

Alchemy 1621

Chapter 1621: Sarah vs Zhao Boqin

Sarah swung her spear around, creating a gust of wind that carried out a force that few in the secret realm could fight against. Her body moved and the spear moved in a certain other way that seemed to amplify her earlier attack even more.

More and more she danced, and the stronger the attack grew.

Zhao Boqin saw the attack and snorted a little. He forced Metal Qi into his spear and swung it forward, a golden dragon rushing forth from his spear, breaking down the attack in one shot.

Sarah said nothing and simply smiled. She just continued sending out more attacks, ones that were more bother than danger.

Zhao Boqin very well knew how she fought, and it irritated him to no end.

As the man started throwing out attacks more and more, Sarah started moving away from him so he had to follow him. She attacked him as well but while she was still on the move.

Zhao Boqin tried many times in between to catch her while she ran, but never could he catch up to her at all. Not only was she annoying, she was annoyingly fast as well. He could almost tell what Dao she was using. Something to do with Wind.

If he had Wood Spiritual root, he might have been able to tell. But without it, there wasn't any way for him to tell what Dao she had.

He had two Dao as well. Dao of Sharpness and Dao of Water. The second one wasn't as helpful, but he did apply the Dao of Sharpness to his attack when he could. It was almost a second nature to him now.

His attacks roared like a dragon as they tore the sky and went for Sarah, but Sarah simply dodged them by running away. His attacks didn't reach her at all.

The two fought in the sky and many of the others had already stopped fighting by now and were watching to the distance where they had went while lost in the battle.

"A good attack from brother Zhao and she will most likely lose," one of the young men said. "In a direct clash, he will most likely win."

Alex nodded in agreement.

"But she's not going to let him," a female's voice took his attention. Ren Wujin was sitting close by, watching the battle as well. "Sister Hongxi is going to make him dance around like a puppet."

"He's fought her long enough, surely he's aware how to fight her," another woman said. "He has defeated her before."

Ren Wujin said nothing.

"Have you all seen him fight?" Alex asked. "Does he use talismans or formations during his fights?"

"No," one of the men said. "He's quite straightforward when it comes to fighting. He will use nothing but just himself and his spears."

Alex continued looking at the battle in the distance while a thought crossed his mind.

'Spears,' he thought. 'Is there a reason so many of them use spears.' He remembered that the Dragon Emperor himself used spears. Alex assumed that these legionnaires were either inspired or taught by the royal family and thus many used Spears. He had certainly seen many use swords and other weapons.

The battle continued for a long time. Hours passed by and the two continued fighting. One chased and the other ran, but neither came close to losing or winning.

The battle was getting intense.

Sarah thrust her spear and lightning flashed from her spear, targeting Zhao Boqin. Zhao Boqin instead spun his spear and created a barrier of Metal energy that blocked the attack.

As soon as the attack was blocked, he thrust his spear forward, sending a swift attack toward the girl, but Sarah simply dodged it. She spun in the air, the spear spinning around her, gathering wind around her that she sent back.

Zhao Boqin sent out an attack of his own. The two attacks collided midair, surprising him just how strong it was. 'Is she starting to use stronger attacks?' he wondered.

Up until now, the attacks had been enough to be a problem, but not enough to be a danger, but this one was.

He saw a flash of light and knew what was to come next was lightning. He saw tendrils of the lightning strike streak toward him.

Zhao Boqin wasted no time and waved his hand around, creating a shield of water out of nowhere. He had to force the Dao of Water this time around and he could feel the slight ache in his head from using it.

The lightning exploded on the water barrier but was stopped thus.

Sarah saw the opportunity and the wind spun around her. Instantly, they gathered around her, forming Wind spears that rushed forward.

Zhao Boqin only felt it coming and quickly enforced the barrier that was already there. The spears all struck the water barrier, creating points of opening from where some of the spears started breaking through.

The man panicked and fought those spears directly with his spears.

The girl pushed her advantage. She threw more spears and various attacks. On top of that, she continued moving closer and closer, step by step. The closer she got, the less distance her attack had to travel and the harder it would be for the man to dodge it.

Zhao Boqin was so busy blocking the attacks that he didn't even have the opportunity to dodge any of the other ones. On top of that, he could feel something changing about the surrounding.

He had felt it so many times and knew that the girl was using another one of her Dao. He still didn't know what, but he could tell that it was getting harder for him to move his body.

He had been caught now. If this continued, he was going to lose. And yet, he didn't fear just yet.

It was true that if she got close enough, he would lose, but there was also the truth that he had one last attack that he could use upon her that she couldn't dodge.

He continued defending, but he waited. He waited and waited, and waited. And then...

'Now!' he thought. Suddenly, his spear glowed blue and a faint image of a blue dragon appeared around it.

Sarah sensed the aura of Immortal Qi and her eyes flashed with surprise and fear. She knew he had it in him, but she hadn't expected him to use it right now. 'So he was truly cornered,' she thought.

Even as the Immortal Water Dragon flew out of the man's spear, green energy surrounded Sarah's spear which suddenly glowed bright white. Her Immortal Qi suddenly turned to lightning once again, this time it held the shape of a feline beast that charged for the water dragon.

The two attacks clashed and the world trembled.

Immortal technique striking Immortal technique was not something the world was able to handle. The clash created a deafening blast and caused the ground beneath everyone to tremble.

Lights of various colors flashed and many even saw the space fluctuate. On the point of impact, space had even fractured, creating tiny openings to the Void that closed as soon as it arrived.

The aftermath of the clash remained a mystery to everyone for a long time.

Chapter 1622: Contemplation

When the world calmed again, people found Zhao Boqin on the ground, his right arm red with a lightning burn. It was somewhat bleeding, but mostly it was painful.

He also seemed wounded in other locations as well, but none were as bad. At least he wasn't badly hurt, so he brought out a healing pill with lightning marks on it and ate one.

The pain disappeared from the man as bone and muscle started drinking in the pure life energy from the pill, restoring themselves to the point that not even a scar of the wounds remained.

Zhao Boqin slowly got up, his head still in a daze as he looked around at everyone. He was searching for his spear which he couldn't find right now. He had to look around the area to find it.

At the same time, Sarah flew back to the ground next to her leader, her face dark with seriousness as the danger the two were both in just now was not something either could have faced even together.

It was a miracle the two of them had survived. It was a good thing that they ran when they did. Sarah seemed to have just been faster than the two.

"Are you alright, leader?" she asked, helping Zhao Boqin up.

Zhao Boqin gave her a glare, but he didn't refuse the help. He took her hand and got back up before staring at her with a long, careful look. In the end, he bowed slightly.

"I have lost."

He left right away, not letting Sarah or anyone else say anything. He flew far enough before stopping and looking toward Alex. "If after fighting with her, you still want to fight me, I'll come on the last day."

Alex nodded, and the man went away.

Alex turned around toward Sarah and quickly flew up to her. "You managed to escape in time," he said, looking at her curiously. "I'm surprised you didn't get an Out-of-Bounds for running far away."

"I think he got it," Sarah said, gesturing to the leaving man. "He just doesn't want to reveal it to anyone. I doubt anyone even sees him getting sent away."

