

Alchemy 1121

Chapter 1121: The Final Few Floors

Alex entered the other room once again and had to wait 12 days or so before it was filled up. The people naturally gravitated towards the room that had more people, so it was natural it would take this place such a long time to enter.

The voice of the room started speaking once more and they were all told the challenge for this room.

A bunch of light gathered at the center as things floated in the air. Alex recognized them for what they were.

Runes.

"You have 20 runes here," the voice said. "Using only the runes available here, make a talisman design that can absorb a sword attack in it to be used for later."

Alex and the rest of the people in the room were surprised when they heard that. "That's possible?" he couldn't help but wonder.

He knew normal attacks could be stored in talismans, but sword attacks were different, especially if you were to include Intent and Qi into the mix.

Just like every else, he too was given a piece of talisman to draw the design into.

A timer appeared in front of all of them and from what he could see, there were 30 minutes on the clock.

He looked away and started working.

'Take in a sword attack,' Alex thought. 'I will need the Storage rune, combine that with the Capture rune. The attack will have to be preserved, so the Preserve rune should be helpful. I can't let the attack hit the talisman, so I need a distance rune.'

He started working on the talisman, just like everyone else in the room.

Alex had practiced runes after he entered the Saint realm just for a short period of time when he was under the imprisonment of the False Immortal.

That hadn't been that comprehensive of practice, so he didn't have as much knowledge on it as he would've hoped to have gathered by now.

Still, seeing as how many of the people here didn't even have a single clue how runes worked, he had high hopes of passing.

These people had only ever bought talismans, and never really delved into how the talismans did the things they bought them to do. As long as it worked, they were fine with it.

Alex came across a few complications as this particular sort of design was not something he had worked with as much, so it took some outside thinking to solve them.

In the end, about 20 minutes later, he was finally done. He submitted the result and the voice spoke.

"You have passed."

The people around him looked at him with weird looks on their faces, almost unbelieving that someone had done it.

Alex himself had a bright smile on his face as he happily went up the floor and entered the 40th floor.

The floor looked empty, aside from 2 people that seemed to be in deep cultivation. There seemed to be a single room in the center of the room, while everyone else was made to stay outside.

Alex could see the cracked space far behind the room and shook his head. He didn't know how long it was going to take to continue moving, so he found himself a place to stay and cultivate.

He didn't eat a pill or anything, but the cultivation still felt so very fast. Perhaps because he barely had any Qi left, it felt like getting to drink chilled water after a hot day of work.

He relished the experience that lasted for a few minutes before he was back to cultivating normally.

He wondered what the task of this floor was. As another 5th floor, the 40th floor was bound to be special. As the last 5th floor with a challenge in it, he wondered if it was something very difficult.

He didn't doubt there was something he would be bad at when compared to what a normal cultivator was supposed to be capable of, but he still couldn't help but be slightly nervous.

If he failed here, coming up would take a long time, and in that time, someone might already have completed all the floors.

The door opened a few hours later and one of the people went through it. He continued cultivating and in that time 2 more people arrived on the floor, who found a place to stay.

Alex suspected everyone he saw now to be part of the assassins, but it didn't look like they were.

After waiting for some more time, the door opened.

He stood up and went up to the door. As soon as he passed through it, the door was closed behind him and the dark room glowed just enough to show the outline of a massive humanoid statue.

The statue moved a bit, surprising Alex. He got on guard, ready to block if it were to attack him.

"WHO DARES WAKE ME FROM MY DEEP SLUMBER? WHO DARES STEP FOOT IN MY DOMAIN?" the statue thundered with a deep voice that sent the words reverberating through the room.

Alex gulped a little, wondering if the 40th floor was going to be the deadliest floor yet. He reached into the storage ring, ready to take out Midnight, although he wasn't sure how helpful that would be.

"SUCH AN ACT OF DISRESPECT SHALL NOT GO UNPUNISHED!" the voice continued. "ANSWER ME, CRETIN, OR I SHALL HAVE YOUR TONGUE PULLED OUT AND— oh, Master White Tiger, it's you."

The deep voice suddenly changed to a soft, sweet voice that belonged to the spirit.

Alex let go of the breath he was holding. "Spirit? Is that you?" he asked.

The lights returned in the room. "Yes, it's me, Master White Tiger. I'm happy to see you have finally arrived here," he said.

"That voice just now..."

"That's something I do to make the challengers feel danger and judge their actions," the spirit said. "Forgive my actions if they seemed disrespectful just now."

The attitude from the spirit was a complete turnaround from the monster he was expecting to fight a moment ago.

Alex relaxed a little. "Geez, I thought I was going to have to fight you," he said.

"Oh, you won't have to fight me on this floor," the spirit said.

"Then what am I supposed to do in here?" Alex asked as he looked around the room. "It's so small compared to the other rooms. Was I supposed to not be threatened by you?"

"That's where it would start," the spirit said. "Once you passed, I would check your potential and decide whether to pass you or fail you from there."

"Sorry, check my potential?" Alex asked. "You base the result on that?"

"Yes," the spirit said.

"And you expect people to be able to change their potential when they come back here?" he asked.

"Of course not," the spirit said. "If you fail in any of the following 5 floors, you fail the overall challenge, master White Tiger."

"What?" Alex shouted in surprise. He wasn't told that at all, most likely because they didn't expect him to ever get this high.

"Does everyone know this?" he asked.

"They would after I told them now," the spirit said. "But there have been people who have known this before coming here."

"I see," Alex said. At least he got to know it now. Nothing could've changed in the result anyway.

"So, how do you test my potential?" Alex asked. "Is there a formation or an artifact?"

"I don't need to," the spirit said. "I have information on everything you are capable of, so I know how much potential you hold Master White Tiger. You have already passed."

"Oh..." Alex wasn't expecting that at all. "So... I move up now?"

"Not yet," the spirit said. "We will have to wait until the ones above us are done."

"You can't have more than one on a single floor above?" he asked.

"I had to make the 41st floor one due to reasons, but every floor above that is a solo challenge floor that takes up the entire floor. So, while there are ones above you, you can't continue," the spirit said. "That is until someone fails in any of the rounds, but at this stage, it's quite hard to find someone like that."

"I see," Alex said softly. "So, how long do I have to wait here?"

"Usually that depends on the 42nd floor," the spirit said. "Since that is the floor that can take days to pass."

"Oh, what's in there?" Alex asked.

The spirit only smiled instead of answering. "That's for you to find out," it said. "Oh, and speaking of which, looks like someone failed on the 41st floor. Up you go then."

Alex felt the teleportation power envelop him and found himself on the next floor. He found himself in a dark room, not even on a wide floor.

"Use a Dao, or you will fail."

"A Dao?" Alex was surprised. He looked around and was glad that there were no spatial cracks in this room. If there was, he would have definitely failed.

He wasted no time and used a fire Dao. The Qi from the atmosphere moved towards him to prove that he was in fact using a Dao.

"You have passed."

He passed, but he still had to wait for whoever was on the floors above him to pass as well.

'This is my one and only chance,' he thought.

He waited for a while and was eventually sent to the 42nd floor. He looked around at the floor with some more spatial cracks in the distance.

And then the voice spoke.

"Sit down and start cultivating."

Chapter 1122: One Last Battle

Alex did as the voice said. He sat down on the cold stone floor, taking a glance at the shattered space for a brief moment before closing his eyes to start cultivating.

He wondered if he was being judged on the usage of his cultivation method, but that didn't sound very fair at all.

Or maybe the floor was trying to judge just how long he could go on cultivating without taking a break. That would be fair.

The spirit had said that this floor took the longest for each person, so Alex was almost certain that was what was happening here.

'I can continue for months,' he thought. 'I wonder if I will pass as long as I cultivate for a f—'

"What a worthless cultivation base!" a voice that sounded like his own spoke in his ears.

Alex nearly stopped cultivating, wondering if there was someone here, but he caught himself in time and stopped.

He softly released his spiritual sense, but no one else was on the floor.

"What a pitiful spiritual sense!" the voice spoke again.

Alex could swear it came from inside of himself like his mind was playing tricks on him. 'I must be hallucinating then.'

"Your parents must despise having you as their son," the voice said.

"Can you keep quiet, please? I'm trying to cultivate," Alex spoke. He didn't know what else to do. His body didn't seem to be cleansing whatever hallucination this was, so he had to deal with it himself.

"No girl will ever love you. They could never love a pitiful man like you," the voice said.

'Is that meant to rile me up?' he wondered. The voice spoke to him, but Alex ignored it as much as he could. He tried to talk to it sometimes just to alleviate his own boredom, but the voice seemed only to be interested in insulting him.

So, Alex let it speak.

He could tell his mind was muddled slightly, but he could think clearly enough that he could tell the time that was passing. He was also sure that he now knew what the purpose of this challenge was.

"You will never have any of your hopes and dreams come true," the voice said.

"And you..." Alex replied. "Are a pitiful excuse for an Inner Demon. So, can you keep quiet, please? I'm trying to cultivate here."

