

Alchemy 1091

Chapter 1091: The Red Haired Assassin

"You made the Earth pill and the Water pill," Gong Liuxian said. "You truly are amazing, young man."

"Does this mean you will start on the dao pill next?" the other man asked excitedly.

Alex gave an awkward smile as an answer. "To be honest senior, I don't want to work on any pills for a very long time now, especially new ones," he said. "So it will take me a while before I get to that pill."

"Oh, that's... well, take your time. There's no hurry," the old man said.

Since the pills were handed over, Alex decided to return back to his room.

He spent the next several days going through everything he thought he had missed. He read the talismans from the insight pavilion that included the information for anyone that was looking for his information.

Surprisingly — not that it should have been— there wasn't much information to look through. Most who were curious about him for the first 3 months or even 6 months had died off in the latter months, leaving not many that were still trying to learn about him.

There was still a lot of information, but it was closer to what would've been 5 months' worth, instead of the 15 he had missed.

Alex wasn't mad about that though. Having less information meant that only the ones that really wanted to know about him would look for him and that would help try and find the ones that wanted him assassinated.

He was still getting a few questions about if Graham was related to him in some ways or not. This meant that despite the investigators that the leader of the Alchemy association had put up to the work had died, there were still others that were working on it.

"Must be the sects and families," Alex thought. It was easy to guess that the council member's tasks wouldn't be ignored by their relatives and disciples.

Still, there was a question as to the fact if one of them was actually trying to find his father or not.

If they were going to go so far as to give that information to the assassins to use against him, then there was likely no reason for them to continue with that task. Although they could be trying to find his father to try and use him against him, he could never forget about that angle.

He then looked at details of the assassins that were given to him by Zhu Shaofan and read it.

There were 7 different assassins, and not all of them had titles attached to them.

Alex's eyes went to the Jade-Faced Assassin who was more infamous of the bunch. He quickly read through the assassin's details and saw just how much he liked poison.

The remaining 6 assassins were the ones Alex didn't know about.

He went from the start. The leader.

The leader of the Dark Phoenix was a person no one knew about. He was a secretive man with barely any information at all. The information read that he was most likely behind a killing of a big figure from the Jade Fire sect, and thus was thought to use a whip as his weapon because of the markings.

Another assassin was one that liked to use explosives, mostly talismans, and pills. Alex remembered the young man that did the same during their fights back in the Tiger sect. How long ago was that?

The explosion-using assassin was pictured to be some old man, although it was likely he would never appear with such a face in the public.

The third one was someone who could apparently freely change his facial features and go wherever he liked.

"Oh, that's the one I fought, wasn't it?" Alex thought. He nodded his head thinking just how credible this piece of information was. The nearly 11th member of the council had gone far and beyond with the information he had gathered.

Another one was a fiery assassin with bright red hair that seemed to have a smoldering personality around her. This one didn't have a name or a description, but just that one image of her.

Alex was surprised at how beautiful this assassin looked. He would've even admired her beauty with a better outlook had she not been coming for his head.

The image showed her surrounded by deadly fire as well as a group of shadowy figures that weren't visible at all.

Alex could tell that this was most likely a scene of a battle and that this was one of her assassination attempts.

The last two assassins were twins that had done some heinous crimes and were on the run. It was suspected that the leader of the Dark Phoenix assassins had recruited them a long time ago and was using them.

Zhu Shaofan made a notice that nothing on the list was final, so Alex had to be careful, but Alex still appreciated the information.

Given how he was right on at least two of them, he could at least be sure that he was correct on at least some of the others as well.

'So I know who to look out for,' Alex thought.

He looked through the list again, just to see if he missed something, and his eyes fell on the red-haired woman again.

He shook his head. With her beauty, she could have obtained so many things that normal people wouldn't be able to, however, she was using it to kill people instead. What a waste.

Alex closed the talisman and put it away. Then, he sat there on his bed... doing nothing.

How long had it been since he had done... nothing? He couldn't remember. Even before coming here, he was testing out the various ingredients in the alchemy association, and before that, he was worried about the assassination attempt.

Perhaps the only time he had sat down doing nothing was back in the Spiritsong city when he waited for his turn of the match to come along so he could fight.

He missed that a little. He had thought he was making some steady progress there, but he was robbed of that. Now, he was trapped in a place with people that may be the ones who he needed protection from.

Alex sighed. 'I can't stay here anymore. I need to leave,' he thought. He knew that was not the best idea right now, but he had to do it.

There were two things that he desperately needed to do that he couldn't do while he stayed in the palace.

First, he couldn't make the spiritual root-improving pills for himself.

Sure he could eat the ones he had made, but he would rather eat the ones with pill veins in them. If possible, he wanted ones with 6 pill veins in them. However, to have 6 pill veins, he needed a strong power to protect his pill from the 6th lightning bolt.

That brought him to the 2nd reason why he needed to leave. He needed to improve his blood aura. For the past year or two, his blood aura had stagnated and hadn't improved.

The only kills he had yet that he possibly have gotten the blood from were the two assassins.

However, the first one was a man that was poisoned to the core and was later immediately burned to death, leaving no blood for Alex to use.

As for the second one, he had exploded himself, once again making it impossible for Alex to use his blood.

Alex desperately wanted to improve his blood aura to prepare himself against the rest of the assassins that would most likely be coming for him.

In the process, he also wanted to get some more blood beasts for himself.

During his fight with the faceless assassin a year ago, he used 7 of his best blood beasts to stop him from leaving, which forced the man to blow his core and destroy his blood beasts.

So, Alex was looking to gain a few more of them as well.

There was also another reason, although he didn't feel like this was making him act this way at all. He wanted to go get some more of the cultivation pills for Scarlet.

If she could have high cultivation, she could most likely help him too. Although, he wasn't putting much hope there. He was sure he was bound to get disappointed anyway.

Alex left his room to go talk to the two seniors that were awake at the moment. He met them and told them that he wanted to leave this place to go train and improve himself.

However, as expected, both of the two old men were adamant about him staying back. He tried to argue that he would be fine outside since he would be hiding his face and all, but the old men simply didn't trust him.

A part of him believed they were doing this for his good, however, another more suspicious part couldn't help but suspect that they were trying to keep him here so they knew where their target was.

Even if not that, they simply wanted him here just because he was so good at making the pills they need.

Alex needed to find a way out.

So, that night he concealed himself as well as he could using his technique and left his room with a new face. He went outside the palace and then walked through the city as a mortal.

The teleportation formations would know who he was, so he instead decided to go through the forest in the mountains that were the closest to him.

The beasts were there, but he trusted his concealment and escape capabilities. By the time the sun was out in the sky, he was already far away from the Sunborn Sanctuary.

Chapter 1092: The First Shadow

Even as Alex arrived at one of the eastern cities of the Southern continent, he couldn't help but wonder if he had made some sort of mistake.

He had left on what could only be taken as an impulse and had not thought of how it would affect other people's lives.

He had left a letter behind explaining that the council members shouldn't try and find him and keep the illusion that he was still hidden in his room.

He hoped that would keep unnecessary people from trying to find him.

The city he was in currently was named the Sundering city, also known as the First Shadow.

Alex looked at the massive tower-like spire that rose to the sky at the east and understood why the city was called what it was called.

Due to how tall the spire was, before the sunlight even fell on this city, it would fall on the spire and its shadow would fall into these lands that wouldn't leave until the sun was really high in the sky.

It was already late in the day so there was enough sunlight for him to use.

"Are you new here, uhh... senior?" a woman spoke from the side. Alex could see that she was aged and had a bit of cultivation base, but not much.

'Organ tempering realm... 9th realm at that,' Alex thought.

"I am new," Alex said. "What is your name?"

"Hm, it's Chu Pinqing," the woman said, surprised that he was asking her name suddenly.

"Is that your real name?" Alex asked.

The woman gave a surprised look but did not answer.

"Don't worry, I'm just trying to learn if you are a player or not," Alex said.

"I... am," she said with a curious look on her face. "How did you know, senior?"

"I have my way," Alex said. "You don't have to call me senior, just call me little brother."

"Okay," the woman said. "Then little brother, do you need a tour of the town? I know a lot about this place and can give you a thorough tour of it. It will only cost you 3 True spirit stones an hour."

Alex couldn't help but smile. "Sure, go on ahead," he said and went along with her as he handed a single True spirit stone to her.

The woman was excited and started telling him about the city.

At first, he was just happy to help a player, but he wasn't expecting him to have so much information about the city, especially with her cultivation base.

His first shock came not even 3 minutes later after the woman started explaining stuff.

The tall spire to the east had surprised Alex sure, but what shocked him more was when he learned the name of the thing he was looking at.

He was looking at the Sundering Sanctum.

