

Alchemy 1671

Chapter 1671: Best Course of Action

Alex watched Hannah grow weaker as she lost even the last of her Qi. She looked considerably older all of a sudden, even more so in her body than her face. Long Huan grabbed her hand and wrote something into it.

Hannah instinctively moved her hand but stopped. No Qi could come out, so she couldn't talk to him at all. She gestured that she was fine, but it barely came across. At least there was one-way communication.

That was better than nothing.

Alex was about to move toward the next pill he had to make when he stopped and considered something. Should he give her a healing pill?

His instinct told him to do it. Eating a healing pill had healed Hannah the other day, even if it was just for a few seconds. She would most likely want that from time to time, but there was another problem with that.

Since it was a healing pill, it could in some ways deal with the poison they had just fed her. The same was the problem with the Nullifying pill, although that was only meant to work for very recent pills.

No, he could not feed her any good pill now. Hannah had to remain that way until he could heal her. "I will have to heal her fast," he spoke in a soft mutter. "You can heal her?" Zhan Luoyang asked. "Do you have any idea how to do that?"

Alex thought for a moment and shook his head. "Not as of yet," he said. "I don't even know if I can make a pill that could help her. If I do, the pill would have to do multiple things at once."

"But a pill with that broad properties won't be very good at treating a poison when compared to a pill created entirely for the purpose of fighting the poison alone," Zhan Luoyang said.

Alex nodded. "I know," he said. "That is my problem in the first place. I do not know more about the poison. I have a vague idea of how it works, but not much. I'm only a Level 7 poison master at best, so I will have to make a pill that deals with just the poison somehow. Make it so potent that it will deal with any poison that harms one's soul."

"Hmm," Zhan Luoyang gave the words some thought. "But then how will you make it work? You mentioned that she can't have her Dantian open, but both the poison and her hurt soul are inside her Dantian. You can't eat two pills at once, but you need the pill to open her dantian too."

Alex sighed. "You're right, there's that too," he said.

"What?" Long Huan seemed surprised. "You fed her a pill to block her Dantian, knowing it would be a problem?" He seemed somewhat angry at the possible implication.

"Yes," Alex said. "But that had to be done. If I knew how to heal her from the start, this wouldn't be necessary. But as it stands, I have to get rid of any possibilities that she could harm herself accidentally while we try to make the antidote."

Zhan Luoyang nodded. "He's correct," she told Long Huan. "Don't worry, that was the right thing to do. But that still doesn't help with the issue that is created. If you cannot open up her Dantian, how are you going to heal her?"

"I've thought about it for a while now," Alex said. "And I think the best possible course of action we can do here is not for me to make a pill."

"What?" Long Huan asked.

"I would very much like to try and make a pill to help her, but I don't know if I'm capable of that. I do not want to be overconfident just because I'm good at making pills. I know my faults too, and I know I'm not very good when it comes to making new pills, specially ones that are meant to be specific. At least, I can't do it without some external aid."

It had been nearly 18 years since Alex had tried to make the Wood Spiritual Root Enhancing pill and was still nowhere close to being able to make it. Unlike the Water and Earth pills, he was working with nothing to jump off of and thus had difficulties progressing far.

"I don't want to spend years trying to make an antidote pill for Sister when I might have other, possibly better, ways to treat her," Alex said.

"What? There are better ways?" Long Huan asked. "What ways?"

"Instead of trying to make a new healing pill," Alex spoke. "We just ask someone to give us one."

"Ask someone? Who?" Zhan Luoyang asked.

"The Immortals," Alex said. "We can ask the Immortals to lend us a pill if they have one."

"Immortals?" Zhan Luoyang gasped. "You don't mean the Phoenix, do you?"

"I do mean her, but I don't think she can help," Alex said softly. "I'll have to take her to the other ones."

"The Tiger is dead, so the Tortoise? You know where he is?" Zhan Luoyang asked curiously.

"Yes," Alex said. "I've met him before."

"Woah!" the woman was very much so surprised.

Alex couldn't help but find her expression quite amusing.

"And this Dantian issue. Will it no longer be a problem if we go to the Tortoise?" Long Huan asked.

Alex didn't correct them by saying that they weren't going to the Tortoise. They were first going to check if Scarlet could help them. If not, they would check if Bai Jingshen had some pills to help them.

If not, they would finally go to the Central Continent to find Senior Yang. He would most likely want to help someone with the Nine Revolutions Celestial Body.

If not, Alex would still be trying to make a pill for her the entire time, so nothing would have been lost.

Long Huan did bring up a good question about the Dantian. That was quite a great problem in the end.

Taking two pills back to back was very dangerous for a body simply because of the chance of the two energies interacting with each other and producing results that could be harmful to one.

However, if Alex took time between feeding the two pills, enough Qi would flow out of her Dantian and the poison would take effect.

He had to somehow make it so that Hannah would take the two pills at different instances, but have their effects take place just one after another with very little time spent in between.

He gave the problem some thought and nodded to himself.

"We should be able to feed her two pills at the same time without causing any side effects," Alex said out loud. "We won't have to worry about the Dantian issue if we do that."

"We can do that?" Zhan Luoyang asked. "How?"

"I say we, but the truth is none of us can do that," Alex said. "We'll have to go to someone to get her aid in this."

"Get to someone?" Long Huan frowned. "Can we trust this person to not give us up to my Father?" Alex chuckled at the question. "Of course she won't," he said. "What mother would do that to her child? Anyway, you should be prepared. We're going to meet your Mother-in-law."

Chapter 1672: Right Now

"Mother-in-law?" Long Huan seemed confused and concerned all of a sudden. He had spent so many years never even considering he had a family on his wife's side, and now that he heard about his mother-in-law, he was feeling nervous.

"Yes, your Mother-in-law, my aunt," Alex said, standing up. Memory was no longer needed as he didn't have any pills to make, so it floated toward him, disappearing into his Soul Space.

Zhan Luoyang noticed that it hadn't disappeared into any storage bag, but wasn't sure where else it had gone. She could only assume a necklace artifact since the thing seemingly floated into his chest.

"I see," Long Huan said. "I will look forward to the day I will get to meet her and the rest of your family."

"Look forward to?" Alex asked. "No, we're leaving right now."

Long Huan was taken aback. "What? Right now?" he asked.

"Yes," Alex said. "Or do you have anything else to do in this empire?"

The man hesitated a bit before shaking his head. "No, I have nothing else to do," he said. "But still, leaving right now is a bit..."

"I'll think of a way," Alex said. "You came through the secret realm. How did you enter it when it wasn't time?"

"Anyone can enter it whenever they want," Long Huan said. "Not to mention I have the Ivory Sword to cut through the walls of any secret realm to hide myself if needed."

"Right," Alex said. "Anyway, get ready to leave. Tell my sister we're leaving."

The young man nodded and quickly wrote into Hannah's hands what they were going to do next.

"Maybe you shouldn't hurry," Zhan Luoyang said. "There are many people in the house that can see you leave. If they start questioning and the rumor somehow reaches the Emperor, it will be bad."

"I don't want to wait an entire day just to..." Alex sighed. "Can you dress them in some servant clothes? I will tell the others that I need some ingredients from the city, so I will want to quickly visit it."

"That can work," Zhan Luoyang said. "But I can't get them out without many people seeing it. I should get a talisman to hide them. Our treasury might have a few. Let me go fetch some."