The voice didn't stop, but Alex wasn't bothered in the slightest. Sometime later, the voice said something else.

"You pass."

Then, Alex was teleported to the next floor.

"That was simple," he thought. He wondered if it was because he had been through so many of these already that a fake Inner Demon didn't even do him anything.

He arrived on the 43rd floor with cracks everywhere near the wall, and some of them even held small holes that showed the void that lay beyond.

"Prepare yourself for your tribulation!" the voice spoke.

"Tribulation?" Alex asked as he looked towards the ceiling. He was most definitely sure what was coming next.

He wondered how strong the lightning strikes were going to be, but since he had no idea, he prepared for the worst.

The first lightning strike came a moment later and struck him in the chest. Surprisingly, it did nothing at all.

'That's so weak,' he thought. The lightning wasn't even as strong as his cultivation base, which was far weaker than what he was capable of.

The 2nd lightning bolt dropped and struck him. It was a little stronger, but not as much. For a normal person though, this would've been the point where they would start getting serious about their defense.

The 3rd strike was stronger than his cultivation base by a small amount and the 4th one nearly reached the next cultivation realm.

The 5th one was definitely stronger than his cultivation base, but that didn't really mean anything to Alex.

'My real tribulation somehow knew what my Qi was capable of and always reached that amount in just 9 lightning strikes. This thing probably can't do that, can it?' he thought.

The next few lightning strikes weren't anything serious either so he easily passed the rest of the tribulation.

When it ended, he was made to go up the floor again. He arrived on the 44th floor, the floor where he had killed those three girls just days ago.

There was not a single hint of damage anywhere at all, except for the gaping holes of the shattering space in the distance.

Alex looked around, wondering what his next challenge was. If he was not wrong, this was his final challenge.

'It's all been so easy since I reached the 40th floor,' he thought. 'Dao, Inner Demon, the tribulation. I'm sure many have passed that already as well. So why haven't they passed this final trial?'

Just as he asked that himself, something appeared in front of him.

A puppet.

Alex waited for the voice to say anything at all, but he was surprised when the puppet started speaking instead.

"I'm glad you've finally made it to your last hurdle, Master White Tiger." The spirit's voice came from the puppet. "But, that does not mean you've succeeded just yet."

"Spirit?" Alex asked. "What's the challenge?"

"It's simple," the spirit said. "You have to fight me."

"I see," Alex said. He had expected something like that after seeing the puppet. "And many people fail here?"

"Almost everyone fails here," the spirit said.

Alex frowned slightly. "Alright, let's see what I have to deal with then," he said.

"Please beware, master White Tiger," the spirit said. "I will not be holding back at all."

Alex nodded and readied himself. He got on guard, ready to fight. Then, the spirit made the first move.

The move itself was very simple. It was a simple Qi projectile thrown from its fist. It had no elaborate form or effect, but even then Alex couldn't help but frown.

Because the power behind the attack was at Saint Soul 4th realm, which was beyond what he could reach with the strongest skills he could use right now.

Alex did not hesitate to dodge at all and the attack hit the wall behind him. "Are you trying to kill me or what?" he asked. "You're using quite a strong skill there."

"I've seen how you fight, master White Tiger. I have seen how everyone who enters the tower fights. I see how strong they are, what they are capable of," the spirit said.

"You can make your way up the other floors by relying on your overwhelming ability, but you can't rely on that in here. My power has been attuned exactly to the level that you have never reached, and unless you can overcome that, you will not be going past this floor."

Alex frowned when he heard that. "So, I can only go past you once I've beaten you?" he asked.

"You cannot beat me," the spirit said.

"Then how do you expect me to pass?" he asked.

"By fighting me," the spirit said.

"How long do I have to fight you then?" Alex asked.

"Until you give up," the spirit said. "That's enough talk, master White Tiger. Let's begin our battle."

Chapter 1123: Giving it his All

Alex knew he was in trouble. Given the fact that even his blood aura could not possibly rival the current monster of a puppet in front of him, he had no way of surviving this battle at all.

The puppet started the attack with a simple dash, but that simple dash alone was so fast that without his Demon Eyes, Alex would not have noticed it. He jumped to the side and sent out a yellow palm strike toward the puppet.

The puppet simply flew through the palm attack and came to attack Alex.

Alex continued running, trying not to use his blood aura for as long as possible. The moment he created armor and was attacked, a massive amount of his blood aura would disappear. He would have to use a massive amount of aura to keep it working at its best to stop all of the puppet's attacks.

Also, he had a feeling that the puppet wouldn't use attacks that could not be dodged. After all, he definitely wasn't going to be killing him.

The puppet continued attacking his non-vital areas with strong attacks that could be dodged, so that added to Alex's theory about it, but that still didn't help him much at all.

The puppet was giving him time to dodge, so Alex did. But that meant he was only ever dodging.

His attacks were weak against the puppet and his movement speed wasn't fast enough to keep the puppet on edge.

Every second of the fight, the puppet was right behind him, and Alex didn't get a single second of freedom.

He didn't even have the time to think as he continuously ran around.

He tried fighting back a few times during the next 5 minutes when he used blood projectiles to attack the puppet.

The puppet was slowed down by the attack, but not enough to make an impact overall. If he wanted to do something, he would need something stronger than just that projectile.

'What can I really do here?' he wondered. 'He is strong in each aspect of a cultivation battle. He's faster, stronger, more durable, and even seems to be a better fighter than me.'

'What does he want me to do? Does he want me to overcome my own strength? Become the strongest I've ever been? I can't do that. I just broke through a few months ago, and without anyone's blood, my blood aura won't be that good either,' he thought. 'There have to be some other winning criteria here.'

He continued dodging for a few more minutes, but the longer the time passed, the more agitated Alex became. There was no hint as to how long the fight was supposed to take place before he was disqualified.

As far as he was aware, it would stop after he ran out of Qi and could no longer fight, which at the rate he was going would be in just another 10 minutes.

He wasn't even sure that was the real amount of time, and for all knew, it could be just 10 minutes, which would end in just a couple of more minutes.

Either way, he didn't have much time.

'I must be missing something,' he thought.

Just then, he remembered something. 'Could it be?'

An idea was forming in his head, but he couldn't act on it yet. It had to be done after he had no other choice.

And for now, he still had choices.

"Let's get rid of them."

Alex stopped running as Blood Armor formed around his body. At the same time, two blood swords appeared in his hands and he started fighting with them.

There was no more running for him at all. He was going to fight, or lose trying.

The puppet looked a little surprised but didn't act strange. It got into close combat with Alex as Alex used all the strength he could in these strikes.

Alex struck as hard as he could, but the puppet wasn't hurt at all. He dodged the puppet's next attack and struck from the side.

He backed off a bit before throwing the sword at the puppet and pulled it back before going in for more attacks.

He continued fighting that way, but even that didn't work.

'What else do I have?' he thought.

Blood poured out of every surface of his body as it pooled in front of him. Then, swords started growing out of it one by one.

By the end, he had 21 swords in front of him, and they all flew above him in an array.

Alex quickly added his sword aura into it, and then he used the 21 Sword Array technique to attack.

The swords started spinning around and attacked the puppet as hard as they could.

The puppet took the attacks easily with not a single scratch on it, but the spirit couldn't help but say, "that was the strongest attack you've used yet master White Tiger. Not bad. But that's still nowhere near good enough for you to win against me."

Alex frowned. He was now more or less completely out of blood aura. If even his strongest attack didn't work, then maybe he didn't have a way to win.

'I still have one more choice,' he thought. He quickly pulled out Midnight and held it ready to attack. Then, he called for help. "Godslayer, can you help me?"

"I was waiting for you to say that."

Godslayer flew out of Alex as a clump of black veins in him, moved from the side of his head, down his shoulders into his arm, and finally into Midnight.

"Move aside kid, I'm here to save the day," Godslayer said as he firmly became part of Midnight temporarily.

"Play along, Midnight," Alex said softly and started forcing all of his remaining Qi into the sword. The sword glowed with black light and soon black smoke drifted down from it.

"Alright, do it," Godslayer said. "This is my best."

Alex nodded and attacked.

God Rending Death Blade.

The black slash that easily warped space around it flew directly to the puppet controlled by the spirit and landed on it.

The puppet was pushed back nearly 2 steps before it stopped and looked back at Alex. "That was... strong," the spirit said. "Very strong. How...?"

Godslayer went back into Alex's spiritual sea and Alex took a deep breath, his arm hurting a little from the attack he released just now.

"Even that wasn't enough, huh?" he asked.

"No," the spirit said. "But this is far stronger than anything you've shown me until now. I must say, I'm impressed."

"Does that mean I pass?" Alex asked.

"Unfortunately, not," the spirit said. "Do you have any more tricks you can use? I would love to see what you do next."

"If I could use Dao, then maybe," Alex said. "But without it, there's really just one more thing I can do."

"What is it?" the spirit asked.

"Give up," Alex said as he relaxed. "I give up."

"Are you sure, master White Tiger? You've come way too far to simply give up. Are you sure you don't want to try something more?" the spirit asked.