"That's the Sundering Sanctum? No wonder the city is called what it is," Alex said. Sundering City was a good name for a place that held the Sundering Sanctum.

Although, one thing didn't make sense at all. Sundering Sanctum was a secret realm, so why was he looking at it outside?

The woman had an answer for that too. "While that is the Sundering Sanctum, it's only a part of it," she said. "I don't know much about the mechanics behind what is happening there, but I've heard seniors say that the space inside is crumbling and things are either being destroyed or being sent out here."

"This spire is said to belong to the main tower in the sanctum and is just an upper half of it, while the main rooms of the tower itself are hidden inside the secret realm," she said.

"I see..." Alex said as he watched the spire. The woman was really coming in handy to understand what was going on. "Do you know when this is going to open up?"

"531 days," she said without any hesitation.

Alex was a little taken aback. "Are you sure? That's a very specific number," he said.

"I am sure," she said. "The experts know how to check the date of the sanctum's opening. While the number might be vague at the start, it becomes increasingly certain as it closes in and by now they are absolutely certain."

"However, if by any chance the number I've said is wrong, please take it up with those experts who gave us that guarantee," she said.

Alex couldn't help but chuckle when he heard that.

The woman took him through the market area, letting him know which store sold what and what did not. Alex looked through the stores and ended up going into an Alchemy store to buy a few ingredients.

Once he was done, he walked back out and went along with the woman as she took him through more of the city.

The woman took him through some bizarre pieces of land, mostly a garden that apparently belonged to a past mayor of this city that was split up into multiple pieces of land.

Many thousand years ago, when the Sundering sanctum was still fine, the mayor of this city at the time had made his residence next to the sanctum's entrance and had made a garden around it.

Years later, when the sanctum started bleeding out space, the spire appeared, separating the garden into various many parts that were suddenly far away from each other.

Although it had created a bit of terror at the time, the ruler from that time had deemed this normal and had told the people to preserve this garden as a reminder.

Now, this was a tourist attraction of sorts.

Alex looked at the spire from up close, even though it was still hundreds of meters away. '531 days' he thought. 'Will I be here then?'

That was a question the answer to which he did not have. He would love to be here, but the situation with the assassins made it so that he would definitely have to skip it.

That was a shame for certain.

"After it opens and closes, do you have any idea on when it opens again?" he asked.

"10 years? 12? You cannot be certain, but it is around that time," the woman said.

"I see," Alex said. 'Guess I'll have to go in at that time then. Although, hopefully, I will already find a way out of this place by then.'

They went around the city for a little while longer and Alex came across a massive, almost industrial building towards the southern part of the city.

"Kang Mega Workshop?" Alex read the name of the building. "Kang... Ah, the one that mines that metals."

It had been a while since he had thought about the metals from the Sunless lands. He had thought of going there to mine some metals for himself but had later planned against it.

'Although, now should be a perfect time for that,' he thought. However, he quickly got rid of the idea. The last thing he should be doing right now is being in places where he would have to be around strong people all the time.

'They own those lands, right? It's not like the Endless tunnel where you could mine as much as you wanted to,' he thought.

He was quickly disillusioned with the idea of mining more. Besides, what was he even going to do with them? Make some more swords? He already had them.

After that, there wasn't much to look at in the city, so he let the woman go. It was getting quite late anyway.

"Here, for your services," Alex handed her a few spirit stones.

The woman thanked him but she could feel her hands bulge a little while holding them. She looked down at the amount and was shocked.

There should have been about 8 spirit stones for the 3 hours she had spent showing around the city, but instead, there were about 20-something.

"Little brother, you—"

She looked up to tell him, but Alex was already mixed with the crowd, nowhere to be seen anymore.

She still looked for him for a minute or two, but seeing that he was gone, a small smile appeared on her face as she pocketed that money.

She decided to go buy some of those tasty dishes from the restaurant that she wouldn't normally buy due to how little she made.

Today she had received a hefty tip, and she was going to use it to feed her children.

Alex walked out of the Sundering city. He was only there to buy some alchemy ingredients but had ended up spending a few more hours than necessary to go on a tour led by that woman.

Now that the tour was over, it was time for him to go back on track.

He left the Sundering City and flew north. He sat on his boat as he spent his time improving his ingredients while waiting to see the Eastwatch city in the distance.

He reached the city around midnight and continued flying. The city was just a milestone for him to know where he was going after all.

He reached the Hiddenbay city that he had been to so many times and then went out of it into the ocean.

He hid the boat and flew on his own, being alert at every step. Even if he was close to the coast, there was nothing that said the stronger sea beasts wouldn't come here.

Just as he expected, a gigantic fish with tentacles for a beard flew out.

Alex looked at the beast with a Saint Core 4th realm cultivation base and smiled. His first fight in a long time had arrived.

Chapter 1093: Returning

A group of a dozen or so people walked in a straight line through a rocky pathway, led by a buff man at the front. They were all carrying various tools on their shoulders as they walked along.

They were unusually chatty this day, partly because they had just finished working, and partly because while they were working, the sun had decided to show its face.

"Ahh, what a wonderful day, isn't it?" one of them asked. "Look at the sun, look at the ocean, the gentle sea breeze. Ah~ it is to die for."

"Hey now, don't go dying just yet," one of the other men said. "We will only have to carry your body back."

"We could just dig right here and bury him, no need to take his body back," another one said.

"Oi! You all are looking forward to my death, are you?" the man shouted in an apparently angry tone, but everyone there was joking anyway, so he quickly ended up laughing.

They all did.

All except the leader.

"Leader, you should laugh a bit too," one of the men said.

"If I find something absolutely hilarious, I will make sure to let you guys know," the leader said and continued walking.

The group gave an awkward smile to each other, shrugged, and continued on.

The road was muddy for a small patch in front of them, so they would have to be careful walking through this patch. Falling wouldn't hurt them, but it was better to keep their clothes clean anyway.

Washing them was a hassle that none wanted to waste their time on.

It wasn't that fresh water was hard to find or that the ocean was too dangerous to go to, it really was just that time was something of a luxury, and none of them wanted to waste it washing clothes.

If possible, they would rather use it to grow stronger.

One of the men slipped and fell onto the mud despite his careful consideration of every step. The other men laughed and pulled him up.

"Goddammit," The man cried out. "Now I'll have to wash it." He grumbled a bit.

"It's just dunking your clothes in water and rinsing them. It shouldn't take you very long," the leader said from the front. Although, he too knew that these men would rather use that time training.

"If only we could fly too," the grumbling man said and continued walking.

If only they could fly.

About 15 minutes later, the group reached their place of residence, but before they could go wash up, a pair of men and women arrived in front of them.

"Damn cultivators," one of them said under his breath.

"Sshh! They can hear you," another one said.

The cultivators did hear them but gave no heed to those words. Instead, they looked toward the leader.

"You, come with us," one of them said.

"Me?" the leader was surprised that he was chosen. "What do you want?"

"Stop asking questions and just follow," the two cultivators said and turned around to leave.

The leader said nothing and walked, following the two cultivators towards a rather fabulous camp that was made at the edge, towards the shore.

He walked past another tent from where he could feel the slight heat of the sacred flames that burned within it.

The three of them finally reached the tent that was... the leader couldn't immediately think of a word for it.

From the outside, it was gorgeous, a work of art. However, on the inside, it was bleak and dreary, as if he was attending a funeral all of a sudden.

"Sit!" the male cultivator said and the leader sat on the chair that was in the middle of the tent.

The two cultivators also took their seats while the female brought out something and said, "Let us begin."

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It had been close to 500 days since Alex had left the Sunborn Sanctuary. He had broken through to the Saint Foundation 2nd realm while in there, and now, he was going to break through once again.

He felt the energy in his body get denser and denser until the Qi started crystallizing around the pillars that were already there.

He kept at it for a few more minutes and once as much of the Qi as he could contain in his dantian crystallized, he understood that he had successfully broken through to the Saint Foundation 3rd realm.

"Wow, a third of my dantian is filled with these crystals," he thought to himself. He wondered if his entire dantian would be one giant crystal by the end, that would only melt to give him Qi when he desired.

Fortunately, the crystals didn't hamper the spinning yin and yang energy at the bottom of his dantian, but for some reason, he got the feeling that they never would be hampered at all.

He sat there cultivating for a few more hours, trying to stabilize himself as well as he could. In the meantime, Whisker returned from his hunt where Ning had sent all of his blood beasts to go train, grow, and bring him some cores and blood.

Another giant container of blood appeared in front of Alex, one that didn't sicken him at just its smell.

One of the fish blood beasts lowered its long fins and Whisker jumped out of it, holding a storage bag.

