The old man also frowned behind his mask. "Shit! I didn't know this bitch could produce such strong Yin Qi," he thought.

Ma Rong put her sword forward and an illusory snake came out of her sword, making its way towards the old man.

The old man suddenly spun his sword in his hand, sending out circular blades of Yang Qi to cut the Yin snakes.

However, things didn't go as the old man expected. His Yang blades quite dissipated when they struck the snakes. The snakes also lost a lot of their energy, but that told him that if the two of them clashed directly now, Ma Rong would definitely win.

"Screw this, I'm not here for her anyway," the old man thought and dashed away. Everyone saw that he was going for Alex.

The second elder and Wen Cheng got their swords ready, while Alex got his teleportation ready to dodge. However, suddenly Ma Rong appeared in front of all of them.

She had teleported in front of them as well and sent out a Yin slash. The old man was surprised when he saw her appear out of nowhere and immediately switched his direction to get out of the way of the attack.

Ma Rong was about to go attack him when she felt something behind her. She turned around to see Alex completely white-eyed, falling to the ground.

Her Yin Qi was just too much for him to remain conscious. The fear was something she understood and could give an explanation for, albeit a really poor one.

Alex had a yang body that was worse than her Yin body. So, whenever she was around and openly using her constitution, Alex would feel a bit scared.

However, this was not something she understood. How could her Yin possibly make him faint, when everyone else around her was perfectly fine?

Ma Rong stepped away from Alex and he finally got back up. He couldn't tell what had happened as his vision had just gone in and out of focus, but he could feel a sense of fear from deep within him.

Ma Rong had now moved away from in front of him.

The Bandit Killer was also looking at them with a hint of confusion in his eyes. He didn't understand what was happening, but as long as the kid was fine, he was fine with it too.

Ma Rong looked forward, toward the old man, as she asked, "What do you want with my disciple?"

"You don't have to know," the old man said. Without even seeing his face, they could all tell how smug he was inside of his mask.

"This man is after you Yu Ming, Leave while we keep him here," Ma Rong said.

"No, master, I can help," Alex said.

She suddenly turned around with an angry face and shouted, "Alex, LEAVE!"

Alex was about to say something when he realized what he had just heard.

"How... how do you know that name?"

## Chapter 540: Father's Name

Alex's eyes were wide open at the moment. He looked at his master with a look of confusion and surprise.

"Master, how do you know my name?" he asked.

"Now's not the time. Run away," Ma Rong said. As she dashed forward. She started fighting with the old man who couldn't really fight against her directly, so he started kiting her.

He would attack her a little and run away before attacking her again. He kept her from getting too close to him as it would be near impossible to fight her with how strong she was.

'Dammit! We have practically the same cultivation base, and yet thanks to her superior body constitution, I am being forced to take the coward's role in the fight,' he thought.

He looked to the side and saw Wen Cheng grabbing Alex.

"Yu Ming, let's go. That old man seems to be here for you. We need to leave while Ma Rong is holding him off," Wen Cheng said.

He knew he couldn't really add much to the fight unless Ma Rong dropped her aura, in which case, she would likely get very injured.

The best way to help her was to not help her right now.

Alex was stubborn, but he understood it as well. He wanted answers as to why Ma Rong knew his name that he had never spoken in the game, not even by mistake, but that could wait until she defeated the old man.

"We need to leave," Wen Cheng turned to the 2nd and 3rd Elders too, who started running towards Alex to protect him.

Seeing Wen Cheng hold Alex to take him away, the old man started getting restless. He was here for Alex and if he was taken away, all the planning he did for the last 6 months, all the bandits he had to kill to make them accept the offer. It would've all been in vain.

He wasn't going to let that happen. He couldn't let that happen. It would seem that he needed to use his hidden knife right now.

"Stop him from getting away!" the old man cried out.

Suddenly, of the two pairs of legs that were running towards Alex, one of them sped up.

Wen Cheng reacted to the change and brought out his sword, but he was a little too late. A bright light flashed right where he was and the sword he was holding fell to the ground.

Two streams of blood gushed out of Wen Cheng. Both of which came from either of his arms. He looked down to see that his right arm and 2 of his 5 fingers on his left hand had been severed off.

"Wha-?" he looked dumbfounded as the reality of what had just happened didn't settle in his mind immediately.

The attacker turned around and went for Wen Cheng again, but the other person arrived just in time and stopped the person's sword mere inches from Wen Cheng's neck.

Alex watched the Second and Third elder clash with a pale face that was stunned.