"I have nothing else," Alex said. "I gave everything I had, and nothing worked, so all I can do is give up."

"I see," the spirit said as it appeared out of the puppet with a bright smile on its face. "Congratulations, Master White Tiger. You have passed."

Alex smiled when he heard that, a smile of relief.

The spirit looked at the smile with a slightly surprised look. "Did you realize?" it asked.

"I guessed, halfway through," Alex said. "But I wasn't entirely sure, so I decided to do whatever I could else before giving up."

"You did well to try everything beforehand," the spirit said. "I would've failed you had you simply given up without trying everything."

"Most fail that way?" Alex asked.

"Both people that have come here before you have given up very early into the battle, which is why I disqualified them," the spirit said. "Most of them are that way, but there are also people who fight and fight and fight, never knowing when to give up. I disqualify them too."

"It is only when someone like you comes, who tries their best, but knows when to give up that I finally pass them," the spirit said.

"I see," Alex said, surprised. "So, I'm the 3rd person that has come up here?"

"Yes," the spirit said. "People usually lose in the 41st and 42nd floor, where they either don't have a dao or can't cultivate while being troubled by an Inner Demon."

Alex nodded. "So, am I done with the challenges? I've won, right?" he asked.

"Yes," the spirit said. "But you have one final thing to do."

Teleportation power surrounded him and he suddenly found himself in another room.

"Welcome to the 45th floor, master White Tiger," the spirit spoke. "This is the final floor."

Alex looked at the spirit in front of him, but his eyes fell on the thing behind him.

The 45th floor was small, much smaller than any of the floors before him, and one of the sides of the floor had been completely destroyed.

However, Alex saw no spatial cracks in here, like all the floors before. Instead, there was just a gaping hole on the destroyed side of the room, and beyond it was nothing but the swirling energy of silver and purple.

The massive hole led to the void.

The spirit pointed towards a podium that was at the very edge of the floor, on the gap.

"There lies the formation that you can activate to complete your climb," the system said. "Press that, and everyone will be sent back outside."

Chapter 1124: Pocket

"So I just activate the formation and I'm done here?" Alex asked to confirm.

"Yes," the spirit said.

"Will I be sent out along with everyone else too?" he asked.

"Yes," the spirit said.

"Then... what about the treasure? I thought I would get to become the new owner," Alex said.

"You do have my approval for it... but I'm not sure you can do it right now, master White Tiger," the spirit said. "The tower is an Immortal Treasure, so refining it will take a rather long time."

"Can I at least try?" Alex asked.

"Sure," the spirit said. "How about I keep you here after you succeed? That way I can check and see if you can refine the treasure right now. Although the right period would be after you break through to the Immortal realms."

"I see," Alex said. "Is that why you haven't had an owner yet?"

"Well, that and the rule that my new owner can't have demon blood in them," the spirit said. "Although there have been a surprising number of Humans in the last 2 or 3 times I opened the playground. It was quite surprising how the numbers increased."

"Alright, I will go activate it," Alex said. "Even though it looks like I will die just going near it."

"The Void does look scary," the spirit said. "Especially the fact there is no opening to the void, it's just there like we're in it."

"Stop scaring me even more," Alex said and started walking towards the small podium next to the void.

As he did, he noticed small cracks along the floor that lead to the podium. He stopped for a moment to make sure they were not spatial cracks and lightly stepped through them to go near the podium.

He arrived next to the podium and was immediately entranced by the void beyond where he was. His eye couldn't tell how far the swirling lights he was seeing were at all.

One second they looked as if they were a hundred kilometers away, and in the next second they looked like they were 10 meters away.

The whole experience was very surreal to Alex, far more so than staring at them through a small crack in space. Now, he felt like he was inside the void.

"Master White Tiger, look ou—"

Alex heard the Spirit's shout and was brought back from his trance just in time to notice the floor slip right from under him.

He flew backward immediately, arriving inside the room, but the floor he had been standing on had crumbled and fallen through the void. Along with that, the podium where the small formation lay.

"Damn," Alex thought. "That was close. Thanks for warning me, spirit. I was too lost in my own thou— spirit?"

Alex looked around the room but he saw no sign of the spirit at all. "Spirit? Where did you go?" he called for him, but there was no answer.

He heard a bit more crumbling and saw the floor at the edges was falling into the void. Alex couldn't help but be worried now.

"Spirit, are you really not there?" he asked. "This better not be a sick joke of yours."

However, after not getting any answers this time around, Alex was certain of one thing. He had lost connections to the Spirit.

Meaning, this entire room had lost connection to the spirit and all the other functionalities of the room had most likely gone as well.

"Wait, how do I get out of here then?" Alex asked. He looked around, but he could think of nothing at all.

"Are you stuck?" Godslayer asked after realizing there were some problems.

"I think so," Alex said as he walked around a little. "The spirit can't hear me, and the formation that is supposed to send us all out is broken."

"So you are stuck here forever?" Godslayer asked.

"Hopefully not," Alex said. "But I don't know how I can get out of here if the spirit can't help me."

"What about the others? Can they do something?" Godslayer asked.

"I don't know," Alex said as he thought a little. "Such a small formation on the podium was definitely not the formation that was meant to teleport us all out. It was most likely the trigger."

"As for the actual formation, it can't be on this floor either. It is likely on each floor since they all have teleportation formations from what I've experienced. If not, then it's at the base of the tower, and will be used on everyone in the tower."

"So you're safe?" Godslayer asked.

"No, that doesn't help us at all. There is a very high chance that the floor can't see us currently. We are now what floor 38 is. We're completely cut off from the tower. So, even if everyone gets to leave, we will still have to stay back."

Godslayer looked around through Alex's eyes, trying to make sense of the situation himself. "Then I guess we are stuck."

"You sound like you came to terms with the situation rather quickly," Alex said.

"It might surprise you, but this is not the first time I was stuck somewhere I didn't want to be for a very long period of time," Godslayer said.

Alex nearly chuckled. "But this time you're in a mortal body. You sure you want to relax so much?"

Godslayer grunted. He didn't like being reminded that Alex's life was tied to his own now.

"What about this floor? Can you cut through it?" Godslayer asked.

"It's tough, but I can try," Alex said. He tried to bring out Midnight, but then realized how hard it was. He tried to force out the space aura in him, but he could barely bring out any at all.

"Damn, why is it suddenly so hard? It wasn't that hard on the previous floors," he said.

"That's because you were still outside the Void until then," Godslayer said. "But now, you are fully inside it. Look, that's why there are no spatial fractures here at all."

Alex looked around in shock. "I'm in the Void?" he asked. "Isn't that the opening to the void?"

"No, an opening to a void is always a crack in space," Godslayer said. "Basically, you're in a pocket of Void, I think that's what they call it."

"Pocket?" Alex asked.

"Void is mostly an ever-moving blob of space and time from what I know," Godslayer said. "But at some places, there form pockets where the energy does not touch. These pockets are all around the void, constantly moving around. If you don't move along with it, you get swallowed by the energies."

Alex gulped. "What happens if you are swallowed by the energy?" he asked.

"I don't know," Godslayer said. "You will have to ask someone with more knowledge about the void."

"Okay," Alex said. "So wait, you said we are in a pocket right now, right? So is this pocket moving too?"

"No," Godslayer said. "These pockets also form in other places, primarily being the portals to our dimension."

Alex thought and bit and remembered his own experiments with the Void. The void was fine for a small distance, but then it ripped everything away.

"I see, we are in the void," Alex said softly. "I should have known when my spiritual sense stopped working long ago."

Alex was about to make a blood sword when he paused. "Wait, didn't you say we're in a pocket in the void?" he asked.

"Yes," Godslayer answered. "What about it?"

"Then how will breaking through this floor help us at all?" he asked.

"I can't say for certain, but since you were not in the void on the other floor, there are likely spatial cracks running in this very floor, separating this floor from the other one," Godslayer said.

"I see," Alex said. He brought out a blood sword and started attacking the floor. However, he soon realized that the floor was way too tough for him. Whatever the material was, it was likely Immortal rank, and so a Saint like him couldn't destroy it at all.

"What now?" Alex asked.

Godslayer thought for a moment. "I have an idea," he said. "Force out as much Spatial aura as you can and try to pull open the spatial cracks inside the floor."

"But I can't push out spatial aura at all," Alex said.

"But you could bring it out before, right?" Godslayer asked.

"A little," he said. "Like barely thick enough to make me look like I'm wearing an oversized glove."

"Still try," Godslayer said.

Alex nodded and tried to push out his space aura, but it simply couldn't penetrate far into the floor. He tried multiple times but failed all the same.

"Dammit!" he thought. "It's not working. Why the hell is it so hard to push out my space aura here?"

"You're trying to fight the space energy that has been in the void since primordial times. Of course, it's going to fight back and make it hard on you," Godslayer said. "Dammit, you were so close. If only you could directly grab onto the cracks, then maybe you would have had a chance."

Alex nodded and paused. "Wait, I might have a way," he said as he slowly made his way to the edge.

