

# Reincarnated With A Summoning System

## Chapter 601 601

The public duel seemed to have been enough to ensure that they weren't bothered for a little while, and Cain's walk with the Lotus Blossom Sect went much more smoothly for the rest of the morning.

The girls found a load of interesting shops and picked up a few small things each, but it was clear that the great attractions were the two that hadn't properly started yet.

The Grand Tournament and the Lectures.

What was happening in the city was small-scale recruitment, but they would have expert seminars later, where the truly knowledgeable could present theories to be verified or overturned by their Immortal Peers.

The bit in Cain's mind that he had always identified as the Laughing God seemed way more interested in the Lectures than anything else, and Cain decided that he would have to make time to see them, even if he didn't know much about the particular topic that they had picked.

There was an interesting caveat to participation though. There were no bystanders, everyone who entered either had to present a theory of their own or have successfully presented one in the past. Those whose theories were shot down were asked to leave the venue, while those who were approved of by the group could return at will and without charge.

But first, he had to check on his experience gains, since he got three quests for the duel that he was in earlier.

[Core Integration 16->22 Percent Complete]

[Repeat Quests will grant reduced experience from the third completion onward]

So, just letting stupid people start trouble with his disciples wouldn't be a long-term plan, even if it was quite entertaining. Cain would have to find new things to do that would help him toward his goals.

Going to see the Ancient Dragon that Master Moon was speaking of earlier would be a good start, the Dragon should have lots of fun ideas on how to pass the time and experience new things.

The group returned in the early afternoon so that another group from the Sect could go to the city for the evening. It wasn't wise to leave the compound too unattended, and the city limited the total number of visitors at one time, so the Sects were all going in groups, posturing and trying to make themselves look good for the potential disciples that most of them were here to try to claim.

The competition was much more fierce among the male sects than it was between the all-female cultivation sects, though the resentment that the Female Sects got was ten times more intense than most other Sects.

It wasn't that they were the biggest threat to the Sects, but that they stole away the few women that the others had managed to recruit, making their Sects even more unbalanced, despite attempts to bring balance back to show that their technique was a universal one that was worthy of being regarded among the great styles that any Cultivator could master.

They might talk a lot about eternity, and self-reflection as a method of growth, but Cain noticed right away that those sects who only embraced one side or the other of the divide were all imbalanced by their very nature.

Some, like the Lotus Blossom, embraced it and focused on what they were strongest at, but others had a style that didn't work as well in such a biased environment, since it was based on complementary abilities supporting each other.

Paladins were like that. Alone, they knew a little bit of everything but were easily overwhelmed. But in a group, even with very different classes, the Paladin became an anchor that kept the group stable against large odds.

As they were approaching the Lotus Blossom Sect's Camp, a young Acolyte in a plain white dress quietly slipped into their ranks, and the Disciples moved to surround her without a word.

It was very smooth, and clearly practiced. This must be the way that they accept applicants while they are here in such a crowded area full of other sects. Elder Ling had mentioned multiple times that it was the purpose of them being here, other than the ones who would be showing off their talent later, so it should have been expected.

They made it a few steps further and noticed a group of angry-looking cultivators moving their way, clearly searching for someone. Stealing Disciples might be the point, but most Sects didn't give their own up willingly, with the exception of a small group of failures who didn't fit well with their membership and style.

"Don't speak, and just stay in the crowd. I will disguise you." Cain whispered, and let Record Keeper use an illusion to disguise the new arrival.

"Have you seen our Disciple? She seems to have gotten lost on the way to fetch water from the river." An Elder asked politely as she approached Elder Ling.

"Your green and silver are fairly distinctive, I don't think I have seen those robes lately, not since leaving the city for sure." Elder Ling replied in an even voice, while the others with the Elder visually scanned the group.

They noted the strange attire of the girl hidden in the middle, but her hair color and face were both changed by Record Keeper, so they simply passed her over as acquired from another Sect.

"Thank you, Elder. If you see our little delinquent, please do let us know." The Elder replied, then led the group onward to keep searching the area.

"That is a risky method of finding a new home, isn't it? I mean what Guarantee does the disciple have that the new Sect they found will be a better place than the one that they left? It's not like they are the top performers with some sort of positive reputation behind them." Luna asked Cain quietly.

"It certainly is risky. I think it's partially on reputation, and partially on the technique that the destination practices. Think of it like a calculated risk, like only calling one group of summons to hold an area, where you balance their strength against the chance that a larger number would overcrowd the battlefield and cause more issues." Cain explained, and the disciples of the Forbidden Treasure Sect all nodded in agreement.

"It's the same with joining a Sect the first time. You don't know anyone there, and most of the time you have hardly heard anything about them and only know like one basic technique, and have almost no strength of your own. So you just go and hope for the best." Sabbath offered.

Luna tapped her chin as she thought about the options she had learned. "Since you can't really leave after you arrive, because you know secrets and their style, it is important to find the right Sect, but you don't know what one that will be until you know more than you do without a Sect.

These things really are difficult, aren't they? I should be more thankful that I got started so easily."

"How did you get started? Even though you're family, most wandering Cultivators would let their children grow up and pick a Sect, or remain with like-minded people until they were much older than you are." Jen asked.

"Hmm, the first thing I remember after being born was him stopping me from bullying my siblings, and then he just let me stay with him all the time," Luna told the Paladin.

"So it's just because Master Cain is an oddball then. That makes a lot of sense actually. Do you ever get the feeling that you are an experiment in his eyes?" Jen asked.

"Me, no I'm pretty sure I'm more of a protege than an experiment. Though sometimes I wonder about how he views everyone else." Luna quipped back, making all the other girls laugh.

She had a point, he was clearly experimenting on everyone around him or using them for his own entertainment. Even the ones he accepted as his disciples.

"Do you think we should enter the Youth Division of the Competition? They verify that you are under twenty years old using a skill that verifies the age of your bones, so disguises won't work. I think it would be a good way to prove that we are worthy of additional training, and not being ditched at a hotel again." Tena suggested, making a crack at how the others were simply ditched because Cain forgot that they were studying the book he gave them and waiting for his return.

"I know, we can put a bell on Luna. He wouldn't leave Luna behind, and if we hear the bell ringing at random, he has wandered away again." Sabbat joked.

"Keep up the jokes and I will braid bells into all of your hair," Cain replied over his shoulder, bringing more laughter to the group, and a bit more hope to the eyes of the new arrival, who hadn't had a chance to properly meet anyone yet, since they were still in public.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 602 602

"Now that we are away from prying minds and greedy ears, why don't you introduce yourself?" Elder Ling asked the new arrival once they were back in the camp area.

"My name is Night, and I was born and raised in the Forest Valley Sect. I will be fifteen this year, and I have a strong Affinity for Fire techniques. Forest Valley doesn't do that, they focus on internal energy Manipulation and body refinement.

My mother was bad at body cultivation too, so she never reached the first Awakening and has been an acolyte all her life, doing chores for the Sect. I don't want that life." The girl introduced herself.

Cain wasn't entirely sure what the practical difference was. Sure, he understood the difference in outcomes, but surely Awakening your body would improve your other talents?

Unless they focused on a bestial path and only improved their body without any sort of other techniques.

That would be a truly strange method for any cultivator, especially a small human girl, though Cain did know some very physical warrior women back home, and not just among the dwarves.

"Can you use fire at all yet?" Elder Ling asked, knowing that the girl didn't have much experience at all, and certainly didn't have an impressive level of cultivation.

Night managed to create a small flame in her hand out of pure energy, which seemed to be enough to satisfy Elder Ling.

"We will get you some robes. Stay away from the edge of camp if you don't want to be dragged back to Forest Valley Sect." Elder Ling decided, and a pair of disciples led the girl away.

"That one might be trouble. Born in the Sect to an acolyte, but not mistreated too badly, and the fact her mother wasn't cast out suggests that she is an Elder's illegitimate daughter. They will probably keep looking for her, but our sect and theirs are on decent terms, so they might let her stay and train with us even if they do find her." Elder Ling told Cain, explaining the situation as she saw it.

It was a good point. The Sects were gathered to gain power and try for immortality and beyond. They didn't usually create many children.

"Still, for now, that is one disciple up for you, and she does show some promise. You should keep her away from the kitchen as well. If her Sect had her doing chores, and they suspect you, they might be watching the area looking for anyone suspicious. The disguise ability I used will wear off after an hour or so." Cain replied.

"I will keep that in mind. It should be quiet at the training ground now if you want to let your disciples train." Elder Ling suggested.

The first group had just gotten back from the city, and the second was on their way out, so there shouldn't be too many people at all in the training area of the camp. That meant that he had the perfect opportunity for his disciples to practice their new classes in a surrounding with almost no risk.

"Luna, I have a new exercise for you. You will create a group of Earth Golems to spar with the others, as a capture-the-flag experiment. You and Sabbath will be the flags since you can't hurt the golems and the golems can't hurt you while you're in the same group.

The other disciples will try to get to you, you will fend them off using only one group of Earth Elemental Golems.

For Luna this is defensive strategy training, for the others, this will be offensive use of your class skills training. You can stun and knock down the Golems, but it won't last, and they won't be hurt, so you need to keep them away from Sabbath and you need to try to get to Luna.

Does everyone understand?"

Cain's description got everyone worked up. Luna was, without a doubt, the strongest of them, but she was also by far the youngest, and the others hadn't seen her golems in action, so they didn't know what sort of power level they would be up against.

"Is there a reward for doing well?" Sabbath asked hopefully, since she would be the flag, and therefore not really part of the training.

"Possibly. I intend to use it to see where everyone needs improvement. I will work with you on your fire skills after the others have had a chance to spar." Cain told the Change Mage.

Their odd little group in the bright peach robes made their way to the training grounds, slowly collecting onlookers as they went. Cain had built up a bit of a reputation for being good in a fight, as well as unpredictable, so the Lotus Blossom Sect Disciples were eager to see what his Followers could do.

Luna waited off to one side, deep in thought, conferring with whatever creatures she had merged with her at the moment, just the Oath Breaker and Record Keeper from what Cain remembered, but she might have added or removed someone when he wasn't paying attention.

Penny, Tena, Jen, and Sabbath huddled together to make a plan of their own. Jen would take the lead, tanking the Golems with her Paladin skills to draw the enemy's attention, while Penny would change into wolf form and flank the group to go for Luna. Tena would keep the golems from going for Sabbath, and they had a reasonable amount of confidence that they should be able to get to Luna before her golems got to them.

That plan was destroyed the moment that Luna summoned Eight Golems for them to fight, giving her a strong numerical advantage at the start, even if the Golems weren't as tough as they seemed.

"Ready? On the count of five, you will begin." Cain called out to the two groups while the Lotus Blossom Sect watched on in awe of this setup for a battle royale between disciples of the Forbidden Treasure Sect.

"5, 4, 3, 2, 1, GO" Cain called, and Jen charged forward, using a battle shout to grab four Golems' attention onto her, while Penny and Tena took two each.

They all charged forward, trying to drive the Golems back around Luna so that they could encircle her and stay on the offense instead of the defense, but the Golems were heavier than they looked, and were proving very difficult to drive backward.

Luna looked a bit sad that she couldn't attack along with them, but she was the summoner, she was supposed to be right where she was, staying safe and directing her troops, something that she didn't have much actual experience with.

The fight was holding steady halfway between her and Sabbath when Luna got a wicked grin on her face and one of the golems rolled off Jen's shield and made a charge for Sabbath.

The lumbering giant only made it a few steps before Tena fell back and slammed it to the ground with her energy dragons, moving it to her group, but that gave the Golems the advantage on the left flank, and Sabbath was forced to move right to stay safely out of their long reach.

Luna hadn't counted on Penny's speed in wolf form though, and the enormous Lycan bowled over one of her golems and launched herself into the air in Luna's direction while Jen side shifted to keep the other from charging Sabbath, an order Luna had given the moment that the Lycan broke through their ranks.

Penny wasn't quite used to the size of this wolf form and she had aimed too high for the diminutive form of Luna, who rolled forward and under the flying wolf, back behind the relative safety of her last free golem.

Jen wasn't having any trouble holding the four that she had on her, alternating smashes with the two-meter-long sword that Cain had made them all for use as a flying platform and her rectangular tower shield.

It wasn't a form of Martial Art that the Lotus Blossom Sect was familiar with, but the footwork was impeccable, and the golems were held in position, not gaining any advantage that they would need in order to break free and go for Sabbath.

The free golem changed shape, gaining a shield and club on its earthen arms, and charged back at Penny, holding the wolf in place as it snapped and snarled in its attempts to get past and grab Luna.

She had been so close to an early victory, and Cain could see the frustration on her face as she struggled to come up with a new way to get past this bulwark of a summon.

Luna, feeling a bit unsafe with only one guard on Penny, pulled two off of Jen, wagering that the Paladin would still be bogged down by two, though she was able to hold four at



bay. That turned things in Luna's favor for a moment, forcing Penny nearly onto her belly as she dodged and was pummeled by the golems.

She wasn't taking damage, but the force was still there, and they were doing a great job at keeping her pinned until Tena's energy Dragons forced her golems back an extra step and allowed her to join forces with Penny.

Her Dragons were also very versatile, now that she was getting the hang of integrating them with her kicks and sword work, and Tena was having an easier and easier time of controlling the Golems until finally she managed to get all but one of them corralled off to the side and Penny charged through the last, lunging at Luna and grabbing the petite Puppet Master in her mouth.

"Victory to team melee. Good job ladies, I will find a suitable reward for you later.

Luna, did you learn something about tactics today?" Cain asked.

"A few things actually. And I learned a lot more about their capabilities as a team, but I also learned one really important fact." Luna informed him.

"Oh, and what is that?" Cain asked with a smile, amused by her enthusiasm even in defeat.

"Penny's wolf form has really bad breath."

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

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### **Chapter 603 603**

Penny transformed back into human form while Cain rummaged through the overstuffed crates in good inventory looking for something good.

"You know what? I'm just going to write you all a personalized skill book. Tena, you needed a short-distance movement skill to get a better position to attack. Penny, you need an energy attack skill for those claws, and Jen, I know a passive skill that will let you heal a little with every strike.

It will help you immensely in a long fight. Not every opponent will be friendly, and you would have taken a huge amount of damage in that fight." Cain informed them.



"Thank you, Master Cain. We will learn them as quickly as possible." The girls answered in unison.

Luna looked pretty depressed that she had lost and wasn't getting a present until Cain picked her up to pet her head.

"Don't worry, I have something for you as well. Then tomorrow we can expand your training to combined offense and defense." Cain told her quietly.

"That was truly impressive Mister Cain. Your disciples work well together, despite the differences in skills." One of the Lotus Blossom Sect Elders commended Cain as he consoled Luna.

"On the contrary, they work well together because of the differences. They all have a role in the battle, so when they are working together the effect is stronger than just a group of individuals fighting near each other." Cain explained.

"Interesting theory. Competing techniques to balance the weaknesses of the individual styles against specific opponents to avoid meeting a hard counter in a group battle. Very suitable for a traveling Sect." The Elder agreed.

"Can we see that again? That fight was amazing, with the energy dragons, and the golems and that giant wolf." One of the disciples asked Penny, who she didn't realize was the wolf she was speaking of.

"Likely again tomorrow. After the practical training, we usually have some sort of other training for the evening, either theory or working on increasing our own strength." Penny replied politely, making the disciple sigh in disappointment.

"If Luna can summon all those Golems, that means that Sect Master Cain taught the technique to her, right? I've seen him fight hand to hand, and he's incredible, but if he can summon Golems like that as well, wouldn't he just be overpowered?" Another girl asked her friends as they made their way to training spots in the yard.

"I think it's a requirement to become a Sect Master, isn't it? You have to be stronger than anyone else in the Sect or at your cultivation level in order for others to see you as worthy. I mean, our Sect Mistress is way overpowered as well. Remember her fighting when the sect was attacked?" The Disciple's friend replied.

Other than Luna, none of the Forbidden Treasure Sect Disciples knew just how overpowered Cain was, but his performances so far hadn't been anything resembling a challenge for him, if they could estimate by the lack of advanced techniques that he had displayed.

He clearly knew quite a few, and many that were well suited to combat, since he was teaching them to others, but when he actually fought, he did it with a minimalist style.

What they didn't understand was that this was Cain's best attempt to remain under the radar and not draw undue attention to himself. It wasn't working, and it was possible that Cain was the only one that hadn't noticed that yet, but he was the only one who knew that he was trying to do it in the first place.

"Come along everyone. We will grab a meal to take to the room and then I will make up the skill books for you all." Cain informed his disciples, ignoring the gossip about them that was going around the camp right now.

They would get over it in a little while. The girls' performance wasn't too shocking, except in its diversity of styles, so none of the Lotus Blossom Disciples would think too much of it, and they all had their own training to focus on.

As soon as they made it to the tents, Cain took out the inscription desk and got to work making skills that would help out the Disciples with the areas where their class skills were lacking.

Gaining a class when you were already higher levels had a few great drawbacks, namely that you wouldn't have time to build up skills and a complementary fighting style on your own before you had leveled up to nearly the first advancement, and that you would gain so many skills from your class all at the same time that you might overlook some of the simple utility and skill interactions that most Transfers in the other world would learn naturally as they progressed.

That was part of the issue with these Disciples. They had a fighting style, to begin with, but it was only partially compatible with their classes, so it had to be adapted to work flawlessly, and they didn't have the experience with the class skills that they had gained to be able to use them to their best effects.

That could really only come by practice though, so Cain started thinking of new routes to the Dragon Mountain that would lead them closer to strong Magical Beasts, the universal test of strength as far as Cain was concerned.

The Disciples had their own ideas. The Tournament in town had both individual and group categories, and they would make a very good group. They could verify that they were all from the same Sect, and had Elders from another Sect to vouch for their identities, so they could enter the group competition as a Sect and work on their coordination there.

All they needed to do was keep their Sect Master entertained so that he didn't get bored and start coming up with new training regimens for them after every battle. It really helped them grow, but they were more used to meditation to build their strength instead of the experience-based method of the System, so all the extra work was simply exhausting.

"So, we go in with the group, same as today, but divert the Elder from the Lotus Blossom to help us register for the group battle, in the outer disciple category, which should be the one that fits our age and power levels. There is a big meeting for Magical-type cultivators going on, and Cain should be immersed in that all day, so we will have time to get through the first matches and report our progress back to him.

Once he sees how well our initiative is working out for us, he shouldn't object to us continuing through the tournament and getting experience that way." Sabbath explained the plan she had come up with to the other Disciples, unaware that Cain was listening in on their thoughts.

"Not bad. We can even use close to the same formation as today. Jen can take the center, with Penny and Tena on the flanks, I will take the rear with Sabbath in the middle to protect our healer and let her use her ranged fire to its full effect.

The people in town were saying that there is a protective barrier that keeps people from getting too hurt in the matches since nobody wants to actually lose a Disciple here, so we should be able to pretty much go all out without fear of killing anyone by accident but be careful at first.

He might be able to get away with it, but I'm pretty sure they would eliminate us from the tournament if we accidentally found a way around the restrictions." Luna elaborated.

"Will you really use the Golems around everyone?" Sabbath asked.

"Yep, but only those ones. I know more summons, but people have only seen the Golems. If I keep using them, I can keep the others a secret in case there is big trouble later, and I'm pretty good with my swords, so it shouldn't be too much of an issue." Luna agreed.

They had all seen her blade work, and she certainly knew how to fight, better than most would expect the rear guard to be able to, so the plan seemed solid. Five Disciples was the minimum for the group matches, with ten being the maximum.

Only five would fight at a time, but the roster couldn't be changed during the tournament, so normally the extras were substituted in due to exhaustion or attrition due to injuries between rounds, keeping their force at a full five-man team.

"Ladies, I have your books ready. And Luna, I made one for you too. Since you're ready to graduate from the Puppet Master Class, I have my secret weapon for you. [Summon Cloning] was the key to my early success, and it works very well with [Merger] to increase your potential.

I can see that you haven't changed your class yet, though you should have picked all the skills already, so maybe this will give you the class option that you were waiting for." Cain offered, then handed everyone their books.

The others were about to open them to start reading when they saw the System Notice, asking if they would like to use the items.

"Hey, it vanished. Oh my goodness, what happened to it? I am so sorry, I didn't know that would happen." Jen began to panic when she used her book, but Luna just giggled.

"That's how it's supposed to work for people like us, at least with special books like those ones. Concentrate on your new ability and you should be able to use it perfectly now as if you had studied it to completion in an instant." Luna informed her new friends smugly as she held her book like a precious treasure for a while before using it herself.

[New Class Options Available]

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 604 604 Classy Luna

Luna opened her Class Options interface for the first time since entering this world and found that she had a wide variety of options available to her that were very different than the ones that she had before.

[Assimilator]

The Assimilator class absorbs the skills and powers of those they defeat to bolster themselves but at a cost. The true nature of the Assimilator slowly changes to match that of the beings that they have absorbed, becoming more like what they have ingested in their search for the most rapid power transition possible.

[Puppeteer Queen]

Grants large numbers of [Noble] permanent summons to supplement the Lieutenant and Commander type summons of the Puppet Master Class, and unifies them into an [Empire], an expanded Raid Party with no member limit.

[Princess of War]

There is no rule in this world more absolute than the right to keep only what you can hold with your own power. The Princess of War increases the combat power of all skills they use and gains bonuses for defeated opponents crushed underfoot.

[Demonic Artificer]

Increased ability to craft Rune Weapons, and use Runes as Power Words to attack and defend.

There were also a collection of Classes that she had seen before, but much to her disappointment, neither Flesh Crafter nor Watcher in the Dark was an option for her.

That meant that she couldn't directly follow in her father's footsteps, and it was likely due to the difference in species. There wasn't much she could do about that, but some of the new options looked promising in their own ways.

Artificer could be fun, and Luna could see the benefit in being able to just form a rune in the air and use its ability. Since she could actually read the Runic Language, she would have a huge advantage over others as well, as she understood the complexities of forming compound words with Runes.

Assimilator sounded like it might have too big of a drawback. Sure, it was likely really powerful, but if she stopped being herself, then what would she be? Luna liked herself as she was, even if she missed her tail.

An empire of her friends also seemed pretty cool, and combined with her Puppet Master Skills, it could be incredibly broken on the power scale, but taking over continents or the world was more of her mother's thing. Luna had dreamed of it, but doing it through politics sounded just a bit too boring for her.

That left Princess of War as the best option that she could see, so Luna dove into the description of its class abilities.

The main class ability was [Versatility], which Cain used to cast a single skill at his current power level, and that was a great ability to have, in Luna's mind. Especially for Summons, which were a minor loophole in the System.

[Versatility] Only affected the designated spell, but once a summons was summoned, you could change the target of Versatility and summon the next batch the same way. They didn't revert to lower power just because you were using the skill on another spell later. The real limit was for skills you needed to keep active, like armor, which needed constant mana input. It would cancel if you changed the target of Versatility.

Then it had skills to improve magical damage, agility, and physical damage, give her magical claws, dragon breath of her own, and even scaled armor.

But the deciding moment was the final skill of the tree.

[Crown of the War Goddess.] This shining Golden tiara, set with a single large Ruby, increases all damage done by the Princess of War and her allies by [10x Level] Percent.

Heck yes, it would give her an actual crown.

She would need to wait until level 300 for that, but she was getting there quickly, thanks to the quests that they keep getting in this world.

Even now, the disciples had a Sect Quest to make the Sect Master proud of them. If they could do that they would get a large bump of experience, which would help Luna merge with her "borrowed" cultivation core, as well as bump up her level.

Luna wasn't sure if Cain had noticed, but he was already nearly level 600, having progressed rapidly after their arrival and with every quest that he completed, but Luna was sure that she could catch up if she was given enough time.

Luna picked her new class, and then looked at her points. She was level 235, so she had 35 points left after finishing up all the skills in Puppet Master. It was a bit sad that she wouldn't get the ability to transform random people for fun as Cain had gotten from Flesh Crafter, but there were still some good things in this class for her.

The obvious ones to start with were ten points into melee damage, twenty points to max out [Draconic Armor], and five points into [War Aura] which added a chance at intimidation on hit.

That was the whole starting tier of the Class, instead of focusing on what looked like the Attack, Defense, and Control trees.

A little bit of a lot of cool things had to be more fun than one really strong cool thing. At least Luna was pretty sure that was how it worked.

"Did you get what you needed, Princess?" Cain asked as Luna returned to the land of the living.

"Yup. When I finish this skill tree I get a real crown." Luna informed him happily.

"I am glad you have your priorities in order. What are the next skills you are planning to take in the skill tree?" Cain asked.

Luna thought for a moment as she looked at the tree then nodded. "On the attack side, the next skill to take is [Champion] which gives me a bonus for one day after defeating an enemy. That will be the next one that I take I think. If it's not what I really want at the time, I will take [Inspiring Aura] to give a bonus to my friends."

That seemed well thought out, so Cain wouldn't argue with Luna's chosen progression in her class. Even if she did only pick it as the top option because it gave her a crown at the end.

"Your class updated? Does that mean you will be even harder to defeat now?" Sabbat asked, looking at Luna's information with her system interface.

"Maybe a little, since I got some new skills. But the real bonus will be that I have real armor now." Luna told the Mage, then activated [Draconic Armor], which caught Tena's attention.

"No fair, that is even cooler than mine. Mine is just simple scale armor, but that is awesome like your whole dress is made of Dragon Scales, and it even has a dragon mask helmet." Tena complained.

"It's because she's a higher level. Every hundred levels or so you will have the option to upgrade. Don't just take anything though. Hold off until you have acquired the skills to get something that is clearly better than the class you have. You all have advanced classes already, so it could be hard for you to get a proper upgrade." Cain explained.

"Got it, boss. I will wait and see what I get when the time comes up. Is there an option to smite lying and lecherous scumbags?" Jen asked before anyone else could speak, looking up from her attempts to polish her shield.

"Crusader is good at that. They can detect lies and reveal them to everyone in the area, and once they are stronger, they can compel the truth from others. Very useful for the vengeance-minded woman." Cain laughed.

"So, you all will be wanting to head into town early tomorrow to get registered for the group event, right? I will be sure to wake you all up in time to get breakfast before first light." Cain informed them, while the Disciples looked at him in shock.

"How did he know that was what we wanted? It was supposed to be a surprise. That won't hurt the quest reward, right?" Penny asked the others.

"It only says we have to make him proud of us, so I don't think it needs to be a surprise. But if he already knows, he won't try to stay in bed, right? This might be better for everyone, and the earlier we register for the team event the better our odds of getting a weak opponent." Tena suggested.

There was something wrong with that logic, as the strongest Sects would sign up earliest in the day, other than the few weak Sects who showed up bright and early so they wouldn't get crowded out by the stronger groups.

Luna changed into her pajamas and climbed into Cain's bed. "Alright, I will sleep now. The earlier I sleep, the less time I need to wait before we can go."

That logic had issues as well, but subjectively, she wasn't wrong, so the others all prepared to settle in for the night after grabbing an evening snack.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.



## Chapter 605 605 Group Registration

All of the disciples were up well before dawn, eager to get going before the walk to the city gates got crowded for the morning with all the Cultivators entering to enter, watch or bet on the tournaments, as well as those who were coming for all of the seminars.

Elder Ling thought they were all overreacting, since it wasn't like they would be turned away, no matter what time today they registered, but the girls were adamant that earlier was better, and the ladies of the Lotus Blossom Sect were equally excited to get into the city and register their groups.

They would have two groups in the competition, Outer Disciples and Inner Disciples, but nothing for the Core Strength group, since they didn't have the power as a Sect without involving their Elders, which was considered shameful, as the tournament was mostly for up and coming talent, not the stronger Elders.

The Forbidden Treasures Sect would be going in the Outer Disciples group, as none of them was over twenty-five years old yet. The Inner Disciples might be a better fight for them, in Cain's mind, but this was their age group, and some of them were still at a rather low level, even if Cain had awakened them and activated the System for them.

They had no trouble getting into the city, as everyone was more focused on their own business, with the individual competitions starting in only a few hours.

The girls were scanned and given individual cards showing their official cultivation level, and bone age, as determined by the magical talismans of the tournament, as well as their Sect Name.

"Are you not competing in the Individual fights?" The Registration officer asked after Cain helped the girls get their names properly recorded and a group assigned for their matches, which would begin this afternoon.

"I don't think that would be particularly sporting." Cain laughed, while the man gave him a questioning look.

To him, Cain seemed to be a very regular sort of Spirit Rank Cultivator, of which there was an entire category participating.

"Don't go by appearances. Master Cain is a hidden Dragon in his own right. The reduced aura is a talent of his, and takes a great many off guard." Elder Ling told the group registering fighters.

The men nodded in acceptance. There were some like that, who always felt weaker.

Elder Ling didn't think anything of the comment, intending it to simply be a compliment to Cain, but one muscular man with Violet eyes got an intrigued smile on his face at that news and headed for the betting cage to make a wager.

"Friend, I wish to place a wager of three Spirit Rank Monster Cores on the Forbidden Treasure Sect as the top female Sect in the Outer Disciple category." The athletic man, clearly a body cultivator, informed the casino worker.

"That is a very large bet for the Outer Disciples sir. Are you certain that you wish to place that particular wager?" She asked, motioning for her boss to come over.

"Oh, it's you. What are you doing to scare my workers today?" The immense form of the casino boss asked the Cultivator.

"Nothing today. I simply want to make a bet. Three Spirit Cores on the Forbidden Treasures Sect as the top females among the Outer Disciples." The cultivator replied.

"Make it a bet for the podium or there is no deal. You know that being the only one to make the second round could make them the top females. The odds are too unpredictable." The boss decided.

"Fine, Three Cores says that the Forbidden Treasures Sect makes the final eight in the Outer Disciples division." The man declared, and the casino boss smiled while tucking his hands in the pockets of his vest.

"I knew there was a reason I liked you old friend. I will take that wager." The boss agreed.

"I will match it. Three more Spirit Cores on the Forbidden Treasures to make the Final Eight of the Outer Disciples." Master Moon declared from a few steps behind the cocky cultivator.

"Moon, have you seen them as well?" He asked, his violet eyes flashing.

"In the valley before I came here. They were not particularly strong when I met them, but there is something about them. I think they have a chance at making rapid progress in the group battle, though I might not pick any of them for the individual competition." Master Moon agreed.

The Casino boss looked a bit nervous at that news, he liked sure wins for the house, not a chance of a dark horse that would upset his odds. As a group of five, and from an unseeded Sect that nobody had ever heard of, with a Spirit Rank Sect Master and being all female, the odds were fifty to one that they would make the podium.

If too many saw the potential of the group, it would cost the casino a huge amount of money, even with the small sums that usually changed hands for the Outer Disciple battles.

As they were talking, a very sour-looking man in green robes came up with his friends.

"One Immortal Core on the children of that Monster from the Forbidden Treasures Sect." The man said bitterly, recalling the humiliation that he had taken at Cain's hands only a day earlier.

"Why do you say, children?" The woman at the counter asked.

"Did you not see their entry sheet? They are all underage, and two of them didn't even scan as teenagers. But don't be fooled. If they were taught by that demon, there is no telling what they will do." The man complained.

He might not like them, but he was still betting on them, even though his own Sect had a group in the Outer Disciple competition as well, and he hadn't yet placed a bet on their behalf.

"Oh, that man who won the test of power with the twin dragon's invocation? That was impressive." A cultivator in the crowd agreed.

"I saw him down a challenger outside with a single burst of [Flame Arrows] as well," one of the gamblers laughed, recalling the spectacle.

"It seems that the Sect Master for those little girls is something else entirely. Reduce the odds of them so that we aren't overwhelmed if the Dark Horse makes a run for the bank." The casino boss whispered to his minions, but it was already almost too late, as the cashiers were writing up gambling tickets at the fifty-to-one rate already.

The best he could do was cut his losses and write later bets at a lower rate.

"Is the tattooed Master of the Forbidden Treasures going to be in the individual competition? It would really help him get more disciples, even if he was only handsome and not particularly strong." One of the ladies in the line to bet asked.

"It seems that he won't be. The witch of the Lotus Blossom called him a hidden dragon, so he might be more powerful than he looks. He is two for two on the single-strike knockouts against Spirit Rank cultivators after all." The violet-eyed man who had started all the commotion informed her with a wink.

Cain and his disciples were waiting while the groups from the Lotus Blossom were all registered since the Inner Disciple lineup was both longer and slower moving than the one for Outer Disciples, who were mostly only sorted by age.

The Inner Disciples were put in brackets to start the tournament based on overall power so that the crowd could see more evenly matched fights, and getting that all calculated and measured took much longer than simply giving them an entry ticket and having the partners randomly assigned before the first matches.

A lot of groups were staring at Cain's disciples with a mixture of amusement and disdain, but the girls weren't letting it get to them. The more underestimated they were, the more easily they could defeat their first few opponents.

If everyone thought they were extremely weak, they would assume that their opponents were no better, and the sense of power from the fight was distorted by the other fights in the area, giving them an advantage.

They would need to win four out of five fights today to advance to the single elimination rounds tomorrow, by Cain's calculation, though if the Outer Disciple Category was more unbalanced than expected, they might advance with three, though that was unlikely and would likely require a tie-breaker match at the end of the day. It would be better to qualify straight away in the regular matches.

"Should we go get some snacks and listen to a lecture before the matches start? Some of those lessons on alchemical theory are really good at putting me to sleep." Jen suggested with a smile that made a lot of nearby contestants laugh and nod in agreement.

"Relaxation is one thing, but perhaps we should go to a seminar on meditation so you don't actually fall asleep? I don't need you all groggy from a nap when it's time to fight." Cain teased, looking to Elder Ling for verification that her teams were finished registering.

"Perfect. First the meditation seminar and then a light lunch, so everyone is ready to go with plenty of time before the Outer Disciples begin this afternoon." Elder Ling agreed.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 606 606

Elder Ling picked a grassy spot under a tree for everyone to mentally prepare themselves for the competition, while Cain read the minds of the people around him to find the best option for a snack before the matches.

The most popular answer seemed to be chewy peanut butter rice cakes from a stall not far from where they would be competing, and it was already busy, so Cain flagged down a local kid who was offering guide services and reservations at local restaurants to pick up an order for them.

"Are you partial to those ones? There is another place not far from here that has really good ones as well." The local suggested.

"I just heard that they were good. How much for three dozen?" Cain asked.

"Four silver coins for the large ones, One silver for the small ones, with the delivery fee." The boy answered.

"Here's five coins. Get three dozen of the large ones to us before the ladies finish meditating." Cain instructed, and the boy took off through the crowd.

"That's a lot of money for a snack." Elder Ling whispered.

"It will be fine. He said they are large, so we should have enough for later as well. Having extra snacks helps make friends in the crowd as well." Cain chuckled, knowing that it was a favorite tactic of Luna as well, to simply give snacks to new people that she liked as a peace offering.

It wasn't long before the boy returned with a large bag slung over his shoulder. If those were all snack cakes, Cain had made a minor miscalculation.

The large rice cakes turned out to be actual cakes, the size of a skillet, made of chewy puffed rice.

"Thanks for your business, sir." The boy called after Cain received the pile of puffed rice and goodness, then headed out to look for more customers.

"Here, take half and cut as many as you need up for your disciples. We will be sharing these for a while." Cain told Elder Ling, who only chuckled at his excess as she accepted half of the cakes.

Splitting two of them was enough for her ten disciples, while Cain split one between his followers, and then hid the rest from Luna, who would get too distracted by the presence of food to do anything productive if he didn't.

"Alright everyone, the food is ready, and then we will head back to the arena. Each team can bring an Elder to coach them, so the Outer Disciples will all enter through the competitor's side and wait in the bleachers for our teams to be called. The Inner Disciples will meet with Elder Janice, who is already in line for general admission." Elder Ling informed the group as she started handing out rice cakes.

"Oh, chewy. Alright, now I'm ready to have a good fight." Luna mumbled with her mouth stuffed full.

"See boys, that's the attitude you should have. Don't worry about the big Sects, just focus on your own preparations." An Elder passing by with his group of Outer Disciples said.

"No pressure at all, right Elder? Even if they lost, at least they're still pretty." One of the disciples joked, sparing a wink for the ladies of the Lotus Blossom Sect.

"I can make you pretty as well if you'd like?" Cain offered very seriously.

"Pardon? I don't think I heard that correctly, Elder." The boy responded, unsure if he had heard Cain correctly.

"I am well trained in Mystic Surgery, I am sure I could make you look quite lovely. None of these beauties needed the help, but if you want an edge on the competition, let me know." Cain replied, making the Lotus Blossom Sect chuckle.

"I think I will pass, noble surgeon." The boy said hurriedly, then backed away to the edge of his group, much to their amusement.

"Perhaps we can catch up later. I would be interested in what would lead a Dark Surgeon away from the Assassin Sects and into such odd company." The passing Elder told Cain with a bow and then led his disciples away.

"Can you really do that?" Elder Ling asked, wondering just how many strange things Cain really knew.

"I could make you look just like Tena if you wanted, or I could take a decade off your appearance and make you a young lady again. I might not be able to fool the bone detection scans, but it would fool anyone else." Cain agreed.

"I don't think that the ladies would take that youthful of an Elder seriously. But before we reach Immortality, time can catch up with us in unpleasant ways." Elder Ling told him.

"We can chat about it at the arena, but we should get going before we get caught in the crowd and don't have time to get to our seats." Cain sighed.

That was the worst part of these events, just trying to find somewhere to sit. No matter where Cain went, the venue was never large enough for the crowds that it drew. It was like some sort of universal law.

Especially in a world like this, where the technology level was so much lower than Cain was used to. In the other world, the Transfers had brought their own technological innovation with them, but in this world, it seemed that many of the little conveniences

had been missed. That might have to do with the energy of the world as well. Cain was used to everyone using Mana, so perhaps this energy wasn't as versatile in its base form, so they couldn't make magical stoves and the like.

At least they had proper plumbing in the city, even if the water source was questionable and Cain avoided using it for anything other than washing.

The Outer Disciple Arena's competitors' entrance was moving much more smoothly than expected, with the teams just showing their tokens and the guard letting them pass without challenge.

Elder Ling dropped off the Inner Sect Disciples with the other Elder from the Sect and returned just in time to meet them, nodding politely to the Guard as she rejoined her Disciples.

"Do you see that? The five-girl team from the Forbidden Treasure Sect? Talk about an odd gathering. Two of them are just small children, but they all passed the power testing to register." Someone was saying in the crowd.

"Don't underestimate them. I met with a Sect that held the same name on a world called Earth, and they were all monstrously talented. The rumor is that that branch had a Divine patron who helped guide their path, but they were Dual Cultivators, and not Mystic Cultivators like these ones seem to be.

Or perhaps not all of them. That tall one looks like a Sword Cultivator, and one of them has the feeling of a Dragon Monk. You know, the longer I look at them, the stranger they are." Another Elder answered.

"Well, you couldn't keep your disciples nature hidden forever." Elder Ling shrugged as she also heard the soft conversation, almost hidden under all the other voices in the crowd.

"They will all understand the genius of having a balanced fighting group very soon. I am more interested in what they are going to do about it. With this level of variety, there shouldn't be any hard counters to them, so everyone will have to find a way to fight through them." Cain laughed softly.

The Sects next to them looked over in confusion and concern, hearing that Cain had brought an unconventional group to the match, and then they saw the girls. Two big blondes, one of which was a Lycan, but the other one seemed to be the Sword Cultivator that the others had mentioned, along with a skinny brunette who was certainly a Mage Cultivator, a true rarity in this and most Immortal Realm worlds. But it was the two children that caught everyone's attention.

They clearly weren't weak, but none of the others could identify their specialty the way that the man in the crowd had done earlier.



"Alright, let's find some seats. Somewhere with shade would be good. I don't want anyone getting a sunburn." Cain decided, which made Elder Ling laugh.

"Then I hope you brought an umbrella. There is never any shade in these arenas." The Elder replied solemnly.

They entered the stadium from under the bleachers and Cain inspected their seating options. The Competitors sat facing the south, so the sun would be on them all afternoon, but the seats were set in tiers, with a large division between sections.

"If we take a spot near the wall, we can set an awning over the Disciples. That will take us all out of direct sunlight at least, and lower the temperature. Once this place fills, it will get uncomfortably warm. At least I know an ability to filter the air and keep the smell of unwashed bodies down." Cain told Elder Ling, indicating his preferred spot.

"Let's not draw that much attention just yet. Save it as a psychological technique if you make the finals. We will take the very top row, furthest from the stages. That is away from the worst of the crowd and will get more natural airflow, along with some shade from the overhead awnings, though the design keeps them from sheltering most of the competitors." Elder Ling decided, then led their troupe up to the top of the arena, well away from the groups that were crowding as close as possible to get the best views of the fights.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

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Once they were settled in, Cain saw the merits of this plan. The other groups all thought that they were being polite, since female sects were rarely serious contenders in the overall tournament, so the others were thankful for their consideration, while it also put them away from most of the crowd, right up until the last few Sects arrived to sit near them.

Their disappointment at having arrived only minutes before the match was to start was mitigated by the fact that they got to sit next to the ladies of the Lotus Blossom, who politely offered small bits of Rice Cakes to their neighbors, at Luna's suggestion.

The idea was that the more people cheering for them, the easier it would be to do well, removing the psychological barrier that came with being treated as the underdog or as a joke by the other Sects.

[Welcome to the Outer Disciple Group Competition. We have a fine showcase of the youngest up-and-coming talents in the region for you to watch, and I am sure that you will see more than a few familiar faces among the Elders that have trained them.

We can save the grand speeches for the older crowd, so without further ado, let us welcome the first four matches to the sands of the arena.

The Divine Lightning will face the Hidden Serpent, Holy Light's prodigies will face off against the Divine Flame's powerful turnout, the Jade River Sect will face Forest Springs Sect, and the ladies of the Forbidden Treasures Sect will face off against the returning champions of the Crushing Mountain Sect.

Sorry about your luck ladies, but the teams are randomized by our organizers, and it seems you have pulled an unlucky draw.] The announcer finished.

"Oh, this should be good. Crushing Mountain should be those cocky ones in brown and gold. They all feel like the Earth Element, so you know what to look out for. Strong defense, and sneak attacks from the ground." Cain informed his disciples.

"They are the returning champions, isn't that too high of a hurdle? Sabbath asked quietly.

"If they were truly talented among their sect, they would have progressed to the Inner Sect team. Don't worry about the other teams' rookies, you have this." Cain assured her.

"Got it, Boss. So, what counters Earth? Water? Or do we beat them at their own game?" Luna asked, focused on the match.

"That's for you to decide among yourselves. I can't guide you through every fight, so it is best if you develop your own tactical decision-making." Cain informed her with a smirk.

The girls huddled together and whispered for a moment as the Sects around them looked on in pity, then nodded their heads and jogged down to the arena, where the ten men of the Crushing Mountain Sect were waiting, with the five largest of them standing in the ring, ready for the fight.

"So, will you forfeit now, or do you want to try to put up a fight first?" The leader of the Crushing Mountain Disciples asked with a sneer.

"Isn't that my line? I am pretty sure that's my line." Penny retorted, smirking at the cocky cultivator.

The wards in the arena should keep him alive, but she had every intention of using that man as a chew toy once the match began.

"Go ahead and bark now, Lycan. We will show you what true power is." The leader laughed, and Luna nodded at the group, confirming their plan.

A white-robed Immortal flew down to the ring between the two groups and looked between them to judge how difficult his job was likely to be.

"Is there going to be a match?" He asked Penny, who he assumed was the leader of the Forbidden Treasure Sect team.

"Not much of one, I don't think these boys are going to last a whole five minutes against us," Penny responded, making the referee chuckle at the trash talk. Half the battle was psychological, and she was clearly getting under her opponents' skin already.

Almost all of the Crushing Mountain disciples were Mythic Awakened, but this world didn't seem to give the same damage reduction buff that her homeland did, only an increase in durability, so Luna prepared to call a set of six Granite Golems the moment that the match started.

If she focused, she could call the shorter ones, at only three meters tall, which wouldn't cause a huge commotion, she assumed.

"Competitors into position. On my mark. Begin." The referee announced, then floated up into the air and raised a barrier around the arena.

Luna called for her new armor and drew a pair of scimitars while calling the six golems into the ring at the same moment that the leader of the Crushing Mountain team called a large sand Elemental into the ring.

The look on his face went instantly from smug superiority to full panic as he noticed the Golems, and then Penny was on him, still in human form, but using claws made from her Druid skills to claw at the hastily raised armor around her opponent.

This was their round one strategy, six golems, outnumbering the enemy, and giving the impression that they could all use the skill, with one of them being better than usual at it.

Two of the Crushing Mountain team members leaped into the air, flipping over the crowd to land next to Luna and Sabbath in the back lines, while the others charged the leading row and did their best to dodge the crushing blows of the Golems.

If they took out the summoners, they wouldn't have an issue anymore. A regular summoning took concentration to maintain, so they assumed that the Forbidden Treasure Sect was linking their Golems all through the Mage type in the back.

But first, they would have to make it past Luna, and the fires of Sabbath.

Both forward attackers were engulfed in flickering blue and pink flames before they even landed, scorching the Earth Armor that formed around them to a deep black, like freshly turned earth.