Alex looked inside and found about 9 different beast cores in there. Not a bad harvest at all.

"You did well," he said as he recalled all the blood beasts into the Blood god's manual. "I don't think you will have to work anymore. I plan on returning now that I've broken through."

Whisker had died twice already in the time he was here. Each time he died, Alex had to leave and control the blood beasts and maybe even aid them in battle.

However, it had been over 200 days since he had last died, so Alex decided to not take his chances with Whisker.

Alex quickly checked Whisker's cultivation base. Due to his lack of time to practice the Undying Physique, he had shown no improvement at all.

While that only meant that the out-of-reach 3rd stage of his Undying body was still out of reach for him, in Whisker's case, it meant that he wasn't cultivating much.

He was reaching closer and closer to the True King realm, but between focusing on the pills and cultivation, and sending Whisker to go hunt with his Blood beasts, Whisker's cultivation base hadn't improved as quickly as it should have.

'I have time,' he made an excuse for himself for his lack of effort. But then again, his effort was focused on himself, the non-immortal that would die if killed, unlike Whisker.

Being free to train as he wanted to and make pills as he wanted to was fun, but now he had to return.

Right after absorbing all of the blood in front of him.

Alex quickly returned to the main continent from the islands he was on, but instead of making his way to the Sunborn Sanctuary directly, he first made his way to the secret realm that was actually a 'secret' realm.

He tore a hole in space and walked in to find the phoenix sleeping peacefully in the sun.

She opened his eyes at his arrival and like a pet who was happy to see its owner after a long day, jumped at him, obviously looking for treats.

"Did you already finish the pills I made you?" Alex asked with a very surprised look on his face.

"No, but I'm down to my last two," Scarlet said.

Alex sighed but said nothing. He bought out two pill bottles and handed them to her. "Cultivating and breaking through very quickly didn't work out as intended for a lot of us, resulting in a very bad cultivation base and a high chance of going through Qi deviation. I hope you've thought about that," he said.

"Yes, yes," Scarlet said as she took the pills. "No need to worry about that."

She opened the bottle and looked at the pills inside with a bright smile on her face. However, just then it stopped for a second as she focused on something.

Then, she gasped.

"There are 6 veins on these pills," she said.

"Of course," Alex said. "I reached that level months ago."

"How many months?" she asked.

Alex thought for a bit and replied. "It was about a month after I visited you to give you the pill last time," he said.

"What?! You could've waited and I would've received these amazing pills then?" she asked.

Alex simply shrugged. "I would've been late if I had waited that long you know," he said. "After I was capable of that, I made my spiritual root-improving pills and ate them. Then, I went on a training spree for an entire month. I don't think you could've waited that long."

"N-no," she said with a slightly sad face. "Well, whatever. It's here now, so I can use it."

Alex chuckled at her cheerful expression. However, while he could laugh at that, what he could not laugh at was her cultivation base.

'Dear god, she's already so much stronger than me,' he thought. If Alex hadn't missed a shipment of pills while he was holed up in the Sunborn Sanctuary, she would've most likely been stronger even.

Either way, Saint Core's 6th realm made her way too strong. He would have trouble fighting her normally at that level. His Dao would barely give him an edge in a fight against her, and if he wanted to defeat her easily, he would have to rely on his blood aura.

'It's a good thing I'm an ally,' he thought as he sat down beside her to talk before leaving back to the Sunborn Sanctuary.

Chapter 1094: Scolding

Alex returned back to the Sunborn Sanctuary through the teleportation formations. He still had his other face, one that no one recognized, but his aura wasn't something that he could change.

So, the moment he was back in the city, the elders were immediately alerted to his presence. Before he could even walk out of the formation, several spiritual senses landed on him, some of them furiously asking him to return to the palace.

Alex sighed. What else could he do but agree with these people? After all, they were the ones that were trying to keep him safe.

He returned back to the palace, of course concealing himself as well as he could, and was confronted with all 10 of the council members.

"Uh... greetings, seniors," he said as he ate a pill that stripped away his made-up face.

"Is that all you have to say?" Liang Shufen asked with a frown on her face. She did not look as pretty when she was frowning.

"Umm... I'm sorry for leaving so suddenly?" Alex questioned if that was what they wanted to hear.

"Where have you been all this time?" Gong Liuxian asked.

"Somewhere without any humans," Alex said. "I made sure to not be seen by anyone, so I went to one of the islands off the coast of the continent."

"You went into the ocean?" one of them suddenly shouted. "Why not just give yourself to the assassins if you are so willing to die?"

Alex did not know what to say. They weren't wrong about the danger of that place, but they weren't aware of his power either. Hell, they probably didn't even know that he could fight people an entire minor realm above his own.

He wanted it to stay that way, so he didn't bother explaining.

"I have ways of staying safe, senior," he replied.

That did nothing to quench their rage at all. He was given an earful by each and every one of the elders on why what he did had been so stupid.

Alex knew that too, but he had his reasons to leave, so he didn't feel bad afterward. Besides, he was kind enough to leave a note before he left, which reduced his feeling of guilt by a lot.

"Do you plan on escaping anymore?" Yao Ning asked.

Against this old woman, the oldest of everyone here, Alex couldn't help but feel like a child. Even though he was his own independent man, somehow being asked such a thing by someone that was thousands of years old made him feel like he was talking to his own mother.

That made him feel like he was still under her care. While most would feel angry at being treated like a child, Alex felt a warmth in his heart.

He gave a wide smile and said, "unless it is absolutely necessary, I don't plan on doing anything reckless anytime soon," he said.

"Good," the old woman said. "Now, come on in. You must have been on a long journey. You look tired."

Alex nodded and entered the palace.

"By the way, what are you all doing out here? I would've assumed that you would be cultivating. Surely you didn't divine that I would be arriving here today, did you?" he asked.

"Why are we all not cultivating? Why do you think?" one of them asked in an annoyed tone.

Alex thought for a bit. "Wait, did you guys run out of pills?" he asked.

"Of course we did," another one said. "You didn't make that many once you started working on that water-improving pill, and once you finished it, you ran away."

"Oh... right," Alex said as he finally remembered. The days from when he had made so many of those pills were mixed together, so he didn't realize it had been earlier on that he had made those pills for them.

"Right, how were those water pills?" he asked. "Senior Lei, you should be the one that was the most excited about it, right?"

"Ahem, I would say sister Liang here was more excited than me," the old man said. "But that is not to say I wasn't very excited either. Our spiritual roots have improved a significant amount, so you have our thanks for that."

Alex nodded. He knew about the improvement they spoke of. Oh, he knew it way better than they did.

Wood and Water were Alex's worst spiritual roots, so when he ate the 6 veined pills, his Water spiritual root suddenly jumped up in quality, going from inferior to superior in a matter of minutes.

It had easily surpassed his Earth spiritual root, placing itself quite high, but still below his Fire spiritual root, which itself was below Yin, which was below the supreme roots of Yang and Metal.

Of course, once he ate the Earth pill, his Earth Spiritual root had become better than his water one. That was to be expected.

He ate multiple of those pills, but more than one wasn't necessary.

"Why don't you seniors give me 3 days? I will make those cultivation pills for you all and you can go back to cultivating," he said.

The group didn't argue and simply nodded. As much as they wanted to punish him for leaving, they couldn't argue that they needed his pills.

"Fine, you get off the hook this time around," one of them said. "But if you leave us again, expect us to remain friendly. We will imprison you if that's what it takes to keep you safe."

Alex chuckled a bit and thanked them before going back to the room that he couldn't help but find familiar.

He rested a bit and immediately got to work on those pills.

Making those pills didn't take very long. With 4 pills in a single cauldron, the only thing that took him too long was to improve the ingredients of those pills.

He could have used his World Defying mushrooms for them to add to the lack of energy, but he wanted to keep it for a time when he needed the energy immediately.

He finished making the pills not long after and handed them off to the elders.

Everyone was excited to get a new set of pills, so they thanked him and handed him two talismans.

"What are these?" Alex asked as he looked into the storage bags. The first one was full of spirit stones, which confused him slightly.

"That one contains the money you made from selling the water pill. You left too early to get your money back," Qiu Jianhong explained. "As for the other one, that is what was sent for you while you were gone. To keep up the appearance of you being here, we took it all without question."

Alex nodded and looked into the second bag. It was all full of talismans from the Insight pavilion. It seemed that they were still sending those talismans for him.

Although, it did look like there were quite a bit less. Did he need to repay the Insight pavilion? He was sure he bought a 2-year package after he had made those earth pills. But that was definitely over 2 years ago.

'I must go renew that. No wonder I didn't get as much,' he thought. His eyes fell on something in the storage bag that wasn't a talisman at all.