"What? Are you trying to kill yourself?" Godslayer asked.

"Wait for a second," Alex said while slowly making his way to the very edge that had crumbled away just moments ago. He made sure to be very careful as he slowly lay on the floor and moved his head out of the edge and down below.

"Look!" Alex said excitedly as he gestured at what was below him.

Surrounded by an energy of purple and silver, there were a few random cracks in the Void that lead back to the tower.

To the 44th floor.

Chapter 1125: Through the Crack

Godslayer saw the small cracks in space as well and realized that there were segments of the void that led to the inner tower.

"That exists huh?" he asked.

"Yeah," Alex said. "It used to be small before, but it expanded after that Saint Soul realm girl exploded her body. I threw it into the cracks after all. Maybe that's why this place crumbled, because of me."

Alex couldn't help but think that he had brought it all on himself. "Anyway, what do you think? That works right?"

"That's not a bad idea," Godslayer said. "If you can get there."

"I don't know how, that's for sure," Alex said. "Can I fly in the void?"

"Haven't you already?" Godslayer asked.

Alex thought for a bit and nodded. He had flown away when the floor had first crumbled. "So can I fly up to the cracks?" he asked.

"That... should be possible," Godslayer said, but he didn't sound very knowledgeable on the matter.

"If only I could teleport directly," Alex said, lamenting a little. "Do you know why I can't use any dao in void? Or even just around it."

"No one knows for certain, but I do know what most people believe to be true," Godslayer said cryptically.

"Which is?" Alex asked.

"Qi doesn't belong to this dimension," Godslayer said. "It did not originate from here, so the heavens had no ruling here. Since the heavens can't rule here, the Dao has no effect here too."

Alex heard it and mulled over it for a bit. "I see," he said. "You sure do know a lot."

"I come from the higher realms boy," Godslayer said. "My knowledge might not amount to much there, but it's still quite a lot for a mere mortal from a lower realm."

"I understand," Alex said and looked down at the cracks again. He used some Qi to make sure he could use Qi still. That didn't seem to have any blockade at all, although he would have to be careful about using up his Qi a lot.

"So, should we start?" Alex said.

"Let's make sure you know what you're doing," Godslayer said. Together, they talked to make sure they knew what they were going to deal with at every step of the way.

The distance between him and the cracks was somewhere between 20 and 30 meters. So, there was a high chance that each of the two places had its own separate pockets.

They were always the same distance from each other, but unless there was another pocket connecting the two pockets, he could forever be lost in the void.

"Are we sure it's not one giant pocket?" Alex asked.

"No," Godslayer said. "We have to work under the assumption that the pockets are separate. Otherwise, you would be open to a nasty surprise."

"That's true," Alex said. "How do we check that though?"

"Hmm... throw something at the crack. If it goes smoothly, you are free to go," Godslayer said.

Alex nodded and looked around for something to throw. There was nothing at all for him to throw. The only thing with him was the storage ring.

"Urgh!" he sighed and quickly created a blood blade. He was already out of blood aura, so having to make so many of these things was problematic for him.

He leaned down carefully again and threw the blood blade as hard as he could. The blade flew smoothly through the 20 meters or so distance and entered through the largest crack in the middle.

"Nice!" Alex thought. "It's all one pocket."

"Good," Godslayer said. "Now go."

Alex jumped from the crumbling floor and flew straight toward the crack. He made sure to look around to make sure nothing else was coming to obstruct him, and before getting too close he threw another dagger.

Right behind the dagger, he followed up on the crack.

"Alright, cover yourself up in as much space aura as you can and widen the gap," Godslayer said.

Alex nodded and quickly pulled out as much space aura as he could from inside of himself and coated his arm. He appeared next to the crack and grabbed it on each side. He could see people fighting inside, but the cracks in space on the inside made it a bit too hard to see.

He ignored the sight and started pulling the cracks wide open. He pulled it wider and wider and wider until he could enter the place.

However, it wasn't done yet. He could enter inside, but the cracks in were still there, which were troublesome for him.

He carefully stepped into the 44th floor, and as soon as he did, the space aura he had been producing suddenly burst out of him to cover his entire body now that he was out of the void. Still, there was enough pressure on him that he couldn't freely use it outside.

But, he didn't need to.

Alex slowly walked forward, careful at every step. He couldn't use any dao to close the space cracks, but he could use his aura to move them aside.

He made use of the aura in him and parted the cracks away so he could walk through it. He needed to be very careful, as he wouldn't even realize when he lost his body parts.

Fortunately, the opening to the void was towards the front of the cracks, so he didn't have much to deal with.

When he finally managed to navigate outside of all the cracks, he looked at the puppet and the woman whose eyes had gone wide in disbelief.

"Who... who are you?" the woman asked, fearfully.

"Master White Tiger, You're back!" the spirit shouted.

Alex ignored the woman and looked at the puppet. "Spirit, why is there another fight?" he asked. "Why did you not send them all back?"

"I'm sorry, master White Tiger. I didn't know what to do," the spirit said. "The platform collapsed and my formations were gone. I had to think, so I decided to think about how to save you while fighting this young lady who had made it up here."

"Well, stop the fight then," Alex said. "I've already won. It's time to send everyone out."

"Absolutely," the spirit said. "But I don't have that authority."

Alex paused. "What?" he asked.

The spirit nodded. "I don't have the authority to send them out," it said.

"But you're the spirit of the tower," Alex said.

"Yes, I can send them out of the tower, but I don't suppose that's where you want me to send everyone, do you?" the spirit asked.

Alex frowned a little when he realized the spirit was correct. The tower and the secret realm were two different things, and the spirit was in charge of only one of it.

"That podium," Alex said. "It lead to some sort of formation, didn't it?"

"It did," the spirit said. "It activated a formation at the base of the tower from what I remember."

"Remember?" Alex asked. "You don't know for sure?"

The spirit shook its head. "I can't go there," it said.

"Why?" Alex asked curiously.

"I don't know," the spirit said. "I simply can't go there."

Alex frowned a little. "Whatever, let's go there anyway," he said. "We need to send everyone out of here."

The spirit nodded. "Let us go to the first floor then," it said and suddenly the three in the room disappeared, appearing in the midst of everyone on the first floor.

No one really batted an eye when they appeared at all. The Spirit had concealed itself from everyone's eyes so they couldn't even see it.

"This is not the base floor, is it?" Alex asked.

"No, it's one floor below us," the spirit said.

"Can you turn off the spiritual sense blocking formation so I can see what's below?" Alex asked.

The spirit shook his head. "The first floor's formation is on the base floor as well. You would have to go there to turn that off," it said.

Alex frowned. "Fine, I'll do it myself," he said and brought out Whisker. "Whisker, see if you can swim into this rock."

Whisker nodded and jumped onto the floor and used his earth movement technique. Using the technique, Whisker could go into any earthen surface and move there for a small period of time.

Alex followed Whisker with his senses and gave him directions of where to go, which was basically down below.

Whisker swam through what felt like 30 meters of rock before plopping down from the ceiling of another floor below them.

"Look around," Alex told Whisker, and Whisker started looking around with his eyes. His senses still didn't work, so Alex was left with just the visual data to go by.

However, that alone was enough.

He saw multiple different formation flags at the bottom of the floor that was working concurrently.

"I see it," he said. "You sure you won't be coming?"

"I just can't, Master White Tiger," the spirit said. "Something there keeps me at bay. Maybe there's some sort of formation running that's not letting me come."

"You've been very helpful to me these days, Spirit," Alex said with a very sarcastic voice.

"Oh, that's an honor to hear, master White Tiger," the spirit said enthusiastically.

Alex shook his head and sighed. "Nevermind," he said. "I'm going in."

"Good luck," the Spirit said.

Alex nodded and felt where Whisker was. He approximated the distance between them and then the dao of teleportation filled him in.

In the next moment, he vanished, arriving right next to Whisker.

"Good job," he said to the little mouse, who squeaked in happiness. Whisker went back into his beast space and Alex finally looked around.

"So, what do we have here?"

Chapter 1126: The Many Formations

Alex looked around in the small room that was somehow being lit up even though there was no source of light. It was as if the walls themselves were emitting lights in small amounts, all of which together became enough to light up the room.

The room consisted of various formation flags laid all around it with a small elevated surface at the center. Alex looked at the number of formation flags and couldn't help but sigh. "I guess you need this many to run something like this tower," he thought.

He walked up slowly so as to not disturb something and arrived next to a formation flag. He looked at it for a moment and was slightly confused.

"Hmm?" he thought and walked over to another one, which also gave him the same result.

"Most of these formation flags are actually just Saint-ranked formations," he said. He had been expecting Immortal ranked formation, but to see that it was actually all Saint ranked, was surprising.

"Or maybe it shouldn't be," Alex thought. He looked around a bit and realized that he had still been making some mistakes in his assumptions about the tower.

The tower wasn't a massive building run by a formation. It was an artifact, and the most common way to add functionalities to an artifact was by using Qi lines.

