

## Alchemy 221

### Chapter 221: Gray

Alex walked up to the cave and entered. The cave wasn't as deep as he was expecting. Inside was darker than he expected it to be, and without Qi. His eyes couldn't view that well

Still, with what little light there was, he managed to find outlines of a pile of stuff. He couldn't tell exactly what they were, so he walked over there to check.

He slowly put his hands on them. They were round and juicy, just as one would expect them to be.

"So he stored quite a few of them here as well, huh," Alex thought as he picked one of them and took a bite of it. Sweet juices flowed out of the Butterfly Pears and entered his body.

His numbed body got a bit better as the energy from the fruits healed him a bit. He ate a few more as he was extremely hungry after the battle and moved further into the cave to look at the thing he was most curious about.

There were a bunch of stones, laid all around the cave and interesting-looking art was drawn on the ground. "What's that?" Alex went around looking at what the drawing was of.

He moved around the small pieces of stones all over the place. The more he cleared the stones, the more the art became clear. When he finally swiped away the last stone with his feet, he finally saw what it was.

It was no art at all. It was actually a formation drawn on the ground itself. Alex was shocked. He could feel a small force pushing on him, something other than the suppressing force from outside.

"What? How is this formation working? You need at least an energy source for a formation to work," he said. He didn't know a lot about formations, but he knew at least this much.

Even the sect running formation could only work because it took energy from the spirit veins on the sect ground. But there was none of that here.

"How the hell is this formation working without any source of energy— " he realized what he had missed. He immediately lowered himself and picked one of the stones he had moved aside because it was blocking him.

In the darkness, he couldn't see the color, but he could see the shape and size of the stone. They were all small stones, rectangular in shape. Alex knew exactly what it was. It was in fact what he had been looking for in the first place.

They were all Yang Jades.

"But all the energy is gone. He used them to power the formation and make himself stronger," Alex said, dejectedly. He looked through the rest of it, but he didn't have to do it.

If his body didn't tell him there was any, then there was no way there was any.

"Sigh, guess I was expecting too much," he said. His disappointment was immeasurable right now. He decided to forget about it and walked outside.

The moment he was at the opening of the cave, he saw a bunch of people standing a little outside it. There were signs of dawn approaching in the sky.

"He-hello brother, are— are you our new boss?" a girl asked.

"Boss? No, I'm no such thing," he said.

"But— but then who will bring us the fruit now? You killed our only source of the fruits," the man standing next to her asked.

Alex was surprised. He had helped them by taking out their oppressor, even nearly ruining himself in the process and the first thing they did was tell him their selfish wishes.

'I see... master was right about these guys. They are selfish, jealous, envious, the filth that knows nothing but to think about themselves,' Alex thought.

"What the hell are you saying?" someone screamed from the side. "He helped us by getting rid of that demon and instead of thanking him, you blame him for your own incompetence?"

"Yeah! Brother, thank you for getting rid of the boss. He was the worst thing to come out of our sect in years. Please tell me your name brother, I will leave this place in 3 days, I will tell the Elders to lessen your punishment," someone else said.

"Brother, you must be tired from the fight. Come, I will give you a massage," another man in the back spoke.

The light of dawn shone through the clouds as Alex's views of the surrounding started to change once more.

'Of course. Not everyone is bad. But not everyone is good either. I will need to judge each person on their own. I see this will be a good lesson for me,' he thought.

"Anyone with ability in your body, go call everyone here. There is more than enough food for you here," Alex shouted. Immediately, people started scattering to tell the others about the death of the boss and the free food available in the place.

Soon there were at least 50 people in the group. Alex was truly surprised at how many people were actually being punished. He called a few people to carry the fruits back out and distribute them to the rest of the disciples there.

Once he made sure everyone was fed, he left the group. People wanted to stick with him, but he ran away fast and found an open, quiet place in the grasses.

He sat on the grasses and felt them. Not a single hit of dew. "This place is really strange," he thought. His only purpose in coming here was gone now. There were no more yang jades here.

"Wait, what did he say about the desert? He said that yang jade was just an interim solution before going to find whatever was there," Alex thought as he turned around to look towards the direction of the desert.

He tried to think of what to do, but too many things had happened today and he couldn't focus his mind at all. "Sigh, I will think about it later," he said and logged out of the game.

## Chapter 222: Human

Alex didn't log back into the game that day.