"No need," Alex said and flipped his hands open. Whisker appeared on his hand in a flash of white light, looking around confused. He saw Zhan Luoyang and finally turned around to see Alex and the rest.

"Brother... what is going on?" Whisker asked.

"Ah!" Alex realized in a start. "I'm sorry. I was so taken aback by the whole thing that I forgot to tell you guys."

Pearl came out a moment later as well, the large white tiger looking around confused. His white fur was pristine and without any other color. Alex grimaced a bit, but quickly hid it. These people had already become part of something worse than Pearl's existence, so he had no reason to hide them from him.

Still, Zhan Luoyang gasped. "The White Tiger!" she said loudly, but quickly realized she might have been wrong. There were no stripes on Pearl's body after all.

Pearl looked around and then at himself. A look of panic showed in him as well, but it was quickly squashed when a feeling of calmness flowed to him through the bond. He looked around at Alex and saw a look that said everything was okay.

Then he looked at the situation and was as confused as Whisker was.

"Pearl, Whisker, look at who I found," Alex said, pointing to Hannah. "I found my sister."

Both of the beasts had their eyes go wide. "Brother, you found your sister? This is great news!" Pearl exclaimed.

"Brother, congratulations!" Whisker shouted out loud as well.

They were saddened to learn of their situation, but the overall atmosphere was still one of happiness. They had no doubt that Alex would fix this problem as soon as he could.

"Whisker, go with Lady Luoyang," Alex said, pointing to the woman in front of her.

"Take him and go as far as you can with him from this place, and then find a safe place where we can put them the two of them," Alex said.

"Okay," the woman said. "But then how will we take the two of them?"

"Leave that to me," Alex said. "Just go for now, and tell me when you're there through Whisker. He will relay it back to me."

The woman nodded. "I'll do that," she said. She wasn't sure what she was to do precisely, but she was going to do it.

Before leaving, however, she took out some talisman and handed it over to the young prince.

"Here, I forgot to give them to you yesterday," she said.

"Oh, they were made already?" the young man said with a surprised look. Alex stepped close to see what they were.

"Teleportation talisman?" he asked. He could easily locate the rune for teleportation. It looked somewhat different, but still quite similar to the teleportation talisman he had used to teleport out of the Northern Continent so long ago.

"That is a strong one. You're planning to use this to leave the Empire?" Alex asked.

"These are just failsafe," Long Huan said. "To take us elsewhere if we ever come upon a situation where we need protection."

Alex nodded. "But I see something wrong with the talisman. It only takes you west," he said.

"No, that is how it was made," the prince said. "I'm surprised you can read a talisman this well. Are you knowledgeable about talisman as well?"

"His Majesty completed all the Talisman trial in the Realm of Trials. He is the first one to do so in many decades now," she explained.

Alex ignored his shock. "Why only west?" he asked.

"Because the other direction is dangerous," the young man said. "There is no fixed range on this and randomly teleports you away. North and South would put me either still in the Empire, or in the ocean to fend for myself. East is the same with all of it being ocean or worse, the Edge."

"The West is the longest direction, so it is the safest to run away to," he explained. "A bunch of these and we should be able to make it to the Southern Continent or even the Western Continent."

"Be careful not to fall into the border of the Central Continent though," he said. "That would not be a fun situation."

Long Huan gave him a confused look. He wondered why Alex talked like he knew what would happen there.

"Anyway, I'll leave," Zhan Luoyang said and walked away.

Once she was gone, Alex waited for a moment and brought out Memory again. It would be good to make everyone think he was making another pill. A pill cloud would be quite the distraction, just in case.

He quickly sat down and started making a new pill. It would be a simple healing pill, nothing more. He was quick about it too, seeing Zhan Luoyang calmly, but quickly walking through the garden to make her way to another house separate far in the distance.

Ingredients flowed out from inside him one after another and within minutes another pill cloud formed. Zhan Luoyang reached a small house, seemingly dedicated to just servants, and entered a room in there.

It was time.

Chapter 1673: Teleportation

As lightning bolts fell from the sky on the pill Alex made, Long Huan went up to Hannah and told her they were going to be leaving soon. He started gathering everything that was in the room that they would need when they arrived in the Southern Continent.

One after another, the lightning bolt fell into the cauldron and faded away. After the 8th lightning bolt, Alex stopped and took out the pill, putting it into a bottle.

He tossed the bottle over to Long Huan, who caught it in surprise. "What is this?" he asked.

"Just a healing pill," Alex said. "Anyway, let's get going."

He walked up to the two of them and grabbed them on their shoulders. Then, he closed his eyes and felt his connection to Whisker. There.

Long Huan shuddered as the world transformed around him. The room they were just in changed and they arrived in another room, standing next to Zhan Luoyang who had Whisker standing on her shoulders.

"How did..." he tried to speak, but the shock made him unable to.

Whisker jumped onto Alex's shoulders. "Get a carriage ready and place these two on it," Alex said. "I'll come in a few minutes."

Before Zhan Luoyang could even nod, Alex disappeared from where he stood, appearing back in the room inside the building.

He took Memory back now that he had made the pills and sighed as he understood what had to be done next. He was running away from this continent, even if for only a few days hopefully, but that would most certainly bring about some problems.

Should he tell the Crown Prince what he was doing? After all, the Crown Prince was the greatest authority right now, with the Dragon Emperor in deep cultivation. 'I'll do what the rest say is wise,' he thought. He would need to first tell the two elders what was happening.

Alex left the building and returned to the two elders who were lounging in the garden, talking to a few people. He took them away and explained the situation as quickly as he could.

"We are ready to leave this place if that is what you wish of us," Yao Ning said. "We will take the young lady with us."

Alex nodded. "Thank you," he said softly.

"You don't have to thank us, Your Majesty. That is what our purpose is," Liang Shufen said. "Anyway, let us leave."

The carriage was prepared by the time Alex went outside, his excuse being that he wanted to visit more of the city and go shopping. The servants would be there just to help him navigate.

Two carriages were prepared for that reason. Hannah and Long Huan would ride on the one behind, and in front, would be Alex and Zhan Luoyang.

And surprisingly, the Crown Prince.

Alex hid his frown before it appeared. "Oh, are you going shopping with us, Prince Fangyu?" he asked the man. His eyes moved toward Zhan Luoyang, and a look of resignation was on her face.

"I do not know what you are planning, Your Majesty," the Crown Prince said. "But if you can help my brother be happy, please do."

Alex said nothing but simply nodded. "I'll do my best." Thankfully, there were no soldiers or guards with them aside from Alex's group. Not even Long Huogang was there for some reason. He was supposed to be the Crown Prince's bodyguard, was he not?

The carriage moved and they left the Zhan family manor house.

The road to the city was short, but it felt like the longest journey Alex had ever been on. He worried about what he was going to have to do next.

Alex knew for a fact that the 'guards' he had been assigned were meant to watch him at all times. Fortunately, they hadn't assumed their current situation to be dangerous enough to warrant protection. Either that or the Crown prince had made them stop.

Either way, he was now free of them. But that would only make the Dragon Emperor more suspicious when he learned of him being missing for the next while.

Could he leave behind Yao Ning and Liang Shufen for the sheer illusion that he would return in a day or two? He wasn't sure. He wanted to take them with him until the very end and see what decision was the correct one there.