'What's that?' he wondered and pulled it out. The moment it was out of the storage bag, his body grew tense. He looked at what was inside and that made him even tenser.

He involuntarily moved away from it and that caught the elders' attention.

"What is it?" they asked.

"Poison... maybe?" Alex said with some hesitation.

The others immediately got serious as well.

"Are you sure?" they asked, ready to destroy it. But Alex suddenly shook his head. He let go of the momentary fear that took over him and pulled the package back towards him.

It was the same type of box as the one he had received from Jade Assassin, the one that had poison in it. So, he had assumed that this one might have poison in it as well.

But the Jade-Faced assassin was dead, so this was most likely not it.

'What if it's an explosive,' Alex thought. He knew one of the remaining 5 assassins was an old man that liked using explosives.

"I'll take this outside in case it is something dangerous," Alex said and flew out of the palace into the sky.

He floated away from the box as he used his Qi to open it. When the box opened, nothing happened at all. Except, a single piece of talisman that was slightly wrapped in a thread flew out of it.

Alex checked the box with his spiritual sense and then burned it just in case. Then, he took the talisman and unwrapped it as he flew down to the elders.

"How did you get this box?" he asked as the talisman was unraveled.

"It was sent to you by your association leader," one of them said. "We saw that it was a one-use talisman inside, so we didn't check it.

Alex nodded and took the talisman to his forehead as he looked into it to see what was written.

However, this was not a text talisman. This was one that could record stuff, and it had a recording.

A big, buff man sat on a chair inside a dark room. His face was rough and old, and he didn't seem to be in the best of mood, but that face was all that was needed to shake Alex to his core.

The elders saw Alex's face drain in color as he softly muttered a word.

"Father?"

Chapter 1095: Reason to Go

"My name is Graham," the man in the recording started speaking. "I'm surprised you people actually care about my name. None of you bothered asking me that before."

The room Graham was in was dark and with barely any furniture. The only thing there was the chair Graham was sitting in and that alone told Alex nothing of where his father was or what he was doing.

"Why do you two keep speaking in my head?" Graham asked. "It's annoying, just use your words."

Alex couldn't hear anything other than his father, so he realized that the ones that were recording the scene were cultivators that had spiritual sense. In all likelihood, they were people in the Saint realm.

Alex started getting excited and Happy. Finally, he found his father. Those years of investigations had paid off. Someone had finally found—

'Wait,' he thought. There was something wrong here. The box that this information had come with had been way too similar to the one sent to him by an assassin before.

An assassin who knew about his father.

There was a conspiracy going on in here that Alex wanted to find out more about it.

"This is a farce. Why the hell would I tell you my wife's name?" his father suddenly got angry. "You bastards deserve nothing from me."

'He's angry,' Alex realized. 'He's not in a good situation. Where is he?'

Just then, Alex saw his father's eyes go wide. "How do you know my son's name?" Graham spoke in the recording. "Bastards! What have you done with my son?"

His father jumped towards the people recording, but he saw a hand suddenly move from the right and force his father down with their Qi.

Alex felt a pang of anger when he saw that. They were treating his father like a prisoner. No worse, they were treating his father like a slave.

His father must have heard something in the recording that made him stop struggling. "I can meet my son?" he asked. "When? Where? How?"

He waited for an answer and frowned. "What the hell is the Sundering Sanctum?" he asked.

"Yes, I will go there. If I can meet my son, I will go to this damned Sanctum all you like," his father spoke.

A very distorted, hoarse voice finally spoke in the end. "If you want to meet your father, he will be entering the Sanctum too. You can meet him there."

The recording ended after that, not a single word more. Suddenly, the talisman burst into fire in his hand, but Alex wasn't in the headspace to care about a little burn in his hand.

His mind was going crazy trying to understand everything that was happening.

"Are you okay, young man? Your hand is burning," one of the elders said as they came to put out the fire. However, when they saw the clean hand that wasn't hurt in the slightest, they were slightly surprised.

It didn't look like he was protecting himself, so his skin not being burned was certainly not an everyday scene for them.

"What's wrong? You look worried," the old woman Yao Ning said.

"I— I am," Alex said, his voice quivering a little. He was finding it hard to keep himself from shaking, both in anger and fear.

"What did that talisman say?" another one of them asked.

"It was a recording," Alex said. "Of my father."

"Your father? Someone found him?" the elders asked.

Alex shook his head. "I don't think he was found," he said. "He looked fine physically, but the anger he had... my father doesn't get angry so easily, so he must hate them very much to get angry like the way he did in the recording. I think he's being kept somewhere, against his will."

"Whether that's to extort me of my recipes, or to use against me, I don't know," Alex said. "But one thing is certain, whoever it is that knows about my father, they want me to go to the Sundering Sanctum."

"What? You can't go there. That's a dangerous place where we can't keep you safe," one of them said.

"Yeah, if you go there, you will be away from us for months," another one said. "That is too long a time period to keep you away from us."

"You guys can't enter the Sundering Sanctum?" Alex asked with a surprised look. "Is there a sort of restriction or did you make an oath?"

"It's just too dangerous," one of them said. "Even us 10 are not entirely safe in there because of the uniqueness of that place."

Alex nodded. "But I must go either way," he said. "This is my one chance to find my father. They mentioned he was going to be there, but I highly doubt it. They will instead send the assassins after me, I'm sure of that. I will get my answer from those assassins if no one else."

He looked at the elders and saw that they were about to argue against him again, trying to keep him from going, especially since the chance of his father being there was none anyway.

"Seniors, I know you are looking out for me, and I appreciate that. However, this is my father we are talking about. The only reason I have not bothered finding a way out of this continent is that I had yet to find my father. So, if you think you can keep me from going after this one thread I've found in years, you underestimate my motivation."

The 10 old men and women looked at each other, not knowing what to say. They couldn't understand the urgency and importance of the task the same way as Alex felt it, but they could respect it.

"Fine, but you will have to be very careful," one of them said.

Alex nodded. "I know," he said. "I'm not looking to die just yet. I have too many things that depend on me to just go and die."

"Alright, let's plan what you can do then."

The 11 of them went back into the palace and started talking. At the same time, they sent a message to the association leader back in the City of Many Flowers to ask where he acquired the package from.

When the reply came, Alex couldn't help but sigh. The leader had absolutely no idea what they were talking about.

'It's definitely the assassins then,' he thought.

He continued talking with the elders who told him more about the Sanctum so he could prepare.

Alex learned about the Sanctum's history and how it was a normal secret realm with a massive towering Sanctum in the center of the secret realm.

However, as time passed, the secret realm began shrinking and after a while, the Sanctum was all that remained.

Now, even that was showing signs of coming out.

He returned back to his room after the conversation.

"Someone must have not properly set up the space-stabilizing formation," Godslayer spoke suddenly as soon they were back in his room.

"You're up?" Alex asked with a hint of surprise in his voice. He was awake most of the time these days but chose to go back to sleep as there was nothing else to do for him. "What do you mean by space stabilizing formation?"

"That's what you need to keep a spatial pocket from collapsing if it is not originally a very stable one," Godslayer said.

"So someone set up the formation badly? You can tell that just from the little information?" Alex asked.

"Yes," Godslayer said. "Unless something external is interfering with the spatial pocket, which is impossible to happen in this realms of mortal, there will only ever be two reasons why a spatial pocket will collapse."

"First, someone set up the Space stabilizing formation badly," Godslayer said. "Second, someone didn't set it up at all."

"In the case of the second one, if there was no such formation, the space, once started, would crumble to become nothing in a matter of hours. However, since it's crumbling but very slowly, it is absolutely because the Space stabilizing formation is not performing as well as it should," Godslayer said.

"So, it's keeping the space inside from crumbling as much as it can, but its not working as well. Is that it?" Alex asked.

"Yes," Godslayer said. "You will have to be careful when you go on such journeys. If the space is crumbling, it's certain to leave cracks even on the space that hasn't already crumbled yet. Those cracks can be very sharp and tear you to pieces before you even know it."

Alex nodded. He knew how sharp space could be. He was not going to mess with it.

"However, with your Dao, I don't think you will have to worry much about the space cracks," Godslayer said. "However, if there are cracks and crumbling space, that means there are likely void gates that have formed in there too. You will have to be extremely careful not to fall into those."

"Void gates?" Alex was surprised and confused. "What's that?"

"Void gates, it's what the name suggests," Godslayer said. "It's a gate that leads to the void."

"What's... a void?" Alex asked curiously.

"It's a dimension outside of our own reality, one that is very hard to reach," Godslayer said. "But if there are cracks in space there, it's likely there will be gates opening to them."

"Dimension that can only be reached from a cracked space?" Alex's eyes went wide when he realized what he was referring to. "That thing from back in the Ancient Battlefield?"