Alex thought for a moment and nodded. If Zhao Boqin was hurt, then he took the damage. If he took the damage, then he hadn't gotten out in time. It made sense that he could have only survived by having been rescued by the talisman.

"They should place some sort of ban on using Immortal Qi inside this place," Alex said in a grumbling tone. "There are no strong individuals here to protect people and the talisman might not always work."

"The Emperor will have to put reforms in place," Sarah agreed. "You should ask him, Your Majesty. You probably get to see him more than all of us combined."

"That's not true," Alex said. "He's usually in closed cultivation." Alex did not like remembering that the Dragon Emperor was so close to making pills with pill veins, and he had only recently helped him become stronger with it as well.

He had thought recently that since he had given ways for the Dragon Emperor to make pills with pill veins, he would maybe not have to worry about the oath anymore. But he could still feel the oath tied tightly inside his spirit.

Whatever he thought, he would have to give the final thing to the man to help him create pills with pill veins without it being left to change.

He would have to give him the Pill-Splitting Qi technique. That was the only way. Even remembering that made Alex feel horrible.

To be forced to give something so incredible to someone who was most likely involved in his sister's murder and even more likely involved in Pearl's mother's death as well. But he couldn't go back on an oath.

The only way to get out of the oath was to most likely kill the man, and as much as he overestimated his own prowess, fighting someone like him was far out of his reach just yet.

The man stood at the peak of the world, and the only people that could possibly fight against him were Immortals who would die in minutes if they even began fighting.

What a terrible situation this was to be in.

Alex realized with a start that Sarah had kept on talking and he had missed most of what she had said. He quickly went back through his own memory and caught up with what she had said.

"Yes, I can call him if I need to," Alex answered her. "But the Kings and Queens would be better for this. Or maybe the Crown Prince himself."

The girl nodded. "That is true."

She also revealed that it wasn't normal for people to be this strong in this secret realm. It was unlikely for people entering to be in the Saint Transformation realm in the first place as most who had that cultivation base would rarely show their faces in this realm.

Old people did not like meddling with children after all.

And given that one didn't have Immortal Qi until they were around Saint Transformation 4th realm, or at least normally, there would rarely be people here that had such a high cultivation base.

Zhao Boqin was a miracle in that way that he managed to reach such a high cultivation base in such a quick time. He would have been heralded as the most talented person in all of the land most likely, but the sudden appearance of the Players had destroyed everything that made him remarkable.

What was previously a miracle now became commonplace.

Sarah seemed to want to talk about a lot of things, especially about herself. She asked questions to Alex, wondering if his clone remembered more about her.

She had returned to the Central Continent too now a decade ago, but her family was nowhere to be found. She was nowhere to be found.

Alex shook his head. There was only so much memory he could remember.

The girl sighed in disappointment. She seemed to miss home, but at the same time, there was no home. It was an odd sort of melancholy that caught Alex too. At least he had a home to return to.

Home...

It had been so long since he saw his parents, his aunt, his daughter. Scarlet was there and so was his master, his senior sister. The 8 elders, his martial uncle. So many people he hadn't met in so long.

How long would it be before he met them again?

'Four years,' he told himself. 'Just four more years and it will all be over.'

He would have to find out more about Pearl's mother and his sister at that time, but he didn't have to fight the Dragon Emperor. He only had to find the culprit and Bai Jingshen would most likely do the rest.

Alex knew he wanted to do it himself, but he would hear to reason when needed.

The day passed by in a blur with Alex spending most of the time talking with Sarah about home and anything else they could think of. Afterward, Sarah left him to cultivate.

The next day, once fully prepared, she returned to Alex. And this time, she was ready for battle once again.

That was good. So was Alex.

Chapter 1623: Wind and Lightning

Alex stood in front of Sarah with, a sword in his hand, and calmness in his mind. No thoughts were floating through his mind. All attention of his was focused on the woman in front of him.

The challenge had been made and accepted, so all that remained was for the battle itself.

Sarah stood steady as well, but there was little calmness in her. She had heard rumors about Alex fighting people as strong as Saint Transformation 3rd realm, despite only being in the Saint Soul 4th.

She could only wonder if he was hiding even more. It was time to find out.

She threw out the first attack, a single bolt of lightning flying from her hand, forking in many directions, all of which seemed to redirect halfway through toward Alex.

Alex quickly formed multiple balls of fire around him with his free hand, each of which targeted the lightning bolts. Fire element weakened Wood element, so it was the correct element to use.

Not that many cared about elements during battle or had the right to. The perfect element to use right now would have been Earth, but he didn't have any Earth techniques.

What he did have was Earth Dao, but since it wasn't necessarily an offensive Dao, it wouldn't have helped him. The fire was good enough for now.

With his other hand, Alex swung Midnight, sending a bright orange flaming slash toward Sarah.

Sarah stood there with no fear and simply struck out once, the slash disappeared into motes of light. She could recognize that she was stronger than the two here when it came to Qi.

'Or he is still holding back,' she thought. It didn't sound right, but she had to be careful.

Alex threw out more Fire attacks, while the girl moved wind and called lightning. The attacks were small and frequent, and neither of them could get the upper hand.

Whatever Sarah did, her stronger Qi wasn't strong enough to overwhelm Alex. Fire against Wood was a bad matchup.

Spinning in the air, the spear danced per her instruction. Alex saw a green aura of Wood energy gather around the spear, getting stronger and stronger as she went on. It was quite an incredible technique that built upon itself and improved its damage by a lot.

Alex knew he should do something to stop her before her winds became too strong, but he had to test himself. He had to test his technique.

He had used the techniques many times, but never had it been against someone who was clearly stronger than him.

With a sudden and difficult strain on his mind, Alex felt the flows of Metal Qi surge through his body and gather on the sword in front of him. At the same time, Sword Intent flared in him as well, creating Sword Qi that covered the sword.

The technique didn't take as long to be ready, especially after having practiced it day and night, all throughout the previous week. Now, he could prepare it in half the time.

Even so, it was enough time for Sarah to build up her technique to the point that her attack was most likely going to carry a strong Saint Transformation 5th realm power, if not Saint Transformation 6th realm.

Seeing that Alex was ready to receive her attack, she thrust her spear around her before finally directing all the energy in front of her.

A large gust of wind, visibly green to the naked eye. The wind caused dread amongst many who felt it in the air, and even Alex felt panic at its power.

But he remained calm. He looked at the incoming wind, looked at the girl behind the wind, and then at an empty area where he could throw the attack.

After being sure he wouldn't hurt Sarah, he unleashed the attack.

A thin line only he could see rushed forward, destroying everything in its wake. Wounds were left in Space where the attack traveled, taking a little longer than normal to heal, as if they hadn't realized they had been cut.

The line passed through the incoming wind next, passing through it as if it didn't touch anything at all.

Alex felt the sword attack weaken considerably, but it didn't lose anything other than damage. It flew past the wind, no longer disturbing space, disappearing into the distance where it would dissipate.

The wind that flew toward Alex still held the aura of a strong attack, but Alex knew it was not so. The attack landed on him and then disappeared like water droplets on a hot frying pan.

The attack had only held the majesty of what it once was, not the damage.