They both charged Sabbath, seeing her as the greatest threat, but Luna was there before they realized that she had moved, knocking their blades away and forcing them back with a flurry of strikes that left shallow cuts across both Cultivators' bodies.

"Dammit, she's fast. I thought she was a sword cultivator, but she's an assassin. Change of plans, you keep the tiny demon busy while I eliminate the conjurer." The Crushing Mountain fighter ordered his partner.

There was a roar from across the arena as Penny transformed into her natural Lycan form, a wolf muzzle replacing her head, and her hands extending into claws as her body became covered in fur. She snapped and caught one of the Crushing Mountain cultivators by the wrist, throwing him against the barrier and making him drop his sword.

The Golems were on him in a second, and with a flash of light, he was ejected from the arena, appearing near a medical treatment facility.

The crowd roared in appreciation. The first forced competitor elimination of the day went to the ladies of the Forbidden Treasures Sect.

In Lycan form, Penny was even faster, and the leader of the Crushing Mountain team couldn't hold off both her and the Golems, being forced to flee to save himself, and leaving his partner alone with all six golems, plus Jen, as Tena came to join Penny, combining their agility and Tena's ranged attacking abilities to control his movements while Penny stalked the cultivator.

"Get rid of the Golems, NOW." The leader ordered, and both men in the back lines turned to attack Sabbath, who surrounded herself in a flame shield, using all of her might to keep it active as the first blows rained down on her.

But then they suddenly stopped, and two more flashes of light threw the men out of the ring, as Luna stabbed the distracted fighters in their backs.

"Sabbat, if you have the energy, set their leader on fire. I am going to go help Penny and Tena catch him." Luna ordered, then used [Shadow Step] to appear right in front of the man, punching him directly in the tender bits with the hilt of her sword, thanks to her much smaller stature.

A universal groan arose from the stands, replacing the variety of cheers and taunts that had filled it only a second earlier.

Penny's claws shredded the man's armor ability, tearing open flesh before the two sides were forcibly separated, and the golems were locked down in barriers of lightning.

"Winner, by Referee intervention, the Forbidden Treasure Sect." The referee announced, and Luna let the Golems disappear from their confinement.

One heavily bleeding and one bruised and battered man were left on the floor of the arena, too tired and injured to even sigh in relief at being rescued by the referee.

[The first victory of the day is announced. The Forbidden Treasures Sect has eliminated the returning champions from contention in the first qualifying round.] The announcer called, and the arena filled with roars of approval and shock.

"Your girls are no joke. I think I made a good bet." A muscular man with violet eyes told Cain with a smile, looking fondly down at the arena.

"Of course. They are favored by the Gods and trained by me, how could they lose?" Cain replied to the strange man, who burst into laughter and then vanished from sight.

"That was strange. I couldn't sense him at all, even though I could see him standing right next to you." Elder Ling whispered to Cain as the girls slowly made their way back up, waving to the crowd and shaking hands as they passed.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## **Chapter 608 608 Not Everyone Can Be So Lucky**

The next group was called as soon as the sand of the arena was raked smooth again, and the matches continued for two hours before the Lotus Blossom Sect was called to the ring.

[Lotus Blossom Sect versus the Shadowed Blade in Ring 3]

The announcement brought a round of sighs. The Shadowed Blade was very powerful, and a group of assassins as well. The flowing fighting style of the Lotus Blossom wasn't a good match for the sinister techniques of their opponent, but they had a look of great determination on their faces.

The Forbidden Treasure Sect had emerged victorious, so they still had hope that they wouldn't be crushed.

Those hopes were in vain. Roughly three seconds after the match started they were all pinned to the ground with a blade at their throats, and the Shadowed Blade was declared the winner.

"There is a chance we will face them in an upcoming round, what is your plan?" Cain asked his disciples.

"Bulwark should keep them off me past the initial strike, giving me time to counterattack after their sneak attack fails. So, Sacred Light to do area damage and keep them from hiding in shadows, then Smite and Blade Flurry?" Jen answered.

"I can dodge that. It's an inferior version of [Shadow Step] Luna declared with absolute certainty.

"Flame barrier, then explosion." Sabbath decided after a moment.

"[Hard Counter] prevents me from being pinned for three seconds, so I can avoid the trap, but after that, it will be a stand-up fight." Tena decided, unsure how the match would end.

Penny thought for much longer than the others before answering. "[Binding Roots] should keep them from vanishing, to begin with, and slow them, then transform to deal with their speed and keep the roots active so the others have an easier time."

Cain nodded happily. "Now you're starting to get it. You're not five individuals, you are a group of five. You all have skills that work to help the group as a whole, and the better you can integrate them, the easier it will be for you to fight together."

That had all the cultivators around him thinking deeply as if he had dropped some sort of divine wisdom, and Cain had to resist the urge to facepalm.

The Librarian had warned him that Cultivation Sects were every person for themselves, all competitive all the time, fights for resources, but to think that they hadn't even thought about coordinating for the tournament, and were instead picking one on one targets like this was some sort of duel, was painfully dense.

Cain was starting to understand why the Elders sent them into the wilderness to train. Though they likely did that the same way, only teaming up when there was a challenge too difficult for one member to take care of on their own.

He wasn't sure how well the Lotus Blossom worked together since they hadn't even had the chance to properly fight back before they were eliminated, but they seemed to be a bit more tight-knit than most of the groups around them, not as openly hostile.

[Smile at your face and stab you in the back is more like it. You don't know the fearsome nature of jealous women.] Oath Breaker informed him.

That was possible, but Cain hadn't seen it yet. He would have to watch and see if the Demon's estimation of human nature was right.

The fights continued for another two hours before the Announcer stepped back to the stage with a huge smile.

[That completes the first Elimination round of the Outer Disciple matches. Next up will be the second round of fights, continuing until midnight, or until they are finished. We have been moving right through the fights today, and we are ahead of schedule, but that could all change with a few tight matches in the second round.

Now, we will give everyone an hour to place their wagers for the second round. Casino staff will be coming around to you, and the matches will be up on the board momentarily.]

There was a large chalkboard at one end of the arena that had odds and matchups written on it, which Cain had ignored earlier because he wasn't wagering on anything, but now that his girls had made the second round, there might be a reason.

"I will bet on your behalf if you like. Participating Sect Elders aren't allowed, but we are eliminated already." Elder Ling offered.

"No need, but feel free to bet on your own behalf. I am sure the disciples would appreciate a consolation prize better than leftover rice cakes." Cain replied with a laugh.

"Hey, there are more Rice Cakes? Why are you being stingy, pass them over. I haven't eaten in hours." Luna complained, while clearly snacking on some sort of meat jerky.

"You are a tiny glutton, you know that, right? Here is another Rice cake to split with the others." Cain told her, passing over the cake.

"Score. Thank you, Boss. We will take good care of the cake." Luna replied politely.

The others shook their head at her antics, but all held out their hands for a slice of the chewy treat. It was actually well suited to the tournament. High in protein, with a reasonable amount of sugar and a rice base. A fairly well-rounded snack food.

"Wagers anyone?" The casino worker asked.

"What are the odds of me punching someone so hard they cry?"

The worker laughed at Luna's question and then shook his head. "Participants and their Elders can't wager. It's to keep them from throwing fights for money. But personally, I would say that the odds are pretty good that you could do it. You broke that other guy's tailbone with that pommel strike, and I wouldn't be surprised if there was a tear or two shed."

Once the time wound down, the announcer returned to the arena, which had been rearranged into two much larger rings.



[First up, we will have the Forbidden Treasure Sect against the Jade River Sect, and the Shadowed Blade Sect against the Blade Flame Sect, who surprised everyone with their first advancement in twenty years.

Come on down to the arena, competitors, and let's get this match started.] The announcer called.

"You're pretty good with your movement skill aren't you? I hope that we get to face each other before the tournament ends." One of the Shadowed Blade disciples told Luna.

The cultivators from the Shadowed Blade all covered their faces and used code names, but the voice was definitely female, and Luna smiled at the thought that at least one of the favorite sects to win wasn't all male fighters.

"Thank you. It comes naturally I suppose, but being stealthy is easier for us isn't it? You can smell most of the boys coming your way from across the stadium." Luna whispered back, then gave the Shadowed Blade assassin a wink and jogged off to her arena.

Jade River Sect specialized in water-type attacks, which were a pretty good counter to the Granite Golems that Luna had summoned in the last fight, and the Forbidden Treasures Sect began to suspect that the random matching system was not as random as it seemed, and the organizers were trying to eliminate them without risking another of their top-seeded Sects after they had pulled off the upset against the Crushing Mountain Sect.

"What is the plan this time? The water will bog down and nearly immobilize the Granite Golems." Penny whispered before they entered the arena.

"We could use water elementals, and square up with them again, but I think something different might be fun. You took all the skills of the Druid skill tree, right? The ones that give bonuses to animals?" Luna asked.

"Of course, why?" Penny asked.

"Summon your wolf pack, and I will summon Dragon Carp. They can move through both air and water and have a pretty nasty water attack. We will swarm them with mundane animals while we fight so that all the water in the world won't give them the advantage." Luna suggested.

"They are a hard counter to my flames though, so I might have a hard time." Sabbath sighed.

"That's fine. You have some healing skills as well, so keep your armor up, and stop them from defeating the wolves. That should be enough." Luna suggested.

The others would have to rely on their movement skills to get around after the Jade River inevitably waterlogged the sand. It was the most effective way to start the fight, and none of them could see any reason not to do it.

The Jade River Sect began to look nervous the moment that Forbidden Treasure Sect entered the arena, but they had a hint of determination to them, letting Luna know that they weren't going to just give up.

That was perfect. She needed the best fights that she could get. They got a lot of bonus experience from the last fight, thanks to the quest to make Cain proud of them, and a forfeit or a one-sided massacre wouldn't be nearly as beneficial.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 609 609

Facing off across from their new opponents, Luna could see that separation that Cain had been talking about. They were together, allied from the same sect, but they weren't really one unit, just a collection of individuals.

That would be a huge advantage for their team, who were actually working together to balance each other's strengths and weaknesses.

"We should switch it up to confuse them. They are used to Luna standing back to protect Sabbath while she uses her fire magic, but we could have Tena do the same thing this time, with her Energy Dragons to keep the water attacks away and her close combat skills.

Then Luna could go on the offense, and that should catch Jade River off guard." Penny suggested.

"That could work. We don't want to be too predictable. We might be forming up in the most optimized formation, but everyone else has seen it now, so they can plan around it if we don't change anything.

Sabbath does need to stay back this time, since there will be water attacks, but maybe not next fight." Tena agreed.

"Why don't I go on offense? They will never expect it, with fire being weak against water. It will grab their attention for a few seconds and you all can blitz them." Sabbath asked, looking over the group for a weak link.

"There, the extra cocky one that is smirking at me. If I go all out with the fire and charge him I think it will put the others off balance and throw off their plans."

"Do it. If it goes wrong, we will have the summons cover for you. I can call a second set if we need it, I'm just holding them back in case we need them as a trump card later. So dump all your fire on him and see if you can overcome his water talent even at the disadvantage." Luna agreed.

With the plan made, the disciples prepared for a hard fight. Going all offense would make things easier, with numbers on their side. In the best-case scenario, they could herd the Jade River Sect into one group and then overwhelm them.

"Is everyone ready?" The referee asked, looking at the physically mismatched teams smirking at each other as if they both knew something that the other didn't.

"Ready, Sir," Luna replied, while the leader of the other team nodded.

"On my Mark. Ready, Set, Begin."

As predicted, the Jade River Sect immediately called a meter of water to cover the arena, forcing both Luna and Tena, who were not nearly tall enough for such an environment, to activate movement skills to get off the ground.

Sabbath lit up in an intense blue fire, and the water around her was dispersed, leaving her standing on dry sand while she sent a barrage of [Fire Arrows] at her chosen target, who was forced to brace himself behind a water shield.

Penny transformed into Lycan form and charged ahead with her six-wolf pack at her heels, startling her enemies.

That wasn't a skill that they had expected, though they had expected summons of some sort.

The wolves were slowed by the water, but they were magical creatures and pushed through without much issue as Penny charged into the Jade River Sect ranks, flanked by Jen and Luna.

Luna called sixteen dragon carp, their shining golden scales flashing in the light as they raced happily through the water toward the blue-robed cultivators and began firing water jets to break their targets' defenses.

"It's an illusion. They're just solid energy. Crush them with blades and wash the girls back to the far barrier." The leader ordered.

Technically, summons were solidified energy, but they were not an illusion, as the disciples found out the hard way when they tried to dispel them with a talisman.

The Jade River fighters were very skilled swordsmen though, and other than the one that was pinned down by Sabbat, desperately trying to avoid being boiled alive by the steam from his faltering shields, they charged into melee with the Forbidden Treasure Sect without hesitation.

Short blades met Scimitars and claws in a furious exchange, and for a moment the battle ground to a halt.

Then the Dragon Carp launched another round of attacks, putting the Jade River Sect off balance, and causing them to lose one member to the wolves and another to Luna's blades.

Then the leader's barrier faltered under the heat of Sabbat's flames, and the water in the arena vanished in an instant.

The last two stood back to back, knowing that they were already doomed, but not wanting to embarrass themselves in front of their Elders and the crowd.

Luna and Jen didn't give them a chance to think about that for long though, and their furious assault drove the two men to their knees before the Referee stepped in and ended the fight, putting a protective barrier over the downed cultivators.

"Winner Forbidden Treasure Sect. Congratulations on moving to the next round ladies." The referee congratulated them, while the crowd screamed its appreciation for the fight.

"Pure brute force to overcome water with fire. That is impressive. I don't think that anyone will underestimate your disciples after this." Elder Ling told Cain, who was making mental notes of the way the girls worked together, so he could come up with a plan to make them even better.

"I'm glad you liked it. I can see that some of the other Sects aren't too impressed though. They think that the match was fixed, or that I brought ringers, transformed to look innocent." Cain chuckled, as the accusations were clearly heard among the audience members who had bet against the Forbidden Treasure Sect.

"Nobody gets past the scanners. But I must say, the thought that you might have made your Sect look less threatening had crossed even my mind. The scan only tells you if they are under the age of twenty-five and mortal. A pair of twenty-four-year-old Spirit Rank Cultivators in children's bodies would be an incredible power play if you were looking to get underestimated." Elder Ling shrugged.

None were quite that old, but she had a point. Cain had made both Luna and Tena look deliberately non-threatening, even if Tena had specifically requested it.

"I don't think it will help once they grow up. They'll still be hard to take as a serious threat, even if you are judging by their aura." Cain laughed.

"What do you mean by that?" A female Elder to Cain's right asked, her eyes as gold as her robes, with long white hair.

"It's part of the technique that they train. It suppresses the threat of their aura unless they deliberately try to spread it. So they will always be underestimated since opponents will assume that they aren't a threat, even if they sense their overall power level." Cain explained.

Mostly it was that the system didn't build up an aura of power the same way that the regular cultivation techniques that everyone here used did. All of the disciples had cores, so they would radiate power, but thanks to the system, it would seem benign and not have that aura of danger that a cultivator who regularly killed and fought would carry.

"What a useful skill for a traveling Sect to know. It seems that you have put a great deal of effort into the training and planning for your disciples' futures." The Elder told Cain with a smile on her weathered face.

"Not as much as you would hope, but they are doing well enough for now, and I can start planning for their futures as we go. They are gaining power at a steady pace, so with a little luck, I will have very nearly forever to plan and help them, but you never really know do you?" Cain asked.

"No doubts at all that they will make the transition to Immortality? It's not such a small thing to most, and it takes a lot of confidence to say that even one of your proteges will make it that far in their cultivation."

The girls made it back before Cain could respond, all of them excited to see how Cain would respond to their performance in the Arena.

"Excellent work ladies. The change of tactics was a nice touch, they never knew what hit them, even to the end. Just make sure that you are in a position to support each other should one of your targets prove harder to lock down than planned, you don't want to lose one of your team to an error in judgment." Cain told them, patting each head in turn as they approached.

Having gone first, they could actually leave for the evening now and find out who their next opponents would be tomorrow, but it would be better if they watched all the matches themselves, so once they started to settle down, Cain brought out another rice

cake, as well as some sliced Magical Beast meat and fruit, as well as some Mythic Fruit Juice to help his disciples recover.

"Settle in to watch the matches. I've got blankets with me as well if it gets cold.

Elder, would you like a light evening snack? The juice is a particularly fine one, produced on my family farm." Cain offered, drawing the interest of both Elders near him.

"Is that juice from a Mythic Rank fruit? And you are just drinking it as an evening refreshment?" Elder Ling asked.

"It's highly diluted for exactly that purpose. It helps with recovery, energy, and mental refreshment." Cain offered, pouring each of them and all fifteen disciples a small shot of juice.

"Now, that is incredible. If I ever get the chance, I would love to travel to your family farm and see just what sort of Clan could cultivate such trees. Even the Lotus Blossom Sect, with its long history, would pay a great amount for a single seed of a Mythic Peach Tree." Elder Ling sighed as she sipped her juice.

"I might be able to help you there, but we can discuss that when we aren't in public. Now, everyone finish your juice and eat your dinner before the next matches start. I think they're going to be good ones."

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## **Chapter 610 610 No Longer Underestimated**

Cain was right. The following matches were incredible. Every set of Sects was well-matched, with no hard counters to another Sect's techniques visible, and the ladies of the Forbidden Treasure Sect got to watch for over an hour before the next pair of matches came to a conclusion.

"Was that enough time to get a good grasp on their techniques? There is a good chance you will face one of the winners in the finals tomorrow. There are only a few more fights after this if you're ready to stay here and watch a little longer." Cain asked his disciples.

They were all wrapped up in blankets, leaned against each other as they watched the matches, and most of the other disciples who would be competing tomorrow were taking the chance to get some sleep between rounds.

"Yep, we made good notes," Luna murmured sleepily from Cain's lap, despite clearly having done nothing of the sort.

"Fine, why don't we let you all sleep? We can return to the camp and find out about the opponents we will face once the matches are announced in the morning." Cain suggested.

"That's an even better idea. Half of the arena is asleep already or at least meditating between matches. We can't forget the 6 P's of competition." Penny agreed.

"Six peas?" The gold-robed elder leading the group beside them asked.

"Proper planning prevents piss poor performance." Penny clarified, making all the cultivators around them chuckle.

"Crude, but accurate. I think my Sect could have used that bit of advice this morning. They didn't know anything about the Sect that they were facing before the match began, and they barely lasted longer than your own match." The Elder agreed, making a few of her disciples blush in embarrassment.

"There was no way to win that. They used skills to summon biting insects on everything." One of the disciples shuddered.

"We have a Sabbath for that. Just purge everything with fire. Insect users deserve nothing else." Luna informed them resolutely while the others nodded their agreement.

The ladies of the Lotus Blossom Sect were on board with that idea. They were fire users, to begin with, and not big fans of any sort of bugs. Purging the entire arena seemed like the only reasonable course of action.

"Alright, let's head out once we get a view of the next matches beginning. Then we can at least say we have an idea of what we will be facing and that we didn't slack in our duties." Sabbath announced while the next groups took the stage.

One group was body cultivators, using raw speed and brute strength to overcome their foes, while their opponent was an assassin sect. In the next arena, two Air Element Sects faced off, using extreme speed and flight to face off against each other in a dizzying aerial battle.

The next morning began with a large crowd gathered around the Lotus Blossom Sect camp. The matches had been announced an hour before dawn, and the supporters of the Forbidden Treasure Sect had gathered to see how they planned to take on an incredibly agile Mountain Wind Sect, the winner of the duel between Air Elemental Sects.



"Do we bring them to us, or do we go to them?" Luna asked the group as she made plans to pick an appropriate Summon for the match.

Penny put down the breakfast sandwich she was working on to voice her opinion. "Sabbat has range, Luna and Tena can move through the air, but I'm stuck on the ground with Jen. I have entanglement abilities if they get close to the ground, and Jen has Smite, but that's not much."

Luna's smile immediately brightened as she came to a realization. "Spiders. We can use spider webs to bring them down. They'll get all tangled, and we can beat them while they're helpless."

The others all shared a dubious look when they heard Luna's proposition.

"I mean, it would likely work, but does it have to be spiders?" Sabbat asked.

Luna looked a bit confused but thought carefully before answering. "There are other things that use webs, but spiders are pretty much the best at it."

Sabbat gave a resigned sigh and reluctantly nodded. "Unless someone has a better idea about how to get them on the ground, I guess it is spiders."

"I will try to grab them and throw them on the ground, but since they all have an affinity to the air element, they have no problems flying using their own internal energy, so it will be hard to keep them there. Or maybe Luna could create birds and dive-bomb them until they return to the ground to take shelter?" Tena suggested.

"Oh, that sounds fun too. Do we know something that can make a lot of birds? Just birds everywhere, filling the sky?" Luna asked Cain.

"Not that I can think of. But you could summon a group of Roc. You know, the ones from the South, with the wingspan ten meters across. In the arena, they would fill the entire airspace. But they might eat a whole human in one bite, which could be an issue." Cain suggested.

"What sort of monstrous creatures did your home keep as pets?" Penny asked with a look of horror.

"Oh, they're not pets. They're wild birds. They're good for keeping the giant rats and tree snake populations under control. But when they're upset, they'll eat almost anything. They have a better temperament than the Gryphons or Hippogryphs, though." Cain explained.

"No wonder Luna isn't afraid of humans when she grew up around those sorts of Legendary Monsters." Penny chuckled ruefully, giving Luna a look of sympathy that she totally misunderstood.

"Right? They don't even taste good, and they eat the things that do. Bloody nuisance birds if you ask me."

"So are we going with spiders or giant monster birds?" Tena asked, looking excited about the second option.

"We should likely stick with the spiders. Legendary Monsters might raise questions about how we knew enough about them to summon an image of them, and that would be very awkward. Most of the people here think they're some sort of solid energy illusion." Luna decided.

"We have our working plan and our formation. The rest we can improvise as we go. These ones seemed to work together as a group better than most, so be aware of that as well. They probably won't want to duel, and they will jump in to rescue their comrades if they get trapped." Jen added, making a mental strategy for how she would deal with the flying cultivators if they weren't able to bring them down reliably.

Cain led the group among their admirers, parting the crowd with a hint of his Ancient aura. Existential Dread might be inconvenient sometimes, but in a crowd, just a hint was enough to clear a path for his disciples to make their way through.

"Tena, we love you!" Someone yelled from the crowd, making the dark-haired Dragon Monk blush.

"Shut it, you lolicon. The curve of a well-formed chest is the path to true enlightenment." Someone yelled back at the first cultivator, sparking a fight among the back ranks of admirers.

"Miss Jen, can you flex those wonderous thighs for us? So much beautiful muscle." Someone else yelled, and the Paladin gave Cain a horrified look.

"Welcome to today's episode of the two-hundred-year-old virgins. This is the real reason that members of Sects like the Lotus Blossom don't travel alone. Not because of the cultivators that have a vendetta against them, but because of the ones that like them too much." Cain informed her with a wink.

That earned him a lot of hateful glares from the crowd, who had been doing their best to forget about his enviable position in life.

The guards let them in without any hassle and escorted them to the arena so that they didn't have to push through the throngs of people trying to get to the arena in time to get good seats.

The Outer Disciple competition usually wasn't highly popular, but there had been a number of upsets this year, and it was drawing the attention of everyone in attendance, especially those who had only heard about yesterday's fights secondhand.

Most Sects took in their disciples between twelve and sixteen years of age, with some only taking them at age eighteen, so the under twenty-five group was usually fairly weak and more of a martial arts fight than an actual battle between cultivators, but not this year.

Even disregarding the strange combination of skills in the Forbidden Treasure Sect, every other finalist had shown outstanding levels of talent this year, with the majority well into their First Awakening, as this world called the Mythic Awakened.

Cain tapped a guard in the escort group on the shoulder to draw his attention. "How is the betting looking? Getting a bit closer now that we have had a few fights?"

The guard laughed. "You're the favorites in this round. One point two to one odds. It's not much of an advantage, but I don't think I've ever seen a female cultivation sect favored in the fighting tournaments before."

"I guess you ladies can't use the excuse that they would be bullying the weak to distract your opponents today. You might as well go all out right from the start. Jen, try combining [Crushing Blow] with [Smite] the second that the match starts. I bet you can catch one of them off guard." Cain suggested.

Five on four to start the match would be a huge advantage if they could manage it, but the Mountain Wind Sect surely had the same idea and wouldn't go down easily.

In the mind of the disciples, that was fine though. They didn't have to win the tournament. The quest conditions said that they only had to make Cain proud of them. So they would do their best, but in a way that they could be proud of winning.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

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According to the schedule, they were the second of four matches in this final eight round and then would fight in the semifinals after lunch if they won, with the final match going in the early evening to give the teams a chance to rest in between fights.

Today, they got the whole arena to move around, which was a massive advantage to the Mountain Wind Sect under normal circumstances. Cain wondered if that had been factored into their odds of victory, but he had faith in his disciples to put on a good show for the crowd.

The first matchup would be the Physical Cultivators against a Sword Cultivation Sect. They had a wide variety of energy and blade techniques that would offset the advantage of the physical fighters, assuming that they couldn't simply withstand the attacks.

The referee started the match, and the body cultivators drew swords and charged the sword cultivators, who met them with a wave of energy attacks. They parried, dodged, jumped over the attacks, and kept advancing, turning the battle into a brutal melee between two groups of talented combatants.

"See, that's such a dull fight. Teleport behind them and FIREBALL." The violet-eyed male cultivator from yesterday told Cain, appearing behind him without anyone noticing.

"Oh, I like this guy. Fireball solves everything. If my blowgun could use [Fireball], it would be amazing." Luna cheered, then got a look of pure excitement as she considered ways to make it possible.

"If you put the Rune on the dart, it should ignite once it was launched." The violet-eyed man chuckled while Cain shook his head. Luna didn't need any help coming up with strange new ideas.

"Why don't I make you a new one? One that will create a fireball when used so that you don't need to burn through enchanted darts?" Cain suggested.

"They are fighting right after this match. I don't think you have time for that." Elder Ling from the Lotus Blossom Sect pointed out.

"Sure, there is time. I have a bit of bamboo here with me and an etching tool. It might be quick and dirty, but it should get the job done well enough for a one-off tool to fight in the next match." Cain shrugged, taking out the items.

"You know they're going to freak out, right?" The man with violet eyes asked.

"Minor details. Think of it like an impromptu lecture, like the ones they're holding all over the city. Only this one will be very short, with no explanations." Cain told him.

Luna stared intently at the man as Cain talked, earning her an interested look and an offering of candy produced from within his fancy black robes.

"Thank you. Did you know your eyes glow a little when you're amused?" Luna asked him.

"It is unavoidable, I suppose. But it's a small thing, just an abundance of energy." The man told her.

Luna seemed to accept that explanation without question, then reluctantly pulled a piece of fruit from her inventory.

"You should try this. It might help." She suggested.

What she had given him was a small piece of dried Mythic Apple, which contained a huge amount of Ice Element mana.

"How might this help?" The man asked curiously, looking at the piece of apple.

"You know how when you eat a whole ham in one bite, you get that indigestion while your body tries to digest that much at once? It's the same thing, I think. A bit of juice to wash down the ham and a bit of extra mana to help your body digest all the mana that it has just sitting around." Luna informed him.

The violet-eyed cultivator reached out and ruffled her hair as he laughed. "That's not how it works at all. It would just make everything overflow, like when you eat too much and make yourself sick. But I appreciate the thought."

While they chatted, everyone else was intently focused on what Cain was doing, etching Runes on a plain bamboo tube. At first, it didn't seem like much or even a worthwhile effort, but as he continued scribing runes around the tube, the gathering of power drew more and more attention away from the stalemate of a fight in the ring onto Cain's work.

Cain finished the inscription and smiled to himself. A combination of Lightning Arrow and Fireball, with a final rune meaning targeted implosion, so it would suck everything in the area toward the core of the detonation before it exploded with a fireball.

The speed of the projectile should be enough to keep the Mountain Wind Sect from dodging the attacks, and the explosion at the end would be a nasty little surprise.

Using Lightning Arrow meant that they didn't need actual darts, only mana, so it was ready to go as soon as he connected the lattice of energy that would activate the Runes.

"Writing it out is the easy part. You just need to know where everything goes. The final part is tougher. You have to link it all just right to make it activate." Cain told Elder Ling, who was watching with rapt attention.

"This is far beyond the bat of Bonk." She breathed, and the man in black looked at her with a mix of incredulity and amusement on his face.

"Pardon, but can you repeat that for me?" He asked, barely keeping himself from laughing.

"The young lady Luna made us a bat with a single string of runes on it. It exemplifies the true nature of the bonk. If you like, we can show you after the matches." Elder Ling suggested.

"Oh, I know what you mean. I just didn't expect to hear it. You truly live up to your calling little lady." The man told Luna.

"It is glorious. I should make another one for dealing with annoying strangers." Luna told him.

"You can't just bonk people to end conversations you don't feel like having." Cain reminded her.

"It's better than stabbing them," Luna muttered, unconvinced.

"No stabbing them either," Penny added, in mimicry of Cain's voice, while the others laughed.

"It seems I am too predictable these days. Alright, I will activate this, and we are ready to begin the match whenever those guys get tired." Cain told his audience and poured Mana into the Rune Weapon in the making, turning the dull green bamboo into a light blue with flickering streaks of lightning down its length.

Watching it for a while, you could see the blue flicker as if it was a contained flame while the lightning flashed sporadically. The audience was enraptured by the weapon, unable to believe what they were seeing.

"That has to be cheating. Are you actually allowed to make custom weapons to deal with your opponents?" Someone asked.

"You can switch between matches. You just can't accept outside help during the fight itself. Everyone switches swords if they have one that is facing a hard counter by their opponents." Another Elder disagreed.

"Still, the artificer made a Rune Weapon while we watched, custom to order for his disciple. How much power do you think they have hidden away as a trump card if he can do things like that on a whim?" Another cultivator asked.

"You have a point. Hey Casino boy, I need to place a wager." Someone called down the stands to where the worker taking bets was waiting to be called on.

The Mountain Wind Sect was sitting on the far side of the arena, so they had a clear, though distant view of what Cain had done. They likely didn't know what he had made, but their Elder should at least be able to tell them that Cain had made either an inscribed talisman or a Rune Weapon.

Most would assume it was a form of Inscription and not Rune Magic, which was incredibly rare and far more powerful than the standard items that most Sects could make.

The Mountain Wind Elder was giving Cain an unimpressed look, not quite knowing what Cain had done but certain that it was an underhanded attempt to strengthen his Disciples at the last minute.

"Boys, I have something for you. Talismans of Dismissal. Those summoned creatures that they use are not mere illusions. They use some sort of talisman or device to temporarily create actual creatures. If you touch them with this talisman, they will disappear." He told his team quietly.

The boys got a vicious glint in their eyes, now certain that they could deal with the trickery of the Forbidden Treasure Sect. The girls had fought well enough, but their summoned creatures were the difference between victory and defeat, at least in the eyes of the Mountain Wind Sect.

The first match went for almost the full hour allotted before it would be decided by the Judge's decision, with the Sword Cultivators of the Sweeping Blade coming out on top.

"Alright, my Treasures. You're up. You know what to do. Go out, do your best and make me proud." Cain told them as the arena was cleaned and leveled for the next match.

"You've got it, boss. We won't let you down." Jen told him, hopping over the crowd to stand on the barrier wall, waiting for the signal to enter the arena.

"Yeah, what Jen said. We will make you proud. I have a good feeling about this fight. I think it is going to be a fun one against the fast-flying guys." Tena agreed, walking down to join the Paladin on the wall, taunting the Mountain Wind Sect with their confidence.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 612 612

The two teams squared off against each other from the arena's walls as the ground was prepared for their meach to begin. It was obvious to everyone present which team was more intimidating, but the Forbidden Treasure Sect wasn't backing down, and their complete confidence in themselves was contagious, making many of the spectators wonder if they knew something that the others did now.

[Teams to the arena floor for the official announcement.] The referee announced.

No abilities or items were allowed to be prepared in advance, so they would need to be standing on the ground when the match began, a crucial point that Luna was hoping



would give her spiders a moment to catch the tricky cultivators before they could fly up out of range.

[Everyone, I want to see a good, clean match. Now ready? Begin.]

The crowd roared in excitement as the match began, and three dozen enormous spiders, each the size of a full-grown bear, appeared in the ring and began shooting webs at the startled cultivators.

Blades of wind flashed and cut apart the sticky webs the moment they approached the Mountain Wind Sect, but that delay still bought Jen enough time to make her first attack, using [Crushing Blow] along with [Smite] to both extend her reach and add Holy damage to her sword swing.

The five-meter-long energy field around the crystalline blade which also doubled as her flying sword crashed into the head of a cultivator, driving him to his knees and ejecting him from the ring in a flash of light.

An instant later, everything was on fire as Sabbath used an area-of-effect spell and lit all of the tattered webbings with smoky orange tongues of fire. Flames and smoke were everywhere, and the remaining cultivators charged each other, knowing that the limited visibility would reduce the advantage of being able to fly.

With that advantage gone, it was down to melee combat skills, and the Forbidden Treasure Sect Disciples were certain that they were as good as anyone in that department.

A dozen nearly invisible wind blades raced toward Tena, who the Mountain Wind sect thought was the most vulnerable, only to be met with the entwined forms of light and dark energy dragons.

The dragons were cut apart by the furious assault, but the reduced number of blades was enough to allow the Monk to escape, rapidly moving through the smoke to kidney punch her designated target and escape his reach again.

Luna's twin blades were wreathed in blue flames as she used Record Keeper's [Balance] Skill on her own weapons to enhance their damage instead of using it as an area attack. A touch would burn the enemy or heal her allies, but the rapid attacks of the twin scimitars were doing a wonderful job of driving her opponent back.

He leaped into the air, intending to gain some distance from Luna to counterattack, but she didn't follow, instead driving both blades into the Mountain Wind Disciple who was going after Sabbath, parrying her flames with his blade as the mage ran frantically around the arena.

"Dammit all." The leader of the wind users cursed and burned a large amount of his energy reserves to blow all the flames and smoke out of the arena so that they could fight without distractions again.

"Find out how they are able to see in the smoke, and someone dismiss those damnable spiders." The man yelled, dodging more webbing as he quit chasing Tena to focus on Luna.

"Bad call," Cain told the violet-eyed cultivator beside him as Tena was suddenly left unguarded, along with Sabbath, while Jen kept another fighter pinned down in this three-on-five fight.

"Target priority, he takes out the summoner, and the fight gets much easier." The man suggested, but Cain shook his head.

"Tena doesn't specialize in attack. She specializes in mobility. You can't just leave her unattended and expect to get more than a half-second advantage." Cain explained while the man smirked at the new information.

"Is that so?" He asked as Tena proved Cain's point.

Tena attacked the back of the man engaged with Jen, breaking his rhythm and getting him trapped by the spiders, then slashed by Jen and knocked unconscious by Tena with a blow to the face.

The unconscious Mountain Wind fighter was ejected from the ring, and the two free fighters went to help Luna, who was stuck in a stalemate against the highly skilled leader of their opponents.

Though he wasn't gaining much height, he was using the wind to his advantage, attacking with tremendous speed and fluttering around Luna, forcing her to spin and parry to avoid being eliminated in a single strike.

He was too fast for the Spiders to properly hit, but Penny, who had hidden in the smoke until it was dispersed, transformed into a huge wolf and forgotten in the smoke that nearly matched her fur, finally made her move, clamping her jaws around the neck of the only other fighter before shaking him like a ragdoll until he disappeared in a flash of white light, eliminated from the fight to go sit in the medical bay.

Surrounded by all five Forbidden Treasure Sect fighters as well as a horde of spiders, the leader of the Mountain Wind Sect team took a knee and looked at the referee.

"Mountain Wind forfeits the match." He stated proudly.

He was surrounded by a lightning barrier as a formality, but the girls all stood down and put their weapons away while Luna dismissed the spiders.

"You are an incredible fighter. I don't think we could have taken you, even two on one, with that speed." Luna told the big man, who smiled down at her as he regained his feet.

"You are tiny but vicious. Any blade-wielding sect would be proud to have you as their disciple." He replied, then leaped out of the ring to go check on his teammates.

[Winner, Forbidden Treasure Sect.] The referee called to the stunned audience.

Half of them might have bet on this outcome, but actually seeing it in action was something else entirely.

Every Sect had a specialty, blades, infiltration, assassination, alchemy, inscription, or even simply a monastic life. But with the wide variety of tricks and techniques that the Forbidden Treasure Sect had displayed, it was unclear what sort of place this unknown Sect was.

It wasn't even clear if all the Disciples were female since they had a male leader and had shown up with only six total people.

That begged the question, were they assassins or possibly monster hunters? Or could this be a specialized team hand-picked to build the Sect's reputation in a land far from their home? That wasn't unheard of, especially for a sect looking to establish a branch location when their original got too large or encountered a division of ideologies.

Nobody had the answer, and Cain wasn't talking about it, currently engrossed in a conversation about the effectiveness of psychological attacks on the enemy. Cain had made a magnificent-looking Rune Weapon seconds before the fight, but his Disciple hadn't even taken it out in the arena, much less used it.

Some speculated that it might have been fake and intended to break the confidence of the Mountain Wind Sect, but others maintained that it simply wasn't necessary since the smoke had kept them all near the ground anyhow.

The arguments continued right up until the ladies returned to their seats, receiving warm congratulations all the way up the bleachers.

"Excellent work, everyone. I have a special treat for you to celebrate a crushing defeat of a very tricky opponent." Cain told them, then brought out one of the decadent chocolate cakes that the Bunnies on the farm loved to make.

They only made cakes in bulk, designed to be distributed to the entire farm, with each pan perfectly filling the oven, so there was far more cake than their small group could possibly eat.

Cain passed around the sample squares to the confused cultivators around him with a smile. The cakes were made with Mythic ingredients for healing and stamina recovery

and had an energy-enhancing cherry filling, which kept the already high-energy Bunny clerics going all day.

"What is the base of this? The dark and sweet but with a somehow rich flavor?" The same Gold Robed Elder who had been seated beside them yesterday asked.

"You mean Chocolate? I suppose it might not grow near here. You're missing out. Young Luna here considers chocolate as one of the essential food groups." Cain informed her.

Luna gave a thumbs-up accompanied by a chocolate-lipped smile while she stuffed her face full of cake and went for a third piece, only to be blocked by Penny, the responsible one in the group.

"You're hyper enough already. I don't know what the Master put in the cake, but I can feel the extra energy accumulation already. If you have any more you won't sleep for days." Penny informed Luna, ignoring the teary-eyed pleading from her fellow disciple.

"Master Cain, please put the cake away. I can't resist that look for long." Penny begged, giving Cain the same pleading look Luna was giving her and making the violet-eyed cultivator chuckle at their antics.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 613 613

The following two fights dragged out again, proving to the audience that the Sects were reasonably balanced and that Forbidden Treasure Sect was simply an outlier. That made a massive change in the betting odds with the casino on the main floor, which desperately tried to shore up its losses after initially giving very good odds that the girls would be easily eliminated.

"How much do we still stand to lose?" The pit boss asked his assistant, who was crunching the numbers, to determine the odds for the remaining fights.

"If the Forbidden Treasure wins the next round, we are down 2 percent. If they lose the final after that, we are up 18 percent. If they win the final, we are down roughly eight hundred Spirit Cores." the assistant told him.

"How did that even happen? We didn't take that many bets on them to win the tournament, did we?" The boss asked.

"It seems that early the first day, before and during their first match, the vendors in the stands took over a thousand medium-sized bets on them to win overall. It was so laughable that the odds were in the thousands to one, so nobody immediately noticed that they added up to so much." The assistant told him.

"Adjust the odds. Make them a heavy favorite to win the tournament, so we can recoup some of what we stand to lose if they actually win." The boss whispered.

"I am afraid that it is too late. Most of the bets we expected for the match have already been placed. There simply aren't enough outstanding wagers for a change in odds to make a difference. The crowd has made their decisions already." The assistant sighed while the boss rubbed a frustrated hand over his face.

"I know, I know, I am just panicking a little. They might do well in the semi-finals, but against those guys, they should not win the final." The boss announced, trying to convince himself that it was true, despite all the things he had seen the Forbidden Treasure Sect accomplish.

[The Semi Final Matches are set to begin now.] The announcer was calling from the arena, drawing all attention to him, even from the panicked workers in the Casino, who knew that heads would roll when their big boss found out about this debacle.

[Will the Sweeping Blade and the Forbidden Treasure please make their way to the arena?] The announcer called, bringing a few chuckles from the crowd, who found the Sect's name to be more than a little appropriate for the Disciples.

Peach-colored dresses and red tunics over black pants met each other in the middle of the sandy floor, each face with a look of determination.

"So, little summoner girl, what do you have for us? Spiders and slow-moving Golems aren't going to do anything against us, and you don't have the brute strength to block our strikes." The leader of the Sweeping Blade asked while Luna smirked at him.

"Have you ever met a Greater Demon? I don't mean a Demon Sect Cultivator, but an actual Demon." Luna asked.

"Don't get ahead of yourself, child. No demon willing to answer your call could pose a threat to us." The man answered while his Sect laughed at what they thought was an empty threat.

"Ladies, let the summons engage first. The Sweeping Blade wants to learn a thing or two about sword work." Luna told the others while the Referee and the Spectators watched in amusement.

If nothing else, the Forbidden Treasure Sect had mastered the Dao of Trash Talking.

They had gotten under every opponent's skin instantly, throwing them off their game and making them choose less than optimal decisions every time. It was almost uncanny as if they were using a technique, but not even the highly sensitive Referee had detected energy usage, so it wasn't a Mystic technique, and words weren't prohibited.

[Is everyone ready to back up their words? Good. Begin.] The referee called, and all of the girls of the Forbidden Treasure jumped back, letting Luna take the lead as four copies of Oath Breaker appeared in the ring with enormous smiles on their faces and swords in every hand.

"Oh, thank you so much. This will be amazing." Oath Breaker cheered, and the Referee panicked so much he almost stopped the fight to dismiss the demon forcibly.

"No, it can't be real. There was no summoning circle, and they don't have any aura of the Lower Planes on them. That's not a real summoned Demon. But then, what is it? Is the ability actually to create a mimic?" The referee pondered, loud enough for the most sensitive ears in the crowd to hear him.

"So that's how she got so fast. That explains the mystery damage as well. Very sneaky, Master Cain. to think you had taught her that sort of thing." The man with violet eyes laughed but didn't elaborate when the spectators around them tried to get answers.

Luna smiled at the Sweeping Blade team's leader and pointed her swords at him. "You, I will deal with myself."

Luna launched herself at him with a speed far beyond anything that she had displayed before while the Oath Breakers engaged the other cultivators in a flurry of blades that was quickly overwhelming the entire Sweeping Blade team.

"We should get to work, or there won't be anything to do. Everyone pick a demon and assist." Penny instructed the others, then transformed into her oversized wolf and leaped to the far right to assist one of the Oath Breakers.

The spectacle had the crowd on their feet as the gallant-looking fighters of the Sweeping Blade desperately fought off the advances of the Oath Breakers, their blades a blur of steel and red energy fields. They weren't winning the fight, but in the battle of public opinion, they were possibly the biggest winners of the tournament.

Every young Cultivator in the arena wanted to be them at that moment, valiantly fighting off real demons and not just doing their best not to get bullied by other disciples. The Sweeping Blade Disciples were faster than the Oath Breakers, who had been summoned at Legendary Quality, making up for their lack of extra limbs.

Once the other Forbidden Treasure Disciples joined the battle, the Sweeping Blade cultivators all switched to dual blades, deflecting claws, fire, and energy attacks while trying not to get decapitated by the Oath Breakers.

To Cain's experienced eyes, it was clear that the Demons were toying with them. With all the bonuses from Luna's gear and skills, a single Legendary Oath Breaker was more than a match for most Mythic Awakened transfers in raw speed. The gap between their base speed and a human was too large.

It did give the girls a chance to show off, though, coordinating with the demons and forcing the Sweeping Blade onto the full defensive while Luna dueled their leader.

"Do you like the surprise that I prepared for you?" Luna chuckled as the Sweeping Blade team leader disengaged, jumping fifteen meters back across the arena.

"You should have made more of them. I've got you now." He answered with a smirk, and the air around Luna filled with energy, which rapidly turned into a mist of sharp-edged red rose petals, cutting into her skin and shredding her dress.

Luna shadow stepped and appeared behind him, going for the kidneys again. He had seen that trick before though, and his blade knocked hers wide, making Luna duck and roll to avoid his counterattack.

They didn't spare any more breath for words as they clashed blades again, two Spirit Awakened fighters going all out with twin blades.

The echo of the multiple fights rang through the entire city, making everyone who couldn't get into the arena wonder what sort of epic battle had broken out among the junior disciples today.

The Sweeping Blade leader landed a kick on Luna that threw her across the arena, then flashed after her, intending to finish this duel before she could land.

He only realized his mistake once he was in the air, flying in her direction. The new blowgun appeared in Luna's hands, and a barrage of Fireballs, moving at the speed of a lightning attack, burst forth in a blur of red light.

Every attack he blocked exploded and pulled him to the point of impact, dragging him around in the air for nearly three seconds while Mystic fires burned all around him.