"You've seen the void?" Godslayer's voice held some shock in it as he spoke.

"I think so," Alex said. "I have looked into a world of silver and purple past a crack in space, that left me with a deep sense of dread."

"Yup," Godslayer said. "That's the void alright."

Chapter 1096: Journey to the Sanctum

Alex visited Zhu Shaofan, who happened to be preparing to leave for the Sanctum as well. He asked if he found any more information on the Dark Phoenix assassins, but Zhu Shaofan couldn't help him at all.

The assassins had become silent for the last two and a half years, so there was nothing more to add to what was already given to him.

"You're going to the Sanctum too?" Lei Zhong who was with Alex at the moment asked.

"Yes, brother Lei," the man said.

"Why are you going?" Lei Zhong asked with a curious face.

"It's been a while since I've been there, and I wanted to go check it out. Also, I have a few employees that need teaching on how to gather accurate and unbiased information. I believe the Sanctum will be a great opportunity for that."

"That does sound like a good place to teach your employees," Lei Zhong said.

"Yes, with all the Saints and all that, they will also learn to recognize the faces of the important figures, helping us gather better information in general. Speaking of which, are you going to the sanctum as well, young man? Almost everyone your age will be going to prove themselves."

"I—" Alex hesitated for a bit.

"Oh, right. Of course," the man interrupted him. "My apologies, I was so excited that I momentarily forgot about your condition. It would've been great to see your alchemy skills being used in the

"Well, lucky for you he is going too," Lei Zhong said.

"Oh, really?" Zhu Shaofan asked excitedly. "That's great news, but aren't you worried about the Dark Phoenixes?"

"It's unavoidable," Lei Zhong said.

"Is that so?" the owner of the Insight pavilion didn't ask anymore. "Oh, when do you plan on leaving? We can leave together."

"Tomorrow morning," Alex said. "I want to have to stay outside as little as possible."

"Hmm, I was planning to leave right now... but I guess I can wait," he said. "Let's leave together tomorrow."

"Oh, that's an excellent idea!" Lei Zhong said suddenly. "We've been wondering how to help him stay out of the spotlight. Why don't you take him in our stead?"

"Is that a good idea? Most people don't know about me, so they will flock to him even more than they would if any of you are there to ward him off," he said.

"No, he will be changing his face, so they won't really notice him," Lei Zhong said. "That way, he will be safer with you than with us. Besides, it's better if we don't leave at all. It's better to give the illusion that he is still in the sanctuary."

"That's... actually not a bad idea, brother Lei," he said. "Alright, young man. I will come by to pick you up tomorrow morning. Be ready to leave."

"Understood, senior," Alex said.

He returned back to the palace and prepared for tomorrow. He made a few pills for himself that could come in handy. The elders gave him a bunch of treasures to use just in case, which he kept as well.

Then he brought out a 6 veined pill. "It's going to probably take months, so I should use these pills," he thought and ate the first one.

As soon as he ate it, his facial structures started shifting and his hair changed to a different color. His skin color became even fairer than it already was and his purple eyes changed to brown with a hint of green.

His Qi was of course still the same, but that was the least of his worries.

After checking everything, he started cultivating for the night and when the time came in the morning, he left.

The 10 council members didn't leave with him, there was no need to. After all, he was with the 11th almost-member of the council. They would be surprised if there was anyone out there stronger than Zhu Shaofan in the continent, not counting themselves.

Alex and Zhu Shaofan teleported to a city called Blooming city that was to the east of them. The teleportation formations from the sanctuary weren't connected to the Sundering city, so they had to come here first.

"Are we not teleporting directly from here?" Alex asked when Zhu Shaofan started walking out of the circle.

"Oh, we are, but I need to pick up a few of the employees here. I am in charge of them this time around," Zhu Shaofan said.

Alex shrugged and walked out with Zhu Shaofan before going to the Insight pavilion. There, he found a group of people, 12 in total, standing around.

"Senior, you're finally here," one of them spoke.

Alex saw the one that spoke, a girl with... large proportion. 'They can get that big?' he thought with a hint of surprise that he was unable to hide from his face.

The girl wore a simple pink robe, one that did not belong to the pavilion at all. The other 11 behind her did, and all of them seemed to be in the True realm.

The girl, however, was a Saint. And not just any Saint, but a Saint Core realm cultivator. That certainly surprised Alex a lot.

'But she's so young,' he thought.

"Xue'er, sorry to keep you guys waiting," Zhu Shaofan spoke to the girl. "Someone delayed me from coming yesterday." He gestured towards Alex.

"Oh, hello," the girl saw Alex and quickly greeted him. Her deep black hair fell forward as she bowed a little.

"This is Xue'er," Zhu Shaofan explained. "She's one of my earliest clerks, but now she's moved through the ranks in my organization and is one of the people that handle it all."

Alex gave a nod of understanding.

"Xue'er, this is—"

"Yu Ming," Alex said as he bowed in greeting. "Nice to meet you, sister Xue."

"It is my pleasure to meet you, brother Yu," the girl replied quickly. She was starting to get slightly pink in the face from what Alex could see.

'Is she... blushing?' Alex thought with a surprised look.

"You chose too handsome of a face," Zhu Shaofan nudged him a little.

Alex was very confused. 'What the hell is happening here?' he thought. Had he really chosen a very good-looking face? Certainly not. He wasn't getting the same reaction from the other girls behind this one.

"Hehe, I'm messing with you," Zhu Shaofan said as he pat him on the back with a bit of strength. "Xue'er is just very shy around men, especially ones her own age and new to her. She will stop being so shy after you spend some time with her."

"Shouldn't we be leaving, senior?" Alex asked.

"Oh right," he looked back at the 11 and asked, "is this all?"

"Yes," the girl said. "We should go quickly. Everyone else has already arrived in the Sundering City and is asking where you are."

"Okay, let's leave," Zhu Shaofan said and started walking. The girl passed by Alex and nodded slightly as she continued walking.

The other 11 followed but didn't dare make any sound at all. With 3 Saints in front of them, they didn't want to disturb them at all.

After a few minutes, they were all gone from that place and arrived in the teleportation building in the Sundering City.

Alex knew where this was as he had taken a thorough tour of this place back when he had come here more than a year ago.

He walked out into a shadowy land that still lived without much light. He turned to look at the behemoth of a spire that towered over the land, still casting the first shadow.

"They must have all already gathered," Zhu Shaofan said. "The sanctum must be opening any minute now."

That had been Alex's plan to stay out here as little as needed. He looked around the city, trying to look for something, anything that could give him some hints.

He was here to learn about his father, so he wanted something out of this visit.

They made their way through the shadowy land until they arrived at the gardens with thousands of other people, all of which were mostly in the Saint realm.

Alex was very shocked to see that. This was a bigger number than the ones that gathered for the Dao mountain's opening back in the Northern Continent.

Obviously, not everyone went to Dao mountain, but that did not make the shock of seeing nearly 5 thousand Saints all in one place any lesser. And all of them were going to enter the Sanctuary?

'No,' Alex thought. He was told this before. A lot of these here are elders or seniors of people that actually want to enter. They were here just to look after that person.

'Still, half of them are going to enter,' he thought. That was still a massive number.

He felt Zhu Shaofan's spiritual sense emerge and search around. He was so strong that he could do so without offending anyone.

"Ah, there they are. Come on guys," he said as he walked towards the other group of people from the Insight pavilion.

Alex saw nearly a hundred different people, all led by multiple saints. The saints greeted Zhu Shaofan the moment he arrived and made way for him to go towards the center so he could hide from everyone.

Alex looked around at the many people and paused for a second when he saw a familiar face.

'What was her name?' he thought. 'Yusong Muzhou? Does she work here too?'

It was the dark-skinned, body cultivator woman he had fought back against in the Battle hall that he believed had come from the Wastelands. She seemed to be entering the Sanctum as well.

'I see,' he thought. 'I'm going to see some familiar faces here, aren't I?'

Chapter 1097: The Sanctum Calls

As Alex looked around the shadowed land at various different people that were there, Zhu Shaofan started handing out envelopes to a few of the saints that were there.

"The Sanctum will open at any moment now, so we don't have much time. Go and memorize who you will be keeping an eye on," he said.

The few saints nodded and left, vanishing into the crowd of other saints.

"What's that?" Alex asked.

"Hmm? It's a list of people for them to gather information on," Zhu Shaofan said. "Sure they will be going in to prove themselves, but that doesn't mean we can't gather a few bits of information when we have the chance."

"You're gathering information about these saints?" Alex asked with a look of surprise. He hadn't expected them to be this forthright with gathering information.