Sarah's eyes bulged in surprise when she saw what happened. She couldn't believe what she saw, neither could she believe that Alex had done nothing.

She had seen him swing and had been told that one of his sword techniques was hard to see. But this went beyond just hard to see. The attack was downright invisible to her eyes. Had he even used any technique? But there had been that slash and that had the energy to it, which vanished.

She couldn't understand. Whatever he had used though scared her. 'And here I was wondering why he was giving me time to gather up my power,' she thought. 'He has a damn technique of his own that takes time to prepare.'

She understood that she could no longer give him time to prepare attacks. If she did, he would most likely use the time to prepare whatever attack he had made.

Thinking so, she swiftly flowed together Wood energy around her, creating a lightning bolt that she shot toward Alex.

Alex struck away the lightning bolt with his sword and punched it with his other arm, sending four golden spears flying toward the girl.

Sarah spun her spear and leaves appeared in front of her, created out of nothing but energy that quickly grew to become more and more until there was a thick collection of them in front of her.

The spears slammed into the leaf-woven barrier.

The barrier was shattered instantly, the leaves floating away, but the golden spears were nowhere to be seen either. What she could see was a Palm-shaped yellow attack flying toward her.

Without much thought, wind energy gathered around her as she used a Dao, and at the next moment, she moved away from the palm, easily dodging it.

Alex felt a small shock go through him at seeing her dodge. What should've been a sure hit, she had dodged so easily. And she had been fast as well, very fast.

He doubted he could've seen her move this fast if he had been keeping an eye on him without the Demon Eyes.

'And that Dao,' he thought. 'She did use a Dao, didn't she?'

He had seen green energy drifting toward her from her surroundings, giving her a boost of speed which...

'Is that what is it?' he wondered, looking at the girl to the side, he couldn't tell what Dao she had used by the feel of it, but he had an idea now that he had seen her use it.

'That dao, it is most certainly the Dao of Swiftiness.'

Chapter 1624: Wood Element

"I can't tell what either of them are doing," one of the men watching the battle said.

"Sister Hongxi's Dao is quite unique, isn't it? I haven't seen many people with a Dao like hers."

"Did you see what the King did though? I can't tell if I missed the attack or what."

"Me neither. I thought he attacked, but then there was nothing."

"Something did destroy that girl's attack though."

"In the first place, I can't believe they are equal. Is His Majesty hiding his cultivation base?"

In the sky, the fight resumed. Both of them used weaker but quick attacks to try and tire each other, neither daring to let the other have enough time to use a particularly strong technique.

Sarah especially didn't want to let him use the technique that she couldn't see at all. She feared what would happen if he used it and she was too slow to stop it.

Vines sprung forward out of nowhere, flying toward Alex as if to capture him. At the same time, Sarah used her Dao of Swiftess to increase her speed so she was in another location before she used her spear to send another attack flying toward Alex.

A vortex of energy appeared in front of Alex, defending him easily. At the same time, a single swing of his sword destroyed the other attacks that were coming from the side.

Alex quickly spun, sending another sword slash in her direction, one that carried Fire with it. Sarah tried to attack it, but before she could, the sword slash exploded in front of her, sending a shockwave that hit her hard.

She flew back a couple of paces, feeling a low pain all over her body from the explosion. When she looked back up, a bolt of lightning was already flying in her direction.

She barely managed to throw out her own bolt of lightning, and fortunately managed to block the attack. It was a good thing the attack hadn't held much power. She let go of those thoughts before going back into battle.

She knew what wasn't working, so it was time to try out new things.

Wood Qi coalesced around Sarah, grouping together in a few different locations around her. The energy seemed to manifest physically just then, turning into flower buds that had barely blossomed.

5 such buds formed around Sarah, which quickly flew toward Alex upon her command. The attack was fast, but not fast enough for Alex to stumble over them. He quickly attacked them, destroying each one before it came even close, but that was just what Sarah wanted.

Sarah immediately controlled the Wind, sending a gentle breeze toward Alex along the path where the flower buds were destroyed. When the breeze touched Alex, he felt a peculiar smell on it that was almost pleasant to smell.

But of course, he understood it couldn't be anything good if it came from his attacker. Although, he couldn't tell what it was. He took a deep breath to smell it all and got a vague hint of an idea of what it could be.

From what he could tell, it was an imitation of a flower he hadn't seen in this world, but one that existed in his mind. It was a poisonous flower that went by the name of Twilight Rose. It gained its name from its purple and orange colors.

It was a pretty flower with a very beautiful smell. But the smell was the worst part of it. It wasn't poisonous, but it did hinder someone's ability to keep a straight mind. It hindered their ability to pay attention.

That was to say, it was a poisonous flower, primarily used to make drugs that incapacitated even Immortals.

And Sarah was using a technique that was creating an imitation of it.

"Not bad," he couldn't help but say out loud, causing Sarah to give a perplexed look in his direction.

She quickly shot out a few spear attacks, sending spear-shaped wood attacks in his direction, but Alex destroyed each one easily as he had all this time. The girl frowned.

Alex thought he knew what she was thinking about. 'She probably thinks I ate a pill beforehand.' She wouldn't have been wrong to think so, as Alex had presented such a pill during the previous Golden Auction.

Not that he had. His body destroyed all the poison and toxins that entered his system. Even Immortal poisons wouldn't do him much harm right now. However, he wasn't sure what Divine and Celestial-grade poisons would do to him.

Was he strong enough to stop those?

"Did you use this move against him too?" Alex asked. There was no need to clarify who 'he' was.

"A more subtle version of this," Sarah said, her eyes still not moving away from him. "Must be nice being an alchemist."

Alex simply smiled.

They went back into battle, both of them attacking each other in a fervorous frenzy. Colorful attacks marred the sky where they fought, and most of the time, Alex could feel the space shatter where the clash had happened.

During the entire time, Alex kept track of the attacks Sarah used. She has used 4 types of attacks right now.

Plant, Wind, Lightning, and finally Smell. If Alex wasn't mistaken, all of these techniques, while seemingly being different from each other, belonged to the Wood element.

He hadn't known about Smell, but it made sense it would be. He didn't have the time to think about any aura he missed back in the Enlightenment domain.

'All wood,' he thought. He was starting to believe that she even had Supreme Wood Spiritual Root. It surely felt like it.

As he was thinking that, Alex's ears perked up a little, hearing a tone in the air that caused his mind to spiritual sea to roil. He quickly looked up and saw Sarah doing nothing but slowly move about her hands. There was no instrument about her, but she was creating some music.

And it was quite incredible with even just that.

'A mental attack,' he thought. 'And that too with music.'

His purple eyes glowed softly and he could see a hint of Wood energy constantly pulsing around the girl, in tune with the music.

'Hell! Even the music is Wood energy,' he thought.

Wood was without a doubt the most versatile element out of all the elements, including Yin and Yang, having so many seemingly different types of sub-elements within it.

And to his surprise, the girl was using all of it. Even ones he wasn't sure about before.

Music by itself didn't fall under Wood energy, but Sound did. And the girl was making proper use of it all in the fight.