Not that they would let him go alone. They were his shadows in his journey. Wherever he went, they would too. At this rate, Alex sometimes wondered if they would follow him right to the Immortal lands when he did breakthrough to that one day.

They arrived at the city, and their carriage led them to the building that housed the teleportation platforms. "Where do we go next?" the Crown Prince asked.

"You should go to the Blackheart City," the Crown Prince said. "The secret realm is right outside of there."

Alex nodded before realizing something. "You're not coming?" he asked.

"I will be of no use there," the Crown Prince said. "Instead, I'll stay here and tell everyone you're doing something important and can't return soon. That should help you get some time."

Alex realized that would be quite helpful. "Thank you," he said to the Crown Prince.

The Crown Prince nodded slowly. They quickly got off the carriage and walked into the building where the Crown Prince used his authority to make the next teleportation happen to Blackheart City.

The workers there tried to explain how that would be difficult to do as it was not in their records, but the Crown Prince's presence made them find a way. And they did.

After just 10 minutes of waiting, the teleportation formation was prepared to take them straight to Blackheart City, from where they would go to the Voidgate.

Everyone got onto the formation platform, including Zhan Luoyang who would see them to the very end.

Alex got on top as well, and held his sister's hand on one side, while Long Huan held it on the other. Touch was the only thing she could sense, so the both of them tried to do their best to make her feel safe.

"Thank you, brother," Long Huan said. "I don't know how long it will take me, but I will come back once my wife is healed. Maybe I won't have to fear Father then."

"Do well, brother. I wish you and your wife the best," the Crown Prince said from outside of the platform, nodding to his brother.

Long Haun nodded back and got ready for the teleportation platform to activate.

As it activated, all 6 of the people there saw light shine through the platform. The white light gathered around them, and Alex felt the teleportation aura fill the air.

Then, they teleported.

The Crown Prince watched the 6 of them vanish right before his eyes and knew where they had gone. He sighed a little, wondering why he hadn't let either. 'No, I can't leave. I have to stay back to help them however I can,' he thought. He shook his head and turned around to leave.

As he did, the light behind him flashed once again. He turned around, wondering if something had gone wrong and they had been returned. However, that was not the case at all.

A single man stood on the teleportation formation now, arriving there right after everyone had left.

The Crown Prince's eyes widened in surprise.

"Father?!"

Chapter 1674: The Ivory Sword

Alex and the rest arrived at Blackheart City and quickly left the building that housed the teleportation formations there. Since he had come here last time too, he was aware of where he would have to go to leave.

However, Zhan Luoyang seemed more familiar with the place and was a better guide. Thus, she took out a boat of her own and carried the people away in it.

The 6 of them flew out the Blackheart City, flying into a large field of open land that was cultivated to grow crops and food. Alex could see a large establishment in the distance, a sect he believed to be the Immortal Saint Pavilion. They couldn't be seen by this.

They made their way past the sect and into the distance.

"How far is the secret realm?" Yao Ning asked as she watched the land fly past her.

"It's not far. Just 10 more minutes," Zhan Luoyang said.

"Oh, it's quite close then," she said. "Is it being this close a coincidence? The only other capital city so close to the secret realm is the Blueheart City, isn't it?"

"That is no coincidence," Long Huan said from the side. "Back when the royal family of Lin used to rule this kingdom, long before the rebellion, they transferred their capital city here so they could be closer to the secret realm. I'm not sure how long ago that was, but it still remains that way long past their family's eradication."

"I see," Yao Ning said. She wanted to say they were weird to do this, but then the capital of the Southern Continent too would move to a different place if the Phoenix were to move away. It was not that different.

"The secret realm's formation won't be activated this time around, right?" he asked.

"No," Zhan Luoyang said. "There should still be a year and a half before it opens. And it only activates when it opens."

"And we're going to be sneaking in," Long Huan said, bringing out his Ivory sword.

Alex looked at the sword, slightly in awe at finding the twin to the one that was in his Soul Space. He saw the small indent on the handle of the sword, otherwise easily missed if he were not looking for it; A small serpentine figure coiling around a sword.

The insignia of the Azure Imperium.

Long Huan noticed Alex eyeing the sword and felt immediately defensive of it. However, thinking logically, he found no reason to fear Alex taking away the sword.

"Do you want to see?" he asked Alex.

Alex nodded without thinking. He was indeed very curious about the sword.

"Be docile," Long Huan said as he passed along the sword.

For an instant, Alex wondered why he wanted him to be docile. Was he not calm? But then, the feeling of rejection flowed into him from the sword, and understood. He was talking to the sword spirit inside the sword.

Just like the black sword, this one had a budding sword spirit as well. It wasn't completely formed, but was good enough so that not just anyone who touched it could use it.

Alex wanted to show his dominance with his Intent but decided not to. It wasn't the sword's fault that it didn't want him to hold it. He simply ignored the feeling of rejection and checked for whatever else he could find.

Just like the black sword had the aura of Teleportation, this white sword had the aura of... space. No, it wasn't precisely space. It was a lesser dao than the Dao of Space. After feeling it for a while, Alex could tell that this sword was only capable of tearing down space, and not manipulating it in any other way.

It was quite inferior to what he could do. But for a sword that could give that ability to someone who had no chance of comprehending space, it was a massive boon.

He looked through the ivory blade for a while longer, to try and understand how it was crafted when he heard Zhan Luoyang's words.

"We're here."

Alex looked up. In front of them was a small settlement of sorts with few people in there. He frowned seeing people here.

"That's the gate," Zhan Luoyang pointed to a large metallic arch that shimmered in the midday light. The multitudes of colors it showed reminded Alex of what a wall between the secret realm and the outside world usually looked like from the inside.

He had never seen one from the outside. Secret realms tended to not exist as far as a regular person was concerned on the outside. Space warped around them so they were never an obstacle to be found.

However, it seemed this one was found and was being affected in some way to create that wall. "That metal arch must be some sort of artifact, right?" he asked.

"It is," the woman said.

"And we're going through it?" he asked.

"Dear god, no," she said. "We would be easily seen if we went that way. Prince Huan knows of a way into the secret realm from the side."

"I do," the prince said, turning around. "That way, if we go behind here, we can enter through a forest."

Alex and the rest said nothing, leaving the prince to make the judgment here. He had come and gone from this place.

The group flew away from the small settlement, arriving on top of a forest, where they landed. It was far away from the other place and there were no people here.

"Where now?" Alex asked as the prince started looking around.

"Uhh... it's here somewhere," Long Huan said, looking confused. "I came out in between two trees and I've marked both of them with a cross. We should be able to find it."

Alex frowned a little. Nearly 20 years had passed since the two of them had come back. The entire forest should look different to him. Even the marking he left would have been covered in moss dirt and tree bark.

Alex sighed. He released his spiritual sense at once, surprising the others around him who weren't aware of how strong it would be. They had their spiritual sense out to search as well, but this one felt like a flood moving through their small stream.

Alex located the secret realm easily. As someone with the Dao of Space, it wasn't that difficult after all.

"I found it," he said, pointing in a direction.

The group immediately flew in that direction, landing in front of someplace that was not how Long Huan had described it.

"Alex, this isn't—"

"Try your sword," Alex said simply.

Long Huan was about to argue but decided not to. He simply sighed and sent Qi into his sword. To his surprise, the sword vibrated and as it did, a layer of energy rippled in front of him, showing the existence of the space in front of them.