He woke up, ate some breakfast, studied a bit, helped prepare lunch, ate it and went to school. Once more it was with Sarah and Emily. These 4 were now very close friends.

"Urghh... I can't wait for saturday. Oh god, it must be so fun in the capsule," Sarah said.

"I'm highly anticipating it as well," Hannah said.

Alex didn't listen to any of their talk. He was so out of it today that he didn't even remember half the thing that happened today.

Emily seemed to be curious as well as to why he was so distant today, but she couldn't bring herself to ask anything. In the end, they went to their respective classes and didn't get to say anything.

On the way home, Sarah seemed to not have classes on thursdays, so she took them both back home.

Alex ate some snacks and went back to his room. He wanted to go back into the game, but just couldn't motivate himself to touch the helmet on the bed.

So instead, he took out his laptop and went online. He went to a video sharing site to watch something, anything, but there was nothing of interest there.

He then came upon a video and was shocked at the sheer number of clicks on it. The video of his cousin speaking about the body she got in Eternal Cultivation, and it had gotten nearly 200 million views.

For a world with less than a billion people, 200 million views were more than good enough. That was enough to show the true reach of Eternal Cultivation in the real world.

However, he was surprised that the video wasn't popular because of the content, but rather the unfairness behind it. There were people who wanted to hate on his cousin and Eternal Cultivation all because his sister got lucky.

He clicked on these people's profiles and saw that they had left some beautiful messages on other videos for other peoples. These people knew nothing about the other people, yet they showed their hate and love just as openly.

Once again, Alex saw the two sides of people. People were quick to hate on something completely unrelated to them. Even when new information was being given out, people focused on what they personally did not get.

However, there were also people who were good. Whether there was a reason or not, they were all sending out positivity towards the ones they didn't even know.

'It seems it is the same inside and outside of the game, huh,' he thought. 'Good or bad, you can't tell something about a person without getting to know them.'

He felt a little better about himself. The guilt of killing someone was very low for Alex since he knew there were others that were helped due to what he did and were in full support of him.

He didn't know if they hated him inside or not, but that didn't matter. What mattered is that he now knew not to after a single interaction.

He looked through more of the videos and ate his dinner. Only then at dinner did he finally returned back to his room. He really wanted to play by now.

So, he put on the helmet and got into the game.

"AH, goddammit, why does it prick so much?" Alex thought as pulled whatever was behind him on the floor. It was his normal sword. He had been in a hurry to leave, so he had slept on top of it.

He sighed and put the sword aside to think of something to do. He looked in two direction, one was the direction to the south of him, towards the top of the cliff.

He could go and tell the elders about the happenings here and they could probably take the disciples back and give them another punishment fitting their crime.

The other direction was to the north of him. It was the desert he had heard so much about and wanted to visit so much. He was really interested in going there, but that would mean he needed to let the people suffer for a little longer.

'Sigh, what should I do?' he thought. He thought for a few seconds as to what exactly he wanted and? needed more. In the end, he just shook his head.

"Humans really do all have the same duality. Wanting to help to do good, and wanting to leave for the desert and leave people to starve. There is an obvious answer that anyone not selfish could choose in a heartbeat. And... hehehe... sigh,I am a human after all," he said as he ridiculed himself with laughter and got up.

He then started walking straight towards the river to go to the desert. He was being a human and taking the selfish choice.

He stood up and walked towards the river in this pale moonlight. With a sword in his hands, he didn't worry about any monster in the area.

The river was about 20 meters wide, and monsters easily hid there. This was a dangerous place. "Can I jump across 20 meters?" he wondered.

He had checked his strength with his physical body but never did any other forms of tests with it. 'Maybe it can work?' he thought. He wouldn't know until he jumped across.

He walked back to create some runway to launch himself off of one bank of the river to the other. With a deep breath, he held his sword on this right hand and ran.

He could clearly feel himself slower than when his Qi was working, but those were unfair to be compared. He ran in the fastest speed he possibly could.

At the end of the bank, he launched himself up and leaped. The speed was amazing enough that he didn't fall into the river and would easily cross the river.

However, on the other side of the river, a centipede appeared. And it was ready to attack him any chance it got.

#### Chapter 223: Desert

Alex grabbed hold of his sword midair and pulled it out from behind him. In a single sweep, the sword hit the centipede square in the head. He didn't manage to cut it open, but the force alone was enough to break it open.

Alex landed with a thump and roles over a few times to stop himself. He immediately turned around to attack the centipede again, but it was dead.