Alex quickly surrounded his mind with spiritual energy, fighting off the sounds that dared to try and daze him.

It was a simple technique he acquired from the Fu Clan ancestor he killed back in the Demon realm. It wasn't very strong, but for the purposes he was using it for right now, it was good enough.

If it became stronger, he had the Spiritual Providence technique.

Having fended off both attacks through Sound and Scent, he rushed back into the fight, this time becoming more serious than ever.

The girl realized that too, and fought hard. Her spear gleamed in the midday sun, flashing all around her as multiple attacks left for Alex. Spears, lightning, vines, wind, everything.

Alex fought it all back, striking each attack precisely, destroying them before it could get close. As he went along, he felt a stiffness around him, making it slightly difficult for him to move around.

When viewing the surroundings with his Demon Eyes, he saw the area around him green with Wood energy that seemed to be stationary. It was very rare he got to see an aura that was stationary.

'Another Dao,' he thought, fighting against the stiffness in the air that refused to move along even when he pushed it. Fighting under such conditions would be very difficult if he couldn't do much.

Fortunately, he found himself able to move quite easily once he started applying the movement technique that caused friction all around him to disappear all at once.

Sarah was taken aback to see him move as if the Dao of Stagnation she had used did not affect him. Dao of Swiftiness took overall, and she started moving around quickly as well, fighting.

The battle continued once again, and both Alex and Sarah realized that they were going to have to continue the fight until either one of them ran out of Qi or got brave enough to take a risk and use a strong technique.

Alex decided that he had already received what he came here to get, which was an answer to a burning question he had of whether he was stronger than a Saint Transformation 5th realm cultivator.

He was good enough for most.

So, it was time to end it.

Alex destroyed a vine rushing toward him and stepped back. "I think we should end this," he said out loud, making Sarah stop as well.

Sarah looked at him and gave a grim look. "I don't think I have anything sort of Immortal Qi to defeat you," she said. "I should call my loss, shouldn't I?"

Alex thought for a bit and shook his head. "No, use it," he said. "I would like to see how strong my technique is too."

The girl gave a startled look. "Are you sure? It's Immortal Qi," she said.

"Yes," Alex said as he concentrated on Midnight in preparation for his technique.

Sarah saw his resolution and didn't question it anymore. She watched him prepare, and when she thought he was ready, she shot a lightning bolt toward him carrying the might of an Immortal.

Chapter 1625: Something More

In front of the might of an Immortal, Alex stood alone. All sounds were lost to him, all sight blinded by the brilliant lightning. A tempest of wind and aura buffeted around him, daring to whip him around like a rag doll in a storm.

But he stood still and his focus was all on his sword.

He was given enough time by Sarah, and he used all of it. Even as the attack came, even as every fiber of his being told him the world around him was being torn apart, he still stood there, doing his best to compress as much Qi and Sword Aura as he could into this one strike.

Then, he released it.

A thin black splinter appeared in the space before him where the attack passed through, shown clearly by the bright bolt of lightning that was making its way toward him.

He saw the attack rush forward and cut into the lightning bolt, nearly splitting it in two. Without waiting, he teleported away, disregarding the sudden buzz to his talisman as he watched what happened from where he had teleported away from.

Even as his head ached with agony, he kept looking at the attack and even managed to see the single bolt of lightning fork into two, although both bolts still flew to where he had been.

While he had been unable to do anything to destroy the lightning bolt, he had managed to affect it in some way. For someone with his current level of strength, that was quite an incredible feat.

The lightning bolt flew into the distance, terrifying everyone in the vicinity before it disappeared into nothing.

Sarah still stood in the sky, haggard by an attack that she herself used before trying to desperately search for Alex. As far as she could tell, he had been standing right in front of the attack when she had launched it.

She had been hesitating for the majority of the time, and the only reason she had even gone ahead with the plan to attack was because Alex had a talisman that was hopefully still useful.

She felt her heart settle in her chest when she found the awe-filled Alex on the ground with no visible wounds. She let out a deep breath before going over to where Alex was.

"Your Majesty, are you alright?" she quickly asked.

"Hmm? Oh yeah, I'm okay," Alex quickly replied, although it had taken a moment for him to move his attention from his own thoughts.

"You weren't hurt?" she asked.

"No, I got out of the way in time," he said. "I wouldn't have asked you to use such a strong attack if I had no way of protecting myself."

The girl nodded slowly. "Then why did you..." she paused for a second, checking her talisman quickly before realizing she had won. Only then did she understand why he hadn't attacked her after dodging.

It wasn't long before she found out that Alex had received an Out of Bounds, but with only a day more to go, nobody would truly care about such a thing.

Zhao Boqin watched the two from far away, his mind still going through their battle. A few thoughts went through his head regarding something that only he could know about. The coterie of people surrounding him had no idea what he was thinking about.

Alex talked to Sarah for a while before leaving her to go cultivate. He had tired himself with the battle, and the last attack especially had been straining. He had given everything but all into that last attack.

Giving all he could into it would've meant using strength so strong that it brought backlash to himself.

He could hear battles going on all around him, people fighting in the sky throughout the day and night, and even noticed more people joining. Zhao Boqin and Sarah's battle, and subsequently his and Sarah's battle had most certainly caused tempestuous aura to alert everyone in the entire secret realm.

Not to mention the Immortal attacks that nobody had ever seen being used twice now.

Alex found it difficult to concentrate on cultivating on multiple occasions but managed to go through the night without having to pause.

Early next morning, as the sunlight was taking away the night's dew, Zhao Boqin came up to Alex.

Alex stopped cultivating and looked toward the man, a gentle smile on his face, mirroring the one that Zhao Boqin seemed to be holding at the moment.

"Your Majesty, are you fit for fighting today?" he asked. He sat beside Alex, close enough that they seemed to be together, but far enough apart that a normal voice they spoke in could be heard by everyone in earshot.

"I have been looking forward to our fight today," Alex said before giving a hesitating look. "We will be fighting, right?"

Everyone's eyes and ears perked up at that, and even the ones who were discreetly hearing their conversation now turned fully to stare at the two of them.

Zhao Boqin took his time to answer the question. "Whether we will fight or not will depend on you, not me, Your Majesty," he said.

"On me?" Alex asked curiously. "I already agree to the fight."

"Yes, but you have to agree to something else as well," the man said.

That caught Alex's attention. Curiosity bubbled inside him like milk on a stovetop. It was about to overflow. "Something else? What is this something that I will have to agree to?" he asked.

"A bet!" Zhao Boqin said. He made no show of hiding his voice. It was for all to hear now.

Alex was taken aback. "A bet? On who wins?" he asked, feeling amused about it. "I can accept if it's that. What do you propose the bets to be?"

"Before that, I have to ask," the man said. He took a deep breath and spoke, "You have the Mirror of Barren Truth, don't you?"

Alex looked at the man's serious eyes and slowly nodded. "I do," he said. "How did you know?"

"I have known for a while," Zhao Boqin said. He hadn't known exactly, but after hearing what had happened when he attacked Alex back then and how it reflected back to him, someone had mentioned seeing a mirror come out.