"It's really here," he said, surprised. Without waiting, he pushed his sword in front of him into the layer of distorted space and cut open a wide gate that led to the secret realm.

"I did it," Long Huan said excitedly. "Let's get in quickly. It won't stay open for very long."

Chapter 1675: Balance Haven

Long Huan took Hannah into the Harmonious Balance Haven, carefully making sure not to have any of her appendages touch the wall of the secret realm which would be unusually sharp.

Alex followed behind them, and then the two elders followed behind him. Zhan Luoyang, however, didn't enter.

Alex stopped and looked back at her. "What are you doing?" he asked. "Come in."

"I can't," she said, a conflicted look on her face. "This is as far as I go, unfortunately."

"You're not coming any further?" Alex asked.

"I can't," she said. "Or I won't have a way to leave. I would be stuck inside the secret realm."

"Stuck inside?" Alex asked in surprise. "I had assumed you would be going all the way. Were you not planning to go to the Southern Continent?"

"I..." She really hadn't been planning that at all.

"Come on, sister Luoyang," Long Huan said. "You've helped us this long. You can't stop now. Besides, your absence can help make Alex's absence look not as severe too."

The woman looked to be in a dilemma for a while, but in the end, she sighed. "I suppose," she said and walked into the secret realm. Her troubled look was still there, but a slight hint of determination peeked through now.

The walls of the secret realm closed back in miraculously after the woman walked in. Miraculous to everyone but one.

Alex turned around and took a proper look at the secret realm that lay in front of his eyes.

The land was uneven, with mountains and cliffs jutting out in every direction. Forests grew atop those mountains and cliffs, with grassland growing on the plains.

Alex and the rest stood atop a large settlement of massive rocks, thrown at the side of a river that seemed to be running dry for now. He settled his footing and looked back at the rest.

"Where to now?" Alex asked Long Huan.

The young man took the lead and looked around. He closed his eyes, spreading his spiritual sense to find the location.

Alex looked at him with curiosity. He had only met this new relative of his just yesterday, but that should've been enough for him to figure out how strong he was. However, no matter how he sensed it, he couldn't tell Long Huan's strength.

He knew for a fact he wasn't very strong. At least, not as strong as his brother. But that would still put him high up in terms of cultivation base. Alex wondered what cultivation base he was in, and more importantly, how exactly he was hiding it so well. The impression Alex got was vague, just like others would through the passive use of his Immortal Concealment technique.

"There!" He pointed toward the south.

Alex's spiritual sense moved in that direction and found a grassland, beyond which was a cave, inside which was the Void. There really was a Voidgate here.

"A Voidgate, huh?" Godslayer's voice flowed in Alex's head. "Interesting."

He made no more comment.

"Let's move," Long Huan took command and carried Hannah in his aura, flying into the sky. The rest followed.

"I don't suppose any of you have been through a Voidgate before, so I realize I should maybe explain it a bit," Long Huan said. "In short, it connects two points in space, creating a tunnel between the two that you can pass through to come out on the other side."

"The travel takes an hour at most and in that time, you will have to let the gate do its thing and take you wherever it wants to. In this case, it will take you to the southwest of the Southern Continent."

"More importantly, however, you will have to make sure that you don't end up using any Qi while you are inside. You might end up causing trouble for our travel and we could get lost in there forever."

Alex heard the things that the prince said, and while he wasn't incorrect in saying what he did, it seemed he didn't know much either. Alex himself didn't think he knew much, but he definitely knew more than him.

Still, all he said was correct, so it was better not to cause confusion by saying things that weren't necessary. As long as they jumped into the Voidgate, they would come out on the other side easily.

"Ah, I see it now," Yao Ning spoke. "I didn't expect it to be hidden from my senses so well."

"It's a crack in space, elder Yao," Long Huan said. "You can't see it easily with your senses. But you can see it pretty well with your eyes once you are close enough. The vibrant colors of purple and sil—"

Suppression filled the atmosphere around everyone in the sky and all of a sudden they plummeted from the sky, unable to keep flying. They were pushed down so badly that they couldn't even maintain a graceful downfall. They tumbled through the sky and would land on the ground if they didn't do something.

Alex felt pain flare up in his mind as he tried to use his Dao. For some reason, he had to fight back the suppression to use his Dao at all. He couldn't use his Dao of Teleportation efficiently from up here at all.

He had to quickly think of what to do, and at that time he saw the ground grow closer and his shadow become denser.

'Shadow!' Alex thought. And he teleported. He arrived on top of his shadow using the Flickering Shadow technique, a teleportation technique that he hadn't used for such a long time after gaining the Dao of Teleportation. It allowed him to teleport between shadows, and he could always teleport to his own shadow using the technique, regardless of the distance. Since it was also a technique and not a Dao, the headache that he assumed would come didn't come as quickly as it should have.

Still, he hit the ground with the same momentum as when he was falling, but to a Saint Soul 4th realm Body Cultivator, that didn't matter at all. He got back up immediately, bringing out Pearl to help him.

Once Pearl was out, the two of them used their Qi to slow down the fall of everyone, especially Hannah who was simply a mortal at the moment. Her body was still much stronger than a regular mortal, but she was a mortal nonetheless.

Everyone landed with grace thanks to the two and Elder Yao immediately grunted in frustration. "What was that?" she asked. "Why did we fall?"

"It's the secret realm's suppression field," Zhan Luoyang said, flexing her palm to feel something. "Our cultivation base is suppressed to Saint Condensation 1st realm, I believe."

Alex frowned and checked his Qi. He tried to pour more strength out, but something was blocking that. It was even blocking regular Qi in the atmosphere from becoming too strong. As such, Dao didn't work either.

"Flight is blocked too?" Liang Shufen asked with a frown.

"I'm afraid so," Zhan Luoyang said. "That's how the formation here goes. Still, this doesn't make sense. Why are we being suppressed here?"

As soon as she asked that, someone's spiritual sense passed through the entire secret realm, immediately locking onto them.

Alex sent his spiritual sense back and felt his heart grow cold in fear. He slowly spoke to let them know what was happening.

"The Dragon Emperor is here."

Chapter 1676: Emperor's Arrival

All 4 that heard Alex's voice turned their heads toward the south as they too realized that the Dragon Emperor had come. "No..." Long Huan's face paled in fear.

Zhan Luoyang seemed to have frozen in shock as well. Alex was the same as well. He couldn't understand why the Dragon Emperor was there at all. How could he have come there so soon? Had the Crown Prince given up on them?

That couldn't be. There would have been no reason to let them go only to call his father. There were so many guards around him and he had let them sneak away.

Had the Dragon Emperor been somehow alerted that they had made it inside? That made little sense either. No, now was not the time to worry about these things.

Alex turned around toward the group. "Let's run!" His words brought them out of their stupor. "He's affected by the suppression too. We can get there first if we run."

Alex jumped next to Hannah and carried her into his arms and ran away, letting the others follow behind him. He was fast, much faster than most of the others behind him, who could only look at him in surprise.

They ran past the river, and into an incline, going over a sparse hill to run down the other side. With flight seemingly completely impossible under the current suppression, running was their only choice.

The Voidgate was no more than 10 kilometers away from them, while the Dragon Emperor was some 25 kilometers behind. If they did it quickly, they could make it there before him with just enough time to get into the Voidgate. Alex didn't even consider what would happen if the man followed him into the Voidgate. He would think about the problem after when he crossed that bridge first.