"There are Qi lines in the walls, not formations," Alex thought. He looked back at the formation flags, "So that means they serve a different purpose from what it was intended for the tower."

He went back to one of the formations and looked at what it did. He noted down the formation patterns and found the other formation flags of the same formation. Once he was done noting down all the patterns, he drew a formation on a piece of paper and tried to figure out what it did.

There were between 4 and 6 base formations in each one of these Saint-ranked formations, so Alex had to find which of the base formations they were. Sometimes this task was easy, but most of the other times it felt impossible because the base formations would overlap each other, making it hard to discern whether there were strokes hidden in other strokes or not.

The first thing Alex did was search for the base formations that connected this formation to the main formation that was most likely outside of this building, possibly in the ground beneath where the Spirit vein was.

Once he was done, he then had to go through other base formation designs that could fit into the entire formation.

At least one good thing about base formations was that there was that one base formation could never be the subset of another base formation.

So Alex didn't have to worry about whether a formation could be this one or that one. He could easily figure it out all.

He worked on it for a few minutes and stopped. "Hmm, so this is the formation that is supplying the tower with constant Qi, huh?" he thought.

Since the tower was an artifact, it was technically supposed to be powered by an Immortal who owned it. However, since there was no one here to control it, the last owner had most likely set up a few formations to help the tower gain Qi from the spirit vein in the secret realm.

Next, Alex looked at another formation.

He took his time and came up with an answer for this one as well. This was a repairing formation that would help the tower repair any problem it came across, such as broken puppets or rooms. It didn't help much but was still better than nothing.

Especially for something that was supposed to be run with Immortal Qi.

He looked at the third formation and after a bit of research realized that it was a formation that blocked people's spiritual senses.

"Oh, this is the one," he thought. "Should I... stop this?"

There were so many people that were staying around on the first floor that would immediately know what was happening down there if he did that.

"No, let's send them all back first," he thought.

He walked over to the next set of formation flags, but along the way, he passed through the elevated floor. He looked at it in passing and stopped in his step when he saw something there.

Embedded onto the floor itself was a small hexagonal wooden plate with something carved onto the top. Alex tried to read what that said, but it didn't look like it was something that was meant to be read.

Given that it was in neither the human nor the demon language, Alex was sure this was just a design choice.

He tried to pick up the wooden plate, and it came off easily. There was a small hole at the top to put a small string through, and that made Alex wonder if this was some sort of necklace.

He tried pouring his Qi into it, but it didn't look like it was an artifact at all.

"Huh?" he thought. He placed it back where it was and continued.

The fourth formation seemed to be the one that was responsible for sending everyone out of this secret realm.

"Alright, let's do that."

He started pouring Qi into the formation and soon enough he felt the power of teleportation take over him. He was sure everyone else was feeling the same as well.

Alex poured out some of his own space aura and fought against the feeling. He continued pouring in the Qi for a while and finally stopped after a while.

The teleportation power disappeared and Alex didn't have to struggle anymore.

"Whisker," he called out.

Whisker came out of his space once again and looked at Alex for instruction. "Can you go up there and check if anyone is still in the tower?"

Whisker nodded and flew to the ceiling before diving into the stone. He made his way to the top and arrived on the first floor.

Alex looked through Whisker's eyes and saw that no one was there anymore.

He quickly walked over to the formation that was getting rid of his spiritual sense and knocked it down. As soon as that was down, the suppression of his spiritual sense lifted, and he could see everything with his senses once again.

He teleported out of the room back onto the first floor where he met up with the Spirit again.

"Master White Tiger, you did it!" the spirit said excitedly.

"Yeah, I did," Alex said. "Is everyone gone?"

"I'm not sure," the spirit said. "A few people had entered the rooms that I couldn't see in and haven't come back at all."

"Take Whisker here and make them return then," Alex said. "I need to go search for something."

"Okay," the spirit accepted the task and left with Whisker.

Alex returned back to the base floor where he spread his spiritual sense and started looking around for something.

The last formation in the room turned out to be something that was meant to make the tower inaccessible for a long period of time after it was opened once. It was attached to the formation that sent everyone out, so since Alex had activated that, the other formation had activated as well and no one could enter anymore.

Whisker and the spirit returned with the unfortunate news that the people that had entered had already died. Alex shrugged. He didn't know who they were, so he didn't feel bad at all.

"Are you done, master White Tiger?" the spirit asked.

"Not yet," Alex said with a slight frown on his face. "The formation I'm looking for isn't here. It must be somewhere outside the tower."

"What formation are you looking for, master Whiter Tiger?" the spirit asked.

"The Space stabilizing formation," Alex said.

"I'm sorry, I'm not aware of any such formations," the spirit said. "I barely only know that there are even formations on the base floor."

"Not your fault," Alex said and thought for a bit. "What are the chances that the space outside of this tower is a complete void?"

"You told me it was all void, didn't you?" the spirit asked.

"I did, but it can't all be void," Alex said. "At the very least, there should be some space where the spirit vein is still there, or the formations wouldn't work. There has to be some small bit of space before the void."

"Maybe," the spirit said. "But the space would still all be cracked, given how close they are to most of the rooms on the floor."

"Yes," Alex said. "But I only care about the small space. As long as I can get there and go down to where the formation is, I could find the problem and fix it."

"That's not a bad idea in of itself, but when you add the spatial cracks, there is a high chance you'll die," the spirit said.

"Well, thankfully we have someone here who can't," Alex said. "Whisker, come on. You have more job to do."

Whisker nodded.

"I didn't find any formation that is stopping you from entering. Are you sure you can't come along?" Alex asked.

The spirit tried and shook its head. "I can't."

"Well, we'll see more about it later then," Alex said and teleported down to the base floor again.

He used his spiritual sense, but of course, it couldn't penetrate the walls. Thankfully, Whisker could pass through it with his technique.

"Alright, go straight below us," Alex said. "I will guide you each step of the way."

Chapter 1127: Gift

Whisker went through the walls and appeared outside, right at the edge of the tower. He looked at what was around him and Alex got all the information.

There were cracks in space everywhere around him, but there was a gap between the tower and the cracks that Whisker could navigate through.

Whisker needed to go straight below, but Alex wasn't sure how much more the tower went on before one could out. Because of that, he had to first send Whisker outside safely and then send him below.

It turned out that the base of the tower was still quite high in the air, so Whisker had to go down for a couple hundred more meters before he reached the ground.

Towards the ground, he stopped on the ground and used his spiritual sense to look around.

"Go around the tower, carefully," Alex said. Whisker nodded and started moving. He scurried along the side of the tower, hugging it at every step so as to not hurt himself on some spatial fractures by accident.

"Stop!" Alex said when he noticed something through Whisker's spiritual sense. "To your right, about 20 meters into the floor. Do you see that?"

Whisker sensed the ground and nodded. He saw a formation flag that was intact there. It didn't look like there were any spatial fractures, so he went down.

He arrived in front of the formation flag and Alex checked it carefully.

He quickly copied the design down and tried to map out as much of the overall design as he could. He wanted to see if this was the space stabilizing formation or not, and find out how many more flags there would be out there.

'Not enough information,' he thought. "Continue along."

Whisker ran out of the ground and appeared back outside where he started walking again.

The tower seemed to be the only thing remaining in this secret realm, so Whisker had a faster time going around.

There was some fractured space that had moved onto the tower, and in those cases, Whisker had to fly around it and continue.

Alex kept searching for the formation flags as he had a general idea of where it would be. He found 2 more and added them to the design.

As he worked on the formation design, Whisker found another one.

Alex let Whisker get to it himself when he realized something was off about this formation flag. He stopped what he was doing and focused on it.

"It's slanted," he realized. "It's not straight. Whisker, try and see if you can push it straight."

Whisker went up to the formation flag and started pushing it.

As soon as he did, Alex felt the space shudder a bit. "More, some more," he said and kept an eye on how stable the space was in here.

As soon as the weird feeling of being inside a secret realm returned to him, he stopped Whisker. "That's it, stop," he said.

Whisker stopped and moved away. The formation flag stayed upright and the space stabilized. Whisker came back outside, and as soon as he did, Alex could see that the shattered space had started healing again.

It wasn't immediately okay to walk around, but it was much better than before, and the chance of propagating was most like gone. It would continue to heal before it was fully stabilized, at which point whenever the people were called back in, they would most likely appear outside the tower, if there was any space there at all.

Alex called back Whisker and went to tell the spirit what had happened.

"That's fantastic news," the spirit said. "I also noticed that have access to the 38th floor now. Although most of it is still broken and needs fixing."

"Now, tell me how I can refine this treasure easily," Alex asked.

"Well, it's as you would do all treasures," the spirit said. "Give it a bit of your Qi and use your blood essence. Although, given the massive size, I'm not sure you can do it so easily."

"That's... that's going to take me a long time," Alex said. "Is there no easier option?"

"There's no shortcut, master White Tiger," the spirit said.

Alex frowned a little. He did in fact want to try and get this treasure, but if the spirit was correct, he would have to stay in here for a very long time to do so, especially since it was an Immortal treasure.