When the flames died, the scorched and battered fighter landed in the sand on one knee, then rolled hard to the side to avoid Luna's downward strikes.

He clearly couldn't take much more, and the burns had slowed him significantly, letting strike after strike sneak past his guard until, with a brilliant flourish, an upward strike tore his tunic from his groin to his throat, and he was ejected in a flash of light.



Two of his teammates had already fallen, and the others went only a few seconds later, their evasion attempts having burnt through their entire energy reserve as the Sweeping Blade team desperately waited for their leader to win and turn the tables in the match.

"So, the summoner is only the little one. Well, the little one who isn't a monk. I look forward to seeing you in the finals." An Elder called up to Cain as the disciples next to him went down to fight the final match of the semifinals.

"Best of luck to you. I will bring snacks for the match." Cain told the man politely.

"Master of the Dao of Trash Talk." Elder Ling muttered as the girls wearily returned to Cain for their head pats and to beg for another slice of that cake. They needed all the energy they could get after that fight, the Sweeping Blade fighters had been well over a hundred levels higher than most of them, and even with the Oath Breakers, they had a hard time getting the finishing strikes in.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 614 614 Finals

The Elder who had promised to see Cain in the finals had every right to be confident. His Holy Guardian Sect was a multiple-time champion, not only in the Outer Sect but in the Inner Sect and Core Power divisions as well. In their earlier battles, they had seemed relatively evenly matched, but once they took the floor in the Semifinals, they started to go all out, lighting up the arena with holy power and crushing their opponents in under a minute.

They were also one of the few truly mixed Sects in the area, and most of their disciples were the children of the previous generation, with an emphasis on their most accomplished Elders and Core Disciples finding partners among each other to make an even more powerful generation in the future.

It seemed to be working out for them, and these Disciples were head and shoulders above the competition, despite most of them still being in their late teens and not close to the twenty-five-year age limit.

"Do you think your disciples are up for that?" The violet-eyed cultivator asked Cain, though his look and tone didn't express any concern about the battle.

"I have it on good authority that the world loves a good upset. It keeps life interesting. On that note, will each of you ladies please take a copy of this tome?" Cain suggested, handing them all an identical book.

[Life Link] Rank S. Usable by all classes. Links the health of all party members with this skill into a single pool.

The black-robed cultivator seemed to know what Cain was doing, or perhaps he could read Ancient and simply read the cover. Cain searched his appearance to see if he was going to out him for unscrupulous techniques, but the man only winked at him and returned to watching the crews clean up the arena.

There was a long gap now before the finale, so the spectators were preparing to have dinner. However, nobody was leaving their seats, knowing that getting out and then back into the arena was essentially impossible.

"I have stew for everyone. Do we have a flat spot where I can set up the cauldron?" Cain asked, looking around the packed stands.

"The landing of the stairs should do. Unless the cauldron is over two meters wide." Elder Ling suggested.

That was a perfect idea, and Cain began to set up the pot, throwing ingredients into it, then spices and water, and finally sealing the lid on the huge pressure cooker.

"Give it half an hour tops, and it will be ready to go," Cain informed them, lighting a magical fire under the pot while the rest of the people around them prepared sandwiches and travel-friendly meals.

The whole stadium snacked and chatted as they waited, though some chose to meditate, and the participants themselves were intensely focused on regaining their energy before the match.

The pressure cooker's whistling stopped with a hiss as Cain opened the pot, producing a stack of bowls for his disciples. "Ladies, get something to eat. It will help with your energy levels."

The aroma of fresh stew wafted over the crowd, and everyone from the spectators to the judges and the vendors selling various street foods gave the Forbidden Treasure Sect envious looks.

Cain handed out the first round to his disciples and the Lotus Blossom Sect, then prepared another set of bowls and put them in his inventory in case the disciples wanted seconds and called to the crowd.

"I made twenty gallons of stew. Anyone who has a bowl is welcome to join us for dinner."

His words nearly caused a stampede as the disciples from the ascetic Sects, who viewed food as a basic necessity to be made as simple as possible, rushed to get some decent stew.

"You really know how to make friends, don't you?" Elder Ling asked with a motherly smile for the hungry crowds.

"It works every time. I don't know why more Sects don't start doing the same. Adding Magical Beast Meat and medicinal herbs can not only make it taste better, but it is a way to build power all by itself." Cain shrugged.

It might only be one single experience point for him, but for lower-level sorts, the Mythic Beast Meat would make a huge difference. It wasn't unknown for some basic classes to get almost as much experience from a high-level meal as from a single monster kill.

"I promise it's not poisoned if you're hungry." Cain offered the Holy Guardians, who were eating plain bread with cheese and water.

"A carefully managed diet regulates the mind and body, as well as pleasing the Gods." The Elder responded, shaking his head in denial.

"As you wish. I wouldn't want to give anyone a stomach ache from unfamiliar food before a crucial match. It would reflect horribly on the character of my Disciples after all." Cain agreed.

Ten minutes before the appointed time, and late enough that everyone had time to eat and have a nap or meditate to restore their energy, the announcer returned to the stage.

[Welcome everyone to the finals of the Outer Sect challenge. In a historic first, both teams are still at full strength for this final match, so they have the full choice of their teams to face off against each other.

You all know who they are, the Holy Guardians Sect from the Light Mountain, and the Forbidden Treasures Sect, who we are informed arrived with the Lotus Blossom Sect as friends.

As of this moment, betting is closed, and the arena will be sealed to prevent any outside interference. I expect to see all participants give their very best in this match. No holding back out of consideration for your opponents.

Now, will the selected teams please proceed to the center of the arena?]

The announcer finished his speech, and the two groups of five made their way to the floor to face off against each other.

"Have we got this?" Penny whispered to Luna.

"One hundred percent. Wait and see." Luna whispered back with a wink.

While they ate, she had pulled a Seraphim Inquisitor into Merger with her for the one skill that only it could offer.

Seraphim Inquisitor Class Skill: [Repent, Blasphemer] The Inquisitor is the embodiment of the will of the Divine and is therefore immune to Holy Power-based damage.

If the Holy Guardians thought that they could ambush her and make the summons disappear with an early match group attack, they were in for a nasty surprise.

[Doesn't this feel a bit dishonest? Like we're cheating. Even Oath Breaker is a bit embarrassed by your shamelessness.] The inquisitor asked in her mind.

[Shush you. All is fair in love and war. Or do you want me to summon Seraphim into the arena and cause a huge spectacle? That's what I thought. I guess we are sticking with Oath Breaker.] Luna replied while the Demon chuckled at her antics.

[You're even worse than your father.] The Seraphim complained but didn't try to annoy Luna any further, secretly eager to see these humans who dared to use Holy Power against its vessel punished.

"Same plan as last time, only this time, I will go all out. Penny, we will need all your friends again." Luna informed the group, then prepared to Summon her secret weapon. A full squad of three dozen Lamia Scourge Casters at Spirit Rank, along with the four copies of Oath Breaker.

She would call the Lamia first to cause chaos and then the greater Demons to take advantage of the situation. If she did it right, the Holy Guardians would never know what hit them. This time, there would be no lower-grade summons. She would use [Versatility] every time and then apply it to the Dark Elven Combat Techniques for the ensuing battle so that she could eliminate her opponents more efficiently.

There was no taunting, only grim determination from both sides as the referee checked them all for hidden injuries or active enchantments that would disqualify them from the competition.

[Both teams ready? Good. Begin.] He announced and flew up to his usual spot above the center of the arena.

Luna had been exactly right about their attentions, and the entire Holy Guardian team bombarded her with Divine Strike skills while she summoned her Lamia.

Cain began to laugh at the appearance of the Lamia, who had taken the Holy Guardians by surprise, appearing right between them and lashing out with their energy blades before wrapping the cultivators up.

"Damnable Demon Cultivators." the Elder from the Holy Guardians muttered as his team fought to avoid being incapacitated by the slender serpentine bodies of the Scourge Casters. Most of their ankles were wrapped, and the Scourge casters were happily grabbing anything they could while they slashed away at their victims with their short swords.

One after another, the Lamia were killed, and their bodies vanished, but the Forbidden Treasure Sect had closed the distance, leaving only Sabbath standing behind Luna and throwing flames at every male body she could see.

This, unfortunately, entirely missed two of the Holy Guardian team members, but since it was increasing the number of attacks on the others, nobody bothered to call her on it.

"Position Seven," The leader called, and every Holy Guardian member who could move shifted into a back-to-back circle and then lashed out with a combined Holy Light that enveloped the entire ring, wiping out most of the Scourge Casters in a single strike.

It clearly took a lot out of them, but in seconds they had made a full circle and were prepared for an attack from any angle, with one member inside the main encirclement, watching the others' backs.

That was the one that Oath Breaker went for first, distracting the others for a split second while the Forbidden Treasure Sect engaged again, with Sabbath bathing the enemy in flames, knowing that Oath Breaker wouldn't take damage as a friendly target.

"Why aren't they going down? The summons can't have taken all the damage." The Elder from the Holy Guardians mumbled, then looked to Cain, who was trying and failing to hide his amusement.

[Repent, Blasphemer] Didn't work on the summons, but the girls themselves hadn't taken more than a single point of Holy Damage, as it was all negated by the skill thanks to the life link. The skill kept pouring the damage into Luna to even the damage distribution out, but in the end, everyone else took one point of damage, and she took zero.

"You look confused. The simple truth is that cuteness is Justice. The will of the divine won't affect disciples so utterly lovely." Cain informed him with the most serious look he could muster.

"Aye, and my mother is a Holy Divinity. I think you gave them a limited-time immunity ability to activate after the battle started. How long is it? One minute? Five minutes?" The Elder asked, but Cain only looked away to the match, where the battle had gotten intense, with Oath Breaker being summoned in and all four Clones going for the Holy Guardians.

While the demons did their best to hold them back, the cultivators went for the Forbidden Treasure disciples, finding that while their attacks didn't work as well as they expected, they were at least doing damage and leaving wounds.

"Position eighty-six." The leader of the Holy Guardians called, and all five fighters took a knee with their shields over their heads.

Red light filled the arena and exploded outward, momentarily blinding all the spectators.

"Blood Magic, is it? Well, that should get around the restriction." The violet-eyed man muttered as four white flashes appeared, leaving only Luna standing and all of the Holy Guardians barely conscious, drained by the sacrifice to power the skill.

Her hit points were under five percent, and her mana was not much better, but she was still in better shape than anyone else. The others on her team were all out of mana and saved with only a single HP left, while the Holy Guardians were out of energy and at five percent health.

[Holy Light] Luna muttered, calling on the skills of the Seraphim Inquisitor to heal herself and damage her enemies.

The spell hid the light of the protective bubbles that removed the Holy Guardians, and the crowd's vision cleared to show only a battered Luna in a nearly shredded dress standing in the ring, with nine combatants sitting in front of the medical bay.

[Winner! The Forbidden Treasure Sect has defeated the Holy Guardians in the most remarkable upset that I have ever seen.] The announcer called, flying into the ring as an exhausted Luna collapsed to the ground and straight into sleep, too tired from mana exhaustion to care that she had won the fight.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 615 615

As soon as the match was called, Cain leaped down into the ring to pick up Luna and make sure that she was alright.

As soon as he found her snoring peacefully in the sand, stretched out the same way she usually did in bed, Cain picked Luna up and went to check on everyone else.

Since they were outside of the ring for [Holy Light], they were still in rough shape, but Penny had recovered enough mana to cast a minor area healing spell, bringing both them and the eliminated fighters of the Holy Guardians slowly back up in health.

They looked rough, but they weren't in danger of dying to a soft touch anymore, which was a bit of a relief.

"Ladies, are you alright? Cain asked before handing them all a glass of Mythic Fruit juice to speed their recovery.

"As good as can be expected. What was the verdict? Did the fight end in a draw? Luna didn't get pulled out to safety." Penny asked.

"Luna got the final blow of the battle after the combined effort of the Holy Guardians failed to eliminate her. We took the victory in the Outer Disciple Category competition."

The disciples all shared a weary but relieved look, then stared dubiously at the arena.

"They're going to expect a speech or something, aren't they?" Sabbath sighed.

"Normally, yes. The victors are usually gathered in the arena with their Sect, cheering and celebrating the overall victory, then there is a speech by the Elder and the competitors, telling everyone how glad they are for the honor and how amazing the competition was." The healing station attendant informed them.

"Most fights don't end in such a brutal and bloody manner. You boys risked a lot, including permanent damage, to use that ability." The elder of the Holy Guardians admonished his team, marching in with the five reserve fighters behind him, all looking suitably chastised, despite the fact that they hadn't been involved in the fight.

"We're sorry Elder." They responded in unison.

"You should be. Nothing is more important at your level than your cultivation. Until you have eternity to work with, you must progress or die. Now, there will be celebrations for coming in second, but I want you to keep that in mind until we return to the Sect."

The Elder certainly wasn't going easy on his team, but if the skill they used was as dangerous as it looked, very nearly killing both the targets and the ones using it, he was absolutely right.

"Yes, Elder. We're sorry Elder." They replied again, but the Elder didn't look convinced, and he certainly didn't look moved enough to let them get away without punishment.

"I will go give a speech as Elder of the second place Sect. It will give your team a few minutes to get themselves in order. They should likely change robes as well. Everyone



seems to think the ladies need to show more decorum than the rest of us." The Elder told Cain with a wink and then lived to the ring to begin his speech.

Cain moved everyone into the medical tent and had them unequip their gear to wash and then put their Sect dresses back on, leaving them looking clean and undamaged.

As the Elder of the Holy Light Sect finished his speech, the team came out to take a bow, showing their gratitude to the audience for all the cheering, before they retreated back to the medical tents to finish recovering.

That was Cain's cue to head back out and say something.

The crowd took to their feet, giving the Forbidden Treasure Sect a standing ovation as they entered the arena, looking as fresh as if they had just gotten dressed for the day and smiling at the spectators.

"Thank you all. The Forbidden Treasure Sect has been on a quest for new experiences, and it has been an honor to participate with all of the excellent Sects from the Mountain Region. I know many of you were taken by surprise by the variety of our tactics, and I acknowledge that it is the strength of our Sect, but I do hope there are no hard feelings and that everyone who was put out can take it as a learning experience for facing unknown opponents.

Now, I will get my old face out of the way and let the disciples speak." Cain informed them, turning the cheering to laughter.

The others pushed Luna forward, and as the last one standing in the fight, they decided that she got to make the speech. Plus, they all knew that she lacked both a filter and common sense, so her speech was likely going to be much more entertaining than anything that they could have come up with.

"It's kind of awesome to get so much love from an audience, isn't it? If there wasn't so much to do, I would definitely bug the Sect Leader to take us to these things more often.

The fights were much closer than many of you might think. It just took a while for others to discover the secret behind the technique, so don't underestimate the Disciples that we faced in this tournament. They are all excellent and promising cultivators with a bright future ahead of them." Luna said, then stepped back, proud of her speech.

The announcer flew down to talk to her since the other disciples had made her the spokesperson for the team.

"Miss Luna, what excites you most about the grand prize for winning the tournament?"

Luna's eyes lit up with joy, and the other Disciples hid their laughter. Clearly, Luna hadn't realized that there was a prize for winning, or she might not have held back at all.

"Is it food? Something sweet? Maybe, Candy? I love candy." Luna asked, grabbing the announcer so he couldn't escape without telling her.

"There she is," Penny whispered, while Sabbath hid her face in Penny's side so the audience couldn't see that she was laughing so hard she was crying.

"Well, uh, I suppose some of the prizes are edible? There isn't any candy, though. There are a wide variety of cultivation materials, as well as a sum of gold coins for the winning Sect." The announcer stammered while the audience joined in on the laughter of the other disciples.

"So there is Candy. We just need to beg the Sect Master to buy it with the prize money." Luna declared happily while the announcer just shook his head.

"I guess a small traveling sect doesn't have the same concerns as the disciples of the larger Sects. The prize will make for an excellent award for such a small group. You are a very lucky Disciple, Miss Luna. Now, I think we should let the crowd ask a few questions, shouldn't we?" The announcer asked.

"Well, I suppose. I think some of them are more eager to get to the casino to claim their prize tickets though." Luna laughed, stopping a few of the first to try to escape the arena to claim their winnings.

"Miss Luna, where did you learn the appearance of Oath Breaker to summon a clone of him into battle? That isn't common knowledge." One of the Elders in the front row called.

His hood was up, and Luna could see his glowing red eyes, so he either wasn't human, or he was one of the Evil Cultivators she had heard about that gained power in any way possible.

"Oh, you knew who he was? Sect Master Cain met him in battle once upon a time, and he showed me." Luna explained.

"So the Sect Master can use that same technique?" Another Elder from the same group asked.

"Of course, if he couldn't, how could he teach it? It's a really good one. I just wish that more people could use it." Luna informed him.

"Miss Penny, is your transformation a blessing from the Moon Goddess?" A cultivator with golden eyes, marking him as a Lycan, questioned.

"It is actually a learned technique, not a holy blessing. The Moon Goddess has smiled on me, though, and blessed me with a variety of nature skills." Penny told him, and the Elder Lycan looked even more excited than he was before.

Healing Skills were very uncommon but not unheard of among the Lycans, who had their own Goddess, apart from the Human Gods that the rest of this world strived to emulate.

After that, so many requests were shouted at once that nobody in the ring could understand anything that they were saying. It wasn't until the Announcer shushed them that they were finally able to get another proper question in.

"Alright, let's wrap this up before the little one starts gnawing on my leg for not providing candy in the reward. How about you, in the top row with violet eyes? What is your question for the group?" The announcer called.

"I will send this one to the Sect Master. As a Rune Master and Spirit Inscriptionist, when will you be holding a symposium for the city to hear?" The amusement on the face of the man in black priest's robes was clear even from this far away, and Cain sighed.

There would be no escaping the city without doing something useful now. The question was, how much should he teach them, and what would he even want in trade for his work since he could make better stuff than most of these cultivators could offer him?

"The ladies will be recovering in the camp of the Lotus Blossom Sect tomorrow, so I will come to the city and hold some sort of lesson, though I haven't decided on what topic yet. Most of you can read, so Skill Book Inscription might be a bit dull, and teaching Rune Magic isn't something you can do in a single lesson. I could hold a meeting for the weaponsmiths, I suppose? I know a few things about crafting Mythic Weapons." Cain suggested, and the crowd fell silent in shock.

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## **Chapter 616 616 Professor Cain**

There was no way that Cain could escape the arena without more questions after that revelation, no matter what the announcer had said about it being the last question.

"You can use Runecrafting?" Someone in front shouted, breaking the stunned silence.

"Yes, and you've all seen it in action. The blow gun Luna used was made in public, in the bleachers. At least a dozen Elders were present and can confirm my words." Cain informed him.

"If you can copy Mythic Rank skill books, does that mean you can read the Ancient magical language as well?" An old woman whose hunched posture was in direct opposition to the sense of power coming off of her.

"Yes, the one who taught me all I know saw fit to teach me," Cain replied, ignoring the faint laughter in his mind.

"This venerable Elder, was it a human?" The old woman asked suspiciously.

"Yes, a human man with a Divine level of power and a very long history, from what I understand." Cain agreed.

The Creators were still not on good terms with the human gods from this world, but Cain thought he should be safe giving away that much knowledge.

It wasn't like the woman was likely to make the logical leap from a random guy with strange skills to the Laughing God, who wasn't even from this world.

There was a lot of speculation about who it could be, but no consensus until finally, they started with more questions.

"Can you stay this evening and teach us a few things about Inscription? I see that your disciples don't use Talismans, so are they wearing inscribed armor?" An Elder in a leather apron asked.

"In fact, they are. We could spend a few hours discussing magical item creation if you like. I have some theories that a master such as yourself should be able to implement."

That was all it took to get the weapons makers worked up, and the other Elders realized that they would have to wait to learn anything.

"How about you come to the space we have reserved? We have forges and room for an audience." A long-bearded Elder in a leather apron requested.

If he were just a bit shorter, Cain would have thought it was one of the Mountain Dwarves, but at 160cm, he was definitely too tall, and he hadn't heard of half Dwarves before, no matter how much this man resembled one.

Perhaps they only weren't a thing due to the insular nature of his world's dwarves and the human's lack of prodigious beards killing their attractiveness in the eyes of the Stout Folk?

"Ladies, why don't you follow the Lotus Blossom Sect back to camp, and you can relax all you want tonight and then all day tomorrow? Just stay in the camp where you are safe since it looks like I will be busy." Cain told his disciples.

"Not a problem, Master Cain. But we're keeping Luna with us. Not that we don't trust you, but you know." Penny told him.

"I'm never going to live that one down am I? It was a minor oversight." Cain sighed, then waved for them all to go back to where the Elder and the others were waiting to congratulate them.

Getting out of the arena was not a quick process, despite the size of Cain's newfound entourage. There were simply too many people packed in for the finals to be able to move anyone anywhere in a hurry. The organizers had even brought in bards to narrate the fight for the people outside who couldn't get into the arena to see the matches, so the streets were packed.

"Elder Cain, will you be doing a symposium on Inscription later? Many of us are greatly interested in seeing how a Mythic skill manuscript can be accurately copied without the wards causing essential errors in the translations." Someone called as Cain's group was near the exit doors.

"Copied? Why would you try to copy them manually? You create Mythic Skill books from your memory of skills that you have mastered. Each one is a unique new creation." Cain replied.

"So you're saying that you can't do skills that you don't know? Or that it isn't possible?" The man questioned quickly before the group moved out of earshot.

"You can do ones that you don't know, but that's a whole other technique than simply creating a Mythic Manuscript," Cain replied vaguely, smiling at the stranger, who was now thoroughly perplexed by the answers that Cain had given.

Attempting to copy advanced skill books was the normal way to do them, but the inscriptionists of this world didn't know about the requirements for materials in the ink, so they inevitably failed the attempt every single time, and the book came out with various levels of errors.

Skill books were more than simple words. There was a Mystic quality to them that prevented those with minds too weak or unsuitable for the skill from understanding them. For Cain's disciples, that meant class restriction. For the people here, it was all about affinities with their cultivation techniques.

Unfortunately for them, they didn't have the System on their side, so they couldn't just use the book and absorb the knowledge it contained. They had to read, understand and apply what it taught. They had it much harder than those with the System did.

Once they were out of the arena, nobody recognized Cain anymore, and they began to make much better progress among the rapidly dispersing crowd. Many would stay to

celebrate, and the lines to cash Casino bets were long ones, but the majority of the flow was away from the stadium, exactly the way that Cain wanted to go.

Their final destination was a large warehouse that had been repurposed into a smithy, with six makeshift chimneys extending from the roof and fans blowing waves of scorching heat out of the building.

"Could you not get the forge hot enough, so you had to trap the heat in a building?" Cain sighed, making the smiths chuckle.

"It was all that we could find. They get a proper winter here, so there were no pole buildings without side walls anywhere in the city. It shouldn't be too bad inside." The Smith shrugged.

"It shouldn't be worse than the forges of Graska anyhow. They turned an entire mountain into a smithy, and the forge area is truly sweltering, unfit for human habitation." Cain replied, earning some confused looks.

"I ended up coming through a one-way portal to this world. Graska is a city in my homeworld." Cain explained.

"They sound like a good sort. A whole mountain dedicated to forge fires sounds like the sort of place that I would enjoy living." The smith who had invited Cain agreed, making his braided beard wiggle with every word.

"Now, I will need at least three smiths, with their assistants, to show this and have everyone understand. For the demonstration, it is easier if I explain, and you smith, while I clarify for the audience."

The smiths rapidly rearranged the seating and set up three anvils around one of the forges in the middle of the room, giving the maximum number of people a good view of the proceedings.

Alright, Elder Cain, we are ready to go. What are we making? I've got a good collection of materials." The smith asked.

"We can start with Epic or Legendary Mystic Item symbology if you like. That should appeal to a large number of viewers and not confuse too many of them."

The smith thought for a moment and looked over the crowd. "I don't think there is an Elder here under two hundred years, so I think that Legendary Symbology would be for the best. They should all be able to reliably create Epic quality items by now."

That made the crowd chuckle. They wouldn't have shown up for this lecture if they didn't at least understand the theories and practices needed to make Epic items. That was the

standard that most decent Sects could expect their smithy to produce for their Inner and Core Disciples to earn from the Sect's storage.

"If they can create Epic, it's not that far to Legendary, only a few extra steps and a small change of runes to concentrate power. Why don't we skip straight to the fun part? Pick two more who have some experience with Mythic weapons, and I will give a short lecture on the fundamental transformation between a Legendary weapon and an Awakened one."

The Smith's smile threatened to split his face at Cain's words, and he took out a small green token, then broke it and nodded.

"I have called for better Elders to follow your directions more accurately. It should help the symposium be understood if the assistants performing the techniques that you are describing don't fail."

Cain chuckled. "I imagine Smithy symposiums are usually very loud but not big on words. Smithing takes concentration, and you can't break it to tell people what you are doing every few minutes. The metal doesn't like that."

"Spoken like a true Smith." An elderly voice from the crowd informed Cain as a man who was almost certainly a Dwarf approached.

"We are here to assist. Rest assured, each of us has created a Mythic Weapon in the past. If your technique is true, we won't fail you." The dwarf assured Cain, gesturing to a pair of equally elderly men behind him.

"Perfect, let's get started then. The item I will be using to demonstrate for everyone today is Stonebreaker, a one-handed Maul of Mythic Renown. Gentlemen, I have prepared written directions for you."

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 617 617

Smiths, in Cain's world, could use these recipes to accurately create items with reasonable success if their skill was high enough, not as a System Function that consumed them to grant knowledge, so Cain had high hopes that this would work.

The copies were from the Smiths asking the Inscriptionists to practice creating recipes for them, and Cain had a load of them in his inventory that he never got around to dropping off at the farm. He had given them some copies, but he hadn't left the rest



behind because, until the last few days of his time in the other world, he had assumed that he would be returning soon and didn't need to fill warehouses with random items he had packed into his inventory for the Guild.

"Is this what it looks like?" The old dwarf asked with great reverence.

"It's the recipe that we will be creating today so that I can teach the others the essentials of Mythic Weapon creation. It might not be the most powerful combat item, but I'm told that the Stout Folk of the Mountains get a real hard-on over Stonebreaker since it will split any rock with ease." Cain agreed.

"So, we need black gold, granite, a bit of Mythril, and enough silver for a handle," Cain explained to the Smith, who seemed to be in charge of the building.

"That's it?"

"I picked the easiest recipe possible to show off the technique, not the depth of your pockets. I can pick out something made of pure Mythril and Divine Steel if you like." Cain joked while the room shuddered at the astronomical cost of such an item.

It only took a few seconds for the Elders to produce the required materials from their storage items, and the forges were brought up to temperature.

"For this item, the stone needs to be carefully carved into the correct shapes, then inserted into the black gold that makes up the remainder of the head of the Maul. That is what they are starting with now." Cain explained as the smiths started carving while the materials heated.

Premade Molds for the handles were brought over, making it easier to form the base shape of the silver handles, while the black gold would need time to heat, thanks to the high density of energy stored in the materials.

"Now that they have the stones carved and set into position, the black gold will need to be worked into a lattice to create the desired head shape, as well as the first few characters of the inscription. You can see the smiths binding the stones into a brick shape now, with a hollow for the handle.

Then they will check their work and shape the outer shell of the Maul, setting the lattice and stones inside, then closing it from the bottom, careful not to damage their hard work."

The smiths sat patiently, asking Cain a few random questions about the process as the three Elders worked for the next two hours, sweating in the heat of the forge but fully concentrated on their work.

"Every step of the way requires constant energy infusion. If there are any interruptions, they will have to start over, and now that the heads are created, they can start with the inscriptions. Notice how the order and exact positioning matters as much as the change in the nature of the energy that they are introducing. That is the difference between a Legendary Item and a Mythic one."

Mostly the smiths simply watched the incredible show as the three Immortal Rank Dwarves pounded, bent, carved, and lovingly caressed the weapons into shape.

The head was placed on the mold for the handles, and the silver was poured into the void of the internals, filling the Maul and creating the handle as an integral part of the weapon. Then, while the metal was still nearly molten, it was held in place with their energy, and the mold was removed to let them create the inscriptions on the handle and continue refining the energy in the weapons.

As the final runes were placed on the base of the handle and a large amount of energy poured from the Smiths into the newly formed Stonebreakers, a light blue light began to shine from the weapons. A single drop of blood was pulled from the hands of each smith by their creation, and the light turned to a rusted red, then settled in, turning the inscriptions on the Maul to an earthy brown on the black and silver of the metal.

"Three for three. Excellent work, gentlemen. Anyone who inspects this weapon and knows you personally will be able to identify you as the creator. Your aura will forever be a part of any Mythic Weapons that you create. It is essential to the process."

The room considered Cain's words for a while as they absorbed the techniques that they had seen displayed by the master craftsmen at his direction.

"Like that, it seems like anyone could create a Mythic weapon." One of the smiths in the audience mumbled.

"Don't scold him. He is right. With enough energy and enough control, any smith can learn to create a Mythic weapon. You might cry if you asked these mighty elders how long it took to earn that level of mastery over their craft, though." Cain chuckled.

"Bah, most of them will be Immortals sooner or later. They have all the centuries that they need. But you know the secret to Spirit Weapons as well, don't you? I could almost feel it as we finished making Stonebreaker." The Elder Dwarf mumbled, annoyed at his lack of breakthrough.

"I will tell you later, in private. I have never managed it myself, but I have at least read the theory." Cain agreed.

What it needed was Spirit Grade Materials compatible with holding a soul. Either a small bit of yours that would heal in a few weeks or the soul of another, to shift a Mythic

Weapon into the Spirit Realm. That was why Rune Crafting was far superior at the higher levels. It didn't have the insane requirements.

Spirit Grade weapons also had a habit of taking on a personality of their own if given enough time. Like Oath Breaker merged with Cain, they would whisper in their wielder's mind, giving them suggestions suitable to the personality of the weapon.

The books in the Library said that many were driven insane by wielding weapons too powerful for their minds and taken over by the soul inside them, but Cain didn't see the big deal. There were voices in his head constantly, and he was still perfectly sane.

Oath Breaker laughed a little at that thought, but Cain shushed him, not willing to take criticism from the Demon at the moment.

"How can we tell that those are actually Mythic Weapons?" Someone in the crowd asked.

"You might have to ask really nicely to get the smiths to let go of them, but the moment that you hold them and activate them with a bit of energy, you will know instantly that they are indeed Mythic Grade weapons.

No, wait. I have a better idea."

Cain summoned a single Mythic Grade Granite Golem outside the forge building.

"I think we can all agree that is a Mythic Granite Golem. I have ordered it to stand still. Go ahead and take a whack with Stonebreaker." Cain instructed.

That somehow seemed like the best bad idea that anyone could have come up with, but if the weapon actually activated its effect against the Golem, there was no doubt that they were on the same level, even though the weapon didn't give off an aura like a living being when it wasn't being wielded.

The oldest Dwarf gave the leader of the Smithy his hammer and pointed to the Golem. "Well, what are you waiting for, boy? They don't trust my word, so you go smash that thing and tell me if the weapon is Mythic."

Cain smirked at the caution since the old Dwarf was assuming his disciple was about to get punched in the face by an angry golem, but the smith stepped forward steadily, taking a shield in his offhand and pouring in energy to activate Stonebreaker.

With the enchantments active, anyone nearby could feel the power of the weapon, and the smith's blow landed true, shattering the lower leg of the Granite Golem and toppling it over, taking out the end wall of the smithy.

From the smirk on the Dwarf's face, he knew that was going to happen and wasn't afraid of being hit. He simply didn't want to be responsible for the property damage.

The commotion had brought dozens of armed guards to the site, thinking that someone was under attack and ready to do their duty and break up the battle before anyone was seriously injured. Cain dismissed the granite golem, leaving the smith standing in a pile of stone rubble with the newly created Mythic hammer in his hand.

"I, um, it's not what it looks like. We were just testing Stonebreaker on a summoned Golem, and it worked, and the Golem lost a leg, which dropped it on the building." The smith tried to explain as the guards looked around for his opponent.

"It looks more to me like you tested your new weapon on the building. But I can't deny that it worked. Good job. Now, please come with me. There is a lot of paperwork for you to fill out now that you've collapsed half a building into the street." The leader of the guard team chastised him while the old Dwarf sneakily took his Stonebreaker back.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

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"Well, we can't deny the power of those hammers now." The Dwarven Master Smith chuckled as his disciple was led away by the city guard.

"You can keep those recipes if you like. I have another copy with me, and you already know how to make the item now, so there really isn't a good reason to take them away from you." Cain told the three old men, whose faces lit up with pure joy at the news.

"That is much easier than trying to inscribe a new copy ourselves. But I will replace them for you. You never know when you might want to do this again, and it will be easier if we return your originals." One of the Smiths informed Cain.

"We have questions. So many questions." An audience member demanded as they moved to surround the group of four who had participated in the demonstration.

"When you carve the stones, does the exact size matter? I would like to make a two-handed version, with a longer hilt, as it would fit the fighting style of my sect better." A man in dark brown robes asked.

"Boyo, who are you planning to give it to?" The oldest of the smiths asked, then handed him the Stonebreaker that had been used to take down the golem.

"Bah, I forgot that you've got freaky midget strength. Who is supposed to use this thing anyhow?" The man muttered when he realized that the existing version weighed upward of ten kilograms.

"Physical cultivators, Immortals, you know, the usual sort of people who would have a Mythic Hammer. It's not like anyone would just give it to a weakling or a rookie." Cain shrugged.

"Even if it weren't a Mythic weapon, I wouldn't want to get hit with that thing." Another cultivator agreed, now that he knew how heavy it was.

"But I second his question. Can we extend the handle?" another man asked.

"I don't see why not. It's just a matter of the mold that you use. The runes end before the grip, so just don't change that and extend the bottom with the same rune to cap it off, and it should work just fine." Cain decided after looking over the interactions between the enchantments.

It would take a lot of luck for them to make a copy just from watching since this world didn't have anything resembling a video camera, so Cain wasn't too worried about the weapon spreading too far. It should help them in their attempts to make other, similar high-quality weapons though.

"Do you have time to come to an inscription symposium? There is an Elder from another sect holding one now, and none of us have the status to call him out on what is clearly false information since we can't copy an advanced manuscript accurately, so there is no solid proof." A female voice called from the back ranks of the assembled crowd.

"You want me to start troubles by calling out another Sect's Elder? Hard pass." Cain replied.

"Could you perhaps hold a symposium of your own on the topic after he finishes? Just showing people how to do it right would do the same thing, and there are dozens of other Inscription symposiums going on." She suggested.

"Fine, but not in the same location. Find me a spot to set up, and I will show people how to manipulate energy to copy a manuscript." Cain agreed.

With Spell Crafting, that was a simple thing to do, especially since these people got so excited over even the simplest of techniques if you gave them a complete manuscript.

"I know just the place. There is an Inn here, where a few Young Masters have set up, as well as the Holy Guardian Sect. They don't bear any ill will after your Disciples won the

fight, don't worry, and it's a large open area with a gazebo that is used for plays when the city isn't as busy." The woman suggested.

"We will follow you there. Manuscripts and Recipes are very similar in some ways, especially the fact that they will not copy properly for those without sufficient skill." One of the old smiths informed them, gesturing for the young lady to lead the way.

Just around the corner, there were two Elders from her sect, waiting patiently with pleased smiles on their faces.

"I told you that it would work. When the pretty one asks, people listen better than when a cranky old man asks." One of the Elders chuckled to the other.

"Bah, he would have done it anyhow. Now get out of the way. It looks like he's bringing a crowd." The other Elder replied, leading the way to the symposium area.

There were a large number of other Inscriptionist and Enchanting displays and vendors set up in this part of town once they got away from the smithy region, and the smell of paper and ink quickly replaced the smell of burning coal and hot iron.

The area that they had mentioned looked more like a park than anything else, and the gazebo was set up in a depression so that the audience could sit on the tiered bleachers, like an overgrown open-air theater. It was an excellent spot, even out of any wind that might pick up, thanks to the tall trees around the area, and Cain wondered what they had to do to reserve this spot for a symposium. Logically, it should be busy all day, every day.

Once Cain arrived and found a table and tools already set up for exactly this purpose, he took a seat, preparing to pick a skill to use as an example.

Something simple and with a wide utility, but filling an in-demand purpose in this world.

Since half the places he had been to didn't have running water, the answer was obvious to Cain after only a few moments' thought. [Gentle Shower] created heavy localized rainfall and was chosen by many Druids to water their gardens, though it was just as good for washing themselves.

The disciple who brought him here looked like she was quick on the uptake, so she might get the double meaning of teaching everyone a skill that would let them shower but that didn't create a concentrated enough stream to fill water containers.

Once the bleachers were mostly full, Cain stood up to greet the audience and introduce his lecture.

"Greetings, everyone. This will be a very simple introduction to the proper creation of complete skill manuscripts without introducing errors or omitting information. The skill

that I will be using today will be [Gentle Shower], and the creation allows for a pause between pages, so I will stop for a few moments if others want to follow along or ask questions." Cain informed them.

"You will allow us to follow along?" One of the Elders asked, looking incredulous.

"It might be easier for those with an affinity to water to learn the skill, but anyone with enough talent at Inscription can copy out the manuscript. I will finish the page, and my assistant will hang it overhead, so you all can read it. What you need to do is exactly replicate the way that I controlled the energy going into the manuscript and the text of the page. For professionals such as yourselves, who have much experience with talismans and such, it shouldn't be impossible." Cain replied politely.

"How long will the manuscript be?" One of the Elders asked, taking out a lap table and writing supplies.

"Six pages in total. As I said, I will make a rather easy but useful skill today."

It looked a lot like a classroom in the park when everyone had their materials out, and Cain took his seat.

"For the Smiths, watch closely as I scribe the diagrams. That part will be the most relevant to your creation of recipes," Cain informed the group who had followed him from the other site, who mostly had chalkboards out instead of paper since that's how they drew weapon diagrams in the smithy, where the magical fires might set a pencil and paper on fire.

The energy flowed smoothly from Cain into the paper, and he carefully guided it into the text, going much slower than necessary so that the others could see what he was doing.

With the first page finished, he looked up at the audience to see if there were questions.

Most of them were already busy writing, having begun the moment that the disciple who led them here had reached over to hang the quickly drying page on the rack.

What followed was a string of inventive curses and tossed balls of paper while everyone worked, but after half an hour, a large portion of the crowd had either succeeded or given up on the attempt.

"Very good, everyone. Now, I will move on through the next few pages at the same rate, and I will finish the last one at a more normal writing pace so that you can get a feeling of how it is supposed to go. By then, you should be able to follow even at a normal pace." Cain explained, then began the second page.



He was right. By the fifth page, most of the Elders present could follow along quite well, having seen the pattern, and they were beginning to understand the theory behind it, thanks to a series of detailed questions about the adjustments being made.

Cain wrote out the final page, while the Inscriptionists nodded in understanding, the faster pace showing them that it was meant to be integrated into their writing technique and not an add-on that was specific to the book.

This time there were a lot more errors since Cain hadn't shown them as slowly, but the majority of the crowd looked confident in their ability to learn the skill from the manuscripts that they had written.

"Now, there is one more very important point to clarify. Will those who are confident in their skills please bring their copies up to the front? Compare your copy to mine and to the others who used the technique to create their manuscript. Then you can stack and bind them." Cain instructed.

One after another, dozens of Inscriptionists came up, comparing their work to Cain's and the others around them, finding that they were perfect copies for the most part.

"Now that is incredible. Dozens of Sects now know your Sect secrets." Someone from the back sneered, clearly not one of the audience members who had been writing.

"Literacy isn't a Sect secret. Teaching others to write basic manuscripts is just a public service. They're not going to gain anything that my Sect can do, but they can't just because I gave them this manuscript." Cain told the man, shaking his head in annoyance at the level of ignorance displayed.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

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"And what might the manuscript do?" Someone asked from Cain's left, approaching as they asked.

"Perfect timing. Do you know the [Gentle Shower] skill?" Cain asked, sensing the aura of a water elemental specialist on the man.

"Gentle Shower? What sort of nonsense skill is that? Is it even an attack skill?" The man replied.

"Of course not. Did you think I was teaching attack skills? It's a life skill that I believe everyone should possess. Please, take my copy of the manuscript and look it over. You can judge whether it is complete and correct." Cain told him.

The Elder was intrigued by the offer and came to the table, carefully stacking the pages and producing a hardcover from his inventory, using a skill to bind the notes so they weren't damaged by handling.

Cain could have just used energy and made it an actual usable item, but that would do just as well for today's demonstration.

The man's skepticism turned to amusement as he went through the six pages, then reread them, his hand moving slowly as he traced the activation rune in the air, building muscle memory before he added energy.

The third time through, he left the book open in his left hand and held out his right, activating a surge of water element energy and creating a gentle downpour of water, like a quality showerhead in the trees outside the stadium.

"You taught everyone how to water the garden?" The Immortal chuckled, looking at the downpour and moving it between trees as the area became sodden with rainfall.

"Nay, he taught them all to wash their arse." The old Dwarven Smith replied, bursting into laughter as he realized the actual meaning of the name [Gentle Shower].

"I know a skill that makes soap as well. It might not be popular in this city since only about a third of the Sects present seem to know what it is, but I can assure you, it is incredibly popular with the ladies." Cain joked, making the smiths laugh even harder.

"Someone get me a working copy of that skill. I'm going to carve it into the corner of the smithy so it gets everyone on the way out." The old Smith told his friends quite seriously, making the others from the Blacksmithy symposium burst into laughter.

"I'm serious about the book, though. I want to carve it into the forge." The old Dwarf muttered.

The female disciple who had been hanging his notes was doing her best not to laugh, while many of the Inscriptionists gave their notes a dubious look, despite them being a perfect and intact manuscript.

"Take it to the enchanter. Tell them to learn the skill and find a way to make items with the skill inscribed on them. I want every group to have at least one before we leave." One of the female Elders told her disciples, and the others began to take the skill more seriously.

What Cain hadn't noticed was that most of the cultivators just used a sliver of energy to block their nostrils when they were in a crowded area so that they didn't have to notice the scent unless they were specifically looking for something by smell. He had just assumed that they were all used to the stench of unwashed bodies and animals crowded into a small area.

The Immortal, who had just finished learning the simple skill, handed the book back to Cain, who passed it to the old dwarf.

"I already know it. You can have the demonstration copy. Did you learn a few things that might apply to recipe making?" Cain asked.

"I think so. I will have to test it later. The others have the new copies of the recipe you gave us ready as well. It is always best to finish up a day without any debts to others." He replied, stroking his beard in satisfaction at a productive day completed.

Cain was just about to get ready to head back to the Lotus Blossom Camp when a middle-aged man, followed by a group of sycophants with irate expressions, barged into the hollow.

"Who is the one insulting my divine teachings by peddling false manuscript creation techniques?" The leader of the group demanded.

Cain looked at the disciple who had convinced him to come here and rolled his eyes at the theatrics of this man, then stepped forward.

"You will be happy to know that there have been no false manuscript creation techniques taught here today. In fact, we have dozens of successfully created [Gentle Shower] Manuscripts to verify the fact that there were no falsehoods taught.

So glad we could clear that up right away. You looked quite concerned." Cain replied with a polite bow.

The Immortal who had demonstrated the skill chuckled and took out a long pipe and a chair, choosing a prime seat and lighting the tobacco.

"Our way is the one true path to Inscription enlightenment. You are not one of our disciples, and we won't allow you to sell your fake manuscripts here." The man informed him, puffing up his chest.

He was Mythic awakened, but barely, as far as Cain could tell. His entire presence screamed weak and self-important, but there was no hint of hidden power or mystery to suggest that it was an act, like so many others put on.

"I suppose that I have a bit of spare time. If you would like to bring one of your Sect Elders, we can both create a manuscript chosen by the audience, and one of these fine

Immortals can judge the quality of our work. I don't care what skill it is. As long as it is in the Mortal Realms, I don't see a problem with using it to demonstrate." Cain suggested, and the man's face went from irate to splotchy red with rage.

"He is the Sect Elder that they sent to represent their inscriptionists." A disciple near Cain whispered.

"Oh, my fault. I have gotten so used to Elders being well above my own meager skills that I mistook you. I do hope you can forgive me.

Now, shall we pick a skill and create a manuscript so that the audience can see our skills side by side?" Cain suggested.

"Do you think that you can just insult me to my face and get away with it?" The man screamed hysterically.

"First off, we are in a sheltered hollow. There is no need to shout. Secondly, I really don't think you can do anything about it, even if I chose to slap your face. Now, would you like to hold the demonstration, or are you done here?" Cain asked.

"Fine, you want a challenge? I will show the world why we are the one true Sect of Inscriptionists. Girl, what is your Element?" The enraged man asked the Disciple, who had been working as Cain's assistant.

"I cultivate Demon Magic." The girl replied shyly, and Cain gave her an interested look, surprised that the calm and gentle-looking Disciple chose not only Demon Cultivation but a rare Magical Cultivation path.

"Oh, that should be fun. What skill do you want to learn? Just name it, and we will make you a manuscript." Cain suggested.

"The King of the Obsession Demons has a skill known as Echoes of Destruction. Can you teach me that? I know both of your disciples practice Demon Magic." She asked.