"Of course, I'm in the business of selling information, so I must keep a stock of new ones for the people that want it," he said. "For example, they say that the Yao family's youngster, Yao Bujiang has managed to learn a rather unique Dao, but no one can confidently tell what it is. They will help me bring back those sorts of information."

"I see," Alex said. "Have you gathered my information too?"

"Of course," the man said. "But don't worry, I won't release it until all of this fiasco is over."

"I appreciate that," Alex said blankly and continued looking around the crowd.

He was absolutely certain that his father wasn't here... but a human heart was a fickle thing. It couldn't help but hope even when the chances were zero.

He hoped at least, if not his father, then he would find something else. Something that could help him lead to some answer.

Unfortunately, he couldn't go out to look on his own. He didn't want people to even notice him here. Who knew where the assassins could be hiding?

The people that had gone out returned and Xue'er affirmed that they had all memorized it.

Zhu Shaofan gave a big smile. "Alright, it should be opening any minute now," he said as he looked towards the massive spire that looked like it was right in front of them, but was rather far away.

"You all, start moving closer. When you feel an aura pulling you in, accept it. It will be looking for your approval to bring you in," he said.

"Understood, senior," everyone said and walked towards the Spire. It wasn't just them, but everyone who was going to join was doing so.

Alex slowly began walking as well. He saw the many saints that went closer to the spire and even a few True realm cultivators.

Alex knew there would be True realm cultivators that wanted to try it out as well. After all, not everything in the sanctum came down to one's might. There was a chance for a self-tempering realm cultivator to be the one to succeed in the sanctum.

Of course, that chance was almost non-existent. Not just them, even True realm cultivators would have a very, very low chance.

Still, some of these people wanted to try it out, mostly the True realm ones. That was why the 10 council elders had made a rule to limit people to those under 200 years old if they are not in the Saint realm yet.

It would give the people that wanted to go in a chance, but the majority would still need to stay out.

That said, 'Some' True realm cultivators still came to be thousands of them easily. It seemed they were staying away from the Saints beforehand, but now that the time was approaching, they went in.

Alex looked around at the crowd, trying to look for his father, one of the assassins, or the other thing he was searching for.

He kept an eye on the crowd while wondering what he was going to do inside the sanctum itself.

The sanctum was a sort of competition set between thousands of competitors. It was a large tower, separated into so many floors that no one had an idea of how many there were, just that there were most likely multiple rooms on the same floor.

Each one of the rooms had people perform something in it. Most of the tasks were unique to the rooms, but it was possible they repeated as well.

You followed the rules of each of the tasks and competed to complete them. Only a select group of those who completed the tasks could advance to the next floor.

If you failed, you went back all the way to the first floor and started all over again.

The elders had said that there were multiple ways to go through the floors, as there were multiple pathways. As they had suspected, each floor held multiple rooms, so one didn't have to go through the same pathway if they didn't want to.

It was said that in the past the first person to reach a new floor in the current iteration of the competition earned a treasure. However, after the space inside had started crumbling, no one got anything.

Now, the only way to prove yourself was to reach the topmost floor and be the one to activate the device that teleported everyone out. Once that happened, the sanctum would go into a hibernation of sorts and it would be years before it was ready to be open again.

It was said that the last time the Sanctum had opened, it was completed by someone from the Jade Fire sect, and it had taken them exactly 8 months and 12 days.

So, Alex understood that this was likely going to take a lot out of his time out here. However, if that meant he could find his father, he was willing to do anything.

Alex suddenly felt a fluctuation of space and turned toward the massive spire. 'It's happening,' he thought.

It was only a few seconds later that the other people, even the strong ones like Zhu Shaofan or the family heads and sect leaders of the various top families and sects of the southern continent sensed it.

Alex felt the pulse of energy touch him and it seemed to be asking if he wanted to come in.

He looked around and saw people disappear one after another. Everyone had been waiting for this, so they entered without hesitation.

As the people disappeared, the surrounding crowd got thinner and thinner. 'I should go in too,' he thought and was about to turn around when he noticed something.

His eyes widened, his vision zooming as far as he could. He looked at a man to his left that was walking away from the spire. More accurately, he looked at a ring on his finger. A golden ring with a gem on it that had spirals carved around it.

Alex had seen that ring before, and it had been very recent as well.

In the recording of his father that had been sent to him, there was a moment where his father got up in anger and a hand appeared to force him back down. Alex hadn't noticed it before, but upon replaying what he had seen in his head, he had noticed a ring on the hand that had emerged in the recording.

This was the same ring.

He had been looking for it ever since he had arrived here, and he had found it.

'That's the bastard that knows about my father,' Alex thought and turned around to go after the man who was flying away.

He too was going to fly away when a person walked right up to him and smiled.

Alex stood stunned when he saw the man that was smiling at him. It was his father. Before he could say anything, the man spoke up, "Where are you going, son? Aren't you going to come in with me?"

Alex was way too flabbergasted to make sense of anything. His father was actually here? Was this real?

He never expected his father to be here, and for him to... Alex paused. His father had a cultivation base in the Saint Core realm.

That was definitely not correct based on the recording he had seen. "Who are you?" Alex asked angrily.

The man just smiled and suddenly disappeared from in front of him. He had gone into the sanctum.

Alex turned to follow him, but then remembered the man with the ring. He turned towards the man who would likely give him more information, but to his bad luck, he had already flown away somewhere.

"Fuck!" Alex shouted out in anger, earning a few glances from the people around him. He looked into the sky, trying to find the man that was there, but there were too many people for him to see anything at all.

"Dammit!" he shouted and turned around towards the sanctum.

The man had flown away, but Alex had seen him. He had seen his face. He could find him later. For now, he needed to find his father's imposter that had just entered the Sanctum.

He had seen his father enough to impersonate him, so that meant he definitely had an idea about him. He could force the answer out of that person.

Alex felt the pulsing spatial energy around him that waited for his intent. He gave it the answer it desired. Then, he was sucked away by the Sanctum like everyone else around him.

Alex found himself in a massive room with many, many people, so he immediately spread his spiritual sense to find his father. But of course, there was a problem.

Spiritual sense didn't work on the first floor.

Chapter 1098: The First Floor

Alex looked around at the thousands of people in the same room as the one he was in.

This was the first floor, the lowest floor in the sanctum, the floor where one couldn't use their spiritual sense at all.

He tried searching for his father's imposter, but he couldn't find someone like that with just his vision where there were so many others here that he could use to hide behind.

'He knew me,' Alex thought. 'How did he know me?'

Alex had gone out of his way to hide by changing his face, however that didn't seem to work at all. His father's imposter had seen right through him.

'The only ones who know about my current face are the 10 elders and Zhu Shaofan. Was it one of them?' he thought.

He looked around once more, searching for people who were looking at him. It didn't look like anyone was looking at him at all.

He quickly reached into his storage ring and pulled out another two pills. One of them got rid of his current face, and the second one gave him a new face.

Since his face had been found, his best course of action right now was to change it and continue moving. The imposter most likely had already moved away from this place after all.

Alex quickly ate the two pills and appeared with a new face that was very plain looking. No one would even pay attention to him with such a face.

Once he was changed, he looked around, wondering what he was supposed to be doing next.

The large stone room was high and wide. The entire room was glowing softly from all around them, giving a somewhat natural light to the place.

The nearly 200-meter-wide circular room had 5 massive open doors that had a curtain of blue light blocking one from seeing what was beyond that point.

Alex looked at the top of each gate and was slightly surprised.

He was told that the various floors had multiple pathways out, each of which was represented by a symbol at the top of the doors that one had to remember to know which one they had entered and which one they hadn't.

Alex had been expecting to see the same symbols on top of these gates, but what he saw instead were numbers. One through Five were all on top of the gates, but not a single person there seemed to have realized that.

After all, the words on the gate were written in Human language.

Since this was previously a demon world, Human language was foreign, and the many people that entered here beforehand would only consider these things symbols.

Of course, to a Saint realm cultivator, having something be Symbols instead of numbers didn't make it any harder. With this memory, they were able to remember everything in detail.

However, this did tell Alex one thing.

This sanctum was created by a Human, probably the first group of settlers that were brought here along with the four Heavenly beasts.

Alex didn't spend any more time on that thought though. It was a matter of the past, and he needed to focus on the present.

Since he didn't know which room was which, he went for the one that was numbered 1.

He looked around the room one more time for his father's imposter and after not finding him, he entered the room.

As soon as he entered, he heard a jumbled mess of sounds coming at him from every direction. The people in the room moved around, used techniques, and made so much noise that Alex found it hard to focus on anything.

He looked at the people running all around the room trying to catch something that was flying around the room.

His vision slowed down and he noticed that there were multiple small balls of light that flew very unpredictably. As he followed one of them, his vision was led to the floating words in the air that he had missed due to the mess of a room this was.