He didn't have that sort of time. He had already wasted 5 months fighting the assassins, he now needed to go find his father.

"Urgh!" he thought. "Fine! I'll do it later. When will you open next? 10 to 12 years?"

"I believe there is a part of the tower outside the secret realm, right?" the spirit asked.

Alex nodded.

"Why don't refine the treasure from the outside? Whenever you are free that is," the spirit said. "I would really want to have you as my new master, so I will try to not resist as well as I can."

"Oh," Alex said. "That's not a bad idea. I could come through the secret realm directly too, but that might be dangerous for a while."

He thought for a bit longer and nodded. "Yeah, I think I'll do that. That sounds like the best way for me right now."

"I'm happy that you're satisfied with that, master White Tiger," the spirit said.

"I mean, what can you really do about it?" Alex said with a disappointed look. "Anyway, I should be going."

"I see," the spirit said. "Before you leave, master White Tiger. Since you did not receive anything despite going through all the trouble, even helping to save my life, please let me give you something to take away."

"Oh," Alex was surprised. "What is it? Is it one of the gifts that you're supposed to give for every floor?"

"Oh no," the spirit said. "I don't have those anymore. Those were all gone so long ago and without anyone to add more, we have nothing to give."

"So what is it?" Alex asked.

The spirit waved its hand and something appeared in front of Alex.

Alex looked at the thing in front of him with a surprised look. "Are you sure?" he asked.

"Please, take it," the spirit said. "This is my thank you."

"I..." Alex was flabbergasted. "Thank you," he said as he took the gift.

The spirit told him a few things about the gift that he needed to know about before he could use it properly.

Alex realized that it wasn't a simple gift as it had restrictions, but it was still quite the gift for him.

Alex prepared to leave, but before he did so, he had to change his face again. After his last face-to-face encounter with an explosion, his pill had lost its effect, so people could see his real face now.

The woman was most likely telling her people who she saw come in through the cracks on the 44th floor.

"Have a safe journey, master White Tiger," the spirit bid him goodbye.

"I'll see you in the future when I take over the tower then," Alex said and teleported back to the base floor where he activated the formation that sent him back out.

Not much time had passed since everyone had come out of the tower, so there was still a huge amount of people there. They were all leaving, but some were wondering if the one who won the challenge was going to reveal themselves.

Alex quietly moved away from the place, intermingling with the other people.

"Young man, here," a voice spoke into his head. Alex recognized the voice and looked in that direction.

Very far away was a single person who smiled and waved at him.

Alex looked at the man and walked towards him. "Senior Zhu, you're still here," he asked.

"Of course, I'm waiting for you," Zhu Shaofan said. "So, how did it go? Did you do well?"

"Yes, I did," Alex said. "I even got something from the Sanctum, a gift."

"Oh," Zhu Shaofen's eyes widened. "I didn't know the Sanctum still gave gifts."

"It did, but people saw me take it, so I had to give it over to someone for safekeeping," Alex said. "Can you call sister Xue? She has it."

Zhu Shaofan's face changed almost imperceptibly, and he shook his head. "Xue'er is already gone," he said.

"So early? She only just got out, didn't she?" Alex asked. "And she had my item too."

"She didn't tell me," Zhu Shaofan said. "Let's go catch up to her group."

"No," Alex said. "Please call her here."

"It's easier if we go there ourselves," Zhu Shaofan said. "I can fly much faster."

"No, I feel much safer staying here," Alex said.

Zhu Shaofan paused and gave him a weird look. "What do you mean 'safer'?" he asked. "Do you think I'll hurt you?"

Alex said nothing.

"Wow! You think so, don't you?" Zhu Shaofan said. "Why would you think that?"

Alex pulled out a talisman. "This is the exact same type of paper your insight pavilion uses, wasn't it?" he asked. "This is what the assassins were using to track me down."

"So?" Zhu Shaofan said. "Our pavilion isn't exclusive to using those papers."

"Maybe," Alex said. "But it sure as hell was convenient for an assassin to come with us on the way here. We even went out of our way to get her."

"Are you saying Xue'er is an assassin?" Zhu Shaofan asked.

"Yes," Alex said.

"There's no way that's true," Zhu Shaofan said.

"Are you saying she came out of the Sanctum then?" Alex asked. "Call her here right away and let me find out I was wrong."

"Yes, she did," Zhu Shaofan said. "Whatever assassin you met, it must have been a coincidence that she was just like Xue'er."

"Oh! Was it a coincidence that the assassin was also called Xue Mei and had very similar proportions and attitude to her?" Alex asked. "Now that you mention it, there are an awful lot of coincidences aren't there?"

"Was it a coincidence that from the list of assassins you gave me, aside from the first two that were already dead by the time, not a single one of them matched?" Alex asked.

"Was it a coincidence that you came back to the Sunborn Sanctuary right after the elders had taken me back there?" he asked. "Or the fact that two of the assassins were taking orders from you before we went in."

"Or the fact that you tried to make me fall for a charmer when we first met her," Alex said.

"What are you trying to get at?" Zhu Shaofan asked.

Alex looked him dead in the eyes and asked, "You are the leader of the Dark Phoenix assassins, aren't you?"

Chapter 1128: Result of the Oath

Zhu Shaofan thought for a bit and asked, "Did you know that I am forbidden to kill people?"

Alex was slightly confused. "What?" he asked.

"You heard me right. I'm forbidden to kill people," he said. "It's not just me of course. All 11 of us are forbidden from killing anyone. That was a result of the oath we spoke all those years ago."

"You're avoiding my question," he said.

"I am, of course," Zhu Shaofan said. "You're accusing me of being an assassin, so I have to give you this explanation so you can understand properly."

Alex frowned, but there were enough people around him, so he felt relatively safe. "Go on," he said.

Zhu Shaofan smiled. "My oath was something I didn't take part to say. I was pretty much forced into it," he said. "Just because the incident happened to take place near where I lived at the time, I was forced to be part of it."

"The incident?" Alex asked.

Zhu Shaofan nodded. "I can't go into more details than I already have. And I have gone into more than I'm allowed to already," he said.

"I didn't join the council of course. Why would I? I was forced to speak such a nonsense oath that stopped me from killing people, and then they wanted me to stay in the capital until... no, I didn't want to join them. In fact, I hated them so much for what they did," Zhu Shaofan said.

Alex was surprised. "You hate the 10 elders?" he asked.

"Hated, in the past," Zhu Shaofan said. "I hold some resentment, but it's not something I can't just bury. It was just that I believed they were the reason behind the incident at the time and hated them."

"It turned out that they were more of a reaction that the continent needed at the time. I didn't know, I just saw what I saw and made my own judgment. I was also pretty ticked off from being forced into the oath to hide what they did."

"I thought I would get over it soon enough, but no, fate didn't want me to," he said. "The 10 elders became the center of attention as they took over the ruling of the continent, while little me who never chose the spotlight was forgotten entirely. I didn't mind at the time, but then those bastards attacked me and my family."

"I fought back, but I could never truly harm them. Any time I tried to use my power, the oath would stop me, forcefully making me stop mid-attack." Zhu Shaofan's face was slowly changing. "So many of my people died that day yet I couldn't even harm the enemy. I... I was useless."

"I asked the elders for help, but they ignored my call for help because the skirmish was small in their eyes and the ones that had died were not big enough to warrant their attention. All they did was give a strong stern to the bastards and made them not attack us again."

"That didn't satisfy me at all. I wanted those bastards dead, but I couldn't do it. So, I decided to commission a few assassins for the task. Unfortunately, it turned out there weren't many strong assassins at the time at all. Every single one of them was a wimpy little bitch that only knew how to talk big."

"That was when I got the idea. If I wanted these bastards dead, I needed to do it all myself. So, I decided to form my own assassin group who could kill for me," he said.

Alex's eyes went wide. "You're confessing?" he asked.

"Of course," Zhu Shaofan said. "Anyway, I decided to form my own assassins group, but of course, I didn't know how to do that. I didn't even know who was strong or who was cruel enough to kill people."

"That was when the perfect opportunity showed itself. You see, we got to go to the Western Continent, where we attacked them and stole their resources," he said. "I found the people I wanted in my group, and I also found something else."

"After we returned, I opened the Dark Phoenix assassins group. I employed the assassins and trained them. Since they were bloodthirsty, they killed those bastards that had come to attack my family all those years ago. Oh, that was a glorious night for me."

"The night sky was stormy and dark, lit up vaguely in the north by... ah, that was wonderful," Zhu Shaofan said.

Alex didn't say anything. He could understand the mentality of taking revenge on someone who has hurt you and your family but reveling in it was not something he could relate to.

"So that's it? You are the leader of the Dark Phoenix assassins," Alex said.

"Yes, of course," Zhu Shaofan said. "The group itself has gone through multiple iterations by now. Most either died during a mission or died while cultivating. There was one group that even died because of infighting. But I continued adding people bit by bit."

"I will have to add some more now," he said. "It's been a while since I've had to change all 6 people entirely. But if they were weak enough to die, then who cares right?"