[What she means is my Area Damage skill. But to be called the King of the Obsession Demons, I think I like this woman. Tell her that flattery will get you everywhere in life.] Oath Breaker informed Cain.

"Who else but I could teach you that level of Demonic Skill? Of course, I can teach it, but can your meager mind handle it?" The challenger asked her with disdain, making the disciple blush in embarrassment.

"I think he would be flattered to be called the King of Obsession Demons, and Oath Breaker is very susceptible to flattery. I will make the skill for you." Cain agreed.

"You speak as if you have met?" The Immortal in his lounge chair asked.

"Once or twice. I have a particular affinity for attracting interesting things to my presence." Cain shrugged.

"Your bluffing won't get you anywhere once the Inscription starts. Now, ready your pen." The challenger demanded, while his groupies gave an obnoxious giggle, assuming that Cain was about to be shown up.

For this attempt, Cain took out his Inscription Desk, channeling Mana into it and preparing the ink for the Skill Book that would teach her [Area Damage]. If he was going to go all out, there was no reason not to make a proper skill book out of it.

Chances are, she wouldn't be able to use it and would just have a briefly powerful magic item that becomes a regular book in an hour, but the creation process was much more impressive when using the desk, which assisted its user.

The other man was grinding and crushing seemingly random materials into his ink while Cain pretended to mix his below the desk surface, despite it being prepared by the desk itself.

Then, he tidied the stack of paper and began to write, scrawling through the text as quickly as possible, as the Mythic Rank version of Area Damage that he was creating was over two hundred pages long.

By comparison, his opponent had only taken out thirty pages of paper and was carefully inscribing the first page.

He was taking the work seriously, but Cain could already see that some of the words were nonsensical. He had failed the creation already and had just continued, assuming that nobody would notice the errors, as so few could actually read the book completely and only translated specific words that they knew in the language.

For over an hour, the two worked until Cain set his pen down and stretched his arms, his manuscript finished and ready for the final creation.

[Hidden Quest Complete: Nobody's Disciple] Mythic Skill book created for a worthy cultivator.

[Bonus Experience Granted]

"You're not giving up already, are you? All those excess pages and you still haven't managed to create a working manuscript?" One of the Syncophants taunted as Cain relaxed.

"Excess pages? The full Mythic Manuscript is two hundred pages long. The lower-grade versions aren't the same as the version that Oath Breaker uses. The level of damage

transferred is far lower." Cain explained politely, then stacked the pages and bound them as a Mythic Skill book before handing it to the disciple.

"There you go. Make good use of it."

The Immortal stood up from his chair, staring at the book in shock, taking it from the equally startled disciple and opening the pages.

"It's flawless. I can feel the aura coming from it. If this was given to a Demon or a Demon Cultivator of sufficient affinity, they could activate it and absorb the skill in an instant." He breathed just loud enough for the crowd to hear his hushed words.

"I told you. Two hundred pages are needed for the full skill. Before anyone gets concerned, such as the others from her Sect, rest assured, I won't be trying to steal your Sect Sister if she does manage to activate it. But the rest of you might be in trouble during your next round of examinations. That skill is a powerful one."

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 620 620

With his inspection done, the Elder handed the manuscript back to the Disciple, who Cain had promised it to, laying the heavy hardcover tome in her reverent hands.

"Is it really alright for me to have this? It won't upset the Demons, will it?" She asked hesitantly, unsure now that the actual item was in her hands.

"Most likely not. Plus, this is a human world, not a demon realm. They might smell similar, at least in the cities, but there aren't enough demons around that they would be likely even to notice that you had a truly demonic skill in your arsenal, much less notice it often enough that it annoyed them." Cain pointed out.

The spectators got a chuckle out of that analysis since everything that they did, they did for the sake of building their own power, and very few of them had ever considered consequences beyond the immediate. The thought that one day, possibly, a demon might notice that you were using a skill that his boss also knew and get mad wasn't a consideration that they made in their quest for power.

"Then thank you. I sense that I can activate this book with energy, is that right?" She asked.

"Go ahead and try it. If you're worthy, you will learn the skill in a single second. If you're really lucky, one of the Gods might smile upon your cultivation and grant you a gift. They have a knack for knowing when the truly talented have arisen and gotten their hands on something interesting." Cain suggested.

That way, if she activated a System Interface by using the book, he could blame it on divine intervention and not anything that he or the Laughing God had done.

"Just remember that if you do get the attention of the Divine, it is safest to keep that to yourself." The Immortal judge laughed, shaking his head at Cain's overblown estimation of the likelihood of attracting the Divine.

Carefully, she mingled her energy with the book, and an ominous red light glowed from the tome before it faded to nothing, taking with it the sense of power that the book had held.

Cain checked her interface, and nothing had changed. She was already Mythic Awakened, and there was no notification of a pending class, but her face was glowing with joy.

"It worked. I know the skill. It is incredible and passive. I can keep it active all the time, and it will seek my enemies when I attack." She informed the group.

"Can you prove it? That you have such an amazing Mythic Skill available?" One of the Syncophants that had accompanied the challenger asked.

"I propose a match, you lot against her. It will be obvious in just a few seconds if she really learned the skill at the same quality that Oath Breaker uses it." Cain offered.

Oath Breaker's damage transfer was one hundred percent at that level, so the first strike that she landed would show the world that she had the skills.

"Wait, there is an easier way. Disciple, slap that pompous man on the face." Her Sect Elder instructed her.

She didn't even hesitate, whipping her hand forward and across his cheek with a resounding slap that reddened the cheek of every member of his sect.

"Well, it worked. I can't guarantee that the damage output is at the maximum, but all of the hand prints look to be the same. I judge it a success." The Immortal agreed while the Disciple's Sect moved to square up with the Sect that came to challenge Cain's talents.

That was enough to make them back down from the fight, as they were clearly overpowered by their opponents and didn't specialize in combat, to begin with. Their



sect was best known for hoarding or destroying knowledge so that they could maintain control over the manuscript markets.

They had lost that control today when Cain taught a hundred others how to create them successfully, though most would struggle for years or decades to be able to do it reliably for most skills.

It wasn't most skills that they were concerned about, though. Perfect manuscripts for their Sects' entry-level skills were much more vital to their growth and survival. The more people who could learn the easy skills, the stronger the Sect as a whole could grow as they built upon that basic foundation.

A simple D or C rank skill usually only needed a single elemental item to create, at least for elemental attack and defense skills, and they could obtain those from the magical beasts without much difficulty. Within the week, and certainly, by the end of the season, they would be turning out new skill booklets for their rookie cultivators, giving them great advantages in their early attempts to cultivate.

"I think I understand. You don't cultivate Magic like so many thought that you did. You cultivate Chaos. You live for it, thrive on it, and even built your group of disciples around it." The Immortal said to Cain, taking a long puff on his pipe to emphasize his point.

"I am not even sure that cultivating Chaos is possible. Chaos just happens. It is only happenstance that it seems to happen more around some than others." Cain denied the man's assertion.

"Exactly what the cultivator of Chaos would say." A voice in the crowd laughed.

He had a point. There really wasn't a way to deny that your affinity was for Chaos when so many strange and random things happened around you, and telling them that you were actually a disciple of the Laughing God wouldn't help.

Not only would they freak out if they knew he was part of the Creators' pantheon, but there was also every possibility that they would view him as a patron deity of Chaos to begin with. It certainly suited his personality.

The crowd just laughed off the concerns about Cain's actual cultivation method, not realizing that he wasn't a cultivator at all, nor were his disciples. At least, not anymore.

"Now, if everyone is finished here, you can discuss among yourselves what you might have had issues with. I know there were successful creations on the very first attempts, so some of you have a real skill for the creation of Manuscripts. I spent all night teaching a blacksmithing symposium, and it is time for me to return to my Sect Members and make sure that they didn't get into too much trouble last night during the celebration of their win in the Outer Sect matches."

"Don't let us keep you any longer. The Lotus Blossom surely took good care of your Disciples, but two lectures plus a challenge all on the same day is more work than most of us are willing to put in for the benefit of others." The Immortal agreed, shooing Cain away and then joining the conversations about Manuscript creation that were filling the area.

What Cain found when he returned to the camp was a hundred very disappointed and dispirited disciples dragging their feet through their daily tasks and none of his own Disciples in sight.

It was possible that they decided to sleep in since he did tell them they had no duties today, but that didn't explain the Lotus Blossom Disciples' state.

"Did I miss some raging party? Why is everyone so down today?" Cain asked one of the ladies who was cleaning the kitchen area near his tent.

"Oh, Sect Master Cain. Will Luna be up for lunch?" The disciple asked, ignoring his question.

Cain took a look around, noticing that the pots had the unseasoned remnants of very watery oatmeal porridge in them and no signs of any other breakfast food products anywhere. That totally explained the dejected disciples. They had gone from Luna's version of acceptable back to that of the tastebud-impaired Kitchen Elder at breakfast today.

"She will most likely be up in time for lunch. I don't imagine that she will miss two meals in a row, no matter how late they were up celebrating last night. Why don't you go check on them and make sure they're all alright, while I get started on a special victory lunch?" Cain told the girl, who smiled and rushed over to his tent, silently sneaking through the flap to see how everyone was doing.

"They're all accounted for and breathing. I didn't see any injuries, but there was a party at the edge of the compound that went to almost daylight, and I don't think that they left until it was over." The Disciple explained.

Then they wouldn't be up much before lunch if they were up for it at all. Luna would likely wake them up as soon as she smelled the food though, so Cain summoned four Human Puppets with cooking skills to assist him and got to work on an extra special treat to reward all the hard work they put into winning the competition.

It wasn't going to be easy getting that much cake ready in two hours, though, and Cain ended up calling a team of Iron Golems to make Cast Iron Ovens, especially for the cakes, since the Sect's kitchen wasn't set up for delicate pastries.

The Lotus Blossom Disciples slowly gathered around the kitchen complex as Cain worked, adding appliances and working with over a dozen summoned creatures and

people to get lunch made on time, with a variety of dishes that none of them had ever seen before but that Luna would recognize as the standard party fare for an event in Long Fang Valley.

Laden with small pies, both meat and fruit flavored, plus a selection of sandwiches and other handheld foods, and a variety of cakes to be served in small squares, it was a banquet fit for a Skyview Duke, one that they could snack on all day long to keep their energy up, and with enough bold flavors to keep even Luna happy.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 621 621

"You have gone all out for this victory celebration. You know it's only the Outer Disciple matches, right?" Elder Ling asked as she came into the kitchen area to steal a pastry before lunch.

"That is true, but I don't have Inner Disciples, only these ones, and it is their very first victory, so it is important to them. I can still hear the Disciples talking about it, and none of them have a competition today, so it is the perfect time to hold a banquet." Cain informed her, then handed the Elder a small pumpkin pie that might be better called a tart, given its size.

"These treats are deceptive. They look so simple and mundane, but they are changing the entire culture of the Sect, one sweet tooth at a time." Elder Ling replied, brushing her lips clean after finishing the tart in a single bite.

"They are also a trap for the unwary. A potent lesson in self-discipline. Either you eat very sparingly and suffer the sight of all your friends enjoying the delectable sweets, or you must put in extra physical work to maintain your figure. There is no sitting around looking pretty when you have such foods available, the disciples will have to keep working hard, or they will find themselves out of shape and falling behind their peers." An Elder that Cain didn't recognize informed them as she entered the kitchen area.

"So that's why your Disciples all train so hard every day instead of spending their time meditating. They need to in order to keep themselves in shape." Elder Ling nodded in understanding.

"It is all about balance. Some Sects will meditate for years and years and only build their foundation, with no skills to use it, some will focus only on skills and enhancement medicines, and their foundation will suffer for it, but if you do a bit of everything, every day, you can become the best-rounded version of yourself." Cain agreed.

The puppets were pulling more food out of the ovens, setting it out to cool with gusts of frost magic, and refilling the ovens for the next batch of goodies while the new arrival stared at them.

"I came because I noticed new women in the camp, unfamiliar faces, and thought that we had managed to obtain a large number of new disciples. But that's not the case at all, is it? These helpers are created by your skills." The newly arrived Elder asked.

"That's right. I didn't have enough hands to prepare this all by myself. The summons created the new ovens as well, and I will leave them here for later. If you don't mind, I will be teaching a cooking symposium for the Sect Members at some point so that they can continue to emulate this cooking later if they can find the ingredients.

Most of it is quite simple, just a bit of boiled or chopped fruit along with the same ingredients as a standard bread has since I've deliberately made most of it unsweetened. Loading the disciples up with too much sugar is a bad idea. They get rambunctious."

Elder Ling laughed at Cain's assessment, looking at the tent where his disciples were still sleeping, clearly judging which ones he meant.

The puppets had started setting out covered trays in preparation for lunch, and the crowd was beginning to build as more and more disciples came to see what the commotion near the kitchen was. The Forbidden Treasure Sect had already done so many outrageous things, including winning the fighting matches as an all-female Sect, that nobody wanted to miss out on seeing tomorrow's gossip unfolding live.

Luna led Cain's disciples out of the tent five minutes to noon, just in time for lunch, and immediately raced to his side when she saw the Puppets were out and cooking.

"Is there a celebration feast? We couldn't do one yesterday. We didn't have time after we got back. Do I smell chocolate cake? Please say there is cake." Luna begged.

"You said that too much sugar makes them hyper, but it seems that the problem is an ongoing one.

Yes, little one, he made all sorts of cakes and pastries and sweets for the Sect today. It seems that the theme is bite-sized foods." Elder Ling laughed at Luna's enthusiasm.

"Oh, a garden party buffet. That is excellent. We can walk and talk and visit while we eat. I think there are some new people who hid here after the party last night as well, so everyone can get to know them on their first day." Luna cheered.

"And that means I have to work. I am in charge of new arrivals, you see. It was a pleasure sampling the sweets, and I will be sure to visit the buffet once it opens." The unidentified Elder told them, then left without looking back.

"That's actually the most I have heard Elder Chen speak to a man in the last century. A lot of our reputation is built around her strict enforcement of the no males within the Sect compound rule, and it was a wonder that she didn't object to you, even with these lovely disciples. But it seems that she has taken a liking to you for some reason." Elder Ling chuckled.

Cain had a fairly good idea of why that was. Elder Chen was actually a Dryad in disguise, and Cain had shown up with a druid in his group and, for some reason, had never triggered hostilities from the species before.

Dryads naturally loathed human males, as well as those of most other species, because they cut down trees to build fires and homes and destroyed the forests that the Dryads loved and protected. Ancients didn't do that, they had no need to do that, and despite his appearance, Cain had found that various forest species had always been more friendly than usual toward him.

"It is always good to make a good impression on others. Now, the food is all ready, so we should do the uncovering. But first, a nice light breeze to blow the smell over to the other Sects. The smell of good food is always a benefit to the Sect's reputation among Disciples." Cain told her with a wink.

He didn't even need to use a spell. The wind picked up a little while he was speaking, blowing the smells of freshly baked pastries across the entire field where the Sects were gathered. Most humans wouldn't notice from that far away, but Cultivators had enhanced senses, so they were unlikely to miss it.

This method actually seemed to work better than having the staff fill plates and the disciples pick spots at tables. There was more movement and conversation, letting the Disciples who were going to be competing in various events or putting on demonstrations in the upcoming weeks talk while they ate, a rare luxury that didn't take away from their training and preparation time.

Of course, it also led to many of them sneaking snacks for later, despite the assurances that there would be an evening meal, the same as always, so some of them were going to learn the lesson about temperance the hard way.

They hadn't been allowed any sweets before Cain arrived, the kitchens simply didn't make them, so there would be more than a few sore stomachs tomorrow.

"I heard that you told the Elders something about holding a cooking class. Do you have a signup sheet prepared for it already? Or is it further into the future?" A disciple asked Cain, catching the attention of others around her.

"I don't have a sheet up yet. How much notice do people need? I can do it tomorrow morning after breakfast, and the Sect can see the students' progress at lunch for the next few days." Cain suggested.

"They will all be eating our food?" She asked nervously.

"Well, we could do a small batch and have the students eat their own meal since wasting food is out of the question, but it is better if the Disciples of a Sect learn to cook for the whole Sect, right? Or are you planning meals for a husband and children?" Cain replied, making the Disciples laugh.

"Alright, I see your point. It will be a very long time before any of us consider abandoning the path of advancement for a family. If we reach immortality, we have forever, after all.

So, will you be teaching both regular meals and all those fancy snacks?" The disciple asked.

[Quest Received: Warranted Jealousy] Teach the Lotus Blossom Disciples enough cooking to hold an event in the city that will cause envy among the other Sects.

Cain couldn't hide the wave of amusement that washed through him as he saw the quest message arrive and adjusted his plans accordingly.

"We will be doing both. I will teach a group of Disciples enough about cooking and baking that they can hold an event of their own that will be the envy of the stinky male Sects." Cain informed her.

"You really do enjoy taunting them, don't you?" Elder Ling asked.

"It's just so fun and easy. They deserve what they get for excluding and harassing these lovely disciples simply because they're women. I think a nice Lotus Blossom Cafe event might be just the thing to show them the error of their ways, and it would also be amazing for your Sect's reputation."

His logic was as random as always, but he was right. It would help their reputation. As a combat Sect, they were mediocre, and they didn't have anything else that really made them stand out. They had alchemists and inscriptionists, but neither was anything amazing. Their only real selling point so far had been that they were a safe space for their Disciples, without the violent infighting that so many other Sects embraced to help their disciples grow.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 622 622 Torturing The Neighbors

Cain woke everyone up bright and early so that they could train and keep themselves sharp after two days of mostly relaxing around the camp. In the morning, they would train their combat skills together. Then in the afternoon, they could pick a skill or trade skill to work on to expand their versatility.

While they worked on their combat skills, Cain was scheduled to begin training the Disciples who wanted to learn to cook. Every Disciple had a task back at the sect, and they were often rotated, then the Disciples would trade back for the ones they wanted or were good at, with some taking less desirable tasks for extra resources or due to unpopularity.

The Kitchens seemed like one of the better tasks, and if they could improve the quality of the food with the limited resources they were given, it would make them many friends.

They had learned enough from Luna and the ladies of the Forbidden Treasure Sect to know that most herbs and spices simply grew wild. They just needed to find the ones that they needed. Cinnamon trees were quite common near their Sect, as was Nutmeg, so they at least had a decent start to their endeavor toward culinary acceptability.

Cain had set up stations for all of the trainees today and brought out even more Puppets to assist him so that he could keep everyone on track, despite their complete lack of knowledge.

He had managed to get twenty volunteers for the lessons, and he had called ten puppets to assist, with the disciples working in pairs, just as they would in the kitchen during a regular service.

"Welcome everyone to the first day of cooking class. We are going to keep it very simple. We will cook a nice stew with flatbread, and because that is no real challenge, we will finish with apple turnovers.

The Sect generously provided a large number of apples for us over the next week, so we will be finding creative ways to use them all before they go bad. That is an essential skill of all kitchens, the full and complete usage of resources. Every bit of waste is the waste of money and effort to stock them, so we will do our best to use up what we have.

Pastry dough isn't easy to make, so we are starting with fried turnovers, which aren't as particular about mistakes with the dough creation.



Each team of two has an assistant assigned to your station. Feel free to say hello. They are people with personalities, though they are summoned, so insulting them will bring repercussions in their assistance, just like with anyone else you are working beside."

The disciples seemed startled, and the Puppets all began to laugh at the look on their faces when they realized that the placid waiting faces were just that, the puppet waiting for the speech to finish, not a sign that they were inanimate or unintelligent.

"Each of them has the skills of a master chef. They all share identical skills, so nobody gets an advantage over their peers, regardless of their rank as disciples within the Lotus Blossom Sect.

Now, chefs, would you kindly begin teaching your disciples to prepare the stew for today's lunch?" Cain instructed.

This might still technically count as him teaching since he had summoned the teachers, but Cain didn't intend to do any more than supervise the process in case a group was so bad that their assisting puppet couldn't deal with them.

Cain noticed right away the dismay on one disciple's face when her mind control skill didn't work on the puppets. She and her partner had intended to just breeze through the lecture, listening while the chef did all the work, but Puppets can't be mind controlled. They are under the control of Cain already, so to influence them, you need to break or override that bond.

That's not something the average disciple can do, so it only annoyed their chef.

It didn't take long for the strict taskmaster to get them straightened out with threats of revealing their attempts to slack during training, a matter that the Elders took seriously as a sign of poor character. Everyone was making good progress on the stew, which needed the most time, so the chefs started them on the dough, which would be fried directly inside an empty cast iron cauldron, which was filling the role of a tandoor oven today.

It made a lot of bread quickly, which was what they needed to serve a hundred people lunch on time.

Everything that Cain planned to teach them over the next few days was quick and in high quantity, with the fancy dishes coming once they had the daily basics down.

The best part of the stew was that it had a rich meaty, and spiced scent that carried everywhere as it was simmering over the fires. Knowing what was for lunch always improved Cain's mood in the morning when he was beginning to get worn out from training or business, and these Disciples couldn't read minds, so a scent was the best way that he could think of to give them the same motivation.

Luckily for the students, they only had a little over a hundred of their Sect Mates here in the camp, so the workload wasn't extreme or even remotely taxing with so many hands because some of them were seriously struggling with the first day's training.

All of the motions were unfamiliar to them, the process was unknown, and the order of ingredients, as well as the reason for such a thing to exist, all had to be explained so that they wouldn't make mistakes and serve everyone an inedible meal.

After a day or two, that would end, and they would begin to get comfortable with the trade skills, but today they were not having fun. At least not until they got to the part where they began to core and chop apples to make the filling for the fried turnovers.

"Why are we only making a dozen of them? The pot can boil more filling in a single batch." One of the disciples asked Cain as he walked by to see how they were doing.

"There are one hundred and six people in the camp. Ten pairs making a dozen each is one hundred twenty pies. Enough for one each and a few extras for the Elders with a sweet tooth. We can't be turning the whole Sect into gluttons, and the pies aren't a very healthy option for lunch." Cain explained.

"Oh, that makes sense. But what happens if we mess them up?" The disciple asked.

"Well then, you will get some constructive criticism about your efforts today. Learning by practice is the best way, after all." Cain shrugged, ignoring the puppets' amusement and the Disciples' horrified looks as they were reminded that all their friends would be eating the outcome of their lessons for lunch.

"Look how serious they are. Letting them serve lunch was a great call. I don't think I've ever seen them this focused on learning a new skill." Elder Ling whispered to Cain as he reached the edge of the group.

"They have realized that everyone's lunch relies on their efforts, even though it's the first day. They will relax in a day or two once they get the hang of things. That's when I expect the first major mistakes to happen. Incompetence with a good teacher will bring better results than complacency and arrogance."

That particular bit of wisdom was a direct quote from Record Keeper, who was even more philosophical than Oath Breaker was on the rare occasions that he deigned to speak in Cain's mind without being spoken to first.

The scent of spiced stew had filled the area around the Lotus Blossom Sect camp, thanks to a healthy breeze and the open stew pots, and Cain could feel all of the envious eyes on him from their neighbors. The Lotus Blossom drew a lot of attention all of the time, thanks to the abundance of beauties, but the last few days' increases in laughter and sociability were enough to make the neighboring Sects envious of their mealtimes.

The level of competition for resources led to often violent rivalries in every Sect, even the Lotus Blossom, so the relaxed and friendly atmosphere was a harsh contrast to daily life for most disciples, and it wasn't helping their mood at all.

Elder Ling began to wonder if Cain wasn't secretly waging psychological warfare on the Sect's neighbors to weaken their wills before the Inner Sect competitions began, but he didn't have any Disciples of his own in that category, so he didn't stand to gain anything from it.

It was Elder Chen that suggested that he might be doing it for their benefit, an effort to help his hosts since they had provided for his disciples without asking for anything.

"Why would he do that?" Elder Ling asked, confused as to the woman's reasoning.

"We all know the legends, right? A mysterious stranger shows up in need of assistance, but he is actually a Dragon or other powerful being in disguise, and he grants the ones who treat him well a blessing in return for their kindness.

No normal cultivator, especially not a wandering cultivator, gives out knowledge so freely. I think that means that what he is teaching means nothing to him and that the benefit of a comfortable place to stay is what he is after." Elder Chen told her counterpart.

"You think he is some legendary Dragon, wandering around with a random group of little girls for his own entertainment? I will admit that it crossed my mind, but from what I can tell, he really isn't hiding any more power, his core is damaged, and this is all he can manage. I think this is more of a convalescence for him, keeping himself from getting bored while he heals." Elder Ling countered.

"Think what you want, but examine his cultivation core more closely. It was at least Immortal before it was damaged, and I don't think it belongs to a human at all. Unless he trains in a Dragon Art, which is possible, given his disciples, I think he is a Dragon himself." Elder Chen whispered so that none of the other Elders or Disciples could listen in.

Dragons held a lot of respect, even in this world, for their might and ability to rise above the masses with enough time. For a Dragon, Immortality wasn't a matter of chance and hard work but patience.

Plus, there was the matter of their innate power, which could make relics that most Sects would fight tooth and nail to get their hands on.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

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With the thought that he might be an injured Dragon in mind, the two Elders began to look at Cain differently. At first, Elder Ling had viewed Cain as an eccentric cultivator who was doing his best in a new world, but if he was an injured Immortal Dragon who had gotten trapped in this world, then he might really have a wealth of knowledge that they couldn't afford to lose.

The question was what they would be able to offer him to keep him around. Anything indecent was out of the question since he had so many lovely Disciples but didn't take advantage of them. In fact, the only one who had been spotted near his bed was Luna, who he had identified as his own daughter, and she was definitely too young for such things.

If she wasn't sleeping next to him, she was trying to bribe Penny into transforming into a giant wolf so she could cuddle it for the night. Not exactly the hallmarks of a forbidden secret tryst.

When the students finally finished lunch, Cain had them set up the buffet stations by their group. Each pair stood by their creations, and the Sect members could try whichever they wanted for lunch, a bit of Russian Roulette with their stomachs.

The chefs had assured him that none of it had such large issues that it would cause injury or illness, so Cain wasn't too concerned, but the students were on the edge of panic, waiting for the judgment on their first attempt at cooking a decent meal for the Sect teams.

"This isn't bad. I mean, it might be made by students with a master guiding them, but it's way better than the bland and boring that it replaced. What all did you have to add to it to make it taste this good?" One of the disciples asked curiously while the actual kitchen Elder listened in.

"That's just it. There isn't anything special in it except the garlic butter on the bread and the cinnamon in the dessert. The rest is just the same basic ingredients made in a different manner than usual.

We learned a lot from the chefs today, and it's just the first day. By the end of the training, we really might be able to impress people with a meal that we create. Can you imagine how many new Disciples we could pull with the image of the mellow guild with good food?

I mean, sure, we all still need to fight for resources, but while we're here, we don't have to fight all the time. Just win the competitions. Plus, energy control is way better for cooking than wood, and we are all Fire Element Cultivators, so the kitchen duty is really good practice for later." The student in front of her responded with a smile.

Cain hadn't thought of that. Since they all worked with fire in combat, continually using it in the kitchen was an excellent form of control training for them since the stakes were the quality of their own dinner if they failed.

"Smart. But it looks like a lot of work. I would rather work on my inscriptions and my blade work than cook in front of a stove all day like some mundane housewife." One of the disciples joked.

"Yeah, but Kitchen duty is also an everyday duty, and you can get pretty good resources from it without going outside, so the trade-off isn't bad." Another disagreed.

The Sect slowly gathered their meal and wandered off to eat, returning with empty bowls and suggestions for tomorrow's lunch, but very few complaints about today's meal, other than the one team who hadn't heated their oil enough before throwing the first of the turnovers in, leaving them a bit more greasy than intended.

In the afternoon, most of Cain's Disciples moved from combat training to practicing alchemy with a very odd Elder that Cain suspected was actually just stoned from putting her face over the alchemy cauldron all the time while Luna worked on Spell Crafting.

Cain had the advantage of experience and had seen a lot more species than she had, but with a little work, she was pretty sure that she could create her own unique style of combat using her own spells, which would get her a huge number of experience points for the ongoing quest that all the Disciples had to make him proud of them.

With his morning plans complete, Cain went to search out the Sect's medics. They relied upon pills made by the Alchemists to treat injuries and illness, but Cain knew that there would be at least a few magical creatures hiding in plain sight.

He wasn't the only one who realized that it was easiest to pretend to be human in this world for their own safety, and if he could find someone with an affinity for nature magic, he could give them a healing spell or two that would really help the triage ward deal with any problems that did come in.

They would have Inner Sect competitions beginning soon, and that meant injuries. Then there were the Alchemists, the mad scientists of this world, who had a habit of causing explosions and poisoning themselves by accident.

An area cure spell would make their craft immeasurably safer than it was right now. The Lotus Blossom Sect had been very good to them so far if the sounds of combat and

arguments that he heard in the distance were anything to go by. It was like they were an island of calm in a sea of inflated egos and aggression.

The medical ward was fairly quiet, as most of the disciples who worked it were away at Alchemy training, learning to make healing pills, but there were two young Disciples here who looked a lot like Elder Chen.

[Name] Lu

[Species] Half Dryad

[Age] 55

Cain smiled when he saw the status of the first disciple. So the militant gatekeeper of the sect might not be the man-hater that she appeared. She might just be a jaded single mother. Fifty-five was young for a dryad, who aged more like the trees that they resembled in their natural form, so this could be her child.

"Disciple Lu, was it? Since you're the only one here, and I'm in the mood for a little teaching session, how do you feel about learning some healing magic? I suspect that you have an affinity for nature magic that you haven't been able to explore." Cain offered.

"And why would you suspect that?" The sandy blonde-haired young woman asked.

"I have my reasons. Call it intuition if you like. Would you like to try it? You are in the infirmary, after all."

"I don't see any harm in it. There aren't many injuries in the afternoon unless Alchemy class goes wrong." She shrugged, mostly bored with sitting around since she didn't have much affinity for fire element skills, which left her somewhat isolated in the Lotus Blossom Sect.

Cain activated [Modify] and tapped her forehead, granting her the nature spell [Regrowth], which both healed and cleansed an area, removing poisons and low-grade curses.

"That should get us started so that you can deal with anyone who comes in. Now, let us start with the eternally useful spell, [Creeping Vines]. It is among the most basic of Nature Element abilities and can be used almost anywhere with the ability to sustain life." Cain began.

"Wait, back up a second. What did you do to my head, and what is this skill? You can't just entirely skip over that part to start teaching me about vines and roots." Lu complained.

"It's an area healing skill. A lot of full-blooded dryads get it as an innate skill. Did you want to try it? I can curse and poison someone if you need."

"Has anyone ever told you that you're a psychopath? There is something broken in your brain." Lu told him with the same incredulous look on her face that she had worn since he granted her the spell.

"But your reactions are spot on. Everything that I could have hoped for." Cain replied with a smile, watching her flounder for a response.

Two disciples ran in, carrying an injured girl between them. "Lu, are there any more healers? There is a big fight at the edge of Camp, the Red Scorpion Sect came to pick a fight, and it's not going well for the Lotus Blossom." They asked, dropping their charge on the ground for the healer to deal with.

The Inner Sect Disciples carried healing pills with them, as well as an assortment of other useful medicines, but the Outer Sect Disciples were usually flat broke from trying to advance as quickly as possible and took an advance against their future resource allocations if they needed healing like this.

"Change of plans. You are going to master the Regrowth Skill first. Then we can start on creeping vines. Now, heal this disciple, and let's go watch a fight." Cain instructed, nudging the Dryad into action.

"What, oh yes, right." A green glow emanated from her body, lighting up the triage tent, and the injured girl slowly stood up, the visible wounds closing in an instant and the cut portion of her hair where a blade had nicked her face growing back out to match the rest of her coiffe.

"You can use a healing skill with no pills? That is awesome. We need you at the fight, though, or someone could get very injured." The disciples begged, dragging her out while Cain followed behind, with his hands clasped behind his back, making it clear that he was spectating and not headed to challenge someone.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## **Chapter 624 624**

They had almost made it across the camp when Cain heard the voice that meant things had taken a turn for the worse and that injuries were not going to be avoided.



"Where the hell do you think you're touching? Oath Breaker, deal with this pervert." Luna shouted, and then the sounds of battle turned to the sounds of screaming.

Cain grabbed the flying sword he had made and flew over the camp in an instant, stopping over top of where Luna was standing between two copies of Oath Breaker with a blade in either hand, facing off against an Elder of the Red Scorpion Sect.

The age disparity was comical, but the man was clearly not on the winning side, and while Luna had a rapidly fading bruise on her face, being healed by Penny, the man had multiple cuts in his robes, and one of his legs looked to be crippled.

The Red Scorpion Sect was not taking it well, and a wave of men was running through the clearing between Sects to join the battle.

"Elder, I suggest you keep your hands off my Disciples and return to your camp, or I cannot guarantee your safety," Cain called out, drawing all attention to himself.

"We have four Immortals in our ranks. What does a Wandering Cultivator at your level think you can do to stop us?" The man sneered back, heedless of the injuries that he had taken while trying to grab Luna.

It was a tradition with many sects to grab the Disciples that they wanted and then use various means to convince them to stay, each a bit more despicable than the last.

"I don't think you want to find that out, do you? From the looks of it, you aren't a match for my Disciple that you tried to snatch, so what makes you think you are a match for me?" Cain replied evenly.

That brought a chuckle from the Lotus Blossom Sect, who had fallen into defensive positions behind Luna as the fight stopped so the Elders could hold their negotiations.

As they argued, the four Immortals arrived, along with the old Dwarf and the Pipe Smoking Immortal from the manuscript lecture.

"Gentlemen, there are rules to such things. You have failed to snatch the Disciple, and not only that, your Elder joined the battle against an Outer Sect Disciple and lost. Haven't you embarrassed yourselves enough without breaking the peace to declare war on another Sect here at the meeting?" The old Dwarf asked, taking out a tobacco pipe of his own and sitting down on his flying sword as if he expected to be here for a while.

"The Red Scorpion Sect cannot allow this insult to stand. A mere Outer Sect Disciple viciously attacked our Elder." An Immortal from the Red Scorpion's group complained with a smirk.

Cain didn't actually know the rules of this engagement, but since they didn't take the 90 percent reduced damage that higher awakenings did in his world, he assumed that he had at least some chance of winning the fight.

The problem was that if he went all out, it would draw a lot of unwanted attention to the fact that he clearly wasn't a human, using human skills. That could be far worse than running away and being branded a coward everywhere that they went after this.

"What do you have to say to that, Elder Cain?" The old Dwarf asked.

"The Red Scorpion Sect owes me an Elder's hand for placing it on my Disciple. If they kindly turn it over and leave, I will consider us even." Cain told him with a smile.

"It seems that there are conflicting insults to be settled. As per the agreement, this must be moved to the open fields on the north side of the city, where the aggrieved party may request a war between sect contingents or a duel between Elders to settle matters. As they complained first, the Red Scorpion Sect has priority of choice." The old Dwarf sighed.

"Then a war between Sect Contingents it is. In fifteen minutes at the battleground." The Red Scorpion Immortal demanded, flying off to the north.

"I really hope that you know what you're doing, Elder Cain. Turning over the Disciple and then stealing them back later would have been the prudent call." The old Dwarf explained.

"I think it would be better today to have a show of force, or I will spend the rest of my time here recovering my Disciples from other Sects, and it will disturb the peace of the Lotus Blossom Sect." Cain sighed.

"Just try not to die. Even if you have to surrender and agree to a penance of time serving their sect, it would be a shame to lose your knowledge." The pipe-smoking Immortal told him with a sly wink.

As they left, Elder Ling flew up to meet Cain, tears in her eyes. "This is all our fault. Your daughter was studying in an empty tent not far from where the fight broke out, and when she came to see what the commotion was, they tried to snatch her."

Cain patted her on the shoulder in consolation. "Don't think like that. Luna did what she thought was right, I do what I think is right, and today the Red Scorpion Sect is going to become an example of why you don't pick fights with strangers."

"The gap between an Immortal and a Spirit Rank Cultivator isn't a small one. You might have been strong in the past, but right now, that is the extent of your strength isn't it? Four-on-one, when each is twice your power, is a huge disadvantage, and the Red

Scorpions are a Blade Cultivation Sect. That's why they wanted Luna, for her combat skills."

"I told you, relax. This fight isn't going to go as badly for me as you might think. I've still got a few tricks up my sleeves."

With that, Cain called his Disciples to fly up to meet him and headed for the combat area, where hundreds of thousands of Cultivators had already gathered along the perimeter to watch the fight. Most assumed that it was going to be one-sided bullying of a Wandering Cultivator and his disciples by a large Sect, but they still wanted to see the outcome, as the Red Scorpions were registered to fight in the Inner Court Competition beginning in just a few days.

"When we get there, standard defensive formation. Luna, call your entire force. Everyone else, hold back and only defend. I will take charge of the offensive force, and it will get very messy, very fast, once I do." Cain instructed them.

"What are you thinking?" Luna asked so she could prepare.

"I am going to call the Heavenly Host to war. They can't complain if the combatants are on the same level as the enemy Sect, and they only have five hundred or so fighters." Cain replied grimly.

It would be a mess, but it would work. He was certain of it.

They arrived with five minutes to spare, looking at the orderly ranks of the Red Scorpions. Many of the robes looked freshly made, and there were many more of them than Cain had expected, nearly a thousand, and Cain caught the smile on the face of the Immortals, now six in number, as he arrived.

They had convinced another Sect to join them under their colors for the battle, intending to intimidate Cain into turning over everything he had and begging for an apology.

"I see you found some new friends," Cain called out as the Disciples took their position below him.

"I see you didn't. Now, are you prepared to grovel, or will you go down swinging while we claim those lovely ladies as our own?" The leader of the Red Scorpion Sect asked.

The dwarf and the other Immortal arrived, landing between the two sides before Cain could reply, but he decided to get the last barb in anyhow.

"I don't think that mere words could settle the insult you have given any more. You will become an object lesson in minding your own business." Cain informed the Red Scorpion Sect Master coldly.

"Well, that makes things easy on us. The two sides have confirmed the necessity of this battle to settle the insult to the honor of their respective Sects. Before the battle, each side must name its terms. Red Scorpion Sect, what say you?" The old Dwarf asked.

"Everything. We will take the Sect Master's life and claim his disciples as our own." The Sect Master declared.

"The terms must be equal. Should you lose, the Red Scorpion Sect will be forced to disband by the Alliance of Light Sects, is that understood?" The Dwarf asked in a calm and emotionless monotone.

"Of course. It's not like they stand a chance anyhow. We are more than capable of crushing a handful of ants underfoot."

"In that case, the battle will begin on my mark. All combatants, take your position, and everyone not involved in the match, please clear the area."

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 625 625 Sect War

Cain discretely activated [Ancient Wisdom], granting his entire raid party and summons the [Existential Dread] Aura.

The old Dwarf had just announced the start of the match when the terrifying wave washed over everything within six hundred meters of Cain, including the entire Red Scorpion force, and even the Immortals began to look pale and frightened.

"Heavenly Host, to me. It is time for war." Cain shouted, letting the aura amplify his voice into a terrifying echo as twelve Spirit Rank Seraphim arrived on the battlefield, each calling their entire host.

Twelve thousand foot soldiers, six hundred Seraphim Warriors, and Sixty Seraphim Inquisitors joined the battle, all with looks of glee and bloodlust.

[Existential Dread] spread from every one of them, and most of the Red Scorpion force fell to their knees in terror, laying down their weapons without a fight.

"You fools, it is a trick, an illusion. Get up and fight." The Sect Leader demanded, reinforcing his command with a skill that blocked fear from his allies.

In seconds they were ready again, glaring at Cain for the dirty trick that he had played on them and only slightly feeling the aura coming off the army called by the Forbidden Treasure Sect.

Luna had called her army of Demons to her side, dozens of Lamia, Oath Breakers, and Wrath Bringers surrounding the Disciples as the second line of defense, should the enemy have the skill to get past the massed army of Seraphim.

A dozen horns blew in unison, and the army surged forward, spears and short swords meeting blades as the Red Scorpions learned that the army was no mere illusion but a very solid and deadly opponent.

Cain flew behind them, leaving the Disciples with the highest-ranked Seraphim, who served as Generals for the force that they had summoned.

The Inquisitors had surrounded the Immortals, lashing out with Holy Light repeatedly as the Immortals' barriers held strong. They didn't have the power to take them down so fast, but between them and the army on the ground, [Might of Many] was stacking up at an astronomical pace.

Cain charged the Sect Master, who could only glare at him as he held out his hands to channel energy into the barrier around himself, keeping it solid in the face of the Inquisitors' wrath.

The moment that Cain's spear met the barrier, it shattered in a puff of released power, letting the attack flow smoothly through at the Immortal's chest, only narrowly missing his heart as the Sect Master dodged and brought his barrier back up to fend off the next wave of Holy Light.

"Surrender now and forfeit your Sect. If you do, some might still live." Cain ordered, and the Sect Master looked down at the ground, where bodies littered the field, both in the black of his disciples and the white of the Seraphim force.

"You cheating coward. How dare you call for outside assistance in a Sect Duel? He screamed in desperation, drawing bitter laughter from the audience.

He had called another Sect to his own for reinforcements against six people, and he was losing. He had no place to be calling others out on dirty tricks.

"The might of a Sect Master has always been the backbone of their Sect. Where is your power? You should have known that my Disciples could summon allies. Why would you assume I could not? Now, are you going to surrender, or do more of your followers need to die?" Cain asked.

That was mostly an empty threat, as only a few Immortals were still fighting. Everyone else had set their weapons down and surrendered to the Seraphim Army. Even if the

Sect Master wanted to duel it out with Cain, there wouldn't be much more collateral damage.

That seemed to be what he wanted, though, as the Red Scorpion Sect Master charged Cain, his blade flickering with incredible speed and forcing Cain to retreat as he parried, then summon a full group of Oath Breakers into [Merger] with him to regain the upper hand. The difference between Spirit Rank and Immortal was no joke, and even with the few Summons that Cain always kept merged, he hadn't been able to match the Sect Master.

Cain drew the Sect Master further into the air, where [Area Damage] wouldn't kill everyone below them every time a blow landed, and furiously clashed blades with the arrogant Sect Master, burning through mana with [Cloud Dancing] as the flying sword wasn't agile enough for the purpose.

Dozens of times a second, blades clashed as the battle turned back in Cain's favor, and the last of the Immortals below them surrendered, stopping their resistance to watch the battle that would truly determine this conflict.

Cain circled over the Immortal's head and activated [Ancient Resistance], choosing Seraphim for the agility that it granted in flight, gaining six softly glowing wings, black on one side, white on the other. That was different from what he was used to. Usually, the wings were white and just plain feathers. They were beautiful but not fancy and glowing like these.

With the added speed in flight, he could circle the Sect Master faster than he could turn, and a spear strike glanced across the Red Scorpion Sect Master's back, tearing him wide open thanks to [Might of Many], and the man suddenly went limp, his spine severed, then crashed to the ground.

A Seraphim Warrior caught him before he hit the ground and gently laid him in the grass, face down, to keep dirt out of the wound.

"Nobody else needs to die today. What says you, referee? Is the match settled?" Cain asked.

"I can't decide this match. They must all forfeit or die. Red Scorpion Sect Master. Do you forfeit?" The Dwarf asked.

The man gave a gurgling answer that Cain couldn't understand, then passed out, leaving the matter momentarily undecided. Then an Elder stepped forward and called out to the crowd.

"The Red Scorpion Sect has been defeated and is willing to face our punishment. But please, for the love of all that is holy, send the medics for our disciples." The Elder declared.

"Seraphim. The battle is over. Heal the survivors, and resurrect the others. Returning a single percent of their life should be a sufficient reminder of the mistake they made today. If they are lucky, some other Sect will take them in." Cain decided, and [Holy Light] Filled the battlefield.

The Seraphim army wasn't very pleased to have to resurrect enemies that they just finished killing, but mercy was in their nature, and they understood the logic behind giving a second chance.

"Your will is done." The Seraphim declared in eerie unison, and Cain deactivated [Ancient Wisdom] and dropped the [Existential Dread] aura.

The crowd breathed a sigh of relief out from under the oppressive weight of the aura that terrified everyone, even though it wasn't aimed at them.

The Red Scorpion Sect Master regained his feet with tears in his eyes, looking over the resurrected and defeated force of his Sect, then removed the badge from his robes and took out a ceremonial sword, placing both in the grass before flying away without a word to anyone.

They appeared to be the Sect's tokens of office, and the Sect was to be disbanded after his defeat. He had failed them all and cost them their home. Cain could see in his thoughts that he intended to disappear on a penance pilgrimage and never return until his shame had been forgiven, or he had ascended to the Divine.

Right behind him flew the Elder, who had started the altercation with Luna, both of them feeling the heavy weight of a thousand hateful eyes watching them flee.

"Elder, may we show mercy to the Red Scorpion Sect? The Sect Master and the instigator of the problem have both fled, and the Red Scorpion Disciples look sufficiently contrite. Perhaps a trip home to reconsider their life choices and some time in contemplation would be sufficient to set them on the right path?" Cain asked.

"Are you sure you wish to go that far? Many of them will harbor a grudge for a lifetime, even if they are dispersed to other Sects." The Dwarf asked.

"And that's why it's better to let them be and let them reorganize their Sect under new leadership. Perhaps they will learn a lesson in humility and not just that the strong can do what they want." Cain replied.