After digging around a bit, he came to learn about a treasure that was sold in the last Golden Auction. Of course, he wasn't going to mention that it had been luck that helped him figure out what the treasure was exactly. Someone who had seen the list of treasures being sold had happened to be there.

"You want my mirror?" Alex asked in a grim voice.

"That's what I want you to agree to before we fight," Zhao Boqin said. "If I win, I take the mirror."

Alex thought for a bit and asked, "What if I win?"

Zhao Boqin knew Alex had no chance of winning, so he didn't care what he would get upon victory. "What do you want, Your Majesty?" he asked.

"Give me a moment," Alex said, his head already running through ideas. "I will have some time to decide what I want exactly."

Chapter 1626: Bet

Zhao Boqin nodded at Alex and stood up to leave. "I'll give you an hour. Please try to think within that time. We don't know when we will be sent out," he said before walking away

Alex nodded and got to thinking.

What could he want from this battle? Did he even want anything?

Zhao Boqin used nothing but his spear, so he didn't even know if he had any other artifacts that were not used regularly. If there were, he wouldn't tell him in the first place.

He had seen the man use some strong techniques, but none of them would be of much use to him, so he didn't want that. He thought of a few other things he could want from the man, but none of them were as good enough to trade for the Mirror.

The Mirror was an incredible life-saving tool after all.

Far off in the distance, Zhao Boqin watched Alex carefully, waiting for him to accept. He had to accept.

He knew much about the Mirror by now, and how effective the mirror was against even Immortals. There was nothing more he could want.

He thought for a bit and quickly called someone over. An older man with streaks of gray and white on his head walked over. This old man was who had told Zhao Boqin about the mirror.

"You're sure that the Mirror cannot be used more than once right?" he asked in a low voice.

"It can be used once every battle, and each time it has to be prepared for the next fight," the man said. "The king must have had someone prepare it with Immortal Qi, but since that has been used up, he cannot prepare it again."

"And there is no chance of Hongxi helping him, right?" he asked.

"I doubt it," the old man said. "They shouldn't have had contact. Besides, you can use Immortal attacks multiple times, can't you? You won't have to worry."

"You're right," Zhao Boqin said. It was hard to say that he could use his attacks multiple times since he didn't have much Immortal Qi. But he could use it at least 3 times if he held back some Qi.

Holding back would be a bad choice against someone with his own strength, but against someone like Alex who could clearly do nothing about it. "As long as he cannot fight against Immortal Qi, I should be fine."

The old man spoke up to agree but kept quiet when he saw Alex turn toward them. Zhao Boqin looked toward Alex and got up.

"Have you made up a decision, Your Majesty," Zhao Boqin asked in a loud voice.

Alex nodded slowly. "I have come to a decision indeed," he said and slowly made his way toward the man.

Zhao Boqin stood up and met Alex halfway through. "So, what is your decision? Will you accept the bet?" he asked.

"I accepted the bet since the moment you laid it before me," Alex said with a smile. "It was the contents of the bet that was stopping me from going forward fully."

"And what is the content to be?" the man asked. "Your Mirror for..."

"For an oath that you will answer two of my questions clearly and without lie, and not tell anyone else what I asked of you. That is what I desire," Alex said.

The man couldn't help but frown. "Oath? Answers?" he asked, looking surprised. "Can I know the question?"

"Not until you swear the oath," Alex said.

The man thought for a bit. "There are things I cannot tell you even if I were to wish to. It is against many laws and my own oath to the empire—"

"I won't make you speak of that which you cannot speak about," Alex said. "Do you still wish to continue with the battle?"

The man looked at Alex, wondering what game he was playing. In the end, he saw no reason to not fight. He knew he was going to win anyway.

"Alright, I accept," the man said. "Should we make the oath to abide by our bets then?"

"Let us do that," Alex said.

Amidst everyone's watch, the two swore their oaths to hold on to each other's demands in the case of either one of them winning.

Things were quite serious at that point, so everyone gathered to watch.

"Since we've made the oath, shall we fight, Your Majesty," Zhao Boqin asked, and Alex agreed.

"Let us fight."

The two flew into the sky, standing on either side.

Zhao Boqin held onto his spear and waited for Alex to bring out his sword as well. To his surprise, Alex didn't bring out his spear at all. Instead, Alex brought out his puppet.

"What are you doing?" Zhao Boqin couldn't help but ask. This was not what he had expected to see happen here.

Alex showed no reaction to the question. He didn't show much reaction to much. The situation had changed.

The reason he wanted to fight the two was to see how far he had come with his Sword and skill. But that had changed. He had gone from wanting to test to wanting to win.

So, he didn't hold back at all.

Zhao Boqin prepared himself as Alex got ready. He watched Alex slam his palm into the puppet and in the next moment, the puppet vanished.

He wondered where it had gone and it was only because of his alertness that he even saw it with his spiritual sense. Somehow, the puppet had arrived behind his back and was already punching him.

He moved forward to dodge, but the puppet still grazed him. The pain that flared in his back was something he hadn't expected to feel from a simple puppet.

He flew forward and turned around, but the puppet was already hot in pursuit. It was next to him even as he turned and punched.

Zhao Boqin used a skill to attack it, but the puppet showed no damage. It took no damage. the man felt his skin go cold as he realized that this puppet was not something he could defeat so easily.

Zhao Boqin swung his spear, a pillar of water erupting from the tip, smashing into the puppet, but the puppet smashed through it like a carp swimming upriver.

The spray of water everywhere left behind a bright rainbow in the sky, and throw the sprinkles of water, the puppet appeared, punching down on Zhao Boqin.

A sphere of water had already appeared around Zhao Boqin to protect him, and even then he was looking to run away or protect himself some other way.

The puppet smashed through the water shield and still flew toward Zhao Boqin. At the same time, Alex was already attacking him from behind.

The man turned around swiftly, his spear already duplicating in his arms as other golden illusory spears formed that smashed into Alex's attack. He felt the shockwave of the blast push through him. Thankfully, he wasn't pushed back into the incoming puppet.

The battle was harder than the one he had fought with Hongxi, and if there was one advantage he could see about it, it was that the puppet was incapable of using any techniques. If it could, he would've been hurt a long time ago.

Maybe there was another advantage here too. Alex was way weaker than the puppet, so if he got the opportunity, he could take him out. Thinking as much, he got back into the fight.

He weaved under the puppet's punch and struck it dead in the chest with his spear, sending it flying backward in an explosion of golden energy. Even then, the puppet stood unharmed, looking only to come back to attack him.

But that was enough time for him to turn around and attack Alex.

When he did that, however, his eyes went wide with the sight of dozens of swords flying in the air in a weirdly numbered array. They spun around, barely any of the metal in the group gleaming in the bright sun.

He could not tell what the black metal that made the sword was, but seeing it not shine surprised him a bit. That surprise only lasted for as long as it took for fear to settle into him of just how strong that attack was.

'Bloody bastard was holding back?' he thought in anger, bringing out something from his storage bag at the same time. God knew he did not wish to use it, but seeing what was happening, the only choice he had was to use this or to give up.

And he did not want to give up.

A wheel appeared in his hand, like one taken from a cart. If the wooden wheel was taken from a cart, it would have been a heavenly cart, used to carry gods and kings.