"He's catching up," Long Huan said. "We need to go faster or else—"

The moment he said those words, the suppression field in the secret realm disappeared. They all felt a surge of power and speed all of a sudden and were now fast enough to reach Alex.

Only, the same went for the Dragon Emperor as well.

Alex flew as fast as he could now and could see the cave that held the Voidgate. It was right in front of him. Long Huan was next to him, rushing for the cave as well. He needed to open it right away.

Just then Alex sensed something. "Take her!" he shouted at Long Huan, throwing Hannah over to him to carry. As soon as she left his arm, he teleported immediately.

Alex appeared in the sky far above and brought out Midnight as power enveloped him.

Body, Blood, Qi, Spirit, and Sword came together to form a power in the infinitesimal amount of time he had. There was no time at all to use his nameless technique, so he could only use the technique he could in this brief period he had.

Power flowed into Midnight, activating the technique that was carved into the sword.

God Rending Death Blade.

Alex swung and cut at the massive lightning bolt with the thickness of a tree trunk. He had noticed the Dragon Emperor targeting the cave and had to stop it no matter what.

Alex's attack was strong, very strong. But it was nothing in front of the strength of a Peak Saint realm cultivator.

The lightning bolt was only weakened, and not destroyed, and the weakened bolt still rushed forth, hitting him directly.

Alex was flung down from the sky, slamming onto the ground, creating a small crater. He was dazed for a second before slowly getting back up. He was... fine?

His broken body was slowly healing on the inside. It was fortunate that his body was strong enough and didn't instantly vaporize because of the attack.

He quickly climbed out and shouted, "Quickly, to the cave!"

Long Huan did not stop and ran, while Zhan Luoyang followed him. Yao Ning and Liang Shufen, however, came to check on him.

"I'm fine, run," Alex said, but they wouldn't leave without him.

Alex brought out the Immortal puppet and Whisker to control it if need be. At the same time, he flew away as well.

However, before they could all reach the cave, the Dragon Emperor was already there.

"Stop!" His voice sounded like the roar of a thousand beasts, moving across the land and creating shockwaves.

Long Huan froze when he was right at the cave. Now that his father was this close, he knew cutting open the Voidgate would do no good for them.

Alex frowned. "Start opening it," he shouted back, but the young man still seemed dazed. Instead of bringing out a sword, he brought out a talisman. It seemed he thought the teleportation talisman to be a safer option than the Voidgate.

Alex didn't blame him.

The Dragon Emperor floated in the air, his blue hair flowing in the wind above. He gazed down, his look saying that everyone here was beneath him. The Noble Dragon Spear was on his right-hand

"This is not what I expected to see when I came to meet you, King Alex," he said softly. "Someone told me you might be up to something, something bad for the Empire, but this is something entirely different."

His gaze then turned toward Long Huan.

"I wasn't aware you had returned, that too for nearly 20 years," he said softly. "You should have returned to me, my son."

Long Huan's face looked grim and he didn't even focus on the talisman in his hands. "You... you tried to kill us," he said. "Why would I ever return to you?"

"I never tried to kill you," the Dragon Emperor answered calmly. "I only wanted the sword."

"You tried to kill my wife," Long Huan shouted back.

"A girl you married after meeting for only a month?" the Dragon Emperor laughed out loud. "You were never officially married. Your marriage was never officially recognized."

"We exchanged our vows," Long Huan said. "That is all that mattered, and you still tried to kill her. No, you did kill her. You killed your own soldiers to get to my wife."

"She shouldn't have tried to kill me then." The Dragon Emperor sighed. "If you want to run away, I won't stop you. Go, leave, but leave the sword. I will be gone from this world in just a year or two once I get that sword of yours. You can freely return to the Empire at that point."

"No one will have known that you defied me then. You can come back to be by your brother's side as he becomes the next Emperor."

"No," Alex answered. "That won't be happening."

This was what he had been fearing. The Dragon Emperor would use the sword and leave, without giving Alex and the rest any time to get their revenge.

"Stand aside, King Alex. I will be willing to look away from what you've been doing here," the Dragon Emperor said and was about to speak when Alex cut him off.

"What will you be doing with the sword that it is so necessary?" Alex asked. "It doesn't have something to with the Azure Dragon being dead, does it?"

Chapter 1677: Predicament

The Emperor's eyes changed the moment he heard Alex's words. His face squeezed into a frown as he stared at Alex.

Alex felt a hint of fear inside of him when he saw that. What he said was most definitely not the right thing to say, but it was the best thing he could say in this situation.

"Brother Alex..." Long Huan slowly said. "What are you doing?"

'Go open the Voidgate while he's distracted,' Alex sent a spiritual message directly to the man.

Only then did Long Huan realize why Alex was becoming brass all of a sudden. He was trying to distract his Father.

Was it going to work?

A puppet flew into the cave with Whisker on top of it and landed next to them. Whisker pointed toward the Voidgate without saying anything and turned around to protect the Voidgate in case any attack fell on them.

The 2nd prince dropped Hannah on her feet and walked over to Zhan Luoyang before handing her the talisman. "If it looks like things will go badly, use this and take away my wife from here. Protect her."

He moved away without waiting for an answer.

Alex stared back at the Dragon Emperor, not letting his attention away from him. He needed this bit of time to save his sister and let them go away safely.

"Who told you that the Azure Dragon is dead?" the Dragon Emperor asked. "That is a lie."

"Can you make an oath to prove that he is alive?" Alex asked the man in return, causing him to frown even further.

"You are going too far, King Alex. Do not dig your own grave," the Dragon Emperor said as if advising a child from doing some misdeed.

Alex knew inside that he shouldn't be doing this at all. Enraging the Dragon Emperor would only get him his ire. But it was the only way for the rest to leave.

'Leave already,' he told his elders with his spiritual sense, but they could sense the danger of the situation. They weren't going to back down now.

The Dragon Emperor held his spear tight and was about to say something when his eyes moved away, looking toward the cave. Alex frowned as he sensed the emergence of Space and Time aura from the cave. The Voidgate was open.

"You're not getting away from me, son," the Dragon Emperor said. Just as he was prepared to move, he felt a burning sensation in his mind as Alex struck him with Heaven's Impact.

The Dragon Emperor's eyes widened slightly, feeling the power of Alex's spiritual attack. It was quite strong, but not strong enough to knock him out at all.

'Dammit!' Alex thought. 'Bastard is not even using any artifacts.' Seeing his attack be barely anything more than an annoyance to the man was not fun to see. He could also tell the man planned to deal with the Voidgate first.

"You killed the Azure Dragon, didn't you?" Alex asked. "You and your wife, you murdered him. I am still not sure why."

The Dragon Emperor froze at those words and looked back down at Alex. He said no words, but his face was all that Alex needed.

He was right. He was actually right.

Alex had assumed that this was the case for a while now, but there had been times when the other possibility had been equally as possible. The possibility was that the Azure Dragon had been working with the Dragon Emperor and had somehow died in an accident.

Now, it was clear there was no accident. The Dragon Emperor had all but admitted to being responsible for the murder of the Azure Dragon. The only question that remained now was how Pearl and his mother fit into all of this. Did they just happen to be there? But then why was the Ebony sword stuck in Pearl's mother?

'Hurry up! The gate will close without my sword. I can't go in without you all,' Long Huan spoke into everyone's mind.

The Dragon Emperor took a long and deep breath and released it in a sigh. A sigh filled with dejection frustration and anger.