"My Divine Wrath Sect will supervise them for the next ten years. As head of the Alliance of Light Sects, it is our duty to oversee punishments. We will help them choose a suitable Sect Master and see that they learn a lesson from today's defeat. Most of their Disciples owe their lives to your kindness today, and it would be shameful for them to forget it." The Immortal from the Manuscript creation seminar mumbled around his pipe, his words somehow carrying to the entire area, and everyone in it.



That was an interesting Skill. Cain would have to learn it later, so he made sure that everyone he could see was recorded into his list of Summons.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 626 626

In the aftermath of the fight, all the disciples stared at each other, looking over their Interfaces with astonished eyes. Never before had they summoned so many into a battle, so they hadn't noticed the difference. But with both Cain and Luna having the experience enhancements of a Puppet Master, the twelve thousand-strong might of the Seraphim armies had provided an incredible bonus to their battle.

Every cultivator that was defeated by the army gave them the experience points of over a thousand regular fights, and the incoming wave of notifications had left them nearly stunned, in the way that Luna had heard about from Neffie, the payment for being power-leveled.

The Red Scorpion Sect seemed to be calming down now that they realized that they weren't going to lose their home, though they lost their Sect Master and their senior Elder after the battle due to the shame of having started a fight they couldn't win.

They would also be under supervision for a decade or more, but that was a small price to pay to keep their Sect intact with all its treasures.

The Elders back at the Sect Compound were not going to be happy about this outcome, though. Even if it was described to them, many were unlikely to understand just how lopsided the battle was. Even bringing the last two thousand members would not have saved them from their fate against that monster and his five disciples.

Surely he must be some sort of mythic creature in disguise. Even if a damaged core explained the difference between his knowledge and his power, such a Skill was not the sort of thing that any mortal was meant to have access to. The Seraphim Host did not just show up because any random stranger called their name, and with the power of the Holy Light that they had faced, the Red Scorpion Sect was convinced that his version of the skill did not call a mimic but the actual Seraphim themselves.

Even among the crowd, most were shocked into stunned disbelief by the outcome of this battle. The Alliance of Light Sects protected the region and kept the peace, at least on a large scale, but could they even face off against such an army? That one man, Sect Master Cain, could walk into any of their Sects and annihilate it before anyone could even arrive to reinforce them.

He seemed to be on the good side of the Light Sects, though and having called Seraphim suggested that he was upright and righteous. Even if his disciples called demons most of the time, surely the noble Seraphim would not betray the cause of righteousness so badly?

Cain heard all those thoughts, as did the Seraphim and the Demons Cain was merged with, making them all stifle their laughter except Oath Breaker, who was laughing uproariously in Cain's mind.

[If only they knew what the Seraphim were really like, they would have a whole new outlook on what they would be facing once they reached the Divine Planes.] Oath Breaker chuckled.

[Are you saying that we are not Moral and Virtuous? Damnable demon, always bending the truth. It's not our fault that humans are too stupid to follow the rules.] The Seraphim mentally answered.

Cain had heard this argument many times before. After spending time with Evangeline, it was clear that the Seraphim version of moral virtue was very different from what the humans thought it was, which was the primary cause of the confusion. For example, their views on nudity. Since they didn't feel lust, they didn't see anything wrong with going nude whenever the weather was nice, but they got highly offended by signs of lust, as would inevitably happen when a human saw them nude.

While mediating the argument between the demons and Seraphim in his mind, the Violet Eyed man flew over to Cain and surveyed the battlefield.

"It looks like your journey has been good to you. Tell me, how is that method working out for the people of your world?" The cultivator asked with a sly smile.

"Quite well, I would say. The first few centuries were a bit chaotic since everyone expected it to only apply to humans." Cain replied, testing how much the man knew about the Laughing God and the System.

"To everyone, you say? Well, that is unexpected. I really should pay more attention to current events, but these idiots are just so entertaining that I lose track of everything else." The man sighed, then brightened up as he remembered something.

"Before I forget, Nyarla told me to let you know that your wife is halfway through her term, thanks to the difference in time flow between realms. That shouldn't have changed much. This realm moves through a year for every day where she is, so you don't need to rush to get back. You won't miss the birth."

"You have been in contact with Misha then? I do hope her health is holding up, all things considered. Do you have a way to bring me there?" Cain asked before the man could disappear again, as he was liable to do.

"Do you think that the baby-obsessed Nyarla would let anything happen to her? She is pampered beyond all sense of decorum and in perfect health. I can bring you there, but not now.

Once you are finished up and ready, I will come looking for you again or the day before the twins are due, whichever comes first." The violet-eyed man informed Cain with a smile.

"Well, if we keep up like this, I don't see a reason that I won't make it on time. That last fight was a huge benefit to my progression."

The immortal nodded. "To your disciples too. Twelve thousand stacks of experience bonus is a little overkill for disciples at their level, and they will need advice on advancement again and some skills to get them back on the right path for their cultivation.

You have a lot of work ahead of you to get them all the things that they need, even if it is just hours and hours at a desk writing up books."

"I suppose that simple and mundane wouldn't be right for my Disciples. I will see to it that they are on the right path to achieve their goals." Cain agreed.

"Good choice. Everyone is watching you. I mean everyone. Even the Lycans are looking forward to meeting you after seeing how much fun you can be. But I need to go again before someone comes to bother me. Good luck."

With a wave, the black-robed Immortal with violet eyes disappeared, leaving behind a hint of dark energy that Cain hadn't noticed before and a Quest Notification.

[Additional Quest: Reality Television] progress your Disciples on a path suitable to entertain and impress those watching from other Planes.

With him gone, Cain turned to his Disciples. "Don't pick a new class option yet. I will help you with skills to get you on the right path, so you can easily transfer to Immortality."

Tena looked startled. "Is it that important to do that now? I saw one that looks pretty good."

Cain nodded. "It is even more important than you think. Some paths look good, but they are actually dead ends and don't lead to anything powerful enough to keep progressing. You get stuck moving sideways until you have moved through enough that you get to one that has a forward advancement path.

So we will make sure that you get on the right path and into a path that perfectly suits you."

The tiny human nodded in understanding, then sighed as she gave up on whatever path she had chosen.

"What path were you thinking of anyhow?" Cain asked.

"Prismatic Dragon Monk. It adds new abilities to all my skills." She explained.

That was pretty good, but they could do better than just a new layer of buffs on existing skills.

"Just wait, we can do better, and if we can't, then you can pick it after we have failed to find a faster growth path." Cain offered.

"It sounds like you have big dreams for your Disciples." Elder Ling asked, approaching the group with a few medics from her Sect, including the one Cain had taught a healing spell to earlier.

"Disciples are like our own children. Who wouldn't want the very best for them? I know you would do the same for your personal disciples, even if others felt they were getting an unfair advantage." Cain replied.

"You have me there. I pamper my own disciples much more than most do, though I rarely take one under my wing. Only the ones with the drive and potential to grow to deserve the honor. It would be wasted on a slacker or someone with bad character." Elder Ling agreed.

"You hear that, ladies? Now you know what you need to do to earn Elder Ling's consideration. Work hard and show her that you have the potential to be outstanding among your peers, with actual good character. That doesn't mean popularity, for popularity often comes with ego and bullying the weak. That won't get you anywhere, but working hard for yourself and others might get you a spot as a personal disciple." Cain told the Lotus Blossom Disciples with a wink.

"Why do I feel like I've been had?" Elder Ling muttered, then addressed her disciples.

"It looks like they are all fine, so there is no need for healing. But he is correct. That is the way to impress any of the Elders in the sect. Don't think for a second that we don't notice who smiles in your face and stabs you in the back. There is a reason that sort of acolyte is still in the outer Sect. You need to be better than that if you want to become an Elder or even an Inner Disciple."

The girls bowed politely at her lecture, and smiled at Cain, who had gotten the usually secretive Elder to open up about what the true path to advancement was.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 627 627 Beauty Ling

"I have an idea. Why don't we watch the Inner Sect and Core Power competitions before we choose? They might do cool stuff that we hadn't thought of, and it might give us ideas. Though some of us have only so many ways forward, it might still help." Luna suggested.

"That's not bad. Will there be cake?" Sabbath asked.

"Not that evil chocolate stuff. Luna was practically bouncing off the walls of the tent, and even Jen barely slept." Penny interrupted.

"The problem isn't the chocolate. It is the cherry filling, as the Mythic Grade cherries give an energy and stamina boost to anyone who eats them." Cain clarified.

"And you thought putting them in a cake was a good idea. Why?" Penny asked.

"Because they taste really good?" Cain tried while Penny rolled her eyes, and Elder Ling laughed.

"You've got it hard, Sect Master Cain. They don't appreciate the level of creativity needed to balance the essential natures of cake and fruits into a filling and refreshing sweet treat." An Immortal from the nearby crowd offered.

"See, someone gets it. That cake is a masterpiece of the art form. Everything that a dessert should be, and it even gives you the energy to burn off the excess calories after a substantial meal, like the sort of celebration feast where such a cake would normally be served." Cain agreed.

"Elder Dragon Tooth of the Shadowed Blade Sect. It is a pleasure to meet you. Our Sect has maintained a strong food culture across a dozen worlds for centuries now, ever since we began to expand from our first Sect Locations.

It would be an honor if I could join you in making a meal to celebrate this victory over the Red Scorpions." The female Elder with a masked face offered.

"Well, you seem to meet the basic requirements, but as we are staying with the Lotus Blossom Sect, it is up to their discretion who is invited into camp. Or could we make a feast in the open between Sects? That way, more people could join in. But I'm not sure that I have the supplies to feed an entire field full of cultivators." Cain replied.

"Why not in our Sect Compound? The Lotus Blossom is always welcome among the Shadowed Blade, though Elder Ling seems to hold a small grudge against a few of our Elders. You see, she was a true beauty in her youth, and there was no shortage of Marriage proposals while she was still a disciple." The Shadowed Blade Elder chuckled.

"That's an understatement. He brought flowers to the gates of the Sect every day for an entire year." Elder Ling mumbled, making the Disciples laugh.

"Oh, ask Sect Master Cain to use his transfiguration ability on you. He made Tena that cute. I bet he could return you to your youthful appearance." Luna suggested.

"Transfiguration? How exactly does that work?" Elder Ling asked.

"I don't think it is a thing that can be explained in words. I can show you if you like, though." Cain offered.

"I wonder if it is the same ability that one of our early Elders had? It was said that she looked the same from age fifteen all the way through to Divinity. No record remains of the skill, but if someone does have it, the Shadowed Blade would pay a heavy price to recover a skill with such close ties to our own Sect." The masked Elder suggested.

Cain actually knew of three different abilities that could do such a thing. [Polymorph], when used at Mythic or higher rank, would last until dispelled. Then there was the Magic Demons' [Transfiguration], which is what everyone here seemed to think was used, and his own [Modify], which was functionally similar to [Transfiguration] but actually exchanged the entire body in extreme cases and would trick a bone age scan, where [Transfiguration] would not.

"Do you have Magic Cultivators among your Sect still? I was under the impression that you were an Assassin Sect?" Cain asked the Shadowed Blade Elder.

"We actually started as a Demon Cultivation Sect, where everyone practiced whatever forbidden technique that they found most suitable, so our techniques are still quite varied, though we no longer use some of the most unsavory sorts to protect the reputation and neutral status of our Sect in the battle between the Light Sects and the Demon Cultivators." The Elder informed him.

That made sense. Over centuries of advancement, Sects could change, especially if they had Elders advancing to Divinity and leaving the Sect. The path they followed would naturally become popular with the younger generation since they had seen it succeed in reaching divinity, while every new generation changed the morality of a Sect naturally due to the changing population.

"I can't just let you say that reversing the process of aging is possible without a Divine Pill and then walk away like that. Sect Master Cain, please demonstrate your abilities with Transfiguration." Elder Ling asked.

"Yes, make her ten or so. We need more cute things in the world." Luna cheered.

"You will do no such thing. No younger than adulthood." Elder Ling countered, making Luna pout.

"No matter how cute that face is, I am not requesting to be turned back into a child. I do have some level of dignity to maintain." Elder Ling replied very seriously.

"She has a point. Can you imagine trying to get people to take Tena as an Elder, even if she had the qualifications?" Penny pointed out, and Luna finally began to understand.

"Being cute isn't easy." She agreed sadly, making all the Cultivators in the area burst into laughter.

Cain focused on [Modify] scanning through the options and going back in age, keeping Elder Ling's original form as a reference.

At twenty-five years old, she had a stunning beauty, with a childlike innocence that denied the years she had lived. It would also still show her as past her twenty-fifth birthday when scanned for bone age, so unless someone actually searched her personally instead of using the simple device, they should never notice that he had actually reversed her age.

Currently, she was in the middle of the Immortal Realm. She had pretty much used up her potential, spending ages to make it this far with no real chance of reaching Divinity, thanks to her naturally mediocre talent that she had overcome with pure hard work.

Cain could tweak that, though. He had plenty of references available for humans with incredible potential. With a small change to her potential and to her energy veins, increasing her ability to move power through her body, Cain decided that the change was ready, letting it settle over Elder Ling, returning her to the prime of her youth.

"Someone find the Elder a mirror. I think you will be impressed. I also made a few other modifications to repair some minor damages from your youth and such. You might also be missing scars and tattoos since I didn't examine you that closely." Cain explained.

"She is stunning. I now understand why Elder Jeremiah would spend an entire year groveling at her feet for the chance to take her on a single date." The Shadowed Blade Elder told Cain.

"Seriously, he hadn't even taken her on a date? I thought she dumped him to focus on her cultivation or something. I don't think I have an anti-Simping recipe, so we should likely keep them apart. He's not here, is he?" Cain replied.



"No, he is at the Sect Compound on the other side of the world. He is the branch Master there now that he has reached the peak of Immortality and is pushing for divinity." The Elder explained.

"That's a small mercy anyhow." Cain agreed, while the Shadowed Blade Elder took two chairs for them out of her storage ring and settled in to watch Elder Ling's responses to her new appearance.

They were still in the middle of a crowd at the site of the Sect Battle, and thousands of Cultivators had been in the immediate area when Elder Ling's body suddenly regressed through the years, with an aura of otherworldly power surrounding her that they all found vaguely familiar, but completely unidentifiable at the same time.

The feeling was that they should know it, but somehow the nature of it defied them, the way that the truth of Divinity did, so many assumed that Cain had used a Divine Level Technique on Elder Ling to rewind time's effects on her body.

That sort of thing was simple for Divinities, and they often did it to change their appearance if they wanted to look wise or blend in with a youthful crowd since hiding their aura from lesser Cultivators was child's play to them.

The pure shock on her face as one of her Disciples brought out a full body mirror, showing her renewed form and the familiar sight of a youthful face that had faded well over a century ago slowly faded to happy tears as she touched her face, still staring at the mirror.

"It's still me, the old me, exactly as I remember it. I don't know how you did it, but it really is Transfiguration. There is nothing to dispel. I am just young again." She managed to say in barely more than a whisper.

"You understand that we will be at your Sect Camp in the morning to request a seminar on how exactly you can just create beauties with energy manipulation, right?" An Immortal standing back in the crowd asked, but Cain shook his head.

"That is, unfortunately, a Sect Secret and not something that I can teach to the masses. But for the right price, I would be willing to use it once or twice more. Perhaps you would like to be a Jade Beauty Elder?" Cain responded with a smirk.

"Don't tempt me. I love all beauties and would never get any cultivation done if I were one myself." The old man laughed, drawing most of the men around him into his laughter.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 628 628

The alteration of Elder Ling made almost as much of an uproar as the downfall of the Red Scorpion Sect had. Most of the Immortals had sacrificed not only their youth but almost all of their lifespan to achieve their goals and live on eternally in the bodies of senior citizens. The prospect of returning to their youth, through Elixers, Divine Skills, or any other means they could manage, was an obsession for many that consumed their lives for many years until they moved on with attempting to reach Divinity, where it would no longer matter.

The first to test the veracity of Cain's abilities was Elder Chen, the Lotus Blossom Sect Elder, who walked up behind her and wrapped the Elder's body in her arms.

"Oh, that is perfect. Young, supple, and perfectly toned, and I do believe that her energy flows more freely than ever before. A return to your youth, without the time spent on damaging techniques in an effort to reach Immortality before you died of old age, has done wonders for you, Elder Ling."

Elder Ling gasped at the unexpected contact. "Where do you think you are touching, woman?"

Elder Chen just laughed and released her, only to take Elder Ling's hair between her fingers and sift through it. "The hair is not dyed. It is thick and flexible again, as it should be for a young woman in her mid-twenties. [Transfiguration] really is an incredible skill."

"Did you really doubt me? Of course, I knew how to use a skill if I was going to do it in public like this. When I ask to experiment on you in private, that is when you need to worry about what I have in mind." Cain replied proudly.

"I don't think that came out the way you wanted it to, Sect Master," Penny informed him quietly.

"Bah, they get what I meant. Now, let's head to the Shadowed Blade, as they have graciously invited us for dinner." Cain told his Disciples, taking the two Lotus Blossom Elders by the hand and dragging them with him, leaving their Disciples to chase after the group.

The Shadowed Blade Sect had a suspiciously large gap between it and the Sects who had camped around them, suggesting to Cain that they were somewhat feared among the gathered Cultivators here. Their Disciples had done fairly well in the Outer Sect competition but hadn't made the finals, so Cain had underestimated them.

The fact that their Outer Sect didn't do as well as hoped could have been the result of an unlucky matchup against a Sect that was familiar with their tricks or a hard counter

for their style, which Cain believed to be shadow related since they had chosen to camp in the trees, instead of the open where it was easier to actually set up a camp.

"Elder Dragon Tooth, who have you found today?" The Elder in charge of the guard duty asked as they entered the trees, more curious than hostile.

"The lone male and the Disciples in Peach Robes are the Forbidden Treasure Sect, who just defeated the Red Scorpions in open combat. Then we have Elders Ling and Chen of the Lotus Blossom Sect and their disciples." The Elder responded, amusement visible in her eyes, the only part of her face visible through the cloth mask.

"Elder Ling Chen, it is a pleasure to meet you and your lovely disciples." The man greeted Elder Chen, though he was looking straight at Elder Ling.

"She is Elder Chen, and I am Elder Ling." She informed the Elder with a frown that promised violence if he made that mistake again.

Cain must not have been hiding his amusement as well as he thought because the Elder looked straight at him after being admonished. "I have heard of you, the trickster Sect Master, whose skills take every opponent off guard. Congratulations on winning, and I will look forward to the story, but I must ask, what have you been doing to the Lotus Blossom Sect Elders?"

"That's hardly a topic for polite company," Cain replied, deadpan, before taking a smack to the back of the head from Elder Ling.

"He used [Transfiguration] to return me to a more youthful appearance. Now, Disciples, take note. Men's minds are warped by testosterone, and they think of perverted things constantly."

Elder Ling's words only made Cain laugh harder. "You know, you're no fun at all. The look on his face was incredible. I am sorry Elder, but my implication was misleading. The appearance is only due to a skill I used on her. But she is lovely, isn't she? It's a shame we would have to fight our way through Elder Chen to get to her."

Elder Chen nodded in agreement, and Elder Ling sighed. "You lot don't get better, do you? Now, let's see what you are planning for a victory meal."

Once she finished speaking, Elder Ling let slip a hint of her Immortal Aura, warning away all of the youngsters who might think she was one of the Disciples due to the return of her youthful face.

"You said that you did the same thing to Tena. To reverse the years, or did you change her appearance as well?" Elder Dragon Tooth asked Cain as they made their way to the kitchens.

"A total change. She needed a new lease on life, and I offered her that as my Disciple. She asked me to make her cute like Luna, and that is exactly what I did." Cain replied.

"If you ask a favor of Sect Master Cain, be very clear about what you are asking, or he will interpret it any way that he likes. I did not expect to look so young again, no matter how cute I am." Tena informed the Shadowed Blade Elder.

"So it can change appearances entirely. That is valuable information. We will have to discuss possible payment for that skill after dinner. I know you said that it was a Sect Secret, but surely we can come up with something?" The Shadowed Blade Elder asked.

"We will see. We all know that truly useful skills don't come cheap. This isn't a simple shower, like the skill that I taught at the Symposium." Cain replied noncommittally.

"Oh, we have that one as well. We had a disciple there who managed a full copy, and the Inscriptionists are working on a way to make it into talismans so that we can put up mobile showers everywhere. We take on a lot of infiltration work, and a strong odor will get you caught by even the laziest of guard dogs in an instant.

Unlike Cultivators who usually plug their noses with energy to hide the scent of unwashed bodies and filthy cities, guard animals won't make that mistake.

"See, this is a Sect that knows what is important. I never thought of plugging my nose with energy, though. That's genius. I just thought everyone was used to the fact that they smelled and could ignore it." Luna exclaimed, finally realizing how everyone else was tolerating it.

"Did you forget to teach her that trick?" Elder Ling asked Cain.

"I forgot about it. I just accepted that people stink. It is a simple truth and a clear indicator of what Realm you are in. At least here, they have proper indoor plumbing. In some places I have traveled, an outdoor latrine is the height of civilization, and using clean water for bathing is considered wasteful." Cain replied, thinking of some of the villages in the Beginner's Valley.

Even in the camps, they had set up enchanted toilets in outhouse buildings. A big step up from an open pit latrine.

The kitchen staff was getting ready for them, and Cain noticed how they cooked was unique. Instead of using high-quality ingredients, they added high-quality energy to the cooking and let everything recombine as if the ingredients were high quality, to begin with.

The process was intriguing, and Cain forgot all about the people around him to go watch the staff work.

Elder Dragon Tooth watched in amusement as Cain inspected the staff, then scanned through the crowd, looking for someone and smiling when he found the head chef.

"Interesting. I hadn't thought of that. Tell me, where did you learn this technique? My foodies will forever love you for today's learning experience." Cain asked the chef who had come over to ask what he was doing in her kitchen.

"It is a Sect skill that has been passed down through the ages. It isn't common in this world, but on some of the others that the Shadowed Blade operates on, it is considered essential knowledge for every kitchen." She replied.

"I can see why. Now that I know it, I don't think I will be returning to the old way of simply roasting things over a fire. It just seems so barbaric now that I have seen a better way." Cain agreed.

"Hold up, what do you mean now that you know it? Seeing this technique one time isn't enough to learn it. It takes years of concentrated effort to learn the fine energy control needed to manage even the simplest dish." The Elder who was in charge of the guards asked.

He had followed them in, trailing Elder Ling like a lost puppy, hoping she would show him some attention.

"It is a particular skill that I have gained. It allows perfect recall of a skill that I have seen. I might not be able to manage everything that your Sect can, but I can at least duplicate the technique." Cain explained while Luna snuck around him to record everyone in the kitchen as well.

Never again could she be denied the good cakes if she could just merge with someone who could turn mundane ingredients into the good stuff.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

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"That I will have to see to believe. Chef, could you give us a bit of space to work? I know you are busy with the preparations for the victory feast, but even one oven and counter would be enough for us to see if Sect Master Cain can actually do what he says.

We all know that he can fight, but learning an advanced trade skill in an instant is a technique that even I have never heard of." Elder Dragon Tooth requested.

"I saw that coming. There is already a counter for you to work at." The chef agreed.

"The way I use the skill isn't quite what you might expect. Though, since you have seen both me and my disciples fight, it might not be much of a shock to you." Cain explained, then made a Puppet Clone of the chef when they reached their station.

He frowned for a second, and with a flip of his hand, the Puppet changed forms, becoming Misha in a sundress and apron, smiling happily at him.

"There, much better. What will we be making first?" Cain asked.

"It hurts the brain less if you try not to think about what you have seen him do," Penny informed the Shadowed Blade Sect Elders, including the chef, who had just seen the clone of herself transform into an entirely new person, who looked a lot like a traditional farm wife.

"Alright, so you use the skill by copying the one who has it, and then you learn it from them. That is unique but not unheard of. We have a few training aids that create images or magical golems to demonstrate things for us." Elder Dragon Tooth noted, writing it down in a notepad she brought out of her storage ring.

"Can chef be a path to Divinity? I see great potential in this skill." Luna asked.

"I don't think so. It might be possible, but I have never heard of someone taking this skill that high, much less being able to base their own advancement around a single skill like that." The chef replied sadly.

"That's too bad. I would much rather cook and eat all day than do other stuff." Luna told her.

The Chef patted her head. "I totally understand little one. I was the same way, and once I reached Immortality, I gave up on the constant search for power and focused on life skills to make my life a bit more comfortable every day. I don't think that your Sect Master will let you slide like that, though, your Sect is much smaller, and there aren't tens of thousands of other candidates with more potential than you who might accomplish what you gave up on."

Luna sighed. "To make it worse, he's not just my Sect Master. He's also my Dad. He never lets me slide."

The rest of the Disciples gave her an incredulous look at that. Cain let Luna get away with anything she wanted, as long as it wasn't too dangerous. Even Penny was more strict with her than he was.

The Puppet had started on a dish while they were talking, assembling potatoes, ground meat, and some vegetables from the supplied ingredients and beginning to chop everything up for her dish.

It wasn't actually Misha. Cain had only made it look like her, so he wondered what had come into the puppet's mind to cause it to take initiative. They were intelligent beings and autonomous, but usually, they would wait for directions before beginning dinner.

Perhaps it was because of the increase in his own power level since the Puppets mimicked his level? That might be it, giving them more initiative. Hopefully, it didn't harm their personality.

Everyone watched as she used the advanced techniques of the Head Chef and combined the vegetables into a thick gravy while the potatoes cooked. She mashed them with a swirl of energy and began to dish the meal onto small plates. While the meat was cooked in the oven, surrounded by a swirl of energy.

She pulled the dish from the oven with a bit of wind magic and set it on the counter to slice.

Meatloaf and mashed potatoes were served exactly the way that the cafe in the Transfer Village made it.

"Thank you. Now that is a truly nostalgic dish. No matter how many times I have it, I never get sick of meatloaf and mashed potatoes." Cain congratulated her, giving the puppet a side-armed hug that made her blush and hide her face in embarrassment.

The Shadowed Blade Elders began to laugh, looking at the Chef, who was giving the puppet a confused look.

"It's you, exactly you, but without the time to get used to the attention. I remember the first day you were in the kitchen, and the old Kitchen Elder gave you a hug after you made a mistake. You did exactly the same thing." Elder Dragon Tooth reminded her, making the Head Chef blush a little at the memory.

"How intriguing. You made it look and act like me, then changed the appearance while keeping the personality intact. These puppets of yours could be very useful training tools." The Head Chef informed Cain.

"They are a combination of quite a few different skills combined. Young Luna is learning the basics of the technique, but she is on a different path, so she needs an actual puppet as the base and can't just change the appearance the way I can. Instead, she chose to focus on combat skills and grow her own personal combat abilities as a Princess of War." Cain explained.



"Wait until the next battle. I think I have the technique down now. I will be able to share the benefit of my greatness with the whole Sect." Luna told them proudly.

Most of the crowd took it as a joke, but the other Disciples knew about the System and the skills Luna was expecting to get. With all the levels that they gained from this last battle and the quest completions, she should have enough points to finish the entire Class Skill tree in one go.

It was a totally broken life mechanic, just catapulting them through decades of training in an instant by choosing the Skill from their Skill Trees, but none of them would choose to go back to the traditional way now that they had sampled life with a Class.

Luna was quiet for a few moments as she picked every skill in the tree, finally reaching the last option and getting the Crown that had been her entire reason for picking this class in the first place. She barely managed to avoid putting it on the instant that she obtained the skill, but now that she had it, she was much happier.

[Crown of The War Princess] Grants the Princess and her Allies (10x Level) percent added damage.

Even her dad couldn't do something that cool. Or maybe he could, now that she could. That was totally cheating. But she had her crown, and that was all that mattered.

The kitchen was organized chaos, with assistants running in every direction as they prepared to turn out a victory feast suitable for the Sect and their anticipated guests. The Shadowed Blade intimidated a lot of Sects, so the numbers would be limited, but they were expecting a large number of Immortals to come here to slake their curiosity, both about the Shadowed Blade Sect's rumored cooking skills and the Sect Master with the damaged core who could solo an entire Sect on his own.

That wasn't something that you saw every day, and it certainly wasn't something that would encourage you to insult him in the future, so every Sect who was on good enough terms with the Shadowed Blade would send at least one representative to the dinner.

A sharp whack drew everyone's attention back to the kitchen, where the Head Chef had hit someone with a wooden switch, sending them scurrying away and laughing. Cain's puppet was blushing furiously while the Head Chef guarded her like a mother hen, and the Elders realized what the problem was.

The Disciples had learned that the puppet had fun reactions to being teased, but the Head Chef recognized them as her own youthful reactions, so she was guarding the Puppet to prevent the Kitchen Duty disciples from acting out.

"Should I send her away? Or I can make some more who are harder to intimidate." Cain asked the Head Chef.

"We have plenty of staff, but what would you replace her with that our Disciples couldn't intimidate?" She asked, intrigued.

"I was thinking of Succubi. You can't intimidate them, and flirting with them never ends the way that you expect it to." Cain suggested.

"VETO." Elder Dragon Tooth called out.

"We have had an incident with a Succubus loose in the Sect before, and I'm not dealing with that again." She clarified.

"Oh, what a week that was. Hundreds of exhausted and half-dead Disciples, all staunchly refusing to admit how they got in that condition like we couldn't recognize the signs of a demon attack. Finding the portal that had opened to the demon realm took forever, and it took even longer to find that damnable Succubus. They have an uncanny way of convincing people to hide them." The Elder from guard duty agreed.

"The only Succubus I know married a Vampire. They're such a cute couple." Luna told them innocently, forgetting for a moment that she wasn't supposed to mention things about the other world that involved nonhumans.

"A Vampire and a Succubus? Now that's a perfect pairing. They can feed off each other, and neither one will get tired, so they can sate themselves until they're bored." Elder Ling agreed, shocking the others around her.

"Thanks for that thought. I will be trying to scrub it from my memory for days." Elder Chen muttered.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 630 630

Luna's innocent mind had entirely missed why the others might find the thought of a demon, and a Vampire pairing might be disturbing, so she just changed topics to the upcoming dinner.

"Hey, there are a lot of new people here. I think we know that one. It's the lady who was sitting next to us in the auditorium and the guy who got all pissed off when he lost his gambling money. Oh, the guy who can't eat peanut butter is here too. Hi people." She called out, waving happily.

"Hello, Miss Luna and the Forbidden Treasure Sect. Thank you to the Shadowed Blade Sect for hosting a celebration dinner tonight so that our Male Elders could attend. The Lotus Blossom is a kind sect, but the rules so somewhat limit the guest list." The Elder, who had been sitting next to them for the entire competition, greeted the group.

"Fantastic battle strategy, Sect Master Cain. Congratulations on your win." An Elder in red robes with a matching dyed beard greeted Cain.

"Thank you. I would have to place it rather low on the scale of strategic victories, but it was effective." Cain agreed.

Once he had greeted Cain and moved on, a procession of meaningless platitudes from Cultivators that wanted to try to get in his good books began, keeping Cain occupied for most of the evening.

By comparison, the Disciples had it easy. The ones who wanted to get answers from them were mostly all other disciples, curious about cultivation techniques, breakthrough methods, and other technical information that would help their quest to gain power.

The real winners of the day were the Shadowed Blade Sect, whose food and hospitality were the talk of the encampment by the end of the evening, with everyone raving about how welcoming they were and the special dishes that they had prepared just for the victory celebration of a small Sect that couldn't bring them much benefit.

Unlike many of the Sects who wanted to suck up to Cain, the Shadowed Blade was in no real danger of being overrun by him, no matter what tricks he used against them, as they had Divine Realm Cultivators in this world who could crush such a force in an instant.

It was clear to Cain that many of the other Sects were bitter about this fact, as their Sect Masters were often stuck in the later stages of Immortal, while their Core Strength was in either the late Spirit Realm or early into their Immortality.

Again, this made Cain wonder if he had been brought to a beginner's area for the Immortal Plane, but the Elders of the Shadowed Blade assured him that this was normal for any Immortal world. Only one in fifty could ever reach those heights, but it was an incredible difference compared to the lower Planes.

They had a point, Cain's world had evicted him even before he had made it close to Immortality, so the fact that the whole world wasn't full of Immortals did make some sense here.

Plus, there was the horny bard factor to account for, where the suave among the Cultivators talked themselves under many skirts and had large numbers of children. If everyone made it to Immortality, the place would be positively overrun with humans.

When it got close to Midnight, Cain went to search for his Disciples, planning to take them back to Camp so they could get up early to get seats for the Inner Sect competition beginning in the morning.

Now that they weren't competitors, they would have to queue with everyone else to get into the Stadium, and he had been told that the lines were far worse than they were for the outer Sect competition. The line for the Outer Sect fights was already hours long, just after dawn, so if they wanted to get a seat, they would have to be there very early.

The only saving grace was that due to the power level of the fights, they would be using all four stadiums at the same time, giving the combatants room to move. That meant four times as many seats would be available to meet the demand, and he just had to pick the one with the least exciting sounding matches and, therefore, the shortest lines.

"You look like you're contemplating something." The man with Violet eyes asked Cain, appearing out of nowhere.

"How to get good seats for tomorrow's competition. I am told it will be stupidly crowded since everyone who has been relaxing out here will want to be in a stadium to watch the matches." Cain replied, getting used to the man's randomness.

"Go to stadium four. It is the women's division, and it is usually only half full of old perverts and the female Sects. You will likely get priority seating if you show up there since your team is all female and won the entire Outer Sect division." The man replied as if it was obvious.

"See, this is where a guide comes in handy. I didn't realize that they were segregated for the Inner Sect fights. That will make things more interesting." Cain agreed.

"And then you can create yourself a harem of new beauties. That's a useful skill to have, but I don't think my wife would approve of me using it." The cultivator laughed.

"I'm not certain mine would either. That's why I don't make a Harem out of them." Cain replied, making him laugh even harder.

"Well, good luck tomorrow. I'm out again. This game of tag is getting intense." The man left again without warning, leaving Cain confused about what he meant, but this time he noticed something change. Just after he left, a few new faces appeared, in the same outfit that he was wearing, but looking incredibly annoyed.

[I think he is training his disciples in search techniques] Oath Breaker offered.

That made a lot of sense to Cain. If he was powerful enough to vanish from where he was without any warning, there must be some way to track someone using a skill like that to travel, and it would be necessary for his Disciples to learn it.

He did feel a little bad for them, though. If they were in training, they had been searching for him for most of a week now without luck.

"Alright, we can return to the tent. I have learned everything that I need to know for the night." Luna informed Cain as he watched the black-robed Cultivators search the area with some sort of skill before sighing and vanishing again.

"You learned how to make the Cherry Chocolate Cake without needing Mythic Cherries?" Cain asked.

"I also learned how to make a new form of puff with whipped cream in the middle. But yes, I learned how to make the good cake with common ingredients." Luna agreed.

Penny looked less annoyed than Cain expected, so she must have accepted that Luna would be making baked goods on a regular basis beginning tomorrow, or she had concocted a plan to thwart Luna from becoming too hyper from the enhanced cherries.

When he had tracked down the whole group, including Jen, who seemed to be incredibly popular with the young men, Cain led the group back to their tent for the evening.

Bright and early in the morning, Cain created puppets to make a meal for the Sect and woke up his Disciples.

"Come on. We are going to watch the Inner Sect ladies fight. We need to cheer on the Lotus Blossom, and there is food ready." Cain called into the other side of the tent, where a pile of bodies had formed around Penny in her oversized wolf transformation.

"We are going to miss the chefs once you leave this place, even if you are training replacements." Elder Ling sighed, the pout on her now youthful face tempting Cain to pinch her cheeks.

"It will be a hard adjustment, but I have left the Puppets here so that they can run the classes while we are at the competition, so nobody is missing out on training. They will be capable of making decent meals in no time, trust me."

"Where were you headed before you got sidetracked and ended up here?" One of the Disciples who had been talking with Luna asked curiously.

"We were going to go to Dragon Mountain and see if the Ancient Dragon had an interesting quest for us. My disciples' method relies on experiences to build their strength at its maximum potential, so simply sitting around actually slows their progress.

Well, unless we keep running into people like the Red Scorpions who volunteer to be made an example of and help them grow." Cain added.

"I don't think you're going to run into another Sect that foolhardy for a while. Not after what happened the last time, but there is the scavenger hunt if you are staying here until the very end.

It's an event for the Sects to partake in on their way home. The hosts hide a number of magical items and rare resources through the region, and the Sects heading home hunt for them as they leave." She offered.

A whole season here was much too long, they would want to be gone before that, or they would be headed to Dragon Mountain just as winter began to set in.

Cain wasn't too worried about the weather at home, but the weather here could be much different and much more dangerous. Not to mention the chances of being attacked in a snowstorm.

"I will keep it in mind, but I think we will likely leave before then so that we can get to our next destination before the winter gets too bad."

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 631 631

As they made their way to the fights, Cain reiterated the reason that they were attending the competition in the first place because he knew that at least one of his Disciples had a very short attention span when the topic wasn't food.

"Alright, as you watch the various techniques, keep in mind any that might fit well with your style. We want to get everyone their optimal advancement path based on what you like, and I will be making you all custom skill books later, so pay close attention to the matches." He reminded them.

Elder Ling thought that was a bit overboard, custom creating skill manuscripts for every disciple, but in retrospect, it wasn't that much different than their practice of letting the Disciples pick something they liked from the library. It was just done in real-time instead of collected over the centuries.

"Now that I have my crown, I want something really cool. Neffie got to be the overlord of Port Nefheim, so being a mere Princess of War forever wouldn't be a great story to tell her when we meet again.

Plus, who knows what sort of cool things she's gotten to do since we left? She might have managed to get an even cooler title than Overlord by now." Luna declared.

"The daughter of my best friend and a close friend of Luna's. She has a particular knack for military leadership and city operations, so she is in charge of a port city back home." Cain explained to the confused Cultivators of the Lotus Blossom Sect.

"Oh, that is too cool. Were her parents the leaders of the city before her?" One of the disciples asked Luna.

"Nope, Sect Master Cain built the city so that he would have a trading port on that continent for his vessels to land at and a place for his members to sleep before they went into the forest to fight the giant reptiles," Luna told her, causing even more confusion.

"You really don't do things in small measures, do you? How do you even establish a new city on a whim?" The disciple asked Cain.

"When you have thousands of people following you, it's easy. Plus, there wasn't another friendly port for the sailors because of the danger of the wildlife in the area. They might not breathe fire or fly, but the local wildlife was nearly as dangerous as a dragon the same size. Because of that, there weren't a lot of ports open, and the ones that were open were very picky about who they let in, so some sailors couldn't trade with the continent at all." Cain told her.

"Oh, I get it now. It's like setting up a branch location of a sect near the beach and letting the city grow up around it. That's what the Blue Crush Sect did with their Ocean Branch. They just set up a training location that stayed for years, and it turned into a city, with docks and trading posts and everything, because they were there to protect the mundane humans from danger."

The timeline was different, as Cain used Golems to actually build the city, but the concept was the same. It was empty until people who saw the opportunity started to show up and fill it in and expand it.

"Not a bad analogy. Now, what will we be picking for today's snack? I know everyone is partied out, and I've got a lunch packed, but there is always a need for an afternoon snack when the matches start to drag on." Cain asked, diverting the topic away from his past.

Elder Ling smiled at him, then took out a small bag from her storage ring. "I came prepared today. I managed to obtain a large amount of peanut brittle for the evening, a good mix of sugar and protein to keep the Disciples' attention on the matches.

As you said, there is a lot to be learned by watching the other Sects fight. Even if they are not quite your own style, you can pick up tricks that might help your own fighting technique or teach you to defend against others."



"Oh, nice call. It looks like the lineup for this arena is shorter as well. The streets aren't nearly as crowded as the ones by the other arenas we have passed. The vendors are different as well. More accessories, pretty things, and not nearly as many sketchy get strong quick schemes." Cain observed.

Elder Ling nodded. "Getting things done is important, but every woman knows that it is also important to look good doing it."

Cain pondered that advice for a while, then handed Penny a bag full of coins and motioned his Disciples toward the stalls. "Go, pick something for yourselves within that budget. It seems I have been neglecting the smaller details."

That made the girls laugh. Cain might not understand a woman's heart, but he was always generous enough that they didn't lack any of the basics.

The area that they were in had a wide variety of things that a cultivator would like. Inscription books with fancy covers, ornamental sword sheathes and covers, clothing with hidden pockets, hair accessories that doubled as weapons, storage rings, and comfortable shoes with hidden weapons.

Hidden weapons were definitely the prevailing theme of this district, but the craftsmanship was amazing, and they would all pass as daily worn items. Cain wondered if that was simply due to the nature of the cultivation style that the locals preferred, where sneak attacks and seduction replaced physical strength as the dominant battle technique.

He had seen them fight, and thanks to their cultivation, it wasn't necessarily true that a female cultivator would be physically weaker than a male near her own rank if they were training in similar styles.

They were almost to the arena when an item caught Cain's attention. According to his scan, it was a [Tome of Wholistic Body Refining], a rank S skill that should be able to help a transfer or cultivator increase their body quality up to Mythic with repeated use.

"Shopkeeper, how much do you want for that book on the shelf?" Cain asked.

It was dusty and half tucked under other items, looking forgotten, but thanks to the System identifying it as a usable item, Cain had noticed it right away among the trinkets.

"That? It's the ravings of a madman, not a cultivation manual. Plus, it's written in a foreign language. But it's got a hint of magic to it, so I can't bring myself to let it go for nothing." The man at the counter rambled.

"Then how about we trade? You have a fine collection of blade accessories, so I will offer you one Magical blade for the book." Cain proposed, then placed an Epic Quality katana on the counter.

It was well suited to the nimble style that many of the sects used, so it shouldn't be hard for the shop to sell such a blade. They could even deck it out with their fancy trinkets and mark them way up when they sold them with it.

The shopkeeper looked suspiciously at the blade, then the book and Cain could hear her mind trying to decipher if Cain knew something about the book that she did not.

"It's not as high of a price as you think. I make this sort of blade myself, so it costs me far less than an item I had traded for." Cain explained.

That was a lie. It was one of the random items he grabbed from the Guild Bank to practice advanced Rune Crafting on before they left the Library. But it was still good enough to serve the purpose and trade for the Skill Book.

"In that case, I won't hold back. The book is yours for the taking." The shopkeeper offered, handing Cain the dusty tome, which he immediately put in his inventory to prevent damage to the aged manuscript.

It wouldn't do him any good, as he was already at Spirit Quality in body and Awakening, but this tome was a treasure trove for the Disciples. They were all regular humans with regular human modifiers, and advancing them to Mythic, even if it took time, was going to be a huge power increase for their combat skills.

Even for Sabbat, who was entirely a ranged caster, it would be an improvement, as a Mythic Body got a higher modifier to the total Mana stored.

Cain looked around before he left, not finding anything else of interest, but there was a rather unique shop next door where all of his Disciples had gathered.

They sold nothing but hair accessories, mostly enchanted and sold with a gimmick. They were arranged by design and color only, and it was up to the buyer to determine the quality and effect of the item by analyzing its aura, among thousands of others.

They also weren't allowed to pick it up and make the task easier on themselves, so Cain was certain that most were simply guessing, but for his Disciples, with the System, it was a much easier task. They only had to find the good items among the thousands of them displayed.

The woman running the shop looked suspiciously at Cain as he entered, wondering if the Elder was going to help his disciples, but Cain only looked around for a moment, then picked out a pair of hair sticks that were carved in the shape of a Lamia.

A simple uncommon quality magical item that had the additional effect of restoring tousled hair to the state it was in when the hairpins were worn. But to Cain, this was the true prize of the shop. The long white sticks with red markings and red hair for the

Lamia's upper body looked remarkably like Cyrene. If he hadn't found them first, there was no doubt that Luna would have picked it herself.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 632 632 Giving Them Ideas

Once everyone had picked an item from the accessory shop, which ended up not having any truly outstanding items at all mixed into the pretty trinkets, the procession made their way to the arena where they planned to watch the Inner Sect Disciples compete.

"It's a good thing we came early. The lineup is pretty long." Elder Ling observed.

Long, in this case, meant most of a city block, as opposed to the four or five blocks that the other stadiums boasted at every entrance.

"It's the Forbidden Treasure Sect. Congratulations on your win in the Outer Sect competition." The group in front of them greeted them as they moved into line.

"Thank you. It was a pleasure showing those arrogant disciples that they shouldn't look down on us." Luna replied with a smile.

"I bet. The last time an all-female team won it was the Shadowed Blade Sect, and they mostly got lucky with Sects that couldn't deal with their speed and stealth." A disciple from the group in front of the one that they were talking to answered.

"Too many cultivators forget that there is more to life than fighting and meditation. Devoting your entire life to trying to extend your life seems like such a waste when there are so many other things you could enjoy along the way." Cain told the Elder of the Sect in front of them with a wink that made the Immortal laugh.

"Is that how you ended up getting your core shattered?" The woman countered.

"A wise man once said that bedding a divine woman will bring divine retribution. From what I know, that actually refers to her husband." Cain joked, making all the Immortals chuckle.

"At least you lived to tell the tale. I hear that Miss Luna is your biological daughter. Might the two topics be related?" The Elder asked slyly.