The wheel was golden in color, despite being made up of wood, with 8 symmetrical spokes coming out from a thick circular center painted in brilliant red. The rim of the wheel was golden but had streaks of white in it as if something was written or carved into it.

Zhao Boqin felt wrong about using this artifact. It was something ancient that was close to its end and would be destroyed any day. He did not know how many more uses he had of this.

Still, he had no choice right now.

Qi poured into the wheel and it glowed. The gold got bright, the red more brilliant. And the white scribbles that could have been text glowed bright blue now.

The wheel started spinning all of a sudden, before slowly moving in front of Zhao Boqin to spin on its own, growing larger and larger until it was twice as large as the man who used it.

At the same time, Zhao Boqin looked away from the wheel to look toward the puppet. At the very least, he had to survive that thing. The wheel would protect him from Alex for now.

Alex looked at the wheel and felt a desire to check just how strong he was here. The 75 sword that spun over him spun even faster under his command and a low buzzing sound echoed throughout the sky and ground like a thousand bees buzzing at once.

Thick Sword Qi filled the swords and then Sword Aura, filling them all to the brink. Then, he thought of adding more.

Embrace your technique, was what Godslayer had told him, so he tried to do it. He embraced the thinness of his attack, the apparent nonexistence of it. The compression he had to put on his technique to make it work, all the different Dao that worked together.

He embraced them all and he added to the swords. A low groan escaped his mouth before he could even stop it. Not that he could have with the sudden pain that jolted in his head. Whatever he was doing, it was having some effect for sure.

Whether it was a good effect or not, he had yet to know.

Flickers of light surrounded him, something even he failed to notice. Nobody else did either. They were too small, too compressed. Too... nothing.

Having done all he could short of giving himself a migraine, Alex sent down the attack.

The 75 swords roared with fury, with Midnight leading the rest, as they made their way toward the wheel that floated in front of them.

The crash of the swords on the wheel was the greatest exchange of attacks that had happened in the secret realm, aside from the Immortal attacks themselves.

The explosive force of the swords crashing onto the solid defense of the wheel sent a force drifting through the sky that caused gusts of winds that threatened to clear the skies and uproot the trees underneath.

People were buffeted by the winds and had to shield themselves quickly before looking back.

While Zhao Boqin was busy fending himself off of the puppet, Alex was drilling into the shield with his sword and was genuinely surprised at how difficult it was.

He could tell it was an impressive treasure, but this was beyond impressive. No matter how much he pushed, the wheel didn't budge one bit. It was perhaps the greatest defensive treasure he had seen on someone. It was perhaps even better than the shield the Dragon Emperor had used in this battle, but he would have to wait to find out.

He kept at it for a while and felt something shift on the wheel.

Zhao Boqin noticed it too and couldn't help but frown. The wheel was old and was steps away from breaking, and it already showed signs now.

He focused on maintaining the wheel, but the puppet was still attacking him. He couldn't understand how Alex was keeping track of everything, including the puppet's attacks. He knew it couldn't have been easy, but he still did it.

His forehead was now drenched with sweat from all the stress. Thankfully, relief filled him when he sensed Alex take back his attack. The feeling of pressure lessened and he could focus back on the puppet.

He fought with the puppet, doing his best to hold back against it for a while when he realized that Alex was doing nothing. He fearfully looked back to see where he was.

Alex was still beyond the wheel with his eyes unfocused on the outside world. And in his hand was his sword which he readied for a single strike.

Chapter 1628: The Result

Zhao Boqin had only managed to turn around and empower his wheel when Alex swung his sword.

For a moment, nothing happened. There was no explosion, no glowing lights, no grand display of power. Then, the barrier in front of the wheel split in half. And then...

"No..." a low groan escaped Zhao Boqin's mouth.

The wheel split in half.

The man couldn't comprehend how his wheel could be destroyed like that at all, and even as the thoughts remained in his mind, he sensed something approaching him at the last moment. Alas, it was too late.

Zhao Boqin felt the slash go through his right side, cutting off his arm and part of the shoulder. The talisman only then understood he was in danger and activated its protection feature, teleporting the man some distance away.

The man stared wide-eyed, first at his wounds, then back at Alex, failing to understand what had happened or what had been done to him.

Alex stood where he did, panting hard, with his forehead full of sweat as well. While he had made the attack seem simple, it had been anything but. He had poured into it even more than what he had in the past attack.

Embracing his technique and putting it into the Sword Intent had been weirdly difficult and he wasn't even sure if he was doing it correctly. It had improved the strength of the attack somewhat, so it should have been the correct thing in some way.

It was still a surprise to him when the wheel broke. He had assumed it had much more power in it, but it had either been close to being destroyed on its own or was destroyed because Zhao Boqin wasn't strong enough to bring the best out of it.

It was a miracle he hadn't used Immortal Qi on the wheel. But then he had other ways of winning still.

He still lightly panted as he went over to Zhao Boqin some distance away, who already had a few people surrounding him with his bare right arm showing through the torn robes. He hadn't wasted time eating a pill it seemed.

"Are you okay?" Alex asked the man.

Zhao Boqin seemed dazed, his eyes unfocused. Alex had to ask him again before he realized he was being spoken to.

"What?" he quickly asked before realizing what was being asked. "Ah! Okay, right yeah, I'm... I'm okay. I think."

The people around him gave a grim look, seeing how out of it he was. Some of them eyed Alex apprehensively, and one young woman even stepped away from the group to not have to confront him even on accident.

"How is he?" Sarah quickly walked beside them as well, and a few concerned faces showed through the crown she brought along.

Zhao Boqin opened his mouth to say something when he seemed to realize what he was about to do. Looking around, he quickly stopped himself and said something else.

"I'm fine, you all can leave," he answered.

"But brother—"

"No, leave," the man said.

"We can talk later. Leave me and His Majesty alone," the man said.

Everyone looked toward him then toward Alex and left helplessly.

Alex stood where he did for a while, eyeing the man in front of him, waiting for him to speak. Once everyone was far away, Zhao Boqin put out a sound warding formation and finally asked what he wanted to do.

"Did you cheat?" he asked.

Alex nearly gave a laugh when he heard that. "What makes you think that?" he asked.

"Well, no, not cheat. That wasn't what I meant to say," the man said, furiously scratching his head. "You did something not normal back there. You didn't cheat, but what happened felt unfair."

"I see," Alex said. "You brought out a wheel that clearly wasn't made in this world. I don't know if you should be the one talking about unfairness."

The man grimaced a bit when he remembered about the wheel. "You destroyed my wheel," he said. "I paid good money for that."

Alex shrugged.

The man looked up at him. "Next time we fight, I'll be ready for it," he said.

"Third time is the charm, eh?" he asked before shaking his head. "Enough of this talk. Let's talk about our bet."

Zhao Boqin felt his insides tangle up at the thought of the bet. The oath that knotted itself around him was tightly holding onto his actions, so he couldn't do anything other than slowly nod his head in agreement.

"I will answer any two questions of yours without hiding anything I am not bound by oaths to reveal," the man said. "Nor will I reveal to anyone what questions you asked of me."