"I sometimes wonder if we have any choice of our own or not," the man said. Wind buffeted around him as his power surged, causing everyone around him to panic. "I thought you would be different at least, one that is not controlled by fate. And yet, here you are, trying to bring my downfall."

The spear pointed down directly toward Alex. "You should have never called yourself a King." And he released a massive bolt of lightning in the shape of a dragon, one that was clearly filled with Immortal Qi.

Alex was ready to protect himself, but Yao Ning moved before him.

A golden sphere appeared around the woman, formed entirely by Immortal Qi, with 16 different golden tentacles coming out of it which all attacked together.

The crash of the two attacks sent Alex falling backward as the world lost all sound and color again. He closed his eyes to the blinding light and yet his senses told him all he needed to.

Space collapsed at the point of impact and reformed just as quickly. The aura created from the attack overpowered every other aura that Alex had been sensing.

Just as Alex was trying to figure out what was happening, Liang Shufen appeared before him and pulled out a flask from inside her storage bag, releasing the water inside of it. The water immediately coalesced in front of them into a shield that blocked another large lightning bolt that fell on them.

Another wave of energy released from the crash of an Immortal attack on an Immortal shield.

"Your Majesty!" Liang Shufen shouted over the sound. "Get to the portal. You need to leave. We will follow."

Alex was going to refuse, but he nodded. He couldn't be stubborn here. He quickly got up and rushed toward the cave, feeling the push of another shockwave between the crash of two Immortal attacks.

Alex panicked on behalf of his two elders. How many Immortal attacks could they defend? He needed to get over to his sister and take her—

Alex froze mid step when he arrived next to the Voidgate and realized there was nobody there at all. The Voidgate was closed, and if anyone had been here, they had likely jumped into it.

The only thing that remained there was a talisman that seemed to have dropped while they ran away.

Alex quickly grabbed onto the sides of the Voidgate and opened it wide, but he couldn't enter just yet. He turned around and tried to peer at the situation outside with his senses.

The Voidgate closed behind him with only a head-sized space open in the end. "Shit!" Alex thought as he came to realize that he needed to keep the space open if the others were to enter with him.

Which meant that he couldn't leave unless both the elders were with him. Frustration built up inside of him and he had to choose exactly what to do.

"I have to bring them here," Alex thought. He would have to grab them and teleport them here. That was the only way the three of them could possibly get out of the current predicament they had fallen into.

Chapter 1678: Escape Attempt

Alex appeared outside the cave, something clutched in his hand, and was once again pushed back by the force of another clash.

The thunderous sound had all but deafened Alex by now and the light had all but blinded him.

Yao Ning seemed to be holding on to the fight in front, using her Hundred Arms Golden Sphere technique to fight off the Dragon Emperor.

Liang Shufen's pretty face looked dark and haggard in the light. Unlike Yao Ning, she didn't have much capability to fight back against the Dragon Emperor. She only had enough Immortal Qi for a few attacks and defenses at most and that seemed to have run out.

Yao Ning would have to be in a similar situation as well.

"Your Majesty! What are you still doing here?" Liang Shufen shouted over the cacophony of blasts at the front. "You should be gone by now."

"Everyone else is gone, and the gate is closed. You guys can't leave without me opening it," Alex said. "I need to take you back."

Liang Shufen's eyes widened and then narrowed in frustration. "How do we get sister Yao to come with us?" she asked. "I don't think she can leave."

Alex stared at the Dragon Emperor in the sky who kept on shooting more and more attacks. Had Yao Ning's technique not been specifically focused on defense against multiple attacks, along with a Dao to reflect the weaker ones, she would've lost by now. Even with that, she only had so much Qi to go around. "Dammit! How much Immortal Qi does he have?" Alex asked, looking at the sky.

"He's not even using Immortal Qi," Liang Shufen answered, her voice laden with frustration and annoyance. "He keeps mixing between the two, and sister Yao doesn't have the time to make changes to her technique at all. Not that she can take a chance on it. She has to put up her best defense just in case."

Alex could understand the problem.

"Elder Yao, I'm coming in to take you away. We need to leave while the Emperor is disoriented," Alex sent to the old woman through his spiritual sense.

"It will be hard to get him distracted," she sent back. "I'm doing all I can to keep him from going after you two."

Alex frowned. "Don't worry, I can do it," he said. "We're coming in."

He grabbed Liang Shufen's arm and teleported into the golden sphere. Then, he brought out his mirror. That would give them the perfect opportunity. Alex waited for the moment the attack would pass and then... "NOW!" The golden sphere went down and Alex put up his Mirror of Barren Truth.

The dragon-shaped Lightning strike that was supposed to land on them was instantly returned back to the Dragon Emperor, the power within it remaining intact as it flew back.

"Let's go!" he bellowed and grabbed Yao Ning's arm to teleport away. But even as he did, he saw her look of horror and realized that somehow, somewhere, something had gone wrong.

The understanding of the mistake came right after.

The attack he had just reflected had been strong, very strong. But it was not an Immortal attack.

Even as Alex understood it, there was no point in dwelling on it. He had already employed teleportation aura, so they could leave. As Alex felt the teleportation happen, however, something happened around him.

The Dragon Emperor simply walked through his own attack, the damage to him being a pitiful amount. He had his hand raised toward Alex, seemingly doing something.

Alex couldn't tell. Not that he bothered to figure it out in his haste. He teleported into the cave in front of the Voidgate... by nearly 5 meters.

"Huh?" Alex cried out in surprise. His teleportation was supposed to bring him right next to the Voidgate, not this far away. "Shit!" He rushed forward in a hurry and quickly grabbed onto the edges of the opening and pulled it open wider.

The cave brightened with the swirling colors inside the Void as Space and Time aura filled the area around them.

"Get in!" Alex bellowed. "Quickly!"

The two Elders wasted no time at all.

Liang Shufen jumped in immediately, disappearing in the glow of purple and silver. Next was Yao Ning. She jumped— An attack landed right in front of Alex on the Voidgate, the force of the impact sending both Alex and Yao Ning backward.

Alex heard his head ring loudly and also felt pain in a few parts of his body that slowly mended itself. He opened his eyes and realized he was outside of the cave, thrown back.

Next to him, the Dragon Emperor landed with his spear in hand and a gloomy look on his face. Alex glared at the Dragon Emperor with all the fury in his heart. However, the Dragon Emperor wasn't looking at him at all.

His eyes were looking somewhere to the side.

Alex turned his ringing head in that direction and saw Yao Ning trying to stand amidst the broken rubble of the cave. Her hands trembled as she tried to get back on her feet, but failed to do so. The Dragon Emperor raised his spear and attacked.

Alex teleported, arriving right in front of Yao Ning. He had enough time to take his mirror out too, just in case it would do something since the last attack he defended was definitely not on par.

Alas, the Mirror was used up, so there was no blocking anything. It would have instead been destroyed by a normal attack if Alex had done that. Instead, he simply stood in front of Yao Ning to give her enough time to get back on her feet.

The attack landed directly on Alex and a thunderous roar filled the world.

Bai Jingshen's gigantic ethereal head floated out from inside of Alex, glowing brightly in the daylight. It stopped the Dragon Emperor's attack, which was most certainly an Immortal attack.

The tiger head floated proudly in front of Alex even after the attack had died and a single voice came from within the head.