"Why would he have to steal my mother? She literally leads a Cult dedicated to worshipping him." Luna asked innocently while all the women present, both disciples and Elders, gave Cain an incredulous look.

"It seems that you have had an interesting time living your life for more than cultivation and battle." Elder Ling told Cain with a smirk.

"It's not as bad as it sounds. Well, from one point of view, maybe it is, but she started the Cult. It's not like I took advantage of some brainwashed worshipper." Cain replied.

"I am not certain that it can be called commendable, but it is certainly less despicable than what I had thought you had done in order to conceive a child." An Elder further up the line reluctantly agreed.

"It worked out well for me. Because of the time flow differences between the world that we were on and the one where his other lover is, I got to be the firstborn." Luna replied proudly, not helping things at all.

"I think we will need to be seated to hear the rest of this story. Or better yet, we can pretend that we didn't hear it at all, and the disciples with overactive imaginations won't have any more fuel for late-night fantasies." One of the Elders joked.

"Then don't tell them that he can use [Transmogrification]," Tena added, throwing fuel on the fire.

"You lot are just loving this opportunity to cause trouble, aren't you? Keep moving forward, or we are going to lose our spot in line. They're bringing people in pretty quickly." Cain admonished his disciples.

"Even more than I had expected to, yes." Tena agreed but dutifully followed along with the group so that they kept up with the flow of the spectators into the stadium.

"We should get seats up close this time. I want to see all the subtle details in case something gives me an idea about how I want to progress next." Luna suggested.

"I think we are going through quests too quickly these days. You didn't even have a chance to wear the Tiara that you invested into an entire skill path for. Maybe you should hold off until you have had time to really master the last set of skills instead of pushing forward with new ones." Cain suggested.

"I suspect that those are all very valid points, but consider this. New and shiny skill options." Luna countered, making the other Disciples facepalm.

"I don't think that is going to convince him, Luna." Penny pointed out.

"Why not? It's a very good point."

The Lycan considered it for a moment, then phrased it in a way that even Luna would grasp immediately. "It's like asking for a new flavor of cake, but you ate the last one so fast you didn't even have time to taste it."

Luna looked horrified at the idea and was deep in contemplation all the way to their seats. Even as the vendors entered the stadium, selling roasted nuts and mugs of weak alcohol, she was still absorbed in her thoughts.

"Having a moment of epiphany?" Tena whispered to Luna as the other girl remained lost in thought.

"Have I really treated life like an underappreciated flavor of cake and failed to thoroughly enjoy and appreciate all that I have been blessed with? Am I nothing more than mediocre cake? I must work harder to fully utilize my skills once we are back on the road again." Luna replied.

"Of course, it was the cake reference that finally got through to her. I think the problem is that you have had things too easy with Master Cain guiding you through everything, so you haven't had to work for every tiny advancement the way that most have to." Penny suggested.

"Oh, you are right. Like back home when we forcefully level up disciples. They pass out from the overload, and when they wake up, they are dozens or hundreds of times more powerful than they were before. But it takes them forever to get used to using their skills properly since they didn't have to fight their way up on their own." Luna exclaimed, finally putting all the pieces together.

Cain nodded happily, seeing that she finally understood the situation, and gave her a pat on the head. However, every other eye in the vicinity was firmly fixed on him, clearly expecting some sort of explanation.

"What? Why is everyone looking at me like that?" Cain asked.

"You can forcefully advance disciples through major portions of their training in a single event while they are unconscious?" Elder Ling asked, shock the only expression visible on her face.

"They actually pass out because of the process. It's a bit mentally taxing. But yes. I have somewhat limited the effect with these disciples, but even then, the training method that I taught them passively increases their advancement rate, so they are flying through their cultivation far faster than should otherwise be possible.

I know you are all eager to know the method, but I am afraid that it is a Sect Secret that I simply can't divulge to the public." Cain informed her.

Elder Ling gave Cain an adorable pleading look that was suspiciously similar to the one that Luna employed when she really, really wanted something. Sabbat leaned over to whisper to Penny and Tena, giving her fellow disciples a conspiratorial look.

"There goes the Sect Secret. We all know that he's weak in two things in this life. Pretty women and that look."

"An excellent try, but you forgot one vital factor," Cain told Elder Ling, then tapped her nose with his forefinger, making her sneeze.

"What did I miss? I swear I have the technique correct." Elder Ling pouted.

"The face isn't a solo technique. You need to add in the correct pleading posture. You are still too rigid from decades of teaching Disciples and upholding your image. But practice a little more, and you will be able to break hearts with a single look." Cain replied with a smirk.

"Bah, I swear I will get it right soon." Elder Ling told him, then shook her head. It was easier to give up on getting that secret from him for now. Once she had mastered the pleading look technique and his guard was lowered, she could try again.

"The hurdle of Master Cain is too high. If you used that skill on any other man, they might well turn over their own Sect Elder to you without questions." One of the Elders that was sitting nearby laughed, then stuck out her tongue at Elder Ling, who was giving her a dirty look.

"Forget the secret. I need to learn that technique. For a sugar trap assassin, that technique would be devastating with a face like yours." A female Elder from the Shadowed Blade Sect added very seriously.

"Sure, you can make fun of me now, but I swear that it is an actual technique." Elder Ling replied.

"Oh, I am certain that it is. But if you're not careful, it will lead to more than just answers." The assassin teased, enjoying the flustered state of the Lotus Blossom Elder.

"Erase that idea from your mind, Disciples." Elder Ling informed her followers.

She might not be able to read minds the way that Cain can, but even she could tell that their minds had taken a turn for the obscene.

"How did we even end up on this topic? I only wanted to know how to speed up my Disciples' cultivation. Forget it. The fights are about to start. Who is sitting in our area? We will cheer for your team to help motivate them." Elder Ling offered, changing the topic to save herself from further harassment.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 633 633

Though the Female Sects matches weren't as popular as the open-class matches, there was no shortage of advanced skills and incredible matches on display that morning.

So far, only one of the Sects seated in their vicinity had been up, a technical Sect that specialized in wisdom-based cultivation. Their unique method allowed them to imbue knowledge that they gained with lasting energy, allowing for perfect recall and increasing their personal power as they studied.

For a certain mindset, it was an incredible technique, as it only required one to obtain and memorize a continual stream of knowledge to advance. Unfortunately, the end result was not very impressive in terms of combat power. It was clear that they all knew this, and even their Elder was impressed with the four minutes that they held out against a mediocre blade cultivation Sect team.

The whole point of them coming here was to gain more knowledge, and studying combat techniques in isolation only gave them so much data to build off. Fighting and learning from their opponents, then analyzing the results afterward, was highly beneficial to the team members.

The only sad part was that none of the morning teams used skills that Cain's disciples weren't already very familiar with from the Outer Sect competition. The Outer Disciples had been much better than usual, and they had seen everything that the teams this morning could do on display earlier in the week.

Since the Stadium had some vacant seats even halfway through the day, the matches didn't stop for lunch. They just let the spectators come and go, giving them a hand stamp to get back in. Cain's team and the Lotus Blossom Sect had no need of that, as they packed a lunch, and the Shadowed Blade very rarely bothered with food stalls, as they had so many qualified chefs within their sect.

"Oh, we are up next. Don't expect much. Our opponent is one of the weaker teams."  
The Shadowed Blade Sect Elder informed them.

The opponent wasn't just weaker, they looked positively terrified to hear the announcement that they would be facing the Shadowed Blade Sect, but they steeled themselves for battle, unwilling to forfeit without even trying to fight back.



The Sect name might be scary, but they hadn't seen the team in action yet, even if it was the all-ladies secondary team that the Shadowed Blade had prepared for this arena while their Championship Team, as the Elder called them, fought in the main matches.

They were an assassination Sect, though, even if they claimed to have reformed a long time ago and offered a variety of bodyguard services and staff training as well as off-the-books missions. They didn't rely on brute physical strength, so there was no guarantee that this team was any weaker than the other, and it seemed that everyone present knew it.

The disciples all perked up, hoping that they would get some inspiration from this match. Even if the opponent was weak, they might still learn something.

That wasn't an option today, though. All five of the Shadowed Blade team members started the fight with [Shadow Step] to rapidly approach their targets and knocked four out of five out with a single strike.

The team leader managed to block the attack of the Shadowed Blade team leader, and a short back-and-forth unarmed fight followed before the Shadowed Blade leader signaled to her teammates, who knocked the last opponent out with a strike to the back of the head.

"Pop Quiz Time. Inner Sect Edition." Cain announced.

"If you were to fight that final battle, what would be your strategy to deal with the Shadowed Blade team?" Cain asked his disciples.

"I Cast Fireball." Sabbat Announced.

"But they're so close. Are you sure that's a good idea?" The Shadowed Blade Elder asked.

"I didn't ask how close they were. I cast Fireball. I am immune to my own flames, so I can cast it on my own location and fill the entire arena in immolating flames." Sabbat explained.

"Not a bad option. Setting your opponents on fire will greatly demoralize anyone that you face." The Elder agreed, then looked to the others for their answers, keen to hear alternate ideas of what her team should prepare for should they encounter a team as creative as the Forbidden Treasure Sect Disciples.

"Swirling Dragons, to create a defensive perimeter around myself, then [Rumbling Strike] on the ground to make their footsteps unsteady, followed by [Flame Breath] and engaging in close combat." Tena decided.

"High Risk, but high reward. A fairly standard strategy for fighting while outnumbered, but well suited to an unarmed fighter with your energy dragons skill." The Shadowed Blade Elder replied.

Penny spoke next. "I am thinking [Entangling Vines], followed by [Enduring Will], [Regrowth], and [Noxious Spores]."

The Elder looked confused, so she continued. "I am a Lycan, but my cultivation style is that of Nature Control, with an emphasis on healing and plant-based spells. So first, grow vines to fill the arena to slow their movement and bind the unlucky, followed by a spell to prevent me from being rendered unconscious, dazed, or befuddled by illusions, and a long-duration healing ability, finishing with an area release corrosive poison magic."

"How long do the first three steps take?" The Shadowed Blade Elder asked.

"Roughly half a second in total? It's a bit long, and I would be relying on the shock of the vines appearing to redirect some of them, but I think it's a solid start. Once the poison is up, I can transform and fight as a giant wolf or just with a Lycan's claws."

The Elder nodded happily at the description. "Well thought out. A bit pressed for time, but if you can dodge the first few attacks while casting, I think it would be devastating."

"I think I would have the hardest time of all of us. I am short on area effects other than [Holy Presence], and I am a melee fighter, so five-on-one is a bad matchup for me. My best bet is to hit who I can with [Smite] and then try to tank the rest of the blows and test my blade against theirs." Jen sighed.

The Elder nodded. "Five-on-one is not an easy fight when you are relatively evenly matched with an opponent using a similar style. There is no guarantee that the other's plans would work, but they do have more flexibility to plan than most do."

Cain thought about her options for a moment, then made a suggestion. "You could wait for them to begin to Shadow Step and activate [Bulwark]. That would absorb the first set of attacks, and it has a chance to paralyze those that strike it. Then [Shield Glare] to blind the ones in front of you, giving a momentary advantage. If you can take it to three on one early, you can leverage the sword and shield style and your [Smite] to try to draw out the battle and eliminate the others."

It wasn't a great option, but the Crusader wasn't a damage-focused class, and taunting them to attack her was pointless when they were going to do that anyhow. It really was better as a team player than solo.

"So, in a fight, she is the frontline? To distract and draw the attention of the enemy, absorbing damage while the others deal with the greatest threats? It is an admirable talent and gives a group battle an advantage that a group of individuals couldn't easily

overcome. It was hard to tell in their fights due to the nature of the battles." The Shadowed Blade Elder asked Cain.

"Exactly right. If she had timed [Bulwark] right, she might have survived the last attack by the Holy Guardians as well, leaving two members against the exhausted team. But hindsight is twenty-twenty, and that's just a matter of gaining more battle experience." Cain told her.

The Elder didn't seem to understand the hindsight reference but got enough of the sentiment to follow what Cain was saying.

"You don't make them compete for resources?" She asked Cain, with a dawning realization of how strange his Sect was.

"No, all events are usually group events, so the rewards are spread between everyone who took them on. That encourages them to work together as a team, which is invaluable in a fight against Mythic Beasts and other such opponents.

"It works out very well for us. Since we all need different things, it is easy to spread them out based on who needs what, and then we balance it out with little things if we can't find one big thing for someone." Luna explained.

"And if food were a cultivation resource, Luna would never leave home again." Penny laughed.

"Oh, there is another match starting. These ones look really mad at each other. Does anyone know them?" Tena asked, pointing at the ring where ten cultivators all glared at each other. The teams were well spread out as if they couldn't even stand the members of their own teams, much less the fighters on the other side.

"Oh, this should be good. Their Sect recently split between two possible inheritors, and it seems that the two sides aren't as unified as they pretend. There were a lot of lives lost in the division. The rumor is that the final agreement was to split the sides evenly by power to end the bloodshed, but that led to an even larger fight about the resources since you can't split a Library when there is only one copy of most of the advanced manuals.

They were facing each other in silence, but that wasn't nearly entertaining enough for Luna.

As the referee hesitantly called the start of the fight and the two sides continued to glare at each other, she decided to give them some loud advice.

"Slap the stupid out of them all. The last one standing wins."

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 634 634

The battle quickly devolved into a flurry of blade techniques, with each pair well spread out so that they didn't have to risk "accidental" attacks from their allies or getting pulled into a larger four-person fight.

Their actual skills were mediocre at best, and everyone could see that the Elders from both sides were visibly embarrassed by the display, even through the open hostility that they were showing each other.

The match ended with two combatants from the same side remaining, and it was clear that they would much rather keep fighting with each other than accept the victory as a team, but the referee was not having any of that, already annoyed by their lack of professionalism.

"Enough. The Shard Rune Sect wins the fight. You can kill each other on your own time. Now get out of my ring." The announcer declared, bringing laughter to the stadium.

The next match was the ladies of the Lotus Blossom Sect against the ladies of the Strangling Vine Sect, an assassin sect that seemed to have a rather well-known reputation for brutality.

"Good luck, ladies. We have faith in you. Remember that the first strike is the most important for assassins, and I think you will do fine." Cain encouraged them.

"He is right. You have trained for this. Now, go make us all proud." Elder Ling told her team.

"You aren't on the main team? You seem to be both powerful and experienced." One of the Elders seated near them asked.

Elder Ling glared at Cain and the Elder from the Shadowed Blade Sect as they both pretended that they weren't laughing at her.

"This is Elder Ling of the Lotus Blossom Sect. Don't let the face fool you. She's a well-respected instructor and coach of their combat teams with Immortal Realm Cultivation." Tena offered when she noticed that everyone else was trying not to laugh and that Elder Ling's own Sect was not around to clarify for her.

"My apologies, Elder. Your appearance deceived me." The other woman stammered, embarrassed at having mistaken her counterpart for a young disciple.

"I told her already that playing the innocent young maiden would be much more entertaining, but she insists that her dignity as an Immortal doesn't allow it," Cain told the woman with a wink, breaking the tension in the air and turning Elder Ling's annoyance toward himself.

"Stop speaking nonsense and watch the match." Elder Ling told him, then began pointedly ignoring him.

"Is it really possible to reach immortality that young?" The other Elder asked Tena in a whisper that most cultivators would not be able to hear.

"Her appearance was returned to her youth through a Secret Technique wielded by Sect Master Cain, and he is enjoying it far more than she is," Tena whispered back, giving the Elder a look that said it was better not to mention it anymore.

The other Elder was giving Cain a look that said that she wasn't going to just forget about this news since she hadn't reached Immortality until her body was past middle age. Until that point, the body of a Cultivator still aged, though at a slower rate as their power increased.

The looks that Cain was getting from the women that had heard Tena's explanation promised that he was going to have a very busy day, and their greedy stares made Elder Ling feel a bit better. It was no more than he deserved, playing pranks on everyone and using their words against them.

She still loved this body, but the assumptions about her age were annoying, worse than the men flirting with her, which she had assumed would be the biggest issue, as it was when she was still an actual disciple.

It seemed that most of them weren't as dumb as they looked, though, and her Cultivation kept them from hitting on her, even if it didn't stop the looks.

The match in the ring began with a call from the referee, and all of the Lotus Blossom Disciples shifted their positions so that they were back to back, thwarting the initial attack plan of the assassins and throwing one of them off balance after her attack was blocked.

With the first strike unsuccessful, the Lotus Blossom Sect disciples split into three groups. Two pairs reinforced each other, with the team leader fighting alone against three assassins. Her energy attacks were doing an incredible job of forcing the black-robed women back, keeping them from assisting their team members, who were hard-pressed against the rest of the Lotus Blossom Team.

When the first of the assassins fell and the team fighting her split to reinforce both the Captain and the other team, it was obvious who was going to win. The Lotus Blossom Captain used a skill that sent flower petals flying all around the arena, carpeting the

ground and making stealth and movement skills mostly irrelevant, as every movement disturbed the petals, which appeared to be incredibly slick, like small patches of ice.

Jen was intrigued by this technique. The team leader was taking the tank role that she usually did, and that area control method that stopped the enemy from hiding in the shadows to attack team members was just the sort of thing that she thought she would love to have.

"Can you teach me to do that?" The Crusader asked Cain, who contemplated it for a few seconds.

"I can think of a few ways to accomplish similar goals. Does it have to be flowers?" Cain replied, startling the Elders sitting near them.

"No, the fact that they are flower petals is pretty but not necessary. Ice slicks or even crunchy leaves would work as well, I think." Jen replied.

"That makes it easier. I know just the thing for you." Cain replied and took out his inscription desk, arranging it in the cramped space of the bleachers so that he could work while they watched the fight.

What he had in mind wasn't difficult. It was a Rank C skill called [Denial], a Holy power skill intended for Clerics, but as Paladins could use Cleric Skill books as well as Warrior books, it would work for Jen. The skill created a simple area of light with feathers floating in it. They weren't just on the ground, but they would be disturbed the same way as the flower petals if you tried to move through them while in stealth, as well as giving a minor slowing effect on enemies.

Being a Rank C skill, it was a short inscription, and Cain managed to finish it while the battle was still wrapping up.

The weakest of the Assassins had fallen, but the others were desperately trying to turn things around, despite being suppressed by the Lotus Blossom team. They almost had it for a moment when one of the Lotus Blossom ladies stumbled, but the Team leader was right on time, knocking the assassin away with a wave of blade energy, and directly eliminating the opportunistic opponent, making the match five on three.

"There, use that right away and let me know what you think of it. It should do just what you wanted." Cain told Jen as the fighters in the ring pressed their advantage.

The book disappeared from the Crusader's hands, startling everyone around them, who had expected her to need to begin studying it since perfect skill books that could be consumed in an instant were a rare magical item, not something you just handed out to disciples on a whim.

"You are going to end up locked in some Elder's room as a boy toy and skill teacher if you keep that up. You know that, right?" The Shadowed Blade Elder asked Cain when she realized what he had casually done while watching the fight.

"Never fear. I have [Transmogrify] to get myself out of tight spots." Cain explained.

"How does that get you out of tight spots?" The Elder asked, confused.

"Well, you can turn them into kittens, fluffy birds, toddlers, Pixies. No, not pixies. That would make things worse. Angry pixies are vicious." Cain told her, making the black-robed Elder laugh.

"You sound like you have experience. For creatures less than ten centimeters tall, the Pixies are incredible assassins. The small size doesn't affect the output of their energy abilities, so you would just be making her harder to catch when she attacked you."

"Bribe them with honey. It works pretty much every time. They lose their train of thought even faster than I do." Luna offered, while Tena shook her head, refusing to accept that dealing with the fae, whose presence was more of a myth than anything in this world, was so easy.

"You are a curious one, even knowing that you came here from another world. I don't suppose that you could make me a copy of that [Transmogrify] skill as a usable book could you?" The Shadowed Blade Elder asked.

"Sorry, Sect Secret," Cain told her with a wink.

"Fair enough. Nobody gives up Sect Secrets for free after all, and I am not sure that your disciples need anything that we have since none of them use a style that is very similar to our own." The Elder sighed.

"He's so stingy, though. You would think that he could be bribed to at least make some of us into lovely young ladies again." An Elder on the far side of the Shadowed Blade team pouted while Elder Ling and Tena both frantically waved their hands, trying to get her to stop mid-sentence.

"Done." Cain cheered since he now had permission, and [Modify] began to work on the Elder.

She was not a beauty, even in her youth. The default setting for twenty years old showed her as well beyond portly with a face that he wasn't sure even a mother could love. Age hadn't done her any favors except in the weight department, so Cain decided to tweak things a bit.



"Elder Ping, I don't know what you mean about again. You forget that I knew you as a disciple." Another Elder taunted the old woman, who was still in the middle stages of the Spirit Rank and likely wouldn't live long enough to make Immortal.

"I don't know. With the time rolled back and a few minor tweaks, I think we can make it perfect." Cain countered, while Elder Ling grabbed his collar and glared at him.

"Don't go playing jokes on other Sects and causing trouble. I heard what you did to poor Tena." She warned him.

"It's fine. I just tweaked things a little," Cain assured her and pointed at the Elder he was working on.

She was now a very average-looking woman in her early thirties, still recognizable as herself, with a more upright posture, as befit her reduced apparent age.

"Oh, that is excellent. I can finish my days in peace and beauty." The Elder mumbled happily, not having high standards for her own appearance.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## **- Chapter 635 635 Cain The Businessman**

### **Chapter 635 635 Cain The Businessman**

That change was enough that their section of the bleachers was swarmed with Elders, all intending to pry the secret of the technique out of Cain by any means possible.

"Everyone, calm down, please. We are currently between fights, and congratulations are in order for the Lotus Blossom Sect on their crushing victory, but the technique will not be spread outside my own Sect." Cain informed them.

"Name your price. I can offer you anything. Money, treasures, land, titles, beauties for your bed." One of the Elders demanded.

"First off, if I needed beauties for my bed, I could have made them out of any random desperate cultivator I met. I am also on a journey, so land and titles don't do me any good at all. Even my disciples are unlikely to need them." Cain informed her.

The bit about making beauties out of random cultivators raised more than a few eyebrows, but the Shadowed Blade Sect Elder looked especially intrigued.

"How much to make a beauty out of a random Cultivator?" She asked suddenly, with an evil glint in her eye.

"Most such skills are not permanent and can be broken with strength, but the best ones must be put on willing targets. If you just want to play a prank on a Sect mate, I can teach you a lesser transformation spell later." Cain told her.

"I am starting to see why people suspect that we are secretly an evil Sect," Penny muttered as the two shared a look of understanding.

"I think he is just bored. The fights were lacking all morning, and Luna inherited her father's attention span." Tena suggested.

"And you all should be thinking of what techniques you need to round out your skill set and advance, not criticizing your Sect Master's hobbies," Cain added.

"What would you charge to transcribe a skill at the level that you gave your disciple? There are all sorts of vanity pills that can reverse the appearance of aging or increase your beauty. These ladies just don't want to expend the resources." An Elder in peach robes similar to the ones Cain's own Disciples were wearing asked.

"If it's one that I know, I will do it for one item interesting enough to catch my eye," Cain replied honestly.

"So, you don't need money. You just want new things?" The Elder verified.

"Exactly. I want things that I don't have, and I have enough random enchanted weapons and armor to equip a small sect. Unless it's got a really interesting effect, I am not short on the basics." Cain explained.

That made all of the assembled Sects stop to think for a while. What do you give a man who can make nearly anything that he wants? Maybe potions or pills since he wasn't known to be an alchemist. Or truly rare and unique treasures, but many of those are worth significantly more than the things they would have asked for on behalf of their Sect.

The complexity of the issue silenced them all through the next few matches, and only a half dozen fights later, they called the matches for the day. The group wasn't as large as others, and the fights had all been somewhat short, so the twenty fights they had scheduled for the day didn't last until late in the night as they would in some other arenas, where matches often went nearly to the full one-hour time limit.

"We will be headed back to the camp for the night, but we will likely return tomorrow unless the Disciples get a good idea and need time to practice new skills for the day," Cain informed their neighbors, letting them know where he could be found if they really did have something cool for him.

"That sounds good. We will look for you tomorrow once we have come up with a plan to appeal to your esoteric tastes." The Elder in Peach Robes agreed.

They all filed slowly out of the arena and started making their way through the city toward the Camps. Or at least that was the plan eventually. The Lotus Blossom Disciples wanted to stop by some of the other arenas on the way out, to listen to the broadcasts from the announcers.

They reminded Cain of radio sports announcers in his first life, giving a vivid play-by-play for those outside the stadium who couldn't see the matches, keeping the general population involved in the tournament, even if they couldn't get seats.

The matches in the first stadium that they passed by sounded rather dull, and even the announcer was getting bored with the stalemate that was nearing the one-hour maximum time between two evenly matched Sects. The vendors outside the grounds had the most amazing hotdogs though, with spicy chili and cheese sauce.

That was really the highlight of their walk out of the city. The fights that were going on were all mediocre, and they didn't feel like waiting for the next one. On top of that, this area of the city was so swamped with people that they had to press their way through the crowd to move, and all of the shops were sold out of anything even vaguely interesting that wasn't food.

"Well, that was a bust, but we can still go back and train for a few hours. I think that is going to be the best way to tell us where we are lacking." Jen suggested.

"I think so too. New opponents let us practice our teamwork, but against an opponent that knows all your moves, you can really learn what you need to improve." Tena agreed.

Cain was momentarily started by the wise advice, and he realized that he had started thinking of Tena as being the age of the body that he had put her in. Roughly the same as Luna was clearly still just a little kid at heart.

Even if Luna still had a Demon's enthusiasm for bloodshed and everything else in life, her mind was still that of a child.

Elder Dragon Fang caught up to them on the way to Camp, holding a small book in her hands and grinning at Luna.

"I have a proposal for you. One book for one book." She offered.

"And what book do you want for the one in your hands?" Cain asked, wondering what she had brought him to make her so sure that he would accept.

"I need a transformation spell that won't be seen through by disguise-detecting charms. I am sure you have one, and I have a precious treasure for you. Mystic Cooking, volume 7 Desserts of the prairies."

Cain glared at the Shadowed Blade Elder. Even if he wanted to, there was no way that Luna would let him turn down that offer. It was practically blackmail to offer up a book full of legendary sweets with his daughter present, and she was even handing Luna the book to examine its authenticity.

"Fine, follow us to the Lotus Blossom Sect, and I will make you a copy of the book. How much of a transformation do you need, and for how long?" Cain asked.

"It needs to last at least 24 hours so that it can be refreshed at night when nobody is around. How much of a change isn't a deal breaker, as long as they won't be recognized out of disguise.

The most important part is that it is a true transformation that won't be detected by talismans and abilities that detect ongoing disguise abilities. They pick out all the disguise pills and other abilities that we have, and you can't use makeup and clothing for every situation." The Elder explained.

That made it a good deal more difficult since true transformations of human forms were almost universally very high-level abilities.

"Do they need to be human? I can make them a cat or fae much more easily." Cain suggested.

Both of those were lower-level witch and nature mage abilities, but they were true transformations and lasted until the user chose to end them.

"Why would anyone want to be a cat?" Elder Dragon Fang asked, confused.

"To infiltrate. Nobody ever expects the cat to be a high-level opponent. They even let them into houses and barns unsupervised and unquestioned." Cain replied simply.

The Elder thought for a while before her eyes lit up as she began to see the possibilities. "So you don't try to mingle with the target. You just wander around all furry and cute, then kill them when nobody is looking."

Luna giggled at her assessment. "Then you find a nice warm lap to curl up in and have a nap while everyone freaks out about the body."

"That is genius. Not only do you get to complete your task, but you can also stay around to see the aftermath. How long does it last?" The Elder asked.

"Until dismissed. I highly suspect that at least one user has remained a cat for most of their natural life because they hate being bothered, and cats can't speak." Cain told her.

"You have a deal."

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 636 636

The Shadowed Blade Elder followed them back to the camp, where Cain set up his desk in the tent with the flap open so that the Lotus Blossom Elder, that was not so discretely watching them from the kitchen area, could see that he wasn't doing anything inappropriate with Elder Dragon Fang.

[Familiar Form: Cat] was a simple spell, one that Witches got around level 20. If received as an individual book, it was Rank F, owing to the fact that it actually reduced your combat capability due to cats not having thumbs or long enough digits to activate the gesture portion of the Witch's spells.

At twelve pages long, it was long for a Rank F spell, but it was still a simple one to write, and Cain handed it over only a few minutes later.

"There you go." He told the Elder, handing over the book.

The book disappeared the moment that she touched it, leaving the Elder with a shocked look on her face and vacant eyes as the Interface activated. That was surprising. She actually had a high enough affinity with the class that she could use the book directly and receive a class.

Cain checked her interface quickly before she finished, so he could tease the Elder, who kept her face covered at all times.

[Name] Tiffani

[Alias] Dragon Fang

[Race] Human

[Class] Witch

[Level] 708

[Awakened Immortal]

[Sect Elder of the Shadowed Blade Sect]

[Master Assassin]

"So, I see you got more than just a book out of the deal. Congratulations. You're level 708, so you should have more than enough skill points to complete the full skill tree. Look at you all fancy, getting dozens of spells all at once." Cain told her once the Elder's eyes began to focus on reality again.

"What did you do to me?" She demanded, grabbing Cain by his shirt and lifting him out of the chair.

"How rude. I didn't do anything to you. You did it to yourself by using a Skill book intended for Witches when you Cultivate a Dark Nature Magic Path. That is your technique, right? Otherwise, the book shouldn't have done much of anything other than let you read it and try to learn the technique." Cain replied.

"You knew that was a possibility?" She asked in a whisper.

"Of course I did. I quite literally wrote the book. It only works for people who already have an extremely strong affinity for the technique. The Immortal from the Light Sects Alliance mentioned that others could use the books if they had enough affinity, so it shouldn't be a secret."

Elder Dragon Fang shook her head. "Not that, the thing that came after."

Cain smiled and extricated himself from her hands, sitting down on the bed. "Why don't you transform, and we can see how fluffy you are?"

"Not happening. But I am going to get an answer from you about this interface that I see." She replied, then coated the tent in an energy barrier that blocked light and sound from outside.

"Fine. Since you are no fun, I will ask you this. Do you know the Laughing God?" Cain asked, and Elder Dragon Fang suddenly went as still as death.

"What do they have to do with this?" She asked carefully.

"Everything. They created it. They choose who gets it. It is their System." Cain told her honestly.

Happy tears rolled down the Elder's eyes and under her mask at those words.

"I will give you a bit of advice now that might save your life in the future. Never speak that name again in this world or any other Human world. Especially in the Divine Realms. There is a Legend among our Sect.

It is said that once, many thousands of years ago, the evil deity you referenced paid a visit to our Sect. That was the beginning of our spread to other worlds, but that person's very existence angers the True Gods of Humanity. Understand?" She reprimanded Cain very seriously.

"They're that mad? On my homeworld, there is a legend that the Human Gods fought with that one's people, but I didn't realize that it was more than a localized incident." Cain explained, hiding the fact that he did in fact, know that the feud was ongoing and that he had been warned about it in advance of arriving here. He had momentarily forgotten that the feud involved the Creators and not just the Ancients.

"So, you are from that place then? That explains your crazy Disciples. What would you do if I revealed your secret?" Dragon Fang taunted with a sly look on her face.

"You forget, I can turn you into a cat permanently, leaving you to live a life being cuddled and carried around by an Outer Sect Disciple of the Lotus Blossom. Plus, you're one of us now. You have a Class, and I am quite certain that if they showed up, those greater Divinities wouldn't miss the fact." Cain laughed while Elder Dragon Fang's smile turned sour.

Of course, a level 700 kitten could beat the average Elder to death with its tiny paws, and it wouldn't stop her from using her skills, but the Elder didn't know that.

"Fine, I won't tell anyone. But I need another book. I promised one to the Sect." She sighed.

"No problem, give me just a minute."

Everyone outside was looking at them strangely when the two came out of the tent, stepping through the barrier that Elder Dragon Fang had erected before she remembered to take it down.

"Oh, don't give me that look. We just needed to discuss combat techniques in private. You won't get Shadowed Blade Sect Secrets so easily." Elder Dragon Fang told the onlookers with a very serious look in her eyes that scared most of the curious disciples away.

"Elder Ling is cuter anyhow." Luna agreed, trying to be helpful.

"So is that his weakness then? I will keep it in mind." Dragon Fang laughed.

Cain leaned over and whispered in her ear. "Tiffani with an I."



Even with a mask over her face, Cain could see the blush on her cheeks. "Damn you. That's off limits."

With her business finished, Elder Dragon Fang headed out, returning to her Sect to share the knowledge that she had gained with the Disciples and other Elders. She would have actually to give them the book and show them, though. For a Witch, the skill activates automatically, and she never had actually learned the skill from scratch, so teaching it to others without a book would be very difficult.

"Why don't you all go practice? Unless you've got an idea that you want to go with to try to set a new path?" Cain asked, making sure that his Disciples weren't slacking.

"Luna is in the kitchen, trying out the new cookbook that she traded your labor for, and I have a proposal for you, but the others can go," Jen suggested.

"Alternating defense capture the flag with Sabbat as the flag?" Penny suggested.

It was a technique that they had used before. One defended Sabbat as she cast, while the others tried to get to her and disrupt her spells. It was excellent training all around, including for Sabbat, who had to learn to dodge and increase her spell-casting speed if she didn't want the defenders mad at her all the time.

The Lotus Blossom Disciples also thought this was a great game, except they had one Disciple play the part of a prisoner instead of having them be active participants. They did a fair number of rescue tasks, mostly because people in this world had a bad habit of trying to abduct low-rank female cultivators, and the Lotus Blossom Sect was a very righteous group.

With Jen and Luna out for this match, they grabbed a number of other disciples to join the game, making it more entertaining than a one-on-two battle would be. The spell that Sabbat used caused a large circle of light to fill the area but took over thirty seconds to cast, not usually something that would be used in combat, but incredibly useful in deterring hostile demons from entering your vicinity, should that be an actual concern.

It would last an entire day if it weren't dispelled, but it was perfect for the purpose of the game since it emulated many of the long buildup techniques that the Cultivators used but didn't do any damage to her opponents or the surroundings while being highly noticeable.

They began their match, with three Lotus Blossom Disciples added per side for balance, and Cain led Jen back to the tent so that they could talk techniques. Her excitement was overwhelming all of her other thoughts, which were so scrambled that Cain couldn't tell what it was that she actually wanted, only that it related to making her a better combatant when she was on the offense.

Currently, she was very good on defense, but her offensive skill was comparatively lacking, and everyone knew that it annoyed her, but it was a limitation of her class, which wasn't designed for high damage output.

"So, what I was thinking was this. The Blood Axe Sect uses double axes for all their skills, right? They can block with them and create shields over the ax heads, which fits well with the job I usually do, but they can go all RAAAAGH crazy Berzerker and chase people down while throwing blades of energy at them, right? So, if I can add that to what I already have, I could switch between offense and defense and gain some ranged attacks with a bit more area damage."

Going from Paladin to Berzerker? That sounded like a fun career path.

"Alright, let's see what I can do for you."

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## **Chapter 637 637 Jen The Brutal**

There were a lot of skills that Cain could make for Jen to help her improve into a more offensive combat direction than she was currently capable of, but she had expressed an interest in the explosive attack power of a Berserker.

The basic berserker class also made a good tank, with their ability to heal on hit, so it wasn't too far-fetched. It also didn't force the group to rely on a Summon to tank in situations where it was inconvenient to call for additional bodies.

But her strength was much better than when he had first met her. The constant stream of Quest bonuses that the Disciples were getting was really pushing them up through the levels. So, he should look for second advancement berserker-type Classes and their main skills.

"What is more important? The Berserker aspect, the double ax fighting style, or the pure damage output?" Cain asked Jen, looking to make the appropriate skill choice from the available options.

"Multi-target damage at more than melee range. It doesn't have to be an ax. A flail or a sword would be fine as well." Jen answered without hesitation.

"Well, that narrows it down some. The trick is to find just the right skill that will let you pick a truly amazing new class because it will permanently affect your development

direction at this point. So don't settle for anything mediocre if that's all that the first skill I try gets you." Cain directed her.

This time he would be making books, so they would have to be compatible with the class she already had, meaning warrior or cleric books. She wasn't really interested in Cleric's skills, from what Cain could tell, so he was searching through warriors he had recorded in the Southern Continent, which mostly had second advancement classes and some Mythic skills.

After a short search, Cain found what he thought might be just the thing. [Sky Cutter] was a core skill from the Dragon Slayer class, a pure Warrior Class that specialized in large-scale ranged attacks to deal with flying monsters.

Flying Monster was also a decent way of describing stronger Cultivators since they mostly fought in the air for versatility, so development in that direction should help her out. The question was what class she could get with the skill since Dragon Slayer wasn't on the Paladin-type mixed class progression path.

Cain took out the desk and began writing the book for his Disciple, watching her excitement build with every page while he dodged questions about what skill he was making and what class it came from. He could reveal it all at once after he had finished writing.

Jen was normally the strong, silent type and rarely spoke unless she had something valuable to add to the conversation, so seeing her all excited was an unusual experience for Cain.

"Alright, here is a Skill called [Sky Cutter]. It is a wide-area ranged blade technique that you can use with most edged weapons. It comes from the Dragon Slayers, allowing them to strike their targets in the sky, even if they try to dodge. Learn this and then see what you find for new options. Remember to check the classes very carefully and report back on what you would want to change." Cain told her as Jen stared at the book in anticipation.

The book vanished the moment that Jen took it, and her consciousness disappeared into the Class Selection Menu, where even Cain couldn't interfere or contact her.

One minute dragged into two, and then five before Jen came back from the Class Selection.

"Sorry, it gave me a couple of new options, and one of them looks really good. It has a lot of holy attack skills, and it self-heals when hit, which will make things easy for Penny since she is our only real healer and she prefers to fight in wolf form." Jen explained.

She had a point. The group wasn't like the typical adventurer group since they had no dedicated healer, despite having a Druid. But with Luna around and with Jen and Penny

both being able to do some healing, it had been more than enough for what they had encountered so far.

That might not be true once they got out into the mountains and began hunting beasts though, so more self-healing for their tank would be a great improvement.

"Is there anything that you wish that class had that it lacks? I can make you another skill, and we can see if it gives you a new option or if we just need to fill the gap with a couple of skills that it doesn't have." Cain asked.

"It doesn't really lack anything. It's more Angry Seraphim than Raging Berserker, but that might fit me better, you know? I get really shy when talking to people." Jen explained.

"If it looks really good to you, then go ahead and take it. Your Class development will likely only get one more option after this, so be very sure that this is the path you want to follow." Cain reminded her, feeling a bit like a broken record.

"I know, Boss. This is the way, I am sure of it." Jen informed him, then went back into the class options to pick her new advancement.

[Holy Avenger] was the class that she had picked, and with all of the extra levels she had gained without changing classes, she should have more than enough points to get the core or even all the skills of the class right away.

Cain waited as she selected the class, then added skill points until she had every skill she could get before speaking again.

"So, what is your new super cool ranged area attack skill that made this the class for you?" he asked the visibly ecstatic girl.

"You will see it once I get to the training arena. I think that at the moment, I might actually be able to solo the Sabbath defense game." Jen replied, then ran out of the tent toward the training grounds.

They were just finishing a game, so Jen stepped into the ring, taking out a canteen for Sabbath, who had spent the last half minute frantically running away and dodging during a failed defense effort.

"Luna, can you make an offense team out of your summons? I want to be able to go all out with these new skills without worrying about hurting anyone." Jen called over to the kitchen area where Luna was taking a break to let her latest concoction cool, then removed herself from the party so that she could actually damage the Summons.

"Sure, what do you want?" Luna asked, eager to see her improvements and come up with new battle tactics for her summons.

"I will leave that to you. If I picked, I would likely say things that would be easier for me." Jen replied cautiously.

"Then we will start with this. Generic Cultivator Guys in white." Luna decided, calling ten [Lesser Golems] into the ring using [Versatility] to bring them to Mythic Quality.

They would be much stronger than the guys they were based off of, thanks to Luna's bonuses as a War Princess buffing their damage and defense, as well as the improved quality, but it should be a task that was possible for a Second Advancement class to deal with.

Sabbat set up behind Jen, who looked back to make sure her friend was ready to begin the game. When the mage nodded, Luna had the Cultivators begin to attack, not giving Jen any extra warning.

Instantly her sword and shield were in her hands, and with a sweep of her sword, bright white light streaked across the arena, taking out a few of the Cultivators and slamming into the shield around the practice ground.

That was [Sky Cutter], and it was devastating against Cultivators in an enclosed area like an arena. With eight members left, four went left while four went right, a situation that usually led to Sabbat spending a lot of time running around, but this time Jen lit up with golden light, and the faint vision of a Seraphim appeared behind her, blanketing Sabbat in a shield of golden light.

Jen hopped on top of it and threw out [Sky Cutter] twice more, driving the left flank back before turning to the Cultivators on the right, charging them at incredible speed, but striking at the ground, creating an area of Holy Light to burst up from the sand, burning the Summons and blinding them before Jen cut them down.

The team from the left was at the shield already, hacking away, but it was holding for the moment, and Jen was on her way back. She launched another wide area attack at them, this one more of a wave of light than the sharp blade that was [Sky Cutter]. It crashed into their hastily raised barriers with a hollow bang, then forced them back away from the barrier around Sabbat while Jen charged again.

Her blade flashed a pattern in the air, and a golden rune appeared before bursting into a hundred smaller runes and hitting the attackers, bringing them all to their knees with cries of pain and surrender.

[Holy Rune: Pain] was the final attack, intended to cripple attackers without killing them. According to the spell description that Cain could see when he looked up the new and improved Jen in his Summoning options.

"Flawless victory. Very nice. Even if it was just a simulated bunch of stinky boys, that level of power is impressive. Tell me, where did you learn that shield? Can you use it on

yourself and still fight?" The Lotus Blossom Sect Disciples asked as the match ended, and Luna dismissed the Summons.

"Yes, I can use it on myself, but I would be trapped inside the way that Sabbath was and could only attack out without moving. I know a very similar armor skill, though, which should be just as powerful." Jen told them, clearly flustered by all the attention, despite the fact that Cain could sense she was desperate for praise and approval.

"Excellent work. You made an incredible choice." Cain congratulated her with a pat on the head while the Holy Avenger beamed with pride.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 638 638

The Lotus Blossom Sect was incredibly impressed with the performance of Jen's new techniques, but it was the ability to summon a large number of seemingly living target dummies to fight against that they were most intrigued by.

They hadn't realized that Luna could summon humans as her Golems, and it opened a huge realm of possibilities for their training.

They always had the most problems when they were facing other humans, not the various demons and beasts that Luna usually summoned, so if they could train against human targets that they wouldn't feel bad about going all out on, they could test a lot of theories in practice, without their lives being in imminent danger from the very first time that they tried.

Jen rejoined the group now that her battle was over so that Penny could heal and refresh the energy loss and the few wounds she had taken.

"Oh Luna, lovely Lady Luna, my friend. Could you make us a specific group of cultivators to train against? There is someone that I didn't get enough chances to slap in person." One of the Disciples asked Luna, who was about to go back to make more sweets in the kitchen area.

"Of course. Which Sect's team?" Luna asked with a mischievous smirk.

"Not a team, you know those guys in the black robes with purple trim that are a few Sects over? That fat pervert and his friends? I don't think I could ever get tired of beating him to death." The girl replied with an evil glint in her eyes.

"Sure. At original strength, or should I ramp them up a little bit so that they are a better challenge for your training?" Luna asked.

"I had friends with me the first time, so his buddies were handled. I think with a smaller group, we should have enough trouble handling him, and it will be a good release for everyone." The Disciple explained.

"You don't need to justify yourself to me. Slapping stupid people is its own reward." Luna told her, then summoned a group of ten young men in black and purple, led by a man almost as wide as he was tall.

"Fight the challenges that you are called for in the training area, but don't kill anyone," Luna informed them.

The ten young men bowed and went to the open area to wait while Elder Ling looked on in amusement, interested to see what the team of three girls was going to be able to do when this heavily outnumbered.

The three took positions and then issued the challenge to the ten Summons, who only waited a second before beginning the attack.

Summons can communicate mentally with each other. There was no need to confer or wait to make a plan. They could do it in an instant and would all follow it without question. That made them much more dangerous than their real selves almost every time, given that human nature would lead to rivalries and bad feelings between even fellow Disciples.

They quickly encircled the team of three girls and launched their attacks, with five attacking and five activating defensive skills to cover for their teammates.

That startled all of the Lotus Blossom Disciples right away since it wasn't how their Disciples worked together in reality, not even during the Tournament.

The girls were more powerful but outnumbered as they were. They were hard-pressed to land a single strike through the defensive skills of their attackers. The three were all Inner Sect Disciples, while the ones they had asked to challenge were outer Sect Disciples with low-level skills, even when they were summoned at Luna's level and Greater Golem Quality.

The match was drawing a lot of attention from the other Disciples, who had realized that Luna could be bribed to let them vent personal frustrations at any time. They weren't quiet about it, and that only brought more attention, even a few curious looks from their neighbors, who couldn't see the match in progress.