That was the oath he had made during the bet. Alex nodded and laid down his own formation to block out sounds. He didn't want to take any chances.

He sat down in front of the man and took a deep breath. He could only ask two questions and he didn't accidentally want to ask something of the man that he could answer without telling Alex something he wanted to know about.

"Around 60 years ago now, the Empress died. Around that time, a bunch of soldiers were taken to the Azure Dragon's domain. What happened before, during, and after that event?"

That was the first question.

Zhao Boqin gave a puzzled look for a moment, thinking to himself about something before a grim expression came upon his face.

"This isn't something we can lightly talk about," the man said.

"I will hear whatever you can tell me," Alex said, speaking slowly so as to not make it a question.

The man grunted for a bit, feeling the oath tighten around him. He had to speak.

"I do not know much," the man said. "I was with my leader at the time, a person named Huang Lumin. We were discussing something when he was ordered away suddenly."

"That was the last I saw of him. After he left, I did not know what happened. All I know is that wherever he went, he died, never to return again. I do not know if he died along with the Empress, but now that I think about it, the timing does match."

The man frowned a bit. "We were told the Empress died during a cultivation breakthrough and were to never talk about it ever again, but we weren't bound by any oath."

"I was made the leader after that, and that was when I found out that it wasn't just my leader that was called away, but many high-ranking members of the army, and almost all of them were dead, with many taking wounds that made them retire entirely."

"Many young blood were brought to higher ranks during that time and I was one of them. The legions became more strict after that."

The man's eyes flashed around, the pieces fitting together in his head. "So they died helping the Empress's breakthrough, huh?" he asked. "I had assumed it was something more sinister. After all, we lost enough military power to cripple us if we had rivals."

Alex said nothing. He let the man have his misunderstandings. That helped him even more. He rummaged through the information a bit, but nothing there was more than what he didn't already know.

At least it was good to know that the empire was weakened thanks to whatever had happened in the secret realm.

"That was good," Alex said and took a deep breath again. "Now, the second question."

Chapter 1629: Inconsistencies

Zhao Boqin wondered why Alex even asked the first question. Not only had he known more than him about the event, he had even revealed to him something he hadn't known before.

It was an entirely weird question to have asked.

'Does he perhaps want to know who died there?' he thought. 'About what they did?'

He would have to wait for this second question to see what Alex wanted to learn about, although he was taking a rather long time to come up with the answer.

Alex went through the questions in his mind multiple times, making sure to get as many answers as he could from it in return. Once ready, he asked.

"A short time after the Empress's death, a group of soldiers were ordered by the Emperor to go after a woman named Han Ahlin to retrieve something. What happened during and after their pursuit of her?"

Zhao Boqin frowned very clearly this time around. He made no effort to hide the disapproving look he held about being asked about something that was clearly the empire's secret. If it ever got out that he had been asked this, he could easily lose his rank, and maybe even his life.

Worse would be if anyone found out he had actually answered these questions. If they found out, that would be the case as the oath was already forcing him to start speaking through the knot that tightened inside him.

"Han... this Han Ahlin... it sounds like a woman's name," the man began. "Is it a woman?"

"She is," Alex said, making sure to show no expression on his face that could give away his nervousness about the questions. The Oathbreakers had already answered both of these questions, so he hadn't expected to learn much, but he still held hope that the man in front of him could at least give him something good to munch on.

However, the man's face was a frown as he fell into thought for a moment. Alex waited, and Zhao Boqin finally looked up, although his face was twisted into a grimace at this point from not having answered.

"I do believe I know what you are talking about," he said. "I was too new a leader, so I wasn't involved in this mission, but I do remember hearing vague orders to get battalions to start moving toward the south for something."

"If you are talking about what I think you are, they weren't after a woman at all. They were after a man," the man said.

Before Alex could ask who it was, Zhao Boqin continued. "I don't remember any names being thrown out. It was secret enough that nobody outside of the mission learned more than a crumb of anything."

He thought for a bit, recollecting some things, and continued answering. "As far as I know, they were after someone, not something, but I wasn't informed directly, so I could be wrong. As for the girl, I never even heard about a girl being involved there."

Alex frowned. What in the hell was going on here? How was the information he received from this man so different from the one he received from the Oathbreakers? This man was bound by the oath to speak the truth, so he couldn't have lied.

The only other reason he found as to why the two accountings of the past were so different was because of the people involved.

Zhao Boqin wasn't involved in the mission, so he couldn't have known much. On top of that, the directly involved Oathbreakers were perhaps much more direly bound by their oaths about that incident.

'So they weren't after sister?' Alex wondered. 'Were they after a man? But then what about the thing they were after? Why was sister involved in this at all?'

More questions ran through his mind when he noticed beads of sweat on Zhao Boqin's forehead and his face going red as if he hadn't breathed for a while. "What's wrong?" he asked curiously. He checked the man closely and found out that he was trying to hide something.

"There's more to the answer, isn't there?" he asked. Alex could feel his heartbeat speeding up. There was more to learn here. "Come on, don't hold back now, or you'll die."

The man did his best to hide the answer, but his oath got the better of him. In the end, he hurriedly let out what he wanted to say.

"The mission went badly and we were called for reinforcement," he spat out.

Alex paused.

"Reinforcement? For one man?" he asked. As soon as the words left his mouth, he knew the answer. It was no one man. His sister was there too.

"I do not know how many there were fighting us, only that they needed reinforcement," the man said. "It seemed dire enough that they needed many of us."

Alex nodded thoughtfully. "Let me guess, you weren't chosen to go because you were too new to it," he said.

"No," the man said to Alex's surprise. "I was chosen. Many of us were."

Alex frowned. Was this man actually involved in his sister's death? "If you went, then you must know more than you're letting on," he said.

"I never went," the man said. "I was ready to, but the reinforcement was stopped from leaving at the last moment."

Alex looked intently, waiting for the next piece of information.

"As it turned out, His Majesty had left the palace to deal with the issue himself."

Alex's eyes went wide in horror. "The Emperor... was directly involved?" he asked. All this time, he had thought that the Emperor had only been someone pulling strings from the shadows, but if he had directly involved himself then...

All the secrecy, all the oaths, it all started making sense why everything was a mystery. The Emperor had involved himself in finding this person and his sister had to die for it.

Fury built up in him. Anger and rage almost made him miss the next information that Zhao Boqin seemed to have casually thrown out.

"An older man who was involved managed to get away, and after that, I never heard anything anymore about the mission. I don't even know what His Majesty could have gotten."

Alex's face changed at those words. "A man got away?" he asked, but Zhao Boqin said nothing. The man felt calm now that he had answered it all, and was no longer required to say anything.

'Someone managed to get away. I should find that person,' Alex thought. Where he could find this person, though, he had no idea. 'And what is it that the Emperor gained from this? What item?'

The original intent for the mission had been the retrieval of a person it seemed. If that wasn't fake information to throw off the others not involved in the mission, what happened to that man? Was he still alive? Was that man and this old man the same person?

Either way, Alex needed to find this old man, but he didn't even know where to begin with. Who could he even ask at this point? Aside from the Dragon Emperor, no one else could tell him anything.