Alex ignored the question. "Why are you telling me all this?" he asked.

"Because I don't need to hide anything anymore. Come on, ask me what you want, I don't have to hide anything."

Alex's eyes narrowed for a second. "Who hired your group to kill me?" he asked.

"I have an oath, remember? I can't say," Zhu Shaofan said. "What I can say is the thing I skipped over before. The thing I learned about in the Western Continent."

"All this time I thought I was so sad that I couldn't kill anyone anymore and that I was likely going to be a very bad cultivator too, only to realize I was wrong. You see, I was entirely mistaken about the oath."

Alex frowned. "What are you trying to say?" he asked.

"You see, it turned out that the oath I spoke had a bit more condition to it than I initially thought. When I was fighting in the Western Continent, I could kill people that was a surprise."

"It was then that I found out that my oath did stop me from killing people, but only the people that were from the Southern Continent. As long as someone was from outside, I could kill them easily," he said. "So, let me ask you. Where do you come from again?"

Alex scoffed. "Is that a threat? Are you going to kill me with everyone watching?" he asked.

"Of course, I can't kill you while everyone watching," Zhu Shaofan said. "But why do you think anyone is even watching?"

Alex quickly turned around and saw that no one was really looking at him at all. He tried to figure out why, but before he could vines burst out of the ground and grabbed him.

He tried to break through them, but they were too strong.

"I realized you had killed everyone inside, so I had already planned to kill you right here, and had made the preparations for it all," he said. "It took me some time to activate. Fortunately, you are a fantastic listener. You gave me enough time to activate the formation without you finding out."

"You can't call out to anyone, and no one can really see you in here at all," he said. "And my cultivation base is simply too strong for you to run away from me."

Alex struggled against the vines and they were indeed too strong. 'I should have checked for traps,' he thought. But he could have never imagined that he would try to kill him so publicly.

"Well, I would say there's no hard feeling, but you did kill 6 people I had to nurture for over a century, so I'm going to enjoy this if you don't mind," Zhu Shaofan said.

"Like hell you will," Alex shouted. He immediately used his teleportation dao and Qi filled inside him and a place far away in the middle of the people.

Zhu Shaofan's eyes narrowed. 'Something's wrong,' he thought. "You're not getting away!"

Even as Alex was teleporting away, something came from behind him and hit him right in the back of his neck.

Instantly, Alex saw the world spin for a second as his head rotated far enough that he saw his own headless body stand there for a moment. In the next moment, his body was teleported away, while his head fell to the ground.

Then, his eyes went white and he died.

Alex's headless body plopped outside far away in the middle of the group of people, all of whom stepped away in surprise.

Some of them were horrified at how horribly he had died, no one expected foul play at all. If anything, they expected this to be a dead body that had just come out of the Sanctum as well.

Zhu Shaofan took Alex's head and nodded. His face had changed back to his normal face after being ripped off from his neck and was relatively unharmed above the neck.

"Tsk, tsk, tsk," he thought to himself. "I was even hoping you could accept their oath so that the Southern Continent didn't have to lose such a gem like you. But in the end, you killed people that were under me, and I don't take that lightly."

"I wished I could have obtained your recipes, but I suppose someone from those people will get it," he said. "Whatever, as long as I get the pills I'm fine. Time for me to take your head to them and gain my reward."

Chapter 1129: Blackout

The crowd gathered around Alex's headless body and wondered what they were supposed to do there. They had to wait for the city to make some arrangements or at least have the acquaintances of the dead person take the body away.

"Can anyone identify who this is?" someone asked.

"I don't know any sect that wears this sort of robes," another person said.

"Maybe his storage bag has some identification?" somebody added. A few people agreed that they should check who it was.

One of them was about to move up front when the corpse spasmed all of a sudden. A Saint Foundation cultivation base erupted from the body and people backed off.

"Get away, the body might be exploding," a few people said.

"Should we destroy it?" another person added.

However, before anyone could attack, the cultivation base retreated back and everything calmed down. Then, from the neck where the head was gone, bones and muscles started wriggling.

Slowly, it grew out in the shape of a head and more things started growing on it. Tendons, veins, skin, eyes, and even brain, everything grew back to the way it was before he had lost his head.

"HAAA!" Alex took a deep breath in as he stopped up from the ground. Immediately a sword appeared in his hand and he got ready to fight.

His body had gone into a fight or flight mode and he looked around, delirious, and tried to figure out what was happening.

"It's alright, young man. We're not going to hurt you," one of the people said and Alex looked toward him.

He gulped a little and breathed in a few more times before he started calming down a little.

"Hey! What's happening out there? Why did you blackout again?" Godslayer's voice cried from inside his head.

Alex's mind was too jumbled to make any sense of what had just happened.

"Hey, isn't that... no, that is. That's Alchemist Alex. I've seen his face before," someone said.

"Alchemist Alex? The one that stopped making pills?" someone else asked.

"You're right. That is him," someone else said.

Alex was still struggling to form coherent thoughts in his head, but for now, he decided to run away.

He didn't even care what direction it was. He simply flew off. People thought of following him, but no one acted on him.

"Wasn't he dead?" someone asked.

"I thought so too, but his head grew out. Is that even possible?" another person asked.

"Could it be a pill? He is a master Alchemist," someone else said.

Far away, a woman looked towards the saints that were gathered around her. "That was him," she said. "That was the guy that entered the 44th floor while I was fighting," she said.

"Are you sure?" the people asked.

"Yes," the girl said. "He came in through the cracks in space and told the puppet I was fighting that he had won. The puppet acknowledged it as a fact and the next moment we were back on the first floor without me ever getting the chance to fully finish our battle."

"I see," one of the elders said. "Then it's settled then. It was Alchemist Alex who completed the Sundering Sanctum's challenges this time around."

It wouldn't be long before more people learn of that fact.

Alex flew silently, gathering the thoughts in his head. Godslayer still asked a lot of questions, but he waited until he had everything working again.

"I died," he told to Godslayer. "Well, at least as dead as a headless man can be before I regenerated back."

"What?" Godslayer couldn't help but ask. "You were headless?"

"I think so," he said. "Some of the people in the crowd also seemed surprised that my head grew back. Holy shit, I didn't even know that was possible."

"So that blackout I felt was your head disappearing?" Godslayer asked.

"I think so," Alex said. "How did it feel?"

"Like I was in a space devoid of anything, just like last time," Godslayer said.

Alex couldn't help but show a surprised expression. "Just like last time?" he asked. "When?"

"Back when that girl exploded her body. This happened back then too," Godslayer said.

"Geez, was my head gone back then too?" he thought. Now that he thought about it, it made sense. After all, that was a Saint Soul realm cultivator's body exploding after all, and by that point, Alex didn't have any defenses at all.

"So I can live even without my head, huh?" Alex thought. "That makes sense. The Undying physique's second stage does say that as long as I have Qi, I will come back to life."

He gently felt the dantian in his body. If what he was thinking was right, then this was now the most important organ of his body.

Not his heart, not his brain. The dantian.

"I will have to be careful," he said.

"So... you can regenerate?" Godslayer asked in a somber tone. "Even from such a massive attack?"

"Yes, my physique technique helps me," Alex said.

Godslayer thought about something and asked, "You called it the Undying Physique, right?"

"Yes," Alex said.

"Undying... how did you get this physique exactly?" Godslayer said.

"From the previous user of the physique," Alex said, not adding more right now.

"Was he... the Undying God?" Godslayer asked.

Alex was surprised. "You know about him too?" he asked.

"Only by name," Godslayer said in a serious tone.

This felt different from all the other times he had talked about a god. Most times he would sound angry and rabid, but this time, his voice was different.

'Has he changed?' Alex wondered. He would be very happy if Godslayer could stop being an annoyance every time something god-related was brought into the conversation.

"That was perhaps the only god from the demons that I know of," Godslayer said.

"Do you not feel angry?" Alex asked. "I took a god's physique, you know."

"You have a lot of things from various gods. There's no point in me getting angry over one more," Godslayer said.

Alex smiled. "It's nice to see that you have progressed," he said. "Now can we go back to talking about how I almost died?"

"Sure," Godslayer said.

"I'm curious, how are you still alive? My head was cut off your know? I would assume you would be gone since my Spiritual sea would have gone with my head," Alex said.

"Of the two you have, for now, the dantian is attached to your physical body," Godslayer said. "Your spiritual sea is attached to your spirit. As long as your spirit remains, the spiritual sea remains as well," Godslayer answered.

"So, I will be fine as long as my dantian is fine, right? I can regenerate as long as I have Qi," Alex said. "Is there a chance of my spirit being harmed right now? Will too much damage to my physical body deteriorate my spirit by any chance?"

"Your spirit is attached to your body for now, so there is a chance. But if your body grows, your spirit should grow as well. Once you reach the Saint Core realm, however, the spirit will separate from your body and form itself a cocoon in your dantian, a core."

"Once it breaks through that cocoon and becomes a nascent soul, your spirit will have separated itself from your physical body. At that time, they can be separately attacked and damaged," Godslayer said.