Ma Rong noticed what had happened, and she too had to stop fighting with the old man to look back.

The Second Elder gritted his teeth with a face full of anger and shouted, "SuSu! What the hell are you doing?"

The third elder moved a little back and got into a stance. "Go away dear, you don't have to fight me," she said.



"Answer me, SuSu! What are you doing? Where are you attacking sect leader Wen?" the Second Elder pointed his sword towards his wife as he screamed in anger.

"What do you mean?" the third elder asked as if she had done nothing wrong. Her left hand went behind her back as she pulled out a black mask. "It is my responsibility as a daughter to obey my father, isn't it?"

All 4 of them watched as the third elder put on the mask in horror as they realized what was happening.

They were betrayed.

"Your... father?" the Second Elder was stupefied. The revelation rang in his ears like a thunderclap.

"You... you told me your parents died of a disease when you were little. How can he be your father?" the second elder asked.

"Easy," the third elder said. "I lied."

"You lied?" Anger flared back in his eyes. "You lied all this time? What's was your purpose in getting close to me?"

"My purpose?" this time it was the third elder who was surprised. "Why would I have any reason to get close to you? I only needed to infiltrate the sect and get it ready for when my father arrived, that's all. Falling in love with you was... a happy coincidence."

Wen Cheng grunted as the shock faded away and the pain came flaring back. Alex turned towards him and saw a pool of blood beneath him.

He quickly brought out a healing pill from his storage bag and gave it to Wen Cheng. Wen Cheng quickly ate it and his wounds closed up, but just like Alex, his cuts too ended on a stub.

Wen Cheng was now without his right arm a few centimeters down from his shoulder and was missing his little and ring fingers off of his left hand.

He gritted his teeth and pried his sword off of his fallen hands and grabbed them with his three fingers. His grip was weak, that too on his off-hand that he rarely used his sword with, but he took it and got ready to fight.

"Yu Ming, run away from here," Wen Cheng said.

"Master, you need to leave too. We all need to leave," Alex said. "Let's call in reinforcement."

"You go call them," Wen Cheng said. "I will kill this bitch."

Alex looked one last time towards them and turned around to leave.

"You're not leaving anywhere," the old man shouted. Immediately he took out a formation plate and threw it below him.

Suddenly, a massive formation sprung forth passing through everyone and reaching a size of about 50 meters in diameter.

It encompassed the entirety of Ma Rong's residence as well as part of the land outside of it.

Alex could see the barrier surrounding them, but he hoped that he could still escape. The earth opened up beneath him, and he fell through. He then involuntarily traveled through the earth until he hit something and came back out.

When he was out, he saw a slightly yellow barrier in front of him. "Tsk!" he thought. He really couldn't escape now after all.

"YHAAA!" Wen Cheng shouted as he ran forward to attack the third Elder. However, before he could reach her, another sword arrived in front of Wen Cheng and stopped his attack."

"What the hell are you doing, Song Heng!" Wen Cheng shouted.

"I can't let you kill her, sect leader Wen. She's my wife, the person I love," the Second Elder said. Despite being weaker than Wen Cheng, he could easily stop Wen Cheng's strike.

"Look at her! She's not the person you knew. She was acting this whole time. She's a traitor and has been using you this whole time," Wen Cheng said.

Song Heng felt a tinge of pain in his heart as he knew that was very likely the truth. Still, he held on to the hope that it was all a lie and that he was likely dreaming.

The Third Elder jumped at them with the sword glowing brown and slashed towards Wen Cheng.

The second elder pushed back Wen Cheng in time and blocked her attack.

"How dare you say that?!" she shouted towards Wen Cheng, trying to force her way to him. "How dare you say my love is fake? There is no truer love than what I feel for him."

The Second elder didn't know what to do. All the things she said... it sounded so good, so true, and yet... could it really be true?

"I'm not lying honey," the third elder turned towards him. "I really do love you." She said.

The Second elder could only see her eyes, but in those eyes, he could see the truth. It was true. She really did love him.

"I loved you so much that when my father asked for a fake name, I even suggested him your family name," she said with a fervent glee in her eyes.

"You did... what?" the Second Elder was confused. "What fake name?"

"My father, when he was here, he needed a name, so I took your family name, Song, and made him a name."

Everyone was confused, but Alex's eyes went wide. Before the third elder even spoke, he already knew who she was talking about

The first person he truly fought to the death, the person that had infiltrated their sect.

"Song Zun!"