When the word made it to the Sect whose Disciples had been cloned, they didn't find it nearly as amusing as everyone else did, and an Elder flew up into the sky to take a look at what was going on in the Lotus Blossom training area.

To him, it only looked like the girls bullying clones of some outer Sect Disciples, not a big deal as far as he was concerned. Even his own Sect bullied those morons. But when one of them began to activate a Secret Technique that nobody outside his Sect should know, the Elder panicked and launched an energy blade, killing the Summon directly and causing both Chaos and confusion among the Lotus Blossom Sect.

"What in the world was that? Did someone in their Sect think that they were betraying the Sect by training with us? Should we explain to them that these are just summons, not the real people?" One of the girls in the ring asked Elder Ling, with blood still splattered across her robes from the destruction of the Clone.

The blood would vanish in a few seconds, as all Summons did when they died, but the confusion was very real.

They didn't know that he was going to use a Secret Technique. In fact, they didn't know that Luna's Summons would even have the ability to use the Secret Techniques that their living counterpart knew. Common sense dictated that they should only know the ones that Luna had seen them using or ones that Luna herself knew.

"Dismiss those Clones right now. How dare you mock our Disciples?" The Elder in Purple trimmed robes demanded from just outside the Lotus Blossom camp borders, clearly irate and still hovering in the air, a skill that marked him as an Immortal.

"Elder Peng, it seems there is some misunderstanding. They are just golems summoned by the Forbidden Treasures Sect, not your Disciples. Your black and purple contrast so well with our white and blue that she chose them to make it easier on the fighters. There was no disrespect intended." Elder Ling assured him.

It sounded very reasonable, but it put him on the spot to explain why he would have attacked someone inside their camp. It would be embarrassing to admit that he thought the Golem was going to activate one of their Sect's Secret Techniques. It was just a Golem Summoned by a little girl, according to Elder Ling.

But he was certain of what he saw. It really was going to use That Skill.

The Golems approached the Elder, recognizing him from the memories of the real people that they were based on, and bowed politely to their Sect Elder.

"See, Elder Peng. They just vanish when defeated." The Disciple who had asked for them to be summoned explained, stabbing one in the back and through the heart, letting the body slump over in death before vanishing a few seconds later.

"I think that only made him more upset." Her friend pointed out as the man began to look irate.

"If they're mindless Golems, why did they recognize me and bow?" He demanded.

Luna silently ordered them to remain mute and not speak until the meeting was over, then thought better of it and simply dismissed them.

"Sorry, Elder, they only last so long. They have basic cognition and can recognize who they need to be polite to, but like other males, their sense of propriety is as limited as their personal hygiene." The girl who asked for them to be summoned explained while her friends tried to hide their shock and amusement at her words.

That definitely could have been phrased better, but the Lotus Blossom was well-known as Man Haters anyhow, so the Elder shouldn't be surprised.

"Summon them again, and let me see." The Elder demanded, looking at Luna, who he had seen performing Summonings during the matches of the Outer Sect Disciples, where these young men had competed.

"Sure, not a problem." Luna agreed.

She summoned the ten again, and the man looked them over carefully, noting how exactly they matched the Disciples, right down to the amulets and talismans that they wore outside their robes.

"The detail is exquisite. But how smart are they?" He asked, then turned to the fat one and asked him a question.

"What is one thousand minus seven?"

The Golem began counting on his fingers, and the Lotus Blossom Disciple burst into laughter.

"Nevermind. Even if it was as smart as the real one, he is an idiot. You, what are the ingredients to a simple healing potion?" He asked another Golem.

"Lifeweed, Spirit Grass, and an Energy Core." The Golem answered simply, having learned basic Alchemy many years earlier at the Sect.

"Well, they have some memories, or is that basic knowledge that they all get? Either way, what would it cost to buy that skill?" The Elder asked Luna.

The look on his face said that he wanted it for extremely questionable, noncombat reasons, so Elder Ling stepped forward to save Luna the embarrassment of dealing with this scumbag Elder.

"I am sorry, Elder Peng. It is a Forbidden Treasure Secret Skill. If they teach it to anyone, it will be to us first." Elder Ling informed him, making the middle-aged man frown and turn away.

"Fine, just don't summon my Disciples again unless you wish to start an incident."

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 639 639

As soon as the man left, Luna walked over to Elder Ling and whispered to the Elder. "So, if we did want to start an incident. . ."

"Don't even think about it. I enjoy my peaceful days, and you have already gotten into one Sect War. That is more than enough for a season." The Elder countered.

Luna looked confused for a second, then immensely sad. "You're saying we only get to do that once every three months? That is way too long. Did you get the timeline wrong? You meant once a month, right?"

Elder Ling just shook her head. "Mister Cain, I suggest that you teach your Disciples a sense of time. Sect wars aren't supposed to be a regular occurrence."

The kitchen Elder, who had come to see where Luna had gotten to in between batches of desserts, decided to explain to the rambunctious Cultivator in more detail.

"The last full-scale Sect War that the Lotus Blossom was in was sixty-two years ago. It takes a minimum of a decade to fully train an Inner Sect Disciple with great talent, so once every ten years is the absolute maximum that most Sects are willing to go that far unless they absolutely crushed the previous opponent or they are left with no other options."

Luna nodded in acceptance. "Old people really have a lot of patience, don't they? I can't imagine waiting sixty whole years to have a war."

The kitchen Elder looked confused for a second, then clapped her hands and smiled. "I get it now. I see where the miscommunication is. Miss Luna, Sect Wars aren't something that you are supposed to look forward to. People lose a lot of friends in them, and if they are unlucky, even their homes."

Luna looked shocked, then seemed to consult something in her mind. It was a deep and powerful but female voice, which Cain assumed was something that she was merged

with, but he didn't bother to dig for the exact answer as the mental voice explained that wars were only fun and profitable if you were on the winning side and that a Sect was like a big family, not an impersonal army or a group of Summons where you didn't care about the dead.

The voice was clearly on the pro-war side of the argument, but it helped Luna understand the subtleties of battle manners.

"They also can't just resurrect everyone as the battle goes on." Cain pointed out.

Elder Ling gave Cain a suspicious look at that reminder of the advanced and strange skills that his Disciples had mastered.

"How does a war ever end when you can just keep resurrecting everyone?"

Cain shrugged. "Either someone retreats, or you kill so many that their energy gives out, and they can't resurrect as fast as you are killing. Usually, armies will target the healers first to save some time on the second method. Resurrection has a very short time limit, after all."

"Your version of war is truly horrifying, isn't it?" Elder Ling asked carefully, not wanting to upset Cain over the issue.

"War is supposed to be horrifying. It wouldn't be war if it weren't." Cain shrugged, and Luna nodded in agreement.

"That's why the God of War is also the God of Orphans," Luna added.

"Your home planet must have different Gods than this one. The God of War here is also the God of Fire." One of the other Disciples explained.

"That's weird. Then who is in charge of the Blacksmith's forges?" Luna asked, confused.

"Oh, the God of Smithing. He is also a Fire-type God, but not as senior as the War God." The Disciple told her.

"How about we all talk about this over dinner? It seems that we have attracted a large number of guests because a certain someone is excessively popular with the ladies." The Kitchen Elder reminded them.

"That's not entirely my fault. They're just greedy for skills and beauty. Their own, of course, not mine." Cain laughed, following the portly Elder back to his tent to get cleaned up for dinner.

When he came back out, the long communal tables were set up, with one set to the side for all the visiting dignitaries. Elder Ling was beckoning him to that side of the dining

hall, looking desperate to be relieved from the constant barrage of questions that she was getting from the other Elders that had come to visit.

Someone had tipped them off that Cain had restored her youth, and they wanted to know every single detail about the process, from the materials used to the inscription and the sensation of change. Those were all factors in successfully applying a transformation ability, but Elder Ling hadn't seen or experienced any of them. One moment she was herself, then she was her younger self.

Being unable to accurately explain it only led to more questions, and even the few minutes that Cain took to get cleaned up felt like an eternity to the Elder.

"Welcome, everyone, and thank you for visiting. I am sure you are all excited to be here for various skills training materials, but it seems that the lovely Elder Ling is getting overwhelmed." Cain greeted them.

"Elder Cain, it is a pleasure to see you again. As promised, we have brought you interesting things that we hope to trade for skill books that our Sects require for the younger generation. But first, whatever the Lotus Blossom Sect has made smells divine. I didn't know that they had such a strong food culture." One of the Elders, an elderly woman with thinning white hair, replied.

The smile on her face seemed to be more for the upcoming meal than the prospect of doing business, which was a surprise to Cain. Normally the Immortals had seen so much in their long lives that little things like this didn't impress them anymore, but the woman seemed to revel in the moment.

The youngest disciples brought around bowls of the usual Sect Dinner stew, but much better smelling than usual, with an aura that Cain could tell, was the most elementary application of the Mystic Cooking that the Shadowed Blade Sect taught. That was served with a side of bread and fruit for a tasty but ordinary meal.

It was when the trays of various pastries were placed on the table as they finished the meal that all of the Elders started to get excited.

"These must be what Luna was working on today. You would think that the girl was starved for half her life by the way that she treasures food, but I can tell that Elder Cain here couldn't say no to her even if he wanted to, so I am certain that she hasn't missed many meals." Elder Ling teased as she picked up a puff filled with whipped cream.

"It's an indispensable part of her personality, I think. She just loves food." Cain replied, inwardly wondering what they would say if he showed them that she was actually a form of Lamia Progenitor and the love of food came from the growth method of her species being based on energy assimilation through consumption.

That also made him wonder how many others were actually nonhumans in disguise, hiding among the Cultivators and being mistaken for eccentric personalities.

They took both him, a perfectly normal human with a few unusual experiences, and Luna, who didn't have any genetic links to humanity, as the equivalent levels of strange, so he wouldn't be surprised if they missed a large number of visitors with even basic disguise skills.

"Let's start with the obvious parts. Who brought something interesting? We can do it like a show and tell. Do your Sects know that practice?" Cain asked.

"Like when Disciples return from a training mission and show off the precious materials and beast cores that they are exchanging for rewards?" An Elder in bright Fuschia robes asked.

"Exactly like that. Show off the interesting things that you don't really need, and possibly trade with the others for things that you do need. It is a good practice that I don't think enough people practice due to limited resources within a large Sect." Cain agreed.

The Elder in Fuschia nodded. "In that case, I have a most curious item. Years ago, on an outing to the coast, I plucked a shell from the shore for my collection, and it had this token inside. It is clearly imbued with rich energy, but I cannot for the life of me tell what it is intended for or where it came from.

You said you wanted new things and interesting ones. This is both of them, assuming that you can determine what it is for."

She handed the token, which was in the shape of a jet-black coin with a square hole in the center, to Cain, who inspected it with his interface. The writing on it was illegible, even to Cain, but the System told him what it was right away.

[Door Key]

[Quality] Mythic

[Allows access to the Surface Entrance to the Land of the Dead]

Cain smiled at the Elder. "Oh, that is a good one. I like it. What were you looking to get in exchange?"

The woman straightened her gaudy robes in satisfaction, proud of having picked the right sort of item to trade for a favor from Cain. "The Holy power area attack skill that you made for your Disciple. Can I have a copy as well?"

Cain thought for a second. It wasn't a high-level skill, just a versatile one, and many Sects here had much better ones with similar effects.

"I don't see any reason why not. I will make it for you tonight, and you can pick it up tomorrow."

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 640 640

With the success of the first deal, the others became certain that Cain was actually accepting curiosities and not pushing for powerful magical items. He didn't argue with the Elder at all and directly accepted the strange coin in exchange for a Skill Book.

The next to ask was a wizened Elder that Cain could feel was pushing the very upper limits of Immortality, close to breaking through to a divine state. Even just sitting near her gave the sense of restrained power and an ethereal grace that clearly wasn't from her physical presence.

"My Sect is in need of a certain skill. One that can animate a body to transfer a soul from a soul gem into it. Our First Elder preserved his soul in a gem, but the skill to create a body to reincarnate him into was lost, and we don't practice the demonic arts to have him possess a living vessel." She explained.

"I can do that for you directly if you only need it done once, and it won't cost you anything precious. Soul Transfer from a Gem is among my core skills. Do you have the gem with you in this city?" Cain asked.

The old woman nodded. "That's a given. We are from the valley. Our sect is only a few hours away from here. If you would like, I can have it brought to us right now."

"Excellent. Now, the greatest question is. Do you really want to bring an old guy back to life when he could be a lovely and gentle young lady?" Cain joked.

The Elder's face went pale, then bright red as her mind ran through possibilities.

"How about a lovely and strapping young man, and then I will make another deal to take a few years off my age?"

Elder Ling gave the old woman a concerned look. "Are you sure that your health is good enough to be having such lecherous thoughts? I don't want to have to rush for healing pills if you get too worked up."

"Bah, it's fine. You should have seen him in his youth. What a fine piece of man meat. It's just a shame that he got himself killed looking for treasures. We both made



Immortality a bit late in life, but now that there is a chance to put him back in a body, it would be a shame not to put him in a good one."

The old woman tilted her head for a second, clearly receiving a message, and then opened a small portal with her energy, taking a dark green gem from the other side and placing it on the table.

That was the Soul Gem, and Cain could sense that the mind inside was still active, not in stasis, as most who were trapped inside Soul Gems spent their days.

[Hey, old man. This Elder wants to bring you back to life as her boy toy.] Cain sent the mental message to the man in the gem with a hint of amusement.

[I died in the early stages of Immortality, and she is almost to Divinity now. I will never live it down, I swear. Let me guess. She wants to put me in some young stud's body so she can ogle and harass me for eternity.] The trapped soul grumbled.

[I see you know her very well. Do you object?] Cain asked.

[Balanced against being half dead in a stone? It doesn't sound that bad.] He replied, clearly not too happy about his anticipated future.

Cain formed a generic male body with the pale skin tone and golden hair of the locals, then made the body tall and muscular before pausing to let the old woman look it over.

"How is that?" he asked the Elder.

"Not bad, but does he have to be so skinny and hairless? He was a big, strapping man, with chest fur I could tangle my fists in." She explained, bringing a shudder from many of the other Elders in the area.

Cain made some adjustments, and the woman gave a reluctant nod, so he made the body even burlier, with a bit of a gut and a level of body hair that a silverback gorilla would be proud of.

"Now we're talking. Just how I like them." The old woman cheered.

The body was carrying a few extra pounds and was built like someone's stereotypical bodybuilder dad, but it was still in its mid-twenties, so health issues and old age slowing him down wouldn't be an issue. The next thing he did was give the body a set of black robes, so the unfortunate Immortal wouldn't end up arriving naked, then picked up the Soul Stone.

Cain activated the skill and let the soul be drawn into the puppet body, reviving the First Elder in an instant.

"What have you done to my body, woman? I knew I should have told the Necromancer what I looked like instead of letting you influence him." The Immortal roared as he looked at his new form.

"I am a fair and impartial arbiter of life and death. How about I alter her a little to match your preference? It's only fair since she picked your new body." Cain suggested.

"You can do that?" The First Elder asked.

"Not a problem. I think it's why half of these Elders are here. Most of them have just reached Immortality, and they didn't manage it as soon as they would have preferred, so they want that ageless look back." Cain explained.

"Anything?" He asked with an evil glint in his eyes.

"If you want to make her a stout Dwarven beauty to match your new stature, I can do that and give her a beard that every dwarven woman in the five continents would be envious of." Cain laughed.

Only about half of the gathered Elders seemed to know what he was talking about, all of them the more powerful ones who had explored other worlds, and they all looked a bit disturbed by the thought.

The beard was a sign of mature beauty among the hill dwarves, and they didn't start to grow it until after their first century, whereas the women of the Dark Dwarves never grew one at all.

"NO. Thank you, but no, thank you. Can you just return her to the way she was when we met?" The First Elder asked.

Cain read the man's mind and found that he was thinking of a chubby-cheeked girl at the Sect entry exams. She was clearly older than the others that were taking the test, as they were all yet to reach puberty, so she towered over her fellow applicants. The focused look on her face made her cheeks puff out like a chipmunk, a thought that the First Elder cherished even a thousand years later.

With a rustle of shifting cloth, Cain activated [Modify] and the Elder's wrinkles began to smooth while her thin white hair turned back to a thick ginger orange. Cain stopped when he got to just how the First Elder remembered her and released the skill.

"How is that?" He asked as the two Immortals stared into each other's eyes.

"Alright, you're done. Time to get a room, none of that in my pure and innocent Sect." Elder Ling reprimanded them an instant before they were going to launch themselves at each other.

"I will repay you later. I have to, uh, cultivate to regain my strength." The First Elder told Cain with a nod of his head, then grabbed his Sect mate and leaped into the air, disappearing into the distance in a few seconds.

"You're more strict than I thought, Ling. Perhaps that's why you can't get a man?" One of the other Elders chided the Lotus Blossom Sect Elder.

"It's a Sect Rule now. You should have seen the chaos after someone imported an entire storage ring full of erotic romance books. A camp full of hormonal youth is enough trouble without encouraging them to be distracted." Elder Ling replied grimly.

"Well, since Ling is no fun. How about I propose a trade? I have this tablet in an unknown language, taken from the ruins of a battle that occurred in the distant past. Nobody on this planet can read it, and it's not magical, but I think that you might appreciate it. Even if it's just for the aesthetics." The Elder who had been teasing Ling suggested, placing the tablet in question on the table.

It was actually a piece of stone facing from a wall, and the beautiful curving script was Ancient graffiti. Without being able to read it, the piece looked like a mystic relic that might contain great mysteries, but to Cain, it was a hand-scrawled allegation about how the author gained carnal knowledge about the reader's mother.

Cain burst into laughter as soon as he read it, which brought Luna running over to see what was so funny. As soon as she read the piece of stone, she too was laughing so hard that there were tears in her eyes.

"What is so funny?" The Elder asked, wondering if she had given them something so worthless that they were mocking her.

Luna answered before Cain could come up with a good lie. "It says: If I had known your mother could do that with her tongue, I would have offered her more than three silver coins."

The Elder looked embarrassed and was going to take the piece of stone back, but Cain put his hand on it to stop her.

"Oh no, I am totally keeping this one. That is priceless. Someone excavated bathroom graffiti from an ancient ruin without knowing what it was." he laughed.

"Now, what do you want for it?"

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 641 641

As if those final words had caught the attention of the Laughing God, a quest notification popped up in Cain's interface for the first time in a while.

[Quest: A Lady's Smile] Fulfill the Elder's Request

[Reward] Bonus Experience

The first thought in Cain's mind was that someone was going to ask something so incredibly outrageous that he would normally tell them to get lost or worse. But for the bonus experience of a quest reward, Cain would be willing to go much further to help than most would normally consider sane and reasonable.

"I was going to ask you for something much larger, but I changed my mind. Give me a moment." she stammered, embarrassed by having offered Cain a bit of relic bathroom graffiti.

"No, go ahead and ask. One request is much the same as another, and you never know unless you make the request." Cain told her.

"Since you have the skill to bring a Soul back from the dead, and after seeing what you have done for the others, I am fairly certain that you can do what I want. I am at the end of my ability, you see. I will never move past the initial stages of Immortality, leaving me the weakest of Immortals until my death due to mistakes that I made during my cultivation.

What I wanted to ask you is if I could start over." She asked hesitantly.

"Start over? As in, start from scratch? You are right. Changing your body wouldn't affect your cultivation, and it doesn't improve your potential." Cain agreed.

It could. He could increase her quality rating and give her a lot more potential, but if there were a conflict in her cultivation due to mistakes she had made, or something that had affected her core, to begin with, she would still be stuck exactly where she was.

The skill she wanted was actually the very worst resurrection spell that Cain had. He had only used it twice, both on enemies he had killed. It made the target a puppet and then reset them to level one when he released them.

"Are you certain of that? I can bring you back to the very beginning, but not anywhere in between. You would be at the very basic of basic levels, and you would likely lose all of your known skills as well, not just your cultivation." Cain explained.

"All of my memories?" She asked, now much more concerned than she was a moment ago.

"Not your memories, but all of the carefully nurtured skills that you had memorized and adapted your body to release efficiently would most likely become inaccessible." She didn't have a class, so Cain was fairly sure the reset would wipe out everything.

One of the other Elders spoke up at that moment. "What about your Sect? What would you tell them when an Elder suddenly lost everything?"

The woman gave a sad smile. "Tell them I went to cultivate in isolation. I will assume a new identity and apply for an entrance exam in the next round. If I don't lose my memories, I can start over from nothing, and my initial potential was very good. I destroyed it trying to survive the first Sect that I was in."

Luna was giving Cain a look like the Elder was a lost puppy that she wanted to take home, and Cain sighed, knowing what was coming next. Surprisingly, Luna kept silent and just continued giving him that look. The problem was that Tena and the others had joined in from the next table, having heard the explanation from the Elder.

"I will look after you until then. As I said, you will start with absolutely nothing, not even the initial stages of a cultivation method established." Cain agreed.

The woman nodded grimly. "Whenever you are ready, sir."

"First, I have a spell called [Binding Oath]. I need everyone at the table to swear that you won't reveal her identity to outsiders. Every Immortal has enemies, and it is best that she really does start over from a clean slate." Cain informed the group, then asked the Record Keeper he was merged with to cast the spell.

A glowing scroll appeared on the table, and Cain called his disciples, the only ones that were close enough to have heard the conversation, over to join in.

"All you have to do is touch it and agree," Cain explained.

One after another, everyone placed their hands on the scroll and agreed to the terms, which were simply not to reveal the past identity of the Elder to anyone who did not already know.

"With that done, follow me to the tent. This isn't a process that others should see." Cain explained, leading the Elder away while everyone else sat at the table, wondering what was so secret about this particular technique.

Though, if it really did destroy a cultivation base and turn an Immortal back into a normal human with no power, it was a truly horrifying ability, and that wasn't something that they could casually allow anyone to learn.

So, once the two entered the tent, a half dozen Immortal Rank shields appeared over it, blocking everything from light and sound to energy transmission in and out of the area. With that in place, not only outsiders but not even the Elders present could detect anything.

"I will apologize for this in advance," Cain told the Elder quietly, then activated [Balance], killing her instantly.

Then he brought her back as a Puppet under his control and looked over her body, turning her into a small child that closely resembled Luna and Tena, with long dark hair, porcelain skin, and gentle blue eyes that matched her original eye color. Then he increased her body quality to Epic, which should be enough for her to regain Immortality without too many issues.

Cain wasn't completely sure how the process worked for Cultivators, or even for himself, since he was Immortal by virtue of species, but an Epic Constitution should be enough, he thought.

"At the moment, you are fully under my control, so I will ask you, are there any memories that you want to be purged from your mind? I have the skills to lock them away." Cain asked.

"No, I did that long ago."

Cain nodded. "Excellent. Now, pick a new name."

The former Elder considered it for a moment before smiling. "Please call me Solara."

"Alright. Next, I will release you from my control, and your powers will reset to nothing. After that, I will inspect your potential and see what sort of path might be suited to you. As you said, a new start. Using the same methods over again would be too obvious and might lead to the same outcomes." Cain explained.

Cain released her from his control and got a message he had never seen before.

[Error: Level 0 is an invalid option. Please input an initial skill.]

"What sort of skills do you enjoy the most?" Cain asked as the Elder gasped and tried to recover from the shock of being reduced from nearly level six hundred as a Puppet to zero.

"Alchemy, I like potions." She whispered, too shocked to do anything else.

There was an Alchemist Class, as Cain recalled it. He just had to search his records since the crafters didn't particularly interest him in the past. The census that he received

from the Demon King was his best bet in this case, and Cain searched for all Demons and Dragons with Alchemy skills, then sorted by quality.

[Golden Dragon Alchemy Fires] Mythic Rank. Allows the creation of Mythic quality Alchemical concoctions of all sorts, including potions, pills, and poisons.

It was at the top of the list and belonged to a class called [Golden Alchemist], a Second Advancement class. That would be a bit overkill, but Cain didn't see any harm in going a bit overboard to make sure that the System didn't call him a cheapskate and cut the reward or call the quest incomplete.

Having to kill her twice in ten minutes because the quest didn't complete would be a traumatic memory, no matter how he looked at it, and the quest was called a Lady's Smile.

[Name] Solara

[Species] Human

[Level] 1

[Class] Golden Alchemist

"Welcome to the Forbidden Treasure Sect, Solara," Cain informed her, then sent an invitation.

[Member Added]

[Quest Updated: Gather all Children] 6/12 present

Cain was shocked by the last message. Since when did he have twelve kids? There were only five by Cyrene and the twins with Misha, which should be born soon. Where did the rest come from?

Then he looked at the incredulous look on Solara's face, and realization dawned on Cain. The System was counting all of his Sect Members as his children for the purposes of the quest.

Children under his authority and children who he had fathered were very different things, but given the ambiguous language of "All Your Children" and the fact that the quest was created by the Laughing God, Cain thought that he really shouldn't be surprised that he had to keep them all.

"It looks like you will be with me for a while. I have a quest to complete, and the Gods have determined that you are coming with me." Cain informed his newest disciple, who gave him the most magnificent smile before beginning to cry and hug his leg.



Cain waited ten minutes for her to regain her composure as he rubbed her back and let her vent her emotions. A small return to youth was one thing, but a whole new start on life was a very different matter, worthy of at least that much time to recover.

"Why don't we go greet the others? I am sure they are all eager to greet their new sister." Cain told her, then tapped on the barriers one after another, signaling the casters to let them out.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## **Chapter 642 642 Introducing Solara**

Cain stepped out of the tent with a small girl holding his hand, looking like the picture of innocence embodied. Her smile was gentle and delicate, and the other Elders, who knew her savage and gruff personality, were tempted to believe that Cain had actually sent the Elder away through a portal and abducted another young girl to be his follower.

"Everyone, I would like you to meet Solara. My newest Disciple. Her cultivation journey is just beginning, so please be kind to her during our stay here." Cain introduced the Elder to her old friends and acquaintances while the girl blushed, not yet used to the looks that she was getting.

It was a far cry from the scared or reverent looks that she was used to, and Solara was beginning to feel a threatening look being cast her way, despite the lack of any enhanced senses.

That feeling was coming from Luna, who was staring at her like a Predator stares at its favorite prey, and the look alone was enough to make the former Elder shiver.

"Luna, you are scaring your new sister. You can cuddle her later." Cain reprimanded.

Tena gave Solara a commiserating look, having gone through the same experience, being much weaker than Luna and small enough for the girl to wrap her arms around after she was first changed.

"She won't hurt you. She just treats everyone like a stuffed animal when she wants to sleep." Penny explained while the other Elders hid their amusement.

"Oh, that doesn't sound so bad. At the Shattered Moon Sect, all of the new disciples share rooms with one bed. You can either learn to share, fight over it, or sleep in shifts.

It is a bonding experience and quite the eye opener for many of the new Disciples that come from wealthy families and were spoiled because of their talent." Solara replied.

"You give them beds? We just put mats on the ground." Elder Ling asked, curious about the other Sect's practices.

"With the boys, the competition is fierce. If you don't force them to compete for everything, all of the time, they form gangs where only a few strongest even attempt to get stronger. So, with competition, even against their roommate, they wake up in a competitive mood, which helps prevent alliances and builds the average strength. That way, we don't have to cull the cultivation of as many and send them away as failures." Solara explained.

"Not a bad idea. Our disciples don't need much encouragement to compete with each other, though. One casual comment about a disciple becoming more beautiful or overtaking a spot on the rankings is enough to keep them at each others' throats for months." Elder Ling thought out loud.

"The storehouse goes through level 1 beautification pills like water after competitions and field trips." The Kitchen Elder laughed.

"Don't those have diminishing returns every time they are used?" One of the other Elders asked.

"They do. By the fifth or sixth time, they are no more than a placebo. But we let them keep buying them anyhow since it keeps them motivated." The Elder replied with a wink.

"You're all strange in the head. We just discourage all forms of vanity since they take away focus from cultivation." A younger Elder at the end of the table added.

"At least we're not the Forbidden Treasure Sect, which turns all their disciples into lovely young women with Secret Skills." The Kitchen Elder shot back.

"No offense, Elder Cain."

"None taken. My disciples were lovely even before they were transformed."

"Since we're all here still. Why don't we get past the easy part? Who is here for their personal appearance, and who wants skill books for their Sects?" Elder Ling asked.

The remaining Elders, other than the Shadowed Blade, all looked guilty, having come there for their own personal vanity.

"Bring out the interesting objects, and I will consider your proposals." Cain agreed, more eager to have a long chat with his new Disciple.

She hadn't said anything about her new class, and Cain saw her notice and then ignore the messages, so there was a good chance that she thought she had received a Divine Inheritance and that she had hidden it from him. As fun as it might be to play up that pretense, it would be better to explain how the System worked before she did anything strange.

She didn't have any skill points at the moment, so there wasn't a huge risk, but the Class did have a few base Skills as a Second Advancement Class, and she still had her knowledge and storage devices. Who knew what she would get up to if left unsupervised?

The items were all simple trinkets, each of them holding an unusual power. But one, in particular, stood out from the others when Cain scanned it. It was damaged, but it was a Mythic homing beacon, which would let those with the knowledge and power open a portal to the designated location marked on the otherwise plain ring.

That alone was worth the effort to change everyone's appearance.

On the off chance that the Mythic Dungeon, or pocket dimension, that the ring led to contained good stuff after all this time, Cain pocketed the offerings and activated [Modify] on everyone at the same time, bringing them all back to their early twenties in appearance.

"That just leaves me with a few books to make. If you lovely ladies can wait for a few hours, I will finish them up and bring them out to you." Cain offered while the Elders examined themselves.

"Take your time. You will be busy tomorrow, I am certain.

The vain ladies might have gotten here first, but tomorrow all of the Elders who have heard about your technique manual inscribing methods will be harassing the border of the Lotus Blossom Sect beginning at dawn." The Shadowed Blade Elder reminded him.

"You just had to bring that up. Maybe I should head into the city again to keep things quiet here." Cain sighed.

"Why don't we set up a station for you at the edge of the camp? You can sit under a pagoda on a comfortable cushion, and they can come to beg you to make skill books for them. It will be more organized than making them all beg for you to come out, and if they're only waiting on those who got there first and not our Disciples to talk to you, they won't bother us as much." Elder Ling suggested.

"That's not a bad idea. Miss Solara is an excellent inscriptionist as well, so you can use her as a front if you get a request to make something simple." Elder Dragon Fang of the Shadowed Blade laughed.

That was quite the mental image, letting the little girl fill out the requests of a bunch of pompous busybodies who should have been able to do it themselves if they had managed to attract talent to their Sects.

"You can bring Luna as well since she can use Rune Crafting. That should really shock them. It would look like a training Symposium for your Disciples." Penny suggested, moving the most energetic of the Sect to a spot where she wouldn't be able to bother the rest to do fun things all day.

"Your Disciple can Craft Rune Items? Then what am I, chopped liver? I spent a thousand years learning the technique, and I still haven't mastered Rune Crafting." One of the Elders grumbled.

"Come and watch tomorrow. I am sure that at least a few of them will come with substantial payments in order to get weapons made or repaired for the next round of the Inner Sect Competition or for the Core Disciples." Cain offered.

"In that case, I should get going to meditate and refresh my mind for tomorrow's excitement. If you will excuse me, Elders, and thank you for the hospitality, Lotus Blossom Sect."

The Elder, who had been trying to learn to rune craft, said her goodbyes and left, followed soon after by the others, with only two left behind for Cain to make their books.

Cain retired back to his tent, where the Elders took a seat on his bed while he sat at the desk to write. Neither book was a hard one, and they only took a little over a half hour in total, but by then, Luna was already dragging Solara to the other side of the tent to sleep.

"Be gentle, her cultivation has just been reset, so she is fragile. I don't want to hear anything about bullying or injuries." Cain warned her.

"If I don't bully her, she will run away again. Have you hugged her yet? She's so soft without cultivation. It's like holding a pillow. Not even Penny's fur is this soft." Luna pouted.

"I warned you. Don't make me punish you for not behaving." Cain threatened, pointing to the kitchen area outside, then making a slashing gesture to warn her he would cut her off from the ability to make sweets from her new cookbook.

"Now, here are your books. Enjoy your evenings, and I will likely see you tomorrow since it seems I will be running an impromptu vendor stand at the edge of the camp." Cain told them.

Both Elders bowed politely, then walked out of the tent as the rest of the Disciples came in.

"Boss, have you seen Luna and Solara? She grabbed the new girl and took off." Penny asked.

"They're already in the tent. Keep her out of trouble, will you? I will keep her busy tomorrow so you can relax." Cain instructed the Lycan Druid.

"No problem, Boss. I think I have come up with a new path for my development as well. We can talk about that tomorrow night." Penny replied, waving as she headed through the flap separating the two sides of the tent.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 643 643

Cain woke up in the morning to the feeling of a small body climbing into his bed to hide. The lack of presence told him it wasn't Luna for a change, so it must be Solara hiding from her.

He was about to speak when the alchemist put a finger to her lips to silence him and curled up between him and the wall. She had only been there a few minutes when Luna and the others came out from the other side.

"Have you seen Solara? I wanted to get her dressed up for the day, so we could show off our new Disciple." Sabbat asked.

"She already headed out for breakfast. But you all wear uniforms. What is there to do?" Cain asked.

"You don't understand the necessities. A lady needs her hair done, makeup, lotion, powder, exfoliation, and so much more. We can't just roll out of bed this beautiful every day." Sabbat informed him.

So that was what Solara was hiding from.

"I am sure you can discuss it at breakfast. Now, get up and get going, or you will miss the best dishes." Cain instructed his Disciples.

Once they were gone, Solara stuck her head out of the blankets and gave Cain a wink, ready to head out.

"Stop. You can't go out with your hair in a nest like that. Come sit here, and I will straighten you out, so you are presentable for the public. We can't have people thinking

I am negligent as a Sect Master, unable to even supervise six people." Cain told her and took a brush out from his inventory.

"You know I am nine hundred years old. I don't need someone else to brush my hair." Solara pointed out.

"Not anymore, you're not. If you want a fresh start, you need to stop acting like the Elder you used to be. So, now you are nine, and I am your Sect Master. Now sit down and let me fix your hair." Cain demanded, tapping his knee to indicate that she should sit down and obey.

"Fine, but just this time."

For all her reluctance, Solara began humming happily, not even a minute after Cain started to brush out and plait her hair into braids, acting very much like the happy young Disciple that she appeared to be.

Cain was just tying a ribbon at the end of the braid when Luna came back in and began pointing at Solara in outrage.

"So that's where you were. You tricked me into leaving so you could get a head start on having your hair done. That's not fair. Next time, I will let you wander until mine is done first." Luna complained.

With her hair finished, Solara turned to whisper into Cain's ear. "She has totally forgotten that my appearance doesn't match my real age, hasn't she?"

"About three minutes after I finished transforming you, most likely." Cain agreed, while his newest disciple sighed and stepped away from him for Luna to take her place.

"Master Cain is the best at hair. He doesn't pull the tangles or anything, and the braids last all day." Luna informed Solara with a smile as Cain began to work.

"Okay, done. Now, let's get breakfast, and then you are coming with me to the pagoda that the Lotus Blossom has set up for us. Solara, you can come too, but I don't know how interested you are in Inscription techniques." Cain told his Disciple, then carried Luna out of the tent and over toward the tables.

When they sat down, Cain could see the new temporary structure being assembled, using a colorful cloth to emulate the traditional tile roof over a wooden structure. It was an impressive venue for a simple vendor stall, but compared to the venues that were prepared inside the city for most symposiums, it was rather small and crowded, thanks to the flow of morning traffic walking between camps.

"Almost everyone who is going to the city will be gone within an hour, and then we can get started. The pathway is mostly empty all day, so only those who are interested will

show up, and the others can take a different route back to their camps if they return early." Elder Ling explained, seeing the concern on Cain's face about their choice not to have him find a spot in the city.

In that case, it should be fine. Plenty of other Sects have small vendors set up at their camp because they couldn't get a spot inside the city. They're usually not influential or large ones, but that pretty much sums up the Forbidden Treasure Sect, doesn't it? We aren't even large enough to set up our own camp and share with friends instead." Cain agreed.

"That's part of the Sect's charm. You showed up with just enough Disciples for a team, plus one Elder, and made your mark on the tournament as well as the Symposiums. Dozens of small Sects and hermit cultivators have tried to do exactly the same thing to get themselves new Disciples, with varying degrees of success.

The trick is, you really do need to have something amazing to offer to entice disciples worth training to a teacher who is unlikely to be able to offer them any training resources at all, much less a chance at extremely rare ones like the big Sects can."

That made a lot of sense to Cain. There was a lot of competition at the bigger sects, and most of the disciples understood that it would be a harsh environment, but that was the only place you could get the resources to actually advance your growth at a reasonable rate.

Not that his disciples needed resources. They had him and Luna for all the experience buff that they could ever need, and the system didn't demand rare treasures to help them advance.

At least not most of the time.

Cain thought of his quest to integrate the Dragon Core at that moment and brought up the quest progression in his interface.

[Dragon Core Integration] 65 Percent

It was going way faster than he had expected, with all the small quests that he had been getting, and it wouldn't be long before Cain could make the Immortal Rank Awakening and become qualified to go to the world that the Ancients were hiding on, according to the one named Nyarla, who seemed to be taking care of Misha.

Once he got there, Cain had every intention of settling down to a relaxing family life for a change. That was what most Awakened did once they had power and wealth, just settled down to family life for a few decades.

Lately, Cain was really beginning to appreciate the fact that he was, in fact, going to be Immortal, with no hurry to get things done in a limited lifespan. The Elves along the



coast of the Serrah Woods embraced that fact, knowing that they had a thousand or more years to live, and thoroughly enjoyed their time.

In theory, he had hundreds of times longer than that, and by the time he could be considered "old" by Ancient standards, even the Elves would feel like children to him.

That might just be this world getting to him, though, as they considered it perfectly normal for a Sect Master or First Ancestor to go into secluded cultivation for a century or more at a time and then return to their duties when they had made a breakthrough, or when there was trouble that their juniors couldn't take care of.

He could certainly appreciate that feeling. Watching Luna and the other Disciples train and grow was a relaxing sort of feeling. He didn't need to do dungeons constantly to grow. He only had to keep up with the System Quests and make sure they were safe.

But for now, there was a lot of excitement to be had. Even before the paths between camps had cleared out, they were beginning to draw a crowd, eager for him to do practical demonstrations and open up a shop selling things that no other Sect in the area could make.

"Elder Cain, are you coming? The crowd is beginning to get annoying." One of the Lotus Blossom Elders called as he walked out of the tent with Luna and Solara in tow.

"I am on my way. Just let me grab a bit of breakfast to go." Cain called back, using mana to enhance his voice.

Nobody outside the camp would mistake his voice for anyone else since he was the only male in the entire camp. That should keep them calm for a few minutes. Or so Cain thought until he heard the cheering. Hearing that he was coming only made things worse.

"Calm down, calm down." He yelled out to the crowd as he made his way to the pagoda, carrying both disciples, one on either hip.

It wasn't until he set them down on the cushions that he realized the look that he was getting from Solara was not a friendly one.

"Sorry, you're the same size, and she likes to be carried," Cain whispered to the former Elder, then gave her a wink and turned to the gathered crowd out front of the camp.

"Good morning, everyone. This will be more like an interactive shop than a symposium. I will explain the theories behind my actions as I create the orders that customers place. It might be unorthodox, but I think it will be more interesting than some simple lecture.

You can ask for Skill Tomes, Rune Crafted items, or just ask questions if you like, but as you know, I do not care for cash. I have enough."

[Quest: Please the Crowd] complete the day without causing a Sect War.

[Reward: Skill Tome] Mana Transformation. Allows System Users to convert mana from mana gems and monster cores directly into experience. Items will be destroyed when used. 1exp per mana converted, in addition to kill bonuses for monsters hunted.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 644 644

Cain wasn't happy to see that message. If it were going to be easy to avoid a Sect War today, the reward for the quest wouldn't be so good.

The crowd seemed entranced by the two small disciples sitting on either side of Cain, though, and not at all violent or aggressive, only curious about why he had chosen to bring the two small girls with him to the stand for the day.

Some suspected it was to keep them out of trouble while the other Disciples were training since common sense said that Disciples that young certainly couldn't be on the same power level as the ones who were in their late teens or possibly older.

Gaining power slowed the aging process in this world much the same as it did in Cain's world, so after they reached their late teens, it became much more difficult to judge the actual age of anyone without analyzing their aura to determine their bone age, which was neither an easy skill to learn, or one that most cultivators would let you do casually, as it was viewed as being highly impolite and invasive.

"First off, I will ask that there is no fighting in the crowd. I know that many of you are eager to get something made, and I will be here for as long as I deem reasonable, so there is no need to fight for a spot.

Now, who would like to go first?" Cain asked.

His words were disregarded the second they came out of his mouth, and immediately a fight broke out for the first order of the day. It moved from two men at the front to including the four men and two women who tried to take their place as they fought into an all-out brawl.

They might have kept at it, except that nobody had expected the sneaky nature of the Shadowed Blade Sect, who sent one of their most junior disciples, who had almost no aura of cultivation at all, to sneak through the crowd and place an order.

"On behalf of the Shadowed Blade Sect, I would like to ask you to show us how to make a venomous Rune Dagger. Elder Fetid Wind says he will cover any reasonable price." The girl reported dutifully.

Cain was about to answer when a roaring from the back of the crowd interrupted him. "Where are you, you little shit? It was Dragon Fang who told you to call me that wasn't it?"

The girl laughed and darted away through the crowd of fighting cultivators, deftly dodging feet and bodies as she activated her elementary stealth skill.

The man made his way to the front, pushing through the crowd to find the Disciple, then stopped when he realized she was already gone and gave Cain an apologetic look.

"I am Elder Blade Wind of the Shadowed Blade Sect, and it seems that I am paying for today's purchase." He sighed.

Luna giggled at the prank that had been played on the Elder, then abruptly stopped when both Cain and Elder Blade Wind glared at her in unison.

"With my materials, I can make you a Mythic Rank Rune Dagger, holding the venomous enchantment for fifty Mythic Beast Cores." Cain offered.

"I can give you thirty and a large Mana Ruby." The Elder counter offered, holding the ruby out beside a bag of beast cores.

"Close enough. You have a deal.

Now, I am sure everyone knows the deal today, I will demonstrate the method as I work, though the chances of anyone actually picking it up completely in a single day are somewhere between The Celestials Invading to throw a party and Elder Dragon Tooth being a man in drag."

That made all of the assembled cultivators laugh, and most of the fighting stopped. Both had a chance of somewhat less than one in a million, and they understood that, but watching might give them a bit of inspiration to push them closer to learning a new technique.

"Luna, please go fetch me a bone from the kitchen about the length of your forearm," Cain instructed.

"Got it." She called, running out of the booth and through the camp. It only took her ten seconds to get back and hand the bone to Cain, who looked it over with appreciation.

"Excellent size. Now, the first step for this is to shape the bone into a dagger." Cain began, using [Modify] to shape it into a large bowie knife with a pure white, single-sided blade and antler-patterned handle.

"Depending on the quality of your kitchen staff, you might be able to stop right here. But today, we will need to add a little bit. The edge I made is sharp and serrated for ease of tearing a wound open to inflict the poisoning effect, so all I will add is the simple rune for poison and then pull that matrix of energy through the blade like so.

I don't know how many of you can actually even see what I am doing here, but that is the method to draw the poison rune through a blade this shape. And then, with an injection of Mana to set it, the weapon is done."

The crowd went silent as the blade turned from pure white to sickly gray with green glowing runes down the length. It was obvious from the energy it put off that it was a Mythic Rank Artifact, and it did give off the vibe of being poisonous, but Elder Blade Wind wasn't going to just take Cain's word for it.

As soon as the blade was handed over, he immediately sunk it into the thigh of the man standing next to him, causing gasps of panic as black streaks flowed across the man's body in mere seconds before his whole body began to convulse and he dropped to the ground, paralyzed.

Cain quickly cleansed the man, and healed him back to full health, then glared at Elder Blade Wind.

"I will have to ask you not to test the weapon on random strangers. But for the record, he had about three more seconds to live." Cain chastised the Assassin.

"Not bad at all. It lives up to its name." The Elder agreed happily, then disappeared into the crowd.

"Since you had to get stabbed by the last item, why don't we take your request next?" Cain asked the man he had just healed.

"That bastard, I will pay him back for that. But not today. He will be expecting it today. Could you make me a Skill Book of Divine Crushing Mountain, as the Crushing Mountain Sect knows it?" The man asked.

"Who here is from the Crushing Mountain Sect?" Cain asked with a sigh.

An enormous man, who might actually be the mountain that the Sect was named after if he gained a few more inches, came forward with an amused grin on his face.

"Go ahead and make it for him. He's too dumb to learn it anyhow." The big man informed Cain.

"Well, since we have permission, if you are prepared to pay the equivalent of one hundred Mythic Beast Cores, I will begin. The details and number of pages vary based on the technique, but the basics of making an actual Skill Tome, one that can be used to immediately learn a skill by anyone with the aptitude, are the same for every Skill.

First, you need to assemble the appropriate materials for the skill you are making. Today, I will use the core of an Earth Golem and a bit of divine sand I borrowed from the smithy. Grind them well and mix them into your ink, then add energy to blend them until you get a usable mixture.