Capture the Light.

'Oh, is that how we go through this floor?' Alex thought. He looked around to see the ball of lights float around once again.

He reached out his hand to grab it, but as he got closer, the small ball of light floated away from him, as if it were repelled by his hand.

He tried again, and once again the ball floated far from him.

Alex frowned slightly. The ball of light wasn't very fast and one could easily grab it as long as they were in the Saint realm. However, its ability to push itself off of someone made it hard for anyone here to grab it.

People were running around, but the closer they got, the further the ball would push itself out of their way.

Alex even saw people using techniques to try and keep the ball of light stationary, but that didn't work at all.

Alex used his own Qi to test and his result was the same. He quickly ran after the balls of light like everyone else and had to stop after half a minute as it didn't work at all.

It was like he was trying to fish for an eggshell that had fallen into his cracked egg. The light constantly moved away from him no matter how fast he got close to it.

"What the hell am I supposed to do?" Alex wanted to shout out in frustration and was even going to. However, no voice came out from him. He was surprised and wanted to see what was happening to him, but of course, his spiritual sense still wasn't working at all.

There was something missing with his vocal cords and Alex wanted to force through it to be able to speak.

But before even doing so, the fact that he couldn't speak confused him. He had heard plenty of people speaking outside, so it was only this room where people couldn't speak at all.

'Does speaking makes this easier somehow?' he wondered.

Not everyone in the room was failing of course. Bit by bit, people were leaving the room. Alex didn't know how they managed to grab the light, but at least he knew it was possible.

'They don't want us to sense something, that much is understandable. But they don't want us to talk too?' Alex thought. 'Do they not want to let us communicate with each other?'

As he thought that, a few more people were leaving. Surprisingly, he managed to see one of the people that was leaving.

Alex saw him reach out his hand and grabbed the light very easily. He was surprised and then his eyes narrowed.

'There has to be a trick to this,' Alex thought. 'Are they using some technique?'

He didn't have his spiritual sense to see that, but he did have something else that could help him. His Demon eyes.

He activated his eyes with a little hesitant look on his face. With so many hundreds of people, with so many different techniques, the room was most likely going to be filled to the brim with colors that were going to overwhelm him slightly.

Still, he used it, and... the room was surprisingly mostly filled with a milky white color, a representation of the neutral energy.

He was surprised at how much of it there was. He could see the ball of lights as slightly larger white-colored orbs that flew within the milky white energy.

When someone tried to reach for it, Alex saw the white fog come into contact with the color that was being released by the person's body and was not mixing together at all.

The white aura rejected any other elemental aura and since the ball of light always stayed in the white aura, it never came into contact with anything at all.

'I see,' he thought as he looked at himself. Yellow, Gold, Black, Red, Blue, and Brown auras floated out of him constantly. He couldn't help it since his Qi constantly passed through all of his spiritual roots, these aura were constantly created.

'So if I can get rid of them...' he thought as he employed his Immortal Concealment technique. The technique didn't get rid of his aura, but it did hide it all inside of his body, containing them from leaking.

As he did, he lost the colors that were coming out of him and the white fog slowly floated toward him. Within them were a few of the ball of lights that came in as well.

Alex reached out and easily grabbed the light. The moment he did so, he was teleported away.

Before he could realize it, he was on a floor that looked eerily similar to the first floor. Except, on this one, his spiritual sense naturally flowed out of him.

He could use it.

He carefully spread his senses around the room so as not to bring anyone's attention toward him. He searched for the imposter, but he couldn't find the man at all.

He walked towards one of the open spaces and sat down on the stone floor. He decided not to leave this place at all.

After all, anyone on the first floor was going to have to go through this room to go to the next one, so he wanted to intercept the man there.

As long as he got the man, he didn't need to bother going through this entire sanctum and could just wait for someone to send him out.

Chapter 1099: Second Floor

Alex waited for a long time before he came to accept the fact that the man wasn't going to come around at all.

It had been at least an entire day, so it was obvious at its point.

There were a few possibilities. One was that the man had already entered one of the rooms before Alex had even come here. Another one was that the man was still back on his floor, waiting to find a way to come up to this floor.

But it was most likely that the third possibility was the most likely. The man had already changed his face back to his normal one and thus it would be impossible for Alex to find him.

"They only wanted to draw me in here," he thought. "I doubt they want to continue using my father's face since it would make them an obvious target for me. Especially since they know I can change my face."

In the end, there was nothing Alex could do right now. He couldn't find the man, so he needed to continue with the floors.

Since his father wasn't here, maybe it was better if he went up the floors quickly and left Sanctum. He had another lead, after all, one that was likely better than these assassins.

Alex looked around and decided to go into the room marked with the number 1.

He walked up to the bluish barrier on the door and passed through it. When he came out of the other side, he was greeted by a crowd of people who were... doing nothing?

He wondered why and he was immediately awarded the answer.

In front of the group of people, there were massive spider webs, or at least they looked like spider webs. Instead, they were silver cracks that had formed on reality itself. Like a broken mirror, the crack made it impossible to see the image behind it clearly.

Alex saw the fractured space and frowned.

The elders had told him that when he saw the crumbling space of the sanctum, he would've known it immediately. He didn't expect the crumbling space to look so... terrifying.

It wasn't just him. Every single saint that was here for the first time was transfixed by the shattering space. The ones that had been here before simply grumbled.

"Dammit, I will have to start all over again!" they spoke in frustration and left through the gate.

Alex watched them leave with a weird look on his face. He had to leave the same way too now that it turned out this room was unusable.

However, doing so would not send him back to where he had just come from. Instead, backing out of a room you had entered sent you back to the first floor, where you had to go through everything all over again.

It wasn't a simple reason why this place sometimes took months and months to leave.

'Fortunately, I'm just on the second floor,' Alex thought. It would have been even more annoying if I was higher on the floors.'

"In some ways, that's quite pretty, don't you think?" someone spoke not far away from him.

Alex looked at the plain woman in her gray robes with a weird look and ignored her.

"Oh, are you not going to answer?" the woman asked.

Alex frowned. "What do you want?" he asked. He didn't think it was possible for this woman to be an assassin since he had already changed his face, but he still couldn't help but be paranoid.

"I just want an answer," she said. "Do you think that is pretty too?"

Alex looked towards the cracked space in front of everyone and said, "Yes, I suppose it's quite pretty."

"Oh, really?" the girl asked with an excited look on her face. "You're not lying right?"

"Why would I be lying?" Alex asked.

"Then promise that you're telling the truth," she said in a playful manner.

"I have no reason to," Alex said and turned to look at the spatial crack again. He wondered if he could learn more about Space from this place. Although, for some reason, he was finding it hard to sense the aura in here.

It was a weird feeling for certain.

"Ehhh! Come on! It's just a simple promise," the girl said.

"Leave me," Alex shouted at her and moved away.

"Tsk! So brass. And here I thought I could give you some information about your father," she said.

Alex suddenly turned around and looked at her with a shocked face. "What did you say?" he asked.

"Hehe, that got your attention so easily. Do you want to know about your father, Alex?" the girl asked.

Alex's eyes turned dark as he glared at her. So she was an assassin after all.

"Gosh, you don't have to glare at me like that," she said. "What are you going to do? Cut me to pieces with your stare?"

"No, I'll use my sword for that," Alex said. "That I can promise you."

"Haha! You have a nice sense of humor, don't you?" the girl said. "Using a sword to cut me in this place? so funny."

Alex frowned slightly. That was right. He couldn't use his sword here, since he couldn't bring it out in the first place.

The rooms with crumbling spaces cut off his access to any of the other spaces as well. Unless he could force the spatial aura around him to move away, he couldn't bring out his sword at all.

At the same time, he was starting to realize that he couldn't use his Dao in this place either. At least not the external help of the dao.

He could still use the dao, but he would have to only use his Qi. Alex tried forcing the spatial aura inside of him to move around his ting to free it from the outside space's force.

'Will I run out of space aura if I do this?' he couldn't help but wonder. There was still a lot of it in his mental space, but that took a lot of time to use up. As for what was in his body, he wasn't sure.

He could feel his sword and be ready to pull it out when the girl spoke again.

"Well, I'm not here to fight you anyway," she said.

"What do you mean?" Alex asked.

"I'm here to make you a proposition, in place of my employer," she said.

"What proposition?" Alex asked.

"Stop looking for your father and forget about him. Make an oath that you will do so in front of one of us, and we Dark Phoenix will never target you again. Well, not unless we have another employer. You have 2 months of time to think about it, or until someone completes the sanctum if that comes to be earlier," she said.

"I don't need any time," Alex said. "My answer is simple. I refuse."