"This human is under my, Bai Jingshen's protection. Anyone who dares harm him shall suffer my wrath."

The words hung in the air like a guillotine, ready to strike down at anyone who dared defy it. The tiger's head slowly faded, and Alex watched as the Dragon Emperor's face changed from uncaring to worried to terrified. He had never expected to see these emotions in the face of the Dragon Emperor.

"That..." the Dragon Emperor slowly found his words to speak. "That... that was the White Tiger. Bai Jingshen, yes, the White Tiger. How did you gain his protection?"

Alex remained quiet. There was no point in explaining, and the explanation was likely not going to bring back any result either way.

"ANSWER ME!" the Dragon Emperor screamed, his voice ripping through the air to strike at Alex.

Alex steeled his heart and got ready to fight.

"First a king, then the damn White Tiger," the Dragon Emperor grumbled. "It seems I must kill you once and for all now."

The Dragon Emperor dashed right next to Alex and swung his spear.

"Die!"

Chapter 1679: Downhill

Blood spurted out of Alex, quickly forming into his Blood Armor. At the same time, 123 swords flew out of his Soul Space, with Midnight at the front, all of which formed into an array and struck at the Dragon Emperor.

The Dragon Emperor used a single attack, a strong gust of air that struck the swords and destroyed the attack.

All the swords fell back, with a few ones that weren't made up of Starforged Tungsten even breaking on impact.

Alex quickly took back all the swords except Midnight and struck again. God Rending Death Blade struck out, but once again a single strike from the Dragon Emperor destroyed it. He didn't even have to use a strong technique to do so.

"There is no reason why you should be fighting back," the man said. "You are too weak to do anything."

Alex moved back and reached out for Yao Ning to teleport with her, but right before he could touch her, he felt the space between him and her expand ever so slightly.

Alex gasped in surprise and had to reach out further, but by that time, the Dragon Emperor was once again on top of him.

The spear struck him on the armor and Alex was sent flying into multiple trees, dragging a large crater on the ground before he stopped somewhere far away. His blood armor was dismissed almost instantly as it lost all of its energy from that one strike, and what little strength he had in his body did nothing to protect him from the attack.

His body worked to heal itself as quickly as it could to save him, the organs that were ruptured and the bones that were broken reverting to how they were before.

Alex saw specks of black and white before his vision returned. His ears still rung from that strike, the sensation of pain not yet letting up. He felt the ground shake again and shockwaves hit him almost the same time. That caught Alex's attention and he pulled himself out of the ground to look back to see what was happening. He was still dazed when he saw that things were not looking very good. Yao Ning had put up her technique once again, creating a defensive sphere with 16 arms floating out to attack in all directions. She fought with the Dragon Emperor, but it was clear she had no chance at victory at all.

She used all she had, her techniques, her artifacts, and any other constructs, but nothing worked against the man who stood above every other mortal in this world.

A single swing of his spear brought destruction and a simple stab brought annihilation.

Yao Ning fought back all the swings and stabs she could, but she was helpless. Alex tried to move to help her in any way he could, but there was nothing he could do against someone whose core was half-filled with Immortal Qi.

Alex looked at his hand. He still clutched the talisman he found inside the cave. Fortunately, it hadn't been destroyed in the attack. With this talisman, he could save her.

Alex focused on himself and looked for the perfect opportunity to teleport into Yao Ning's sphere. Just as he was about to teleport, a forked lightning bolt came toward him out of nowhere.

Alex teleported to the side out of pure instinct and watched the lightning bolt fly past where he had been. Once he knew he was safe, he focused back on saving Yao Ning and turned around just in time to see the scene of terror.

The lightning strike broke past Yao Ning's barrier, striking her. She flew into the distance, crashing into the ground. Even without looking, Alex could tell she was badly hurt.

He needed to save her.

Alex teleported to grab onto her and run away with her, but even as he did, he felt the space expand between where he wanted to be and where he was.

Alex understood what was happening, and he altered his teleportation to match the increasing distance. He arrived right next to Yao Ning and reached to grab her. So close.

The Noble Dragon spear stabbed into Alex's hand, spearing through it into the ground. He was so close, and yet... so far.

The Dragon Emperor raised his other hand and struck out with a bolt of lightning.

The Immortal attack consumed all light and sound as it blasted into the ground. Alex felt the remnants of the attack pass through him, the force ripping away his skin, but his body was unable to move due to the spear that stuck him to the ground.

When everything faded away, all that remained in the ground was a deep hole with not even a body remaining. Alex looked at the hole in horror as the realization dawned on him.

Yao Ning was dead.

"No..." A deep sense of loss filled Alex. "No..."

The Dragon Emperor pulled out his Spear and pointed toward Alex. "I would prefer if you answered my question now. I can't seem to—"

Alex struck out.

White hot fire poured out of his hands, filled with True Fire Dao, burning with a temperature that ignited the woods around them just because of their proximity.

The Dragon Emperor quickly wove a barrier of Air with his Qi, forming a defense. He suddenly felt the barrier warp as space itself warmed around him.

He used his own Dao to expand the space around him, to put more distance between him and the fire.

The fire disappeared a moment later, and what came was a single sword strike that he barely managed to see before it was right next to him. It was so small that it was practically invisible to his senses for the most part.

It managed to break past his barrier of wind somehow, but when it did strike him, it was already too weak. The attack struck him in the chest, creating a small line of wound that bled a few drops of blood, but other than that he was fine.

"Not bad. But you'll have to do more if you want to hurt me in any way important," the Dragon Emperor said. When the dust cleared, Alex was there on the ground before him, staring at the Dragon Emperor intently.

The Dragon Emperor moved to attack him and paused. He tilted his head in confusion.

"Why do I no longer sense your killing intent?" he asked. Then he struck out.

A bright white bolt of lightning struck through Alex, tearing him into millions of motes of light.

"No wonder..." The Dragon Emperor said with an amused expression. "A fake."

He spread his senses and immediately covered the entirety of the secret realm. He first checked the Voidgate to make sure he wasn't there. Then, he searched the rest of the area.

At first, the Dragon Emperor frowned as he couldn't find Alex at all. He worried that he had somehow let Alex go. However, a moment later, he saw Alex pop out of the ground nearly 30 kilometers away from there.

"A ground-based escape technique, huh?" he asked himself. "Not bad."

He moved at a blinding speed and covered that distance in the time it took Alex to cough out the dirt and get back on his feet. Before Alex could realize what was happening, he was once again struck with a weaker bolt of lightning, and the Dragon Emperor stood before him once more.

Chapter 1680: Shock

1680 Shock

Long Fangyu stood before the giant gate of the secret realm, staring at the iridescent colors of the barrier that kept the secret realm out of the regular world.

He stared at it, but his eyes did not see anything. His mind was lost in his thoughts, and the only thing he could think at the moment was that he hated himself.

He was a coward, a hypocrite. After gaining his brother's trust that he would not do anything to hurt him, he told his father exactly where he had to go to find him.

He hadn't told the Emperor about his brother. The Emperor had only come there to meet with Alex. But by telling him where Alex had gone to, he had pretty much told his father where his brother was too.

The moment his father said that the king of the Southern Continent might be plotting something, he had lost all sense in him to hold back his information and told his father exactly what he needed to hear.

He had put the empire's priority before his brother.

And now he felt terrible about it.

"No," the Crown Prince told himself. "I can't let this be, can I? I have to go save him. I have to save my brother."