"So... as long as my dantian is safe for now, I'm safe," Alex said.

"It sure seems that way," Godslayer replied.

Alex asked a few more questions and once he got the answers, he began thinking about Zhu Shaofan.

That man had managed to stay under the many elders' noses and ran his assassin organization. Alex wondered why he even opened an information organization, but the more he thought about it, the more it made sense.

Having your own organization to gather and parse information was very convenient for assassins as they could get any information they wanted at any time. Not only that, it was a great way to proactively hide information about themselves. If they were the biggest in the game, they could make any information disappear.

Just like how Zhu Shaofan had managed to make his own name disappear from almost everything in history. Barely any people remembered him anymore at all.

"He killed me, or at least I hope he thinks so," Alex said. "If he thinks I'm dead, he will go to the employers to get his reward. I wonder where he will be going."

Alex had a list in his head, and he had a few suspects in his head already. "I should be more proactive now that I know how I can find the person who can lead me to my father," he thought.

For that, however, he needed help. And the only help he could get right now was from the elders.

Alex decided to return back to the Sunborn Sanctuary as quickly as he could.

He stopped flying and looked around. "Where the hell am I even?" he thought. He had been flying so aimlessly for a while now and only now he had realized that he was in the middle of nowhere.

He released his spiritual sense that reached over a dozen kilometers wide instantly and saw a group of people on a road. He flew towards those people and asked for directions before flying towards the closest city from where he was.

Once he was in the city, he took the teleportation formation and was now on his way back to the Sunborn Sanctuary.

Chapter 1130: Blood-tainted Lead

Alex arrived back in the Sanctuary and immediately rushed to the palace to speak with the elders.

He went in rushing and met two of the elders that came to intercept him, thinking he was someone else.

"Young man? You're back already?" Yao Ning asked when she saw him. Hou Xinya was surprised as well.

"What happened in the Sanctum? Did you find your father?" Hou Xinya asked him.

"Forget my father, the entire Dark Phoenix group was waiting for me there," he said.

"What? Are you fine? Are you hurt?" Yao Ning asked worriedly.

"Not really," Alex said. "I was nearly killed, by none other than Zhu Shaofan. Turns out, he's the leader of the Dark Phoenix assassins group."

The two elders looked at him with a confused look.

"I can make an oath if you want," Alex said.

The other two looked at him suspiciously. "Zhu Shaofan nearly killed you?" they asked.

"Yes," Alex said.

"How did you survive?" they asked.

"He thought he killed me, so he left," Alex said, not bothering to tell anymore. "I'm sorry, I don't have time for this. That man thinks he's killed me and is most likely on his way to get his payment. Can either of you come with me to go catch him? I can't do it alone."

The two hesitated a little. "Wait for a while. Once the others are out, we can discuss it, and then we can go," Yao Ning said.

Alex frowned for a second and only then remembered that the members of the Council couldn't leave the capital unless they all previously agreed to it.

"Is it true that you guys can't kill anyone on this continent?" Alex asked.

The two elders frowned a bit. "How do you know that?" they asked.

"Zhu Shaofan told me," Alex said. "He told me that the oath you had him makes stopped him from killing people. He said his family members were attacked once in the past and he had to watch helplessly since he couldn't kill his enemies. He has been despising you since then."

The two elders thought for a bit and remembered the past. "That can't be... but he seemed so..."

"He established the assassin group just so he could kill people he didn't like," Alex said. "He told me that and then revealed to me that he could kill people, as long as they were not from this continent, just before he went for my head."

The elders heard him and slowly realized that everything added up. The truth was still not decided in their minds, but the evidence was there for now.

"We can't leave right now, but it doesn't look like there's a hurry," the old woman said. "We will call everyone out and make a decision to leave. Just wait for a while."

"But we might miss out on the people that are trying to kill me," Alex said.

"Have you figured out who they are?" Yao Ning asked.

Alex hesitated for a bit. He reached into his storage and prepared his new gift just in case it was needed.

"I have a good idea," he said. "It's someone strong and rich enough to employ the Dark Phoenix group, and someone who also knows the connection between me and my father."

"Who?" Hou Xinya asked.

"All 10 of you and your families," Alex said. "You all are my suspicion."

The old woman's eyes widened for a second before narrowing for a second. "So you have been suspicious of us," she said. "I would be too."

Alex was a little surprised. "I would've expected you to get angry, and maybe even throw a fit as to how disrespectful I was being."

Hou Xinya was halfway there, but he quelled his rage.

"I had a guess," the old woman said. "Back when you mentioned that someone had sent you a visual recording of your father, I wondered why they would do such a thing. Rather, I wondered how they even knew who your father was. And the Heaven Silk thread, that's not a common item."

Alex nodded. "That's why almost all of you were under my suspicion," he said.

The old woman nodded. "But not all of us are your enemies, the 10 of us are certainly not. We old people have been holed up here for generations, and everything we do, we do for the sake of the Southern Continent. It's part of our oath that can only be broken under a single condition that hasn't been fulfilled yet."

Alex gave a thoughtful look. "So... it's the sects or families then," he said. He didn't trust her words entirely, but it was better for him to start with the families and sects anyway. His father was most likely being held hostage by them after all.

"You now have 10 groups of enemies in your mind," the old woman said. "Even if we leave right now, we won't get to them all before Zhu Shaofan would get to them. The chance of us and Zhu Shaofan being there at the same time is near impossible after all."

Alex thought for a bit. "I do have a way," he said. "I just need the Saints of each of these places to gather together for a bit."

"Alright, then just wait for a while. We will for everyone to come out, then we will have a meeting, and then we can leave," the old woman said

Hou Xinya nodded behind her, as that was the most appropriate response to this. Anything else would be reactionary and thus not very well thought out.

"Also, someone sent this to you about 3 months ago. I think they were trying to poison you again," Yao Ning said as she tossed a wooden box to Alex.

Alex grabbed the box and was surprised that it was slightly heavy. "This has poison?" he asked.

"Something poisonous," she said.

"You've opened it?" Alex asked.

"Yes," the old woman said. "Lei Zhong got it and it's well packaged, so unless you break it open, you won't be poisoned."

Alex slowly opened the body and found something wrapped inside of it, something heavy. Used his senses to look past the wrapping and saw that it was an ore.

A reddish-white ore that Alex didn't know anything about.

"This ore is poisonous?" Alex asked curiously.

"Apparently," the old woman said. "The ore is toxic and remains that way until it's turned to metal. I didn't know about it until sister Lei told me, which she heard from old man Kang."

"You can obtain the Blood-tainted Lead, a crimson metal that is very unique and expensive because of how durable and how rare it is. That little ore alone should cost you upwards of tens of thousands of spirit stones," the old woman finished.

"How did you get this?" Alex asked.

"It was put outside the Alchemy Association with your name on it, just like the box you got from before," she said.

Alex frowned. 'This doesn't make sense,' he thought. 'Why would anyone send this to me? That too 3 months ago. I was already inside the Sanctum by that time, so I would have most likely been considered dead at the time with 4 different assassins coming after me.'

"Anyway, you should throw that ore," the old woman said.

"No, I'll keep it," Alex said. "Please have the rest of the seniors leave their cultivation as quickly as they can."

Once he said that, Alex went to his room while thinking about the ore he had received. Why had he received another blatant murder attempt on his life while he wasn't even around?

'Is it not a murder attempt then?' he wondered.

If it was not, then what did the ore represent? Alex looked at the box, the wrappings, everything, but there was nothing written on it at all.

'Blood-tainted Lead,' he thought. 'A rare ore that's also so toxic that I was warned about it.'

Alex paused. He quickly went to his room and opened the box. And then, he tried to crush the ore with his palm. He couldn't really feel anything from the ore in terms of its toxicity, but he did notice how incredibly crumbly the ore was.

Of course, he could crumble it so easily because of his strength as the ore itself wouldn't normally crumble, but with an ore this brittle, the powder would get everywhere.

As he went down that thought process, something struck him.

"Can it be?" he wondered.

He quickly left his room and went to find the two elders.

"Young man, why are you out right now?" Yao Ning asked.

"I... I think I have an idea," he said.

"An idea?" the old woman asked.

"Can either of you leave right now?" he asked.

"Didn't we plan to leave after everyone is out?" the old woman asked.

"I can't wait," Alex said. "I will be leaving soon and going to Sureheart city."

The old woman's eyes narrowed. "Because of the ore?"

"Yes," Alex said. "I believe it came from there, but I'm not sure they had any malicious intent behind it."

The old woman frowned. "Can't you just wait? It might be dangerous," she said.

"Don't worry, I won't go near anywhere that is dangerous," he said.

The old woman still tried to stop him, but Alex had already made up his mind. He left the palace that very second and made his way to the teleportation formation.

Very soon, he arrived at Sureheart city which was one of the most northwestern cities of the entire continent, not counting the Wastelands.

He looked at the mountains the city was surrounded by and a massive mansion that was built there.

That was his goal today.