The girl shrugged. "As I said, you have time, just think about it," she said. "Also, don't try to fight me please, you are very weak. I might just kill you accidentally, which is not my plan."

Alex could see people turning to look at him and the woman, wondering what was happening. Should he shout it out? Tell them who these people are so that maybe they would help in the battle?

'No, they have my father. If I make a mistake...' He decided against it. Still, he continued staring at the woman. He was going to kill her himself.

Only, he wanted to figure out who she exactly was.

There were 5 assassins remaining. One was the older man that loved using explosives. Another was the leader, who he knew nothing about.

There was the red-haired woman, the one that he had truly taken notice of.

And finally, there were the twins. Was she one of the twins? He couldn't tell. She could also be the red-haired woman wearing different clothes, but that seemed impossible as he wasn't seeing any fire aura coming out of her body.

The one in the information was surrounded by fire.

Then... was this the leader?

"Where is my father?" Alex asked.

"Why do you even ask that?" the girl said. "You know there's no point, right?"

Alex frowned. "You were not the one that impersonated my father, were you?" he asked. "You said you had other people in here with you."

"Of course," the girl said. "We came prepared."

"Good," Alex said as he finally pulled out Midnight in the middle of the crowd surprising everyone. "Then I can kill you without hesitation."

The girl showed a look of surprise and even a bit of confusion, but she didn't show any fear at all. She still believed that she had the upper hand if they were to fight.

"Hey! What the hell are you doing?" one of the crowd shouted.

"He's trying to kill that girl," someone else said.

"If you two have a grudge against each other, go solve it outside. Don't make this place your battlefield," they said. "Or we will throw you in there."

Alex turned to look towards the spatial cracks where they pointed and making use of that opportunity, the girl ran through the gate.

"Shit!" Alex said as he ran through the gate, following her. He arrived on the first floor, his spiritual sense was immediately suppressed.

Still, he stood up and looked around. He barely managed to get a glimpse of the woman eating something as she entered Gate 3.

He wasted no time and followed her to enter Gate 3 as well. He wasn't planning on stopping before he killed her or got an answer.

Chapter 1100: Going up the Floors

Alex found himself in a new room with people that were either leaving the room or simply standing still as if frozen.

However, upon closer inspection, he saw that they were just looking at something high above them.

Alex didn't immediately check to see what it was but instead looked around at the people that were closest to him.

He was trying to look for the girl, but he had already seen that she had eaten a pill, so he expected her to have a change of face. However, she couldn't have changed her robes so quickly. So, he searched for anyone wearing plain gray robes.

Unfortunately for him, there were simply way too many people wearing such clothes.

'Dammit!' he thought. He activated his demon eyes to see if he could recognize her by the colors around her, but there were too many people, each with similar colors coming out of them.

There was also the possibility that she escaped the moment he entered without him realizing it. That was very frustrating to think about.

Just then, he noticed something else. There was a small string of aura or Qi that was connected to everyone coming from the ceiling. He followed the thread of Qi and looked to the ceiling and saw something floating in the air.

An illusory image of an ingredient floated for everyone to see.

"Pinkfrost Jade pears?" he spoke softly when he saw the fruit that was high in the air.

Suddenly, the image changed to something else, and at the same time, he teleported out of the room to the second floor.

"That's it?" Alex thought and grumbled for a second. He should have stayed and tried to find the girl.

A few people looked towards him, some even glaring when they saw the sword in his hand. He frowned a little and put it into his storage ring.

There were not as many people as he would've expected to be on the 2nd floor. 'I did wait for a day, so they had a bit of a headstart. They must be on the higher floors,' he thought.

He thought of moving along but stopped. 'Is there even a point?' he thought. He sat down on the floor of the 2nd floor and sighed.

'Make an oath to never search for my father... why?' he wondered. He finally had a bit of free time to try and figure out what was happening.

'Not search for my father... is this actually not about me? Or are they trying to mess with me?' he thought. The Faceless assassin had also said something similar to their plan not being about killing him, that was only to happen when their first plan didn't work.

Was their first plan to make him say this oath? But why? What was his father to these people that they were forcing him to stop looking for him?

'It must have something to do with his constitution or talent,' Alex thought. 'They must think he's a unique existence and are keeping him somewhere. That recording must have been from his place of capture.'

Alex was slowly understanding that these people were never trying to kill him for who he was or what he was doing, but rather who his father was. They were trying to stop him from finding his father.

'That's it, isn't it?' he thought. 'That's why those investigators were killed. They didn't want me to find my father.'

There was still a chance that he was wrong and the reason was something else, but for now, that was the reason he was going to work under the assumption of

'Will they kill my father if I push them too hard?' Alex wondered. While it was possible that they wanted something from his father, it was also possible that they would kill him just because they couldn't have him as well.

"The chances are low, but I can't discard the possibility," Alex thought. He took a deep breath and shook his head.

'Now is not the time for this,' he thought. Since he now somewhat understood the motive around which his enemies were working, they were going to wait for him to give his answer.

Since he knew what his answer was, he could also know what the result of this answer would be. "Assassination," he thought. "I'm going to be killed to stop me from looking for my father."

The situation was always dangerous, but it suddenly felt more real somehow. 'I need to get out of this place quickly.' He thought.

Since the deadline was for 2 months, Alex decided to complete the tower before that. If he could be the one that completed the tower, he would not have to worry about having to give any answer or falling victim to the assassination.

'I can do it in less than 2 months, right?' Alex thought and stood up.

There were 45 different floors from what he had heard, and he was going to complete all of them as soon as he could.

Alex stood up and looked at the various doors to the rooms once again. Gate 1 was crumbling, so he had to go for Gate 2 this time around.

Gate 2 was darkened, and so were the others. He had to wait before he went in there.

'Dark gates... that means this is a task that requires a specific number of people, right?' he thought.

Sometimes, the rooms only accepted a certain amount of people per task and the rest had to wait outside before the task inside was completed.

It seemed all the rooms on the 2nd floor were like that. The only reason he was even able to enter the 1st room was that the room was destroyed for the most part.

It took 10 minutes before the 2nd gate was open and Alex managed to sneak in despite the people waiting already.

As soon as he entered, he looked to the top to see what this room was all about.

Choose a Side and pull the rope to your side.

"What?"

He finally looked down and saw that the room was separated into two sides with a rope made up of Qi at the center. There were specific places for everyone to stand at.

He walked up to one of the empty ones and grabbed the rope. "Is this tug of war? Do I pull now?" he thought. But the rope was stiff and rigid. It didn't look like it could be pulled on just yet.

He was also feeling a slight pressure on him that was keeping him from using his Qi excessively.

'So they don't want us to use any external technique,' he thought. 'Fine, I'm just going to pull then.'

He waited for the rest of the people to get into their position and then the room finally started flashing with symbols.

It counted down from 5, but of course, Alex was the only one who knew that. He grabbed it tightly and got ready to pull

4,3,2, and then 1.

As soon as the rigid rope felt slightly softer, he pulled on it with everything he had, along with the 29 different people beside him.

The rope lurched, coming over to his side of the room instantly. He didn't know how much of that was because of him, but it happened nonetheless.

Unlike the last group, they did not have to spend a very long time trying to pull the rope to their side.

Every single person in that room suddenly felt themselves being taken away again.

Alex and the other 29 would be taken to the 3rd floor, while the rest would go to the 1st floor to restart it all over again.

He arrived on the third floor, with about a few hundred people in it. And from the looks of it, they had all been waiting here for quite a while.

There were 5 rooms once more, and only 4 of them had actual gates that had darkened. The final one had nothing but silvery white light coming from the inside.

'Another room with fractured space,' he thought. He hoped that wasn't the case for each of the floors he went up on. If somehow there was a floor that was completely cracked with no way of going up, he wouldn't know what to do.

A few more people popped up, but the gates still remained closed. Alex sat down and waited for the gates to open up.

People flocked to the first gate that opened, so by the time he got a chance to enter any other one of the gates, nearly 2 hours had passed.

When he went in, it turned out that the room was a competition of strength. 50 people had come in, and according to the words floating in the air, only 20 would be moving on.

A puppet stood at the center of the room and everyone was supposed to attack it one by one.

A light fell on someone asking them to attack the puppet. The person attacked and the light moved onto someone else.

Apparently, they weren't going to learn who attacked the hardest until it was all over.

Nearly 30 people later, Alex finally got his chance. He wasted no time and threw a metal punch at the puppet.

The light moved around and a while later everyone was done.

Then, the room dimmed a little for a few seconds, and 20 lights shined on the 20 winners. Alex was one of them.

They all felt the teleportation aura capture them, and then they were teleported.

When the 20 of them reappeared, everyone including Alex was on the 4th floor.