Then, you need to precisely control your energy as you write the text into the book. Any variations, spelling errors, or interruptions, and you will get an incomplete text, which can still be used to some degree, but not a perfect copy of the skill."

Cain explained his method slowly as he wrote out the Rank C skill book, which the man making the request had mistaken as the Crushing Mountain Sect's secret skill.

"If you finish it perfectly, your energy will form a detailed cover as soon as the last rune is inscribed and the pages are stacked, like so. Now, this is a complete Tome of Divine Crushing Mountain."

Cain finished and held his hand out for payment.

The cultivator gave him an Immortal Realm Dark Flame Phoenix core, which had the same value as a hundred Mythic Beast Cores, and picked up the tome.

He looked at it. Then glared at it. Then poured energy into it. Then swore at it. None of those things had any effect, though. The man had close to zero affinity for Earth Skills, as far as Cain could tell, and the book didn't even begin to glow when he poured energy into it.

Even Sabbath could make it glow a little, and she was neither a warrior nor an Earth Mage who could possibly use the skill.

"Well, that is unfortunate. But the Crushing Mountain Elder's guess was right. It seems that despite the tome being complete, you lack the affinity for it. There is still the chance to use it manually, but I will warn you that the ability to use it immediately will fade in an hour or so. I didn't permanently stabilize the book." Cain informed the man, who looked a bit pale at the news.

"What would it cost for a stable book?" The Crushing Mountain Elder asked.

"The Materials for a permanently stable book are roughly ten times what he paid for that one." Cain shrugged, not elaborating on the fact that he was using the Inscription desk, which was nestled into the cushions in front of him, to create the books for free.

"That's steep. But we don't need it anyhow. We can just teach our juniors." The big man chuckled.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 645 645

"Do you want the next turn since your Sect was singled out?" Cain asked, and the people in the crowd began to get excited.

They had learned what they thought was the secret to Cain's choice of examples. He was picking the people affected by the last request, which everyone thought was the fairest way to go about it.

"In that case, what would it cost me to get a new axe? A big one that can cut hills in half with a single swing and part the ocean for a hundred meters ahead of me? I will pay whatever it costs, or I can trade you for this bag of Mythril Ore and Gems."

That sounded like a pretty amazing weapon, but Cain had no idea how he was going to go about creating it. Maybe he could use wind blades? They would part the waters as well as cut through hills, but if they wanted to cut hills in half and reach a hundred meters with a Wind Blade's width, it was going to have to be a very intricate weapon, most likely at the Spirit Rank at the very minimum.

"That's a steep order. Can we scale it down? Or can we make it scale with the user?"

That Cain could do, a progressive rune that you had to pour monstrous amounts of energy into each time you used the effect to get the full damage out of the weapon. Without that extra energy, it would just be a very decent Mythic weapon.

"Crushing Mountain is never weak. Only the strong can live in our Sect." The man responded with pride.

So a progressive rune was fine then.

"Alright. Now, this is going to take some time, so watch closely." Cain began, then dug through his inventory for random items to make into a rune ax.

He had a good stick to make the handle, which was currently a bo staff, but he lacked an ax head.

"Luna, go find me a good rock. Big as that guy's head, at least." Cain instructed, and she took off again, but this time toward the city walls.

"While she hunts for an ax head, we will make the handle. This will be a two-handed weapon suitable for a man of your particular stature. I'm not sure if anyone told your mother, but the child doesn't have to be the size of a mountain to join the Sect.

Or do they?"

The big man laughed and pointed to a Dwarf beside him, who was wearing identical robes and had stone arrowheads braided into his long white beard and faded eyes, showing that age had nearly blinded him before he made it to the Immortal Realm.

Cain took out the staff and reshaped it into the handle for the weapon he was envisioning, a large double-bladed war axe with a stone head. Cain began to narrate the process as he made the handle, then set it aside when Luna came back with a rock.

She had used her knife to carve rough facial features on it, and it did look a good bit like the big man who had commissioned the weapon, but it also looked suspiciously like she had removed it from the city wall.

That shouldn't be a big deal. They had Earth Element specialists to repair that sort of damage.

Cain reshaped the ax head, then looked at the disappointed look on the Crushing Mountain Sect Elder's face, and changed it again to make it a perfect replica of a Dwarven Battle Axe, with a hammer on one side and a long spike on top that could be used as a makeshift pickaxe.

That brightened their looks considerably, and Cain began planning where he was going to put all of the runes to make this thing actually work.

He needed Earth Shaping, Durability, Perfect Size, Wind Blade, Sharpness, and Cleave.

The first two could go on the handle. The wind Blade could go on the spike, while Sharpness and Cleaving would need to be repeated on both sides of the blade.

That left him a bit of room though, so he added crushing to the hammer side and began sketching the path in his mind, using Record Keeper's [Precognition] to see hundreds of incidences where he failed to create the weapon before he got it right.

That was the true secret to building a reputation as an infallible Master at your skill. Never let others see all the times you failed.



Cain set to work now that the pieces were complete, carving the myriad of Runes all over the weapon. In the Runic language, the symbols even took on shapes that represented their nature. Sharpness and Cleave both had hard and angular lines, while the wind blade was an interlinking set of flowing circles, with the small variations being the actual letters.

Cain didn't bother to get into the theory, or the actual alphabet, simply brushing off those questions as not teaching literacy as part of his seminar today, but still, it took him over three hours to finish the weapon.

"And done. It seems that it is time for someone to go get us lunch. Young Ladies, if you would please." Cain suggested, sending the girls away to fetch food.

They had both been entranced by the process. Luna because she was learning tricks to the craft, and Solara because she had never seen anything as insane as making a Rune Weapon out of scrap stone and a broken staff.

She had seen it twice in a row now, from less than a meter away, with all of her senses focused on his skills, and still, she had no clue how the reshaping process happened.

"I'm on it!" Luna cheered, embracing her role as the day's gopher now that she was sent to go for food.

"That axe, it is incredible." The Elder from the Crushing Mountain Sect whispered with deep reverence in his voice.

"It must be flawed. No cultivator would show their deepest secrets so easily." Someone in the crowd scoffed.

"What makes you think this is a deep secret? It is just another branch of inscription, with a slightly different process to empower the Runes. Every branch of every Sect should have at least a few Inscriptionists, even if they're not particularly good ones. The Sects need them for everyday life and keeping the privacy wards active." Cain tried to explain.

"Like we buy that. Rune Crafting is a lost skill. No way does it actually work as well as you say, and what is with the reshaping of the rock? Are you just an Earth Cultivator who got a few Sects in on your scheme?" The man taunted.

Cain saw that the crowd up front, who could actually sense the aura of the weapon and had more clearly seen the process, were starting to get upset and that it was going to lead to violence again, so he decided to try a different tactic.

"If you are certain that the weapon is a dud, you can kindly ask the Crushing Mountain Sect to give you a casual demonstration. If you do, I will happily put your request next in line." Cain suggested.

"Hmph. Bring it on. He's a weakling, to begin with, and that lump of rock will shatter the first time it hits something solid. Come on then, show us all how big of a fraud you are."

"Since he's so weak, there is no need to hold back. You heard the man. He wants to take a casual swing in exchange for the next spot in line." The Dwarven Elder with the arrowheads in his beard commanded his Sect mate.

The big man passed over the bag of ores and gems, then picked up the axe with a smirk, pouring elemental energy into the weapon.

The Runes, followed by the entire weapon, began to glow with dull gray and brown energy, and a surge of immense power flowed over the Lotus Blossom Camp as the Rune Weapon truly came to life in the hands of a Peak Immortal Cultivator.

Cain could see in his interface that the man was over level 700, more than qualified to break through to the early stages of divinity, should he manage to find a source of inspiration or a Divine Skill that would allow him to awaken.

That did not bode well for his opponent, but only a second later, the surging energy backed down to a much lower level, and the smirking Giant turned his attention from the weapon to the cultivator, who called him a weakling.

"This should be about ten percent power, right? That is more than enough for the likes of you."

He didn't even give the weapon a proper swing or use any skills. He just casually swung the weapon overhand with one arm and let it crash into the other man's shielding.

Layer after layer of defenses shattered, and the ground around him was cracked, while the Cultivator was nearly driven to his knees, barely holding up against the strike.

"Well worth the money. Thank you, Elder Cain." The giant of a man chuckled, then turned and walked off through the crowd to take a spot near the back, where he had been before his Sect was called out.

"Well, you did take his strike. That means you're up next, assuming you had a request for me?"

That brought some chuckles from the crowd as the man recovered his breath and channeled energy into his body to replace what he had burned while keeping his shield intact. The look of astonishment in his eyes was proof enough to everyone else that the attack wasn't staged. Had he been only a little weaker or less prepared, he might have died.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 646 646

"If you truly can create a Rune Item to order, I would request one to test the true future development of potential candidates. Many can test for aptitude, but aptitude and achievement are two very different things. I want to know of the greatest accomplishment they will make." The man who had just taken a strike from the Crushing Mountain Elder requested.

"A prophetic item? You understand that the future isn't set and that outside influences can change the course of your life, correct?" Cain asked.

"Many things in the Immortal Realms can change fate, but if there was never a chance of great accomplishment, then it never mattered what their potential could be." The Cultivator countered.

There was a lot of discussion in the crowd. An item that could see the many futures of a Candidate would be a huge boon to any Sect that got their hands on it. Simply being able to see the chance for a student to change the world would reveal the hidden geniuses whose accomplishments outshined their innate potential.

Potential only measured bloodline and innate cultivation aptitudes. It had no measuring standard for luck or fate, after all.

Cain thought about the proposal for a while and then decided that it would be easy enough to do. With the Runes for Fate, Prophecy, and accomplishment, as well as the rune for Light, he could create an item that glowed more brightly for people who had bright potential futures.

The big question was if the man in front of him could afford it. Cain wasn't willing to hand out something that interesting to a random stranger for nothing, after all.

"What do you have that could interest me?" Cain asked, hoping that the man really did have something good.

The cultivator snorted. "Just a greedy charlatan, scamming people out of their treasures, I knew it."

"Did you think I was making Rune Items for free? Is the Forbidden Treasure Sect well known for its charity work? Everyone else has paid for the creations I have made, so what can you offer that would entice me to make a Stone of Fate for you?" Cain replied evenly.

"If he can't pay, I will." A booming voice announced from the air above them, and a Divine Level cultivator landed directly in front of the stall.

"City Lord, it is a pleasure to see you here. What attracted your attention?" The man who was clearly here only to cause trouble for Cain requested politely.

"I heard what you asked for as I was on patrol. If you can't afford the price, I can. I will buy it and have it placed in the city square. Anyone who can activate it will be allowed to test themselves if it is a genuine item. I have already reached Divinity, though it is only the earliest stages of the Demigod Rank. It is no problem for me to see into the potential future of those around me." The City Lord replied while giving Cain a curious look.

Having someone see his past and future could be a rather delicate and dangerous situation for Cain, who wasn't yet in the Immortal Realm. The City Lord was immeasurably more powerful than he was, and Cain really wasn't looking forward to the chances of being squashed like a bug.

The City Lord's presence did present a unique opportunity for Cain to complete his quest though. What fool would dare start a war when the highest power in the city was sitting right in front of them? He could complete the assignment, do a few more simple requests, and then collect the quest and call it a day.

"Sir, would you care to join us? It is quite comfortable here out of the direct sunlight." Cain offered, gesturing to the open seat where Luna was earlier.

"I spend too much time cultivating or doing paperwork. A moment to stretch my legs is a rare opportunity." The City Lord declined the offer with a faint smile.

Luna arrived with lunch just then and placed the platters of sandwiches and sweets on the table with a careful movement that Cain recognized as great concern that she might spill the pastries.

"Alright, I will finish this task first, so don't eat all the food while I work." Cain cautioned his daughter, who already had a small square of roast meat sandwich in each hand.

"I will ask them to bring more over." Luna agreed, then began carefully eating, making sure she didn't drop any crumbs.

That wasn't what he meant, but close enough.

"Alright, if it is going in the city square, I will need to use something large," Cain told the crowd, then summoned a Granite Golem to stand beside him.

With a thought, the Golem made a statue of a Seraphim with their wings folded in front of them, wearing a light Toga that was the Seraphim version of fully clothed for interactions with the other species.

"You seem quite familiar with the Seraphim." The City Lord stated, repressing most of his curiosity until Cain finished the design.

"I spent a bit of time around one, that's all." Cain shrugged off the man's intrigue and turned the two-meter-tall statue so it was lying on the ground in behind the table.

"This might be harder for some to see, but the end result is all that most of you care about anyhow, so that is fine. If you want to see more clearly, just fly up a little so you can see over the crowd."

Cain began carving the runes on the base of the statue, on the roundel under its feet, and the stone began to give off an unmistakable aura of prophecy, filling the crowd with awe for the level of power and control being shown, even if they couldn't understand the technique being employed.

Cain finished the first layer and had the Granite Golem encase it in another layer of stone so that he could repeat the process. In order to make the process scale properly, he either needed to inscribe the runes repeatedly all over the statue or make layers so that the light would scale properly.

Over and over, Cain inscribed the runes, altering them a little every time so that the enchantment could be linked to look into multiple likely futures at the same time when he finished. That was how the process was described in the textbook that he had learned from, but Cain had never done anything this intricate before, and there was a rather high chance that he would fail and have to start over.

That would be embarrassing, but he could complete it in only a few tries, even if the first try failed. Unless his luck was really bad, that was.

Most of the afternoon passed with the crowd watching with rapt attention while Cain finished a hundred layers to make a proper prophetic statue. Even if there were a one percent chance of the user doing something noteworthy, it would glow a little.

If that something noteworthy were actually incredible, it would be brighter, and with higher chances, the glow would be larger. Runes had something akin to a will of their own, so Cain couldn't guarantee which portion of the Statue would light up unless he bound the Runes to specific spots, but for prophecy, that would be more difficult, owing to the fact that the chances were coming from different realities.

That would make using this statue a bit of an adventure, as they would have to search it for a spot that lit up if their chances of a bright future were dim and unlikely. Cain had confidence that it would light up, though.

With all of the layers done, Cain covered the base with one more layer, forming a plinth half as tall as the statue he had started with. It left the beautiful Seraphim, which bore an uncanny resemblance to Evangeline, standing on a meter-tall round pillar, clearly

visible over the crowd when Cain let the Granite Golem use [Earth Manipulation] to stand it upright in front of his booth.

The aura of Holiness caused by recreating the image of a true Seraphim mixed with the aura of prophecy caused by the Runes the moment that Cain poured mana into the statue to activate it for the first time.

The pulse couldn't be ignored. Even those in the camps on the far side of the city could feel the activation of the statue with their highly attuned senses, bringing dozens of powerful Cultivators over.

"There we go. A true masterpiece, perhaps the greatest item I have ever crafted." Cain told the City Lord proudly.

The other man was staring at the Seraphim, unable to believe what he was seeing, despite having watched it being created. Then he looked from the statue to Cain and back again before walking over and placing a hand on the statue's foot.

He channeled a bit of Divine Power into the statue, and an immediate surge of light filled the afternoon sky with a piercing white light.

First, the eyes, then the wings of the statue, lit up with white light brighter than any illumination spell Cain had ever seen, and he began to wonder if he had made a mistake on the calibration of the item.

"The Divine Dragon Elder once said that I had the chance to slay a Demon Lord and protect the entire world. It seems that the chances of that battle happening are much higher than I had hoped." The City Lord spoke softly, bringing everyone back to their senses as the light faded.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 647 647

The Cultivators who were flying over recovered first, due to their immense power, and landed in a circle around the City Lord and the statue with weapons in their hands, ready to defend against any sort of threat to the area.

"Relax, old friends. This strange man has just made a statue of prophecy for the city. I activated it to see if it was genuine, and the light you saw was the threat of a Demon Lord attack at some point during my life." The City Lord explained to the assembled Divine Realm Cultivators.

"A true statue of prophecy? May we try?" The strongest of the men among the new arrivals asked the Lord.

"Go ahead. He has agreed to sell it to the city, though we haven't agreed upon a price yet." he agreed.

Cain thought for a moment and realized that his quest wasn't done yet, so these men could be very useful to him today. He only had to make it through one day without a Guild War.

In retrospect, it would have been better to claim he was training in seclusion and just spend his time doing nothing all day, but Cain hadn't thought of that option until just now.

"All I ask is that you really do put it in an accessible spot and make it available to the general public. Anyone who wants to test themselves should be given the chance." Cain recommended.

The overjoyed and greedy looks on the Sect Leaders' faces said that this was the right call. If it was in public, they could station recruiters nearby in case someone did show potential to change the world. Whoever took such a person in and trained them would stand a high chance of rising to new heights by association.

"I can agree to that. I myself am not a Sect Leader. That is why I get to lead the city. But these are the Six Divinities whose Sects all have compounds within the valley itself." The City Lord explained.

They really would make out like bandits this time. They were local, so it was easy for them to pluck new talents the moment that they were revealed, denying them to the slower-moving Sects.

One of the Demigods was giving the statue a curious look, then he took out a dull stone blade and extended the hilt toward the statue.

Beyond everyone's expectations, the statue reached out and took the sword from him, making a sharp flourish and then turning its blade down to pierce the stone beneath the Seraphim's feet.

Cain could sense amusement from the statue and suspected that he had attracted the attention of an actual Seraphim with his creation, but the feeling faded quickly, and all eyes turned to face the Demigod who had given it a sword.

"It is a treasure that we use to measure aptitude. It works in a similar way, glowing when power is introduced. I had wondered if there would be resonance, but I never expected that the Rune Statue would take it away from me." The man muttered.



"Rule one of dealing with Seraphim. Never give them a weapon that you need back. They might be righteous, but they love combat." Cain replied.

The Divine Cultivators all nodded in agreement, knowing at least a little about Seraphim nature after such long lives.

"Now it is multipurpose." Luna pointed out, smirking at the statue.

The City Lord turned to address her. "Then why don't you go next, little one? We can see how it reacts to someone else?"

Luna happily got up and rushed to the statue, reaching up to touch the blade in the Seraphim's hands.

The blade lit up from the hilt down, illuminating the entire blade in bright red, while the Seraphim's wings glowed with dim white light, and the statue's eyes glowed in a fierce black light that seemed to dim everything but the statue itself.

The overall effect was disturbing, and even the Demigods looked confused.

"The blade says that she has the potential to easily become a Divinity, and the wings say that she has a slight chance of making a memorable contribution to history, but what is with those eyes?" The City Lord asked.

"Could it be because I am a Priestess of the War God?" Luna asked, taking out her ability-created crown and placing it on her head proudly.

"That could be it. The Runes only specify prophecy and fate, not specific indicators for them." One of the Demigods agreed, stroking his beard as he thought.

"You, whoever you are. Come and try this statue." The City Lord demanded of the man who had originally requested such an item to be created.

"Yes, your holiness." He responded and immediately placed a hand on the statue, not channeling any energy, to see if he could trick it.

The statue pulled a surge of energy out of him, and the blade lit up with a blue light all the way down the length, slightly less brightly than when Luna had tried, and half of the fingernail began to glow on the middle finger of the left hand.

"Good potential. There is no reason you can't make the later stages of the Immortal Rank. It seems that your chances of being the protagonist of future legends are somewhat dismal, though." The City Lord informed him.

The man was about to suggest that Cain was messing with him, as he was certain that the statue had just given him the finger, but under the attention of the Demigods, he had no choice but to hold his tongue.

A portal opened in the air, and one of the Sect Leaders pulled a small boy of about five years old from inside.

"Ragnar, test yourself on the statue," he demanded of the startled child, who still had food around his mouth, having been taken from his afternoon snack without warning.

He touched the statue and began to look pale as it pulled energy from him. He was unable to externally use his energy yet, so the statue did it for him, lighting up scattered feathers on the wings and a thin line of red light on a mostly blue glowing sword.

"A slim chance to make it to Divinity, and some random chances of making a notable impact on the future? That's exactly what the Oracle said when you went to visit, isn't it?" The City Lord asked.

"In almost exactly those words. Go back to your Mother and keep cultivating, boy." With those words, the boy vanished again, and the crowd began eyeing the statue with renewed interest.

The Oracles weren't easy to get to see, and they were very busy, but the statue didn't have other things to do. You could see it anytime.

None of them were under any illusions that it would be an easy task in the near future, though. The statue had shocked the crowd, and once the City Lord placed it out, he would need to guard it to keep the crowd of Cultivators who wished to know if they could be the Protagonist of the History books from overrunning it.

"What will it say about you, I wonder?" The City Lord asked Cain.

"Who knows? I just spend my days seeking knowledge. Those who apply the knowledge are the ones more likely to be remembered by history." Cain shrugged.

"Come try your creation. I suspect that it will have something interesting to say." One of the Demigods informed him, and it clearly wasn't a suggestion.

Cain sighed and stood up, wondering if this was the end of his hopes for completing the one day without a Sect War quest.

Cain placed his hand on the statue, and the blade lit up with a piercing Golden Light, bringing gasps of awe from the entire crowd. Then the statue itself lit up, and the noise got even louder.

"What in the seven heavens is that? Did he break it because he is the creator?" One of the onlookers asked.

The Demigods on the back of the statue, who were shielded from the light of the sword, all turned to examine Cain, clearly intrigued by him. Cain had to wait until the light of the sword faded to see what had drawn their interest, but when he did, all he could do was laugh.

The entire statue was lit up, mostly in the pale silver of Ancient Seraphim, but with all the feathers in different colors, giving the appearance of a Modern Art project, but the most striking feature was the hair, which was glowing with impossible colors, ones that the human eye should not be able to perceive. Some of them weren't even visible to Cain, though he could sense that they were glowing, and he only lacked the ability to perceive them properly.

"A near certainty of becoming a Major God, with a slim chance of doing anything? Is that what the statue is trying to tell us? Does it lack the ability to interpret the potential of those who have the power to shape worlds to their liking?" The City Lord asked.

"Most likely. I don't have that ability, and I don't know how to explain it properly, so my creation likely has the same difficulty." Cain offered.

The Demigods looked at each other, conferring silently, then nodded in agreement. "We can only do what we can do. Even the Oracles can only see so much of the future."

Before they could say any more, a teenage boy in flowing blue robes had rushed out of the crowd, reaching for the statue. They were all fast enough to have stopped him, but let him try anyhow, not willing to shatter his dreams if he should be someone like Cain, who had infinite potential.

"I will be the Greatest Hero in History!" The young Cultivator declared condescendingly.

The center half of the blade lit up in an ethereal gray light, and a few dozen feathers turned black with a gentle glow.

"Mid Spirit Rank Potential with a slight chance to do something so despicable that it leads to worldwide notoriety." One of the Demigods informed the boy, whose proud look had turned to horror before he bolted from the area in panic.

"Fate truly is a double-edged blade." An unassuming Demigod woman with long golden hair chuckled as the boy ran away crying.

"Perhaps I will try my own disciple. She has gotten a bit too big of an ego for her own good."

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 648 648

A teenage girl in a rather scandalous dress, short and low cut enough that it left little to the imagination and made of thin black silk, appeared in front of the golden-haired woman, who was looking at her with disgust.

"I went out for a bit, and you thought you had the chance to sneak out on a date? Think again. Now, put your hand on the statue and channel energy." The girl's Mistress demanded.

"Yes, Lady Anna." The girl muttered, ashamed of having been caught and shamed in front of so many esteemed Cultivators.

The blade lit up in a nearly even mix of blue and red, and the right arm of the statue, the one holding the blade, lit up with a strong red glow.

"The chance isn't high, but if it does happen, it seems this girl could be a great war hero, and the potential isn't bad. A nearly fifty percent chance of reaching the Divine Realm." The City Lord commended her.

The Demigod known as Lady Anna looked proud for a moment, then recalled that her Disciple was in trouble for sneaking out and took out a Monk's Cassock, dropping it over the girl's head before tying the waist rope a bit more loosely than most would have, almost completely hiding her figure under thick gray wool.

"I think we have caused enough of a scene here for the moment. I will place the statue in my storage ring for now, and I will prepare a spot in the city for it to be erected by the end of the week." The City Lord announced, bringing a round of quiet grumblings of discontent from the Cultivators who had hoped to test themselves right away.

A week wasn't a long time for an Immortal, though, and they would often go into secluded training for months or even years at a time if they thought they had sensed a chance to break through or had an epiphany on some topic.

"Next up, you, with the Cat in your arms. Cain called, then realized that it was Elder Dragon Fang in disguise.

He instinctively checked her status with his System interface and found that she was still in the Witch Class and hadn't advanced despite her level, but she had learned the transformation skill that he had made for her just the night before, which was an astounding level of comprehension.

Learning a skill from a book usually took months or even longer. She had managed to activate it well enough to fool all of those around her in a single night.

The woman, who Cain's interface identified as a Disciple of the Shadowed Blade, despite the fact she was wearing a plain sky-blue dress, stepped forward to make her request.

"I would like a book of [Deadly Muse] if you know the skill." The woman asked politely.

Cain searched through his references and found that it was an exclusive skill of a Vampiric Demon, the ancestors of Vampires, and it let them assume a much more powerful Immortal Form, one that could withstand even direct piercing damage to the heart, which would normally be their weakness.

How the woman even learned of the skill confounded Cain. It wasn't the sort of knowledge that you would expect people to just casually ask about in any world, much less this one.

"Do you mean the transformation skill?" Cain asked, just to make sure.

"Transformation? No. It is an assassination skill." She replied with confusion, and Cain saw the skill she meant in her thoughts.

[Lethal Muse] was a shadow assassin skill that called a Specter with the face of a beautiful woman to leap out of the darkness and kill the target with soul damage.

"Ah, I understand. The name I know that one under is Lethal Muse. They are very similar in name but very different in practice. Yes, I can create that book since it isn't exclusive to any Sect, as far as I know." Cain agreed.

Some of the assassin sects looked disgruntled at that news, as they all had members who knew the skill but wouldn't share it easily, even among their own members.

"What will it cost me?" The woman asked carefully, knowing that the skill was very valuable and that she would be targeted on her way back to camp once she had possession of the book.

"That is a very interesting kitten you have. You may not know this, but I am also fond of fluffy things. Bring her here, and let me pet her while I write, and I will give you the book." Cain requested.

The look of offended rage in Elder Dragon Fang's kitten eyes was enough that the killing intent made some of the nearby cultivators shudder. They assumed that it came from the woman holding the cat, despite her placid look, and began to wonder if there were some history between her and Master Cain.

"I am sorry, but I am not permitted to set her down." The woman replied, taking a step back.

"That's fine. Come and sit here between Luna and me. She loves fluffy things as well." Cain decided, patting the cushions on the ground.

It would be suspicious to everyone if she declined since the man was asking such a small price for an incredibly valuable skill, so she took a seat, ignoring the look that her Elder was giving her.

Elder Dragon Fang's hope for peace lasted all of two seconds after she sat down when she felt small hands gently stroking her head.

"She's so soft. It's a shame we can't keep her." Luna pouted while Solara stared at the Cat, just now realizing who it was since she wasn't used to checking everyone she interacted with by using her interface.

Without it, her senses didn't detect the trick at all, and it seemed that none of the other Immortals in the crowd had noticed either. She had been there when the book was made and given to the Shadowed Blade Elder, but she still couldn't believe that it had been mastered and made so effective already.

"Why don't you just beg your Sect Master if you like the cat so much?" One of the Cultivators standing near Luna asked.

"She's not from my Sect. No matter how cute and fluffy she is, it would be rude if I asked." Luna explained, causing the man to misunderstand her concern as a courtesy to the girl holding the cat and not Luna being concerned about asking an Elder to defect just because she was soft on the hands.

Cain narrated the skill as he made it, giving pointers on the energy control used to make Skill Tomes and throwing in some friendly conversation about the competitions that were going on. The skill was C Ranked and not immensely powerful. It would be D ranked, but the surprise factor of the Spirit coming out from the shadows was enough to put it over the threshold, according to the System.

"Come back again anytime. But first, I have something for you. It would be a travesty if you were to lose such a magnificent creature, so you should take this." Cain informed the Disciple.

He merged with a Gold Elemental and made a small flat link collar with a tag that read "Princess." The Disciple didn't dare to attempt to affix a collar around the neck of Elder Dragon Tooth, so she simply accepted the gift and held it awkwardly in her hand after she put the Skill Tome away in her storage ring.

"I thank you for your consideration. I will see what she thinks of it once we are safely back at my Sect Camp." The Disciple told Cain with a smile that said Elder Dragon Tooth had already expressed her exact opinion on the topic.

"I am sure she will love it. After all, you wouldn't want anyone mistaking her for a stray, and no stray would wear such a lovely accessory." Cain replied, then waved her away to return to her Sect.

She had only taken a few steps when Cain remembered his quest to not start a Sect War today and called out to stop her.

"Take this guy with you. It is getting late, and a young lady walking with valuables could become a target for the unscrupulous."

Cain summoned a single copy of Vala to accompany her back to the Shadowed Blade camp. The Demon was a bit conspicuous, but she was an incredible close combat fighter, and he could now Summon her using one of his [Supporter] slots now that he had freed the original.

"What is that?" One of the Cultivators standing next to where Vala had appeared asked.

"Did you just call me a What? Do I look like an inanimate object to you? Perhaps an animal?" The offended Demon asked, and Cain realized that maybe her personality wasn't the best choice for avoiding conflict.

Vala was about to draw her sword on the little offensive human, who was only half her level, and Cain was about to order her to stop when the Disciple stepped in between them. She wasn't trying to stop the fight. She was entranced by Vala's appearance.

"Is that an actual Blood Dancer? They are super rare. I mean nearly extinct rare. Where did you manage to find one? Is she tamed with a skill, or did you make friends and get her to agree to a Summoning Contract?" The disciple asked, looking at Vala from every possible angle, even flying using her energy so she could look at the tall Demon from above.

"She is an old friend and will escort you safely home. Vala, please try not to stab anyone. We don't want to have any Sect Battles break out today." Cain replied.

"No problem. Where did you call me to, anyhow? This place reeks of unwashed humans. Is it the Western Continent? I hear they don't have amenities like showers there." Vala asked.

"Long story. But it's not the same world. Just make sure that she makes it back safely, please." Cain told the Demon, who looked at the curious Disciple and resigned herself to playing twenty questions until they could find the girl's home.



Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 649 649 Flawless Victory... Almost

As the Disciple carrying Elder Dragon Fang walked out of his sight, escorted by Vala, Solara leaned over to whisper in Cain's ear.

"You know that the Elder is going to make you pay for that, right? Calling her over and forcing her to endure being petted for hours at a time is not something that such an esteemed Cultivator will easily forget and forgive."

"You've got that right. I think that next time she is here, I will offer to teach her the Evil Eye technique. If looks could kill, she would have burned me to ashes today." Cain agreed.

"And you did it anyhow?" Solara asked, startled that Cain had noticed but hadn't changed his course of action.

"Of course. As Luna said, she is very soft. Plus, even a super serious Elder like her needs some pampering now and then." Cain chuckled, then turned to the crowd.

Cain looked up at the crowd, who were all eager to try to catch his attention since the last request hadn't challenged anyone's Sect directly. They also realized that this Elder had been working all day and had given far more benefit than most were willing to share, so the show would surely be coming to an end soon.

Their fears were confirmed when Cain spoke again. "This will be the last one that I have time for today. The others will have to wait until I find the time again."

"When will that be? Do you have any timeline?" One of the Cultivators in the back asked.

"I can't say for sure. I need to train my Disciples before I will have time to hold another demonstration. I am sure you all understand keeping the Disciples in line is the duty of every Sect Elder." Cain responded.

That made sense to all of them, and though his disciples seemed well-behaved, they had been snacking on sandwiches and pastries for hours now without spending any time in meditation, a waste of valuable time in the early stages of their growth.

Being their only Elder present, it was up to Cain to keep them progressing, and letting them slack all the time would reflect poorly on him when they returned home. Most of

the crowd assumed that they were just a visiting Sect, too small for their own camp, and not a solitary Cultivator who had inexplicably taken in a half dozen Disciples.

That thought would be enough to make many of them laugh out loud. Wandering Cultivators tended to be either extreme eccentrics, focused on a single task that they hadn't accomplished, or criminals who couldn't remain in one spot. Therefore, it never occurred to the crowd that there were no more members of the Forbidden Treasures Sect.

"To make this more fair to those gathered here, everyone needs to write their name on a piece of paper, then place it on the table in front of me. I will have one of my Disciples pick a slip, and then I will try to fill that request." Cain suggested.

That got a lot of attention from the back of the crowd, who thought that they had little chance today since nobody would want their Sect's techniques recreated, and they weren't close enough to be directly called upon.

One after another, the gathered crowd came forward to put their names on the table in a procession lasting nearly half an hour until finally, the flow of Cultivators either dried up or those in front of them blocked any potential additions.

"Good news, everyone, we are ready for the draw. Now, we will have the lovely Miss Luna, whose fingers are sticky with fudge from her most recent snack pick a name." Cain declared, earning himself a look of annoyance from his daughter before she licked her fingers clean.

Luna leaned over the table and swept her hand through the collected names twice, thoroughly shuffling them and tossing a few unfortunate ones to the ground before she delicately picked one from the top of the rearranged pile and handed it to Cain.

"Elder Shang of the Divine Phoenix Sect, please step forward," Cain called as he read the name on the slip.

Elder Shang looked exactly like Cain thought a venerable Elder should. Long white hair, a Fu Manchu mustache with a braided beard that reached below his ribs, and a slightly hunched posture that was clearly an affectation hiding the powerful body under the crimson robes.

"I am Elder Shang." The old man greeted Cain politely, clasping his fist in a traditional greeting.

"Today is a fortuitous day for us all. But I believe this final request of the day might be a bit more daunting, even for one with your varied knowledge. One of my Elders has made a grave mistake while cultivating and has destroyed his cultivation potential. I wish to find the lost Divine Phoenix Resurrection Skill to reincarnate him so he may begin over."

Cain searched for a moment and realized that he didn't know any such skill. He knew various ones that did the same thing, reincarnation as a child, with the same potential you were born with in your last life, but not that one.

So, he resorted to the basic tactic of all Puppet Masters and Summoned a Divine Phoenix into a merger with him.

That wasn't the same thing, their reincarnation was a bloodline ability and not a skill, but it might do the same thing.

[Phoenix, do you know how to do that?] Cain asked, recalling the question so the Divine bird knew what he was talking about.

[That's not reincarnation. It is regression. You can find it under my Spirit Rank skills.] the Phoenix explained.

Cain looked it over and found that it was indeed there, restoring a body to an earlier state and recovering its potential to what it was born with. It could be done with a single drop of blood, so in a way, it was a reincarnation, but not in the eyes of the Phoenix.

[Or the stupid man could have asked politely for a single drop of blood and recovered from the damage that he did to himself.] The Phoenix laughed in Cain's mind, sounding more like a happy crow than a divine creature.

[Stupidity should be painful. Maybe he will make fewer mistakes in his second life.] Cain agreed, then took out his pen to begin the work.

"The skill you seek is called [Regression], and it can restore a living being to a childhood state from even a drop of blood. That is a Spirit Rank skill and not an easy one to make. Did you consider asking the Divine Phoenix that guards your Sect to donate a drop of blood instead?" Cain asked.

"The Elder offended the Divine Guardian a little over five thousand years ago, and it hasn't forgiven him yet." Elder Shang explained, and a few of the bystanders' eyes lit up in understanding, now knowing who he was there to help.

Cain had thought the haughty bird simply didn't see the man as being worthy of a second chance at life, but for someone from the Divine Phoenix Sect to actually offend a living Divine Phoenix seemed like an incredibly poor judgment call.

"Are you sure they deserve a second chance? I mean, they did offend the Divine Guardian." Cain asked.

Elder Shang chuckled and stroked his beard. "Honestly, no. But I have been sent by my Sect Master to find the skill to perform the reincarnation anyhow."

"In that case, can I substitute a less sensitive skill? I know some that won't offend the Phoenix, and you can use them instead." Cain offered.

Elder Shang was unable to believe what he had heard. "What sort of skill could emulate the Divine Phoenix's legendary power?"

"Well, we have a few options. [Dark Phylactory] will create a new body for you upon death. It will even look just like the original and start out as a child, needing to rebuild its power. In function, it is similar. Or we have [Eternal Bloodshed], which will bring him back as a young adult and save him from rebuilding the base stages of his cultivation." Cain offered.

Elder Shang shook his head. "An Undead skill would be unsuitable for our methods, but what is the second one? I have never heard of it before."

Cain read the description and realized that it came from Carnage, the Legendary Wrath Demon, as a blessing for worthy opponents that he killed so that he could find them and kill them again later.

"It belongs to the Wrath Demons," Cain replied simply.

The Elder shook his head. "No, that one is definitely out. The Sect Master would never let an Elder learn Demon skills."

Cain thought for a moment, finding the other skills that he could find were almost all undead skills, some with Elemental secondary traits. Even [Regression] was a form of Undead Skill with a heavy Fire Elemental influence.

Cain was about to agree to make the Regression skill if the man could come up with a sufficient payment when the piercing shriek of a mighty beast cut through the air, and a red flaming orb crashed to the ground beside Elder Shang, revealing a small girl with hair made of feathers.

"Don't even think of it, old man. I told you, the Divine Phoenix Clan won't help him until he has made amends." The girl informed the crimson-robed Elder in a very serious but childlike tone.

"Please forgive him, Lady Paula. He didn't mean it, and he has spent millennia trying to make up for his mistake." Elder Shang begged.

"No. He called my feathers ugly. I won't forgive him so easily." The Phoenix declared, and the audience gasped.

Not even they would dare to say something so idiotic. Any novice disciple of the Divine Phoenix Sect should have known better, much less an Elder.

[Why not curse the man instead? The Phoenix Blessing is under the control of the Phoenix, so she could just make it activate every time he reaches the Immortal Realm instead of every time he dies.] The Phoenix in Cain's mind suggested.

[Simple, safe, and surprisingly bloodthirsty. I like the way you think.] Cain responded.

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"Lady Paula, if I might make a suggestion about the best way for him to repent in a short period of time?" Cain asked.

"Speak, strange creature." The Phoenix replied.

Cain sent a telepathic response so that nobody but her could overhear their conversation.

[If you make him find you the most delicious meal, then use Regression on him, followed by Phoenix Blessing set to be triggered when he reaches the Immortal Realm again, you get to watch him panic all through his third life as he fears that the curse will activate again.

That should be enough to make him beg forgiveness properly.] Cain told her.

"There is no need for you to have the book, Elder Shang. This creature has convinced me to forgive the rude one. He only needs to bring me one Lava Dragon Egg, poached and garnished with thousand-year-old Spirit Grass, and then I will forgive him and let him start over again." Lady Paula the Phoenix informed the Elder.

The man looked a bit pale at those conditions, but it seemed somewhat fair to Cain. She only wanted him to make her lunch. Lunch with a dragon egg and rare seasonings, but still, only one lunch.

The rest of the cultivators also seemed to be rather concerned by the conditions, so Cain decided to just ask instead of skimming through random thoughts to find the answer.

"Is the problem the Lava Dragon Egg or the grass?"

Elder Shang looked at Cain as if he had grown a second head, then managed to stammer out an answer. "The only Lava Dragons on this continent live in the Dragon Peak Volcano, where their ancestral dragon also resides. Going there and retrieving an egg is, well, suicide.

No matter what we try, I don't see any way that we could actually recover the egg alive. Then there is the issue of poaching an egg that thrives in the heat of an ancient volcano and is immune to Dragon Fire."

Cain stopped the Elder there and turned to the Phoenix. "You must still be really mad at him. Would you like a different kind of egg? I am sure that their spirit is willing, even if their flesh is weak."

Lady Paula thought about it for a while and then got a big smile on her face. "You're right. I can ask for any egg I want as long as they can find it and bring it to me. In that case, I want an omelet made of two eggs from a Swamp Crocolisk, with Thousand Year Spirit Grass and Minotaur milk cheese."

That sounded more reasonable to Cain, as the Swamp Crocolisk was a Spirit Rank beast and not an Ancient Dragon. They were enormous and violent but not impossible to overcome for a team of adventurers or a Cultivation Sect.

Getting someone to milk the minotaur to make cheese could be interesting, though.

Elder Shang thought about it for a while and then nodded. "That we can do. It might take a few months to find a Crocolisk nest and to make the cheese from a minotaur, though."

Lady Paula only shrugged. "I don't care if it takes a year. I'm not the one who messed up my own cultivation."

Once she was done speaking, Paula jumped into the air and transformed back into a small Divine Phoenix before flashing over the horizon in a streak of red light.

"So, he insulted an adolescent Phoenix by calling her ugly? I am guessing that there is more to the story, likely some idiotic idea that she might give him a feather to prove her beauty." Cain said to Elder Shang.

"Nobody knows for sure, but she certainly holds a grudge. I have heard that her kind takes fifty thousand years just to reach adulthood, so her juvenile rebellion and attitude might have played a part in the incident.

Either way, we need to make amends with her." Elder Shang replied, then turned to face the crowd.

"Most of the ingredients we already have, but we need two Swamp Crocolisk Eggs in perfect condition. So, the Divine Phoenix Sect is issuing an official Quest. The first two cultivators to bring us the eggs will be richly rewarded with Immortal Realm Treasures from our treasury."

His announcement brought a huge level of excitement to the crowd. Hanging out in the valley for an entire season got boring for many of the more spirited Cultivators, and a hunting mission was exactly the sort of thing that would brighten their days.

Immortal Realm treasures weren't easy to come by either, even in this world, so the risk of fighting a few Spirit Rank monsters while looking for eggs was nothing at all compared to the reward.

The excitement had drawn all the attention away from Cain's position behind the table, so he took advantage of the distraction to get to his feet and pull the entire setup into his inventory, returning the space to bare grass.

He had said that was the last request of the day, and he intended to stick to his word so that these greedy sorts wouldn't try to keep him there all night.

That didn't seem like it was going to be an issue, though. The crowd was clearing out pretty quickly, with only a few lingering Elders still hanging around and going over their notes from the day's projects.

The sights of the day, especially the statue, had simply been too exciting for most of the crowd to focus on trying to learn anything at all about inscription and Rune Crafting techniques in the end.

"Elder Cain, do you have a moment for this old man? I have a question about the Rune Crafting portion of your lessons today. Using raw energy won't activate the runes, and no known Element will do as a substitute, so how do you activate them so smoothly without an artifact?"

I have a technique that transforms accumulated mana into Origin Power, which activates them without an issue, but normally only Cultivators who have reached the entry to the Divine Realm can use it." A white-robed man with an impressively long white beard and a well-polished bald head asked as Cain was about to leave the edge of the Sect camp.

Cain didn't really know how to explain it to the man, as the energy used by the Ancients had a special quality to it simply due to their bloodline, so he decided to just make something plausible up.

"It has to do with my Cultivation Technique. It alters the mana just a little bit and gives it a hint of otherworldly power. It is enough to activate the Runes without trouble, but I can



see how that could confuse others who haven't progressed far enough to reach the bottleneck of activation."

"Could you make a Talisman that would do the same job?" The old man asked.

That was a good question. With Rune Crafting, Cain could theoretically make a talisman that would create a hint of Ancient Aura to transform the energy that was passed through it. But that sounded like a hassle, even with his ability to recall thousands of books he had read and skills he had seen used in the past.

"I could, but the conversion of the talisman would be extremely inefficient. It really isn't something I have specialized in since I can do it myself much more effectively." Cain offered.

"Do you have a moment to check my work? I think I have it right, but it just isn't activating." The man asked, eager to verify that he wasn't making a mistake now that Cain had verified that it was possible to create a Talisman to transform energy enough for those without a relic or a special technique to activate the Runes for the first time.

"Sure, let me see what you have managed."

The man took out a short wooden club with the word BONK written on it in Runic letters, which made Luna giggle.

"Oh, I started a new trend. I always knew that I was secretly an industry leader." The little Demon laughed.

"You know the bat of bonk, little one?"

The old man began to idly stroke his beard as he contemplated the reasons that the girls were sitting at the table today. Presumably, they were his personal disciples and were there to learn the skills that Cain was using, so it was plausible that they had some skills related to the technique that even he didn't know yet.

"I don't just know of it. I made it. The essence of Bonk is not to be underestimated." Luna said with a big smile on her face at the memory.

"She really did. It was a demonstration for a Sect Elder." Cain agreed.

"Well then, I have two expert advisors, if you don't mind helping me. See, here I have the drawing of the original that I was working with, and the placement seems to be correct, and I examined the lattice of energy, so I think I can do that part, but I can't get the initial step to complete when the runes initially activate.

My energy is correct, I have made an item before, and this one looks simple. I'm not sure what I am doing wrong." He explained.

Cain let Luna look first, and it only took her a second to see where the inscription went wrong.

"The third rune has been drawn out of order. The runes move energy in a specific pattern, much like calligraphy brush strokes, they aren't the same at both ends, so when you carve them in the wrong stroke order, they are incorrect, despite being the right shape.

Luna took an unadorned bat from him and drew the four characters with a paintbrush and black ink, then handed it back.

"Try it now."

The runes started glowing the moment that he put energy into them, and the old man looked overjoyed at the revelation, picking Luna up and spinning her in circles as he celebrated.

"Thank you, young lady. I will remember this kindness."

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