Alas, the knowledge he gained about his sister was even less this time around. Although the rest of the information did build a greater picture that could hopefully help him in the future.

'I can't do this on my own anymore,' he thought. 'I truly need someone to come along and tell me the answers.'

He was feeling tired.

Out of the corners of his eyes, he saw Zhao Boqin muttering something to himself. Something that was not audible, but the expression he held made Alex jump in fear.

He had a deranged look about him and his lips moved incessantly as if he was arguing with himself. It looked very odd.

His eyes suddenly turned toward Alex, and Alex felt trouble coming.

"You know about the legionnaires dying, some more important than others," the man said, glaring directly at Alex. "You are planning something. What are you planning?"

Alex stared back without faltering for a few moments before looking away. "We are done here. You can leave," he said.

"No, you won't be leaving," Zhao Boqin said. His spear was already out on his hands. "You are planning something and I will not let you leave without answering me. You are planning to attack the Empire, aren't you? That's why you want to learn so much about the military's failure over the past few years."

"I have no such plan," Alex said. "Now put away the spear."

"Not until I'm sure you do not plan on attacking us," he said. "I won't let you go without an oath of your own."

"Oath? You want me to promise you that I wasn't really asking about the flaws in your military?" he asked.

"No, make an Oath that you won't hurt the army, the empire, the emperor."

Alex frowned at the last one. There was no way he could ever make an oath to not hurt the emperor. That was the only one who could answer him about both Pearl's Mother and Hannah. If not, he would have to die all the same for them.

He was about to say something when his expression changed once again. His talisman buzzed slightly and a teleportation aura gathered around him.

'Is it already time to leave?' he thought.

Zhao Boqin nodded slowly. "I understand," he said, power flowing into the spear, Immortal Qi gathering in it. "That look on your face is all I need to tell that you plan on attacking us. You will die for this."

Chapter 1630: Cut

Alex didn't have any opportunity to focus on the teleportation aura that gathered around him. He was in a much more hurry to look at the man that was ready to kill him.

Anger swept through him and Midnight appeared in his arm. At the same time, he let out a blast of Spiritual energy that swept through everything in front of him in an area, disregarding how much energy he wasted using it like this.

As the spiritual energy swept past Zhao Boqin, he felt his head grow a little dull, even with his artifact especially meant to stop mental attacks. He pulled back his spiritual sense to protect his spiritual sea and quickly got the reins on his mind back. A moment later, he looked up to find Alex moving away from there, rushing toward the edge of the sound-stopping barrier.

Without pausing, he channeled the Immortal Qi that was already in the spear and shot it toward Alex.

All colors in the world were gone the moment the attack was launched.

A golden dragon rushed out of the spear in a roar, crumbling the space around it as it flew toward Alex in the distance. The world seemed to dim as it flew, shockwaves spreading away from it, that collapsed in on itself as the dragon moved faster than the shockwave itself.

The compounded shockwave let out an even stronger shockwave, all of which perfectly enhanced the attack as it landed on Alex.

Had Alex tried to protect himself, or even just try to move aside, he might have been able to do something. However, moving in a straight line with his back turned to Zhao Boqin, he had no chance of escaping this attack.

The massive dragon struck Alex in the back. And Alex burst like a bubble.

Zhao Boqin was taken aback. It truly was like a bubble. Alex exploded in a burst of light as the golden dragon rushed into the distance. Vile screams rang from outside at the sight of the dragon, and Zhao Boqin wasn't sure if he attacked someone accidentally.

He didn't have the time for such thoughts. Confusion filled his brain. Confusion about what happened and how Alex disappeared into nothing. He let out his spiritual sense to see how Alex had died without blood and guts.

And that was when he sensed the oddity that was right in front of him.

Hidden to the eyes, but not to the senses, Alex was standing in front of him, right where he had been the entire time. And in his hand was a sword with strength that made Zhao Boqin's hair stand on its ends.

He quickly reached for more Qi inside of him, but it was all too late.

Alex swung and the world was cut into two for Zhao Boqin.

Zhao Boqin stared at Alex as the right half of his body slid down first, and then his other half. The two images he saw from each eye were vivid even with the two halves separated at that moment.

It was as if it took a moment for his body to realize that he had been cut into two.

Life left Zhao Boqin's eyes and just like that, he died.

Alex felt a tinge of pain inside his head. Not only had he used regular Qi and Sword Aura while using this technique, but he had added Blood Aura as well to improve its strength just a touch more.

Doing so had left him light-headed for just a few moments. Those few moments were enough for him to slip his control on the teleportation aura that was gathering around him, and it readied to take him away.

Alex said nothing and prepared to leave, but as he did so, he saw a teleportation aura around Zhao Boqin's body as well. Belated it may be, or even dead, his talisman had activated as it was time to leave.

The two halves of the body blinked out of existence before Alex could even do something. He grunted in frustration at seeing that and left himself to the mercy of the teleportation aura that surrounded him.

Moments later, he teleported out as well.

He arrived on a side of the island, with the ocean in front of him, and not so many people in between them. There were barely 4 people within a hundred meters of him, and even those he did not recognize all that well.

He looked around, searching for dismembered bodies that might have teleported out. However, he didn't notice any of them. Seeing the people around him, he was sure this wasn't the only place they had come out to.

Many people were missing, so there had to be other locations around the island that people were teleported to. He kept his ears wide open to hear sounds of shrieking to see if someone had screamed upon the sight of a perfectly halved human.

He heard no such screams.

A soldier of the army was telling everyone where they should head over to, and Alex quickly followed his direction to move toward the beach. He flew through the sky, making his way toward a ship that was in the distance. It was the only ship there it seemed, and it was waiting for their arrival.

The ship was headed by Mao Yingtai, the Silver Queen. And today it seemed her mood was the serious sort. Alex wondered when she was last in her bubbly mood. To his surprise, he looked forward to that more than this.

The Queen flew to the sky before he could even land on the deck and quickly gave greetings. Before she could get too far with her greetings, however, he spoke up.

"I killed a man," he said.

There was no way people weren't going to find out sooner or later. Many knew he was with the man at the end, and with only him coming out, there would be questions and suspicions soon enough.

He would rather deal with it already.

The Silver Queen gasped in surprise. "Death? In the Martial Ground?" she asked. The possibility sounded preposterous to her, as the talisman would stop all lethal attacks. At least they were made that way.

"The leader of the 8th Battalion of the Talon Legion, Zhao Boqin attacked me just moments ago, and in retaliation, I attacked him as well. My attack was lethal, and he died."

The gasp Mao Yingtai made this time sounded much more serious than the last one. "Your Majesty! A Legionnaire's death, especially someone like him, is too serious a crime that I cannot help you with. This is beyond me."

Alex nodded. "Who will handle it then?" he asked.

The queen grimaced. "I cannot tell you just yet. Let me send word of this. As soon as we reach the mainland, we'll see."

Alex nodded. "I would like to go rest for now," he said. His head still thrummed lightly from using the attack. Embracing his technique was still difficult.

The queen nodded and took Alex to a room in the ship herself and only left once she was sure he was properly settled.

Once privately in his own room, Alex let his guard down and breathed a deep sigh. Whatever came of this problem, he would deal with it somehow.