He took a deep breath and entered the secret realm.

The thing he saw when he entered was the destruction of the land inside and only two people in the distance.

His father stood over Alex with his spear pointed at Alex, ready to kill him.

* * * * *

Alex clutched the teleportation talisman in his hand tightly, hiding it from the Emperor. He needed to use it to escape.

Small-ranged teleportation, even the Earth Devour technique seemed useless against the Emperor given his usage of Immortal Qi. As Alex was now, the only way to get out of this situation was to use the talisman.

Only when he teleported far outside of the range of the Dragon Emperor could he truly escape?

He asked Godslayer for help, but the Sword spirit was too weak to do anything against the Dragon Emperor.

Alex started up at the eyes of the man whom he hated so much. He had brought so much pain to him and his friends.

The Dragon Emperor was the person somehow responsible for Pearl's mother's death. He was the man responsible for all but killing his sister.

And now, he was responsible for killing Yao Ning, the woman who cared for Alex, the woman who Alex cared for as he would his own grandmother.

The Dragon Emperor had killed her, and that was the reason why the man would die at his hands.

"You wish to kill me," the Dragon Emperor said, pointing the spear down at him. "I understand. We are of the same mind in that. I wish to kill you too. But it seems fate has a different intention of what is to be of your life."

The spear slowly dug into Alex's chest, blood pooling out.

"I had some idea about your Body Cultivator, but it seems you have become unnaturally strong. This cannot happen in merely 10 years with the Mountain Crushing artifact. Tell me, how did you improve your body before this?"

Alex grunted. "The only... the only thing I'll tell you is that one way or another, I will kill you," he spoke.

The Dragon Emperor snorted. "You couldn't kill me even if I let you do it. My body cultivation alone is stronger than most others," he said as he pulled down the spear, cutting more of his flesh. "If you do not wish to tell me about your body cultivation, then it's fine. Tell me about the White Tiger. Where did you gain his protection?"

Alex spat at the Dragon Emperor, but the man simply created a gust of wind that diverted it. Then, with the same air, he slammed Alex's head into the ground, sending specks of black and white to fill his vision.

"I see, then you will not tell me that either," the Dragon Emperor said, anger and disgust filling his mind. "Oh, how I wish to kill you right now. But it seems I cannot kill you."

Alex's attention snapped back when he heard those words. 'Couldn't?' he wondered.

The Dragon Emperor read the confusion on Alex's face. "Yes, I cannot kill you," he answered. "Are you happy you will live?"

Alex said nothing.

"Don't worry. The only reason I cannot kill you is because of your trade. We made an oath to trade with each other. Until our trade is completed, I cannot kill you. If you want to die right now, complete the trade. You will die anyway in 3 years if you don't complete the trade on your end."

The Dragon Emperor started laughing to himself. "Trade and I'll kill you now. Don't and die 3 years later. You do not have easy prospects, do you?" he asked.

3 years. That was a short time, but if Alex could get even that, it would be helpful. Anything to continue living would be helpful.

Then he saw the Dragon Emperor and saw the mania behind his eyes.

"I said I would let you live for 3 years," he said, dragging his spear through Alex's stomach even lower. "I did not say you would be kept as you are until then."

The Crown Prince arrived and saw the horrifying sight in front of him.

"Father! You can't do that," he quickly said. "The Phoenix will kill us."

"Don't worry about the Phoenix, son. She's weak right now," the Dragon Emperor said. "Besides, even if she had her strength, she couldn't come. I can kill this man without any remorse and we would be safe. So long as an Immortal doesn't come for us, there is no one in this world stronger than me and my empire."

"So... you aren't going to deny that you killed the Azure Dragon," Alex said between gasps of air. He was struggling to find a way to escape from all that was happening to him.

"Killed the Azure Dragon? No," the Dragon Emperor said. "At least, that wasn't my intention. It just happened. I'm curious how you found out. Was it Yan Yating? No, he's bound by oath to not answer anything. Even if he broke his oath to the empire, he cannot break an oath to the heavens."

The Dragon Emperor sighed. "I should not be delaying this any further," he said. "If you are the one my prophecy claims to be my downfall, then I must get rid of all chances of you defeating me."

He dragged the spear even below and stopped right above the naval region. Alex felt the pain there and knew what was going to happen.

He heard the panicked sound belonging to Godslayer in his mind that seemed to echo through his mouth.

"NO—"

The Dragon Emperor stabbed down and cut through his Dantian.

Alex gasped as the shock hit him. As if plunged into a pool of ice-cold water, his body spasmed as all the Qi in his body drove into his Dantian, and from there it leaked out.

Alex teleported as far as he could, but that was not as far as he wanted to. His Dao was working, but nothing was coming out of his Dantian. The leaking Qi did not work for him.

"No!" Alex shouted. He tried to heal his body, but it didn't work. Without Qi, the Undying God's Physique did not work. He needed Qi to heal his body.

Blood poured out of his stab wounds. He needed a pill. Maybe a pill could help him if he was fast enough.

The Dragon Emperor's senses were on him as he watched Alex fret around from far away.

Alex felt his mind grow heavy from not just the pain but also the blood loss. His dantian was destroyed, so he was no cultivator anymore. The loss of blood now affected him as it would a regular person.

He lay on the ground, panting, trying to think of something. His mind blanked for a moment, forgetting what he was doing. He needed Qi to heal his body quickly, to heal his wounds.

"Right, pill," he remembered and went to look for a pill. However, when he tried to look into his Soul Space, he found it nearly impossible to get into his Soul Space.

"No!" Alex cried out. His spirit was wounded, either from the stab or from crippling. "No, my pill." He couldn't even enter the Soul Space, let alone find the pill.

The Dragon Emperor watched silently from the distance.

"Father, he'll die," the Crown Prince said.

"No, he won't. We'll take him back once he goes unconscious," the Dragon Emperor said and continued watching.

Alex frantically hit his head to keep himself from fainting. He couldn't faint here. He needs to heal his body. No, he needed to run away.

He remembered the talisman in his hand and used his weak spiritual sense to activate it. But that talisman needed Qi too.

How was he going to get any Qi here? He had no access to his storage and his dantian was broken open. He could not use any Qi from his own body.

"Dao?" Alex thought. He could use Dao, but that wouldn't heal him or activate the talisman. What he needed was Qi and there was no Dao that could give him Qi.

"No..." Alex realized. There was one.

Immediately, he fell onto his pool of blood and held to it. Even as pain flared in his mind from using a strong Intent while his spirit was weakened, he didn't stop.

He employed the Dao of Blood Aura.

The aura in the blood within him and the pool beneath him surged, turning from Blood Aura into Qi. Immediately, his body drank on the Qi, using it to heal his wounds.

But Alex didn't have the luxury. Even as his body tried to heal the wounds on his torso, Alex pulled it away, dragging it into the talisman before it could leak away from his destroyed Dantian.

The Qi formed from the blood outside his body was out of his control, and it was only the ones from within his body that Alex could use. But even that, while very weak, was just enough for him to use to activate this talisman.

The Dragon Emperor's face changed as he realized Alex was doing something. He flew toward Alex immediately, but it was too late. He had given Alex the distance he needed, and that had given Alex enough time.

Silver light glowed around Alex as he used the last of his mental strength to use the Dao to use the talisman. When he knew he had finally done it, his will to stay conscious gave out.

And darkness took over.