He took a deep breath and calmed himself. He wasn't expecting a monster to appear out of nowhere here.

"Damn, isn't there a ton more monster around this place?" he thought. He had to be careful now.

He felt the heat radiating from the ground and was surprised just how hot the ground still was. He leaned down to grab a handful of the sand and felt it. It was way hotter than he was expecting it to be.

He let it fall from his hands and watched just how fine it was. Riverbanks had sand too in the real world, but they were nothing like this. The sands outside were mostly white in color and were usually wet and lumpy from being around the rivers.

This, however, was yellow in color and very, very dry. Even just a few meters away from the river, it was no humidity in it. He felt it a bit more and said, "It's so coarse and rough."

He looked around the desert; It was everywhere. He was baffled by just how much sand there was in this place, and even more so baffled by just how large the land itself was.

As far as his eyes could see, there was nothing but desert.

"I'm going to get dehydrated at this rate," he thought and went to the river to drink some more water before leaving the place. He didn't know where he had to go in this vast desert, so he randomly chose a direction and walked forward.

Along the way, he made sure to drag his feet or sword and make a marking wherever he went. He wanted to find his way back in case he reached a place from where he couldn't see the cliff side anymore and needed to come back.

The dire direction he chose to go was in a small angle from the river such that the further he traveled, the further he would get from the river.

Still, he didn't wish to go very far away as he didn't know exactly what monsters there were in the desert. Just the ones on the river shores were skin tempering and muscle tempering equivalent.

If he went in and found some bone tempering equivalent monsters, then he would have a hard time fighting them. If he found some organ tempering equivalent monsters, then he would be as good as dead.

A lizard monster appeared a few minutes after he started walking, so Alex killed it without hesitation. A few minutes later, another centipede appeared. Alex had no problem dealing with that as well. However, he was a little slower in killing this monster.



He went further and killed more monsters. Within the next hour, he had killed over 15 different monsters in the desert. They were all the same speed and strength as any other monsters he had fought till now.

But he realized that killing them was taking longer than usual. That was all because of the pressure he was feeling. The same pressure that suppressed his Qi and spiritual sense, was now starting to suppress his body too.

It was very little suppression when compared to the one he got for Qi and spiritual sense, but it was still there. He could clearly feel the slight pressure all over him.

And it got worse as he walked forward.

A snake monster slithered towards him from underneath the sand. Alex could clearly see the undulations on the ground and got ready. As usual, just as it was near him, the snake monster jumped out of the sand and tried to bite and eat him.

Alex sidestepped the attack and prepared his sword. As soon as he saw the exposed neck of the snake, he hacked at it.

BANG

A large sound appeared as the sword dug deep into the snake's body, but the snake didn't die. The wound wasn't enough to cause severe harm to the snake, and could only harm him.

The snake launched an attack with its tail and managed to hit Alex. Alex immediately grabbed the snake's tail in hope of not being thrown away.

The snake shook its tail around, in hopes of making him let go, but it couldn't. In the end, Alex took the opportunity to leave the tail and run right at the snake.

The sands made it hard to run, but he still managed to reach it in time. The snake was once again bringing back its tail around to hit him, but before it could even do anything, Alex slashed it one more time, with extra power this time, and managed to fully hack through the snake's already half cut neck.

He took a few minutes for a breather and thought to himself, "The monsters are getting stronger and stronger. Thankfully, the pressure is stopping them from becoming strong as well. Still, their defense is unaffected."

He looked at his sword that was starting to get dull and thought, "will this even be useful anymore?"

After killing the monster, he walked forward until he felt like he wasn't going anywhere. He could still easily see the cliffs and knew that if he were to walk for a few minutes, he would reach the riverside.

"I do have to walk towards the north if I want to get anywhere. However, that would mean getting attacked by the monsters that are much stronger than the snake just now. Can I even do that?" he thought.

He deliberated for a while and in the end decided to walk towards the north direction, directed away from the cliffside. If anything dangerous came up, he thought he could just run away.

#### Chapter 224: Return

The feeling had returned. Alex had barely walked 10 minutes north in this treacherous desert, and he was already finding a new yang jade.

He got happy and sped up the pace. A new monster came towards him, with the intention of killing him, but he didn't care. Monsters were very normal for him now and he could kill them easily.

However, that did not mean that it was a swift process. Due to the increased pressure on his body, fighting the monster was more taxing than usual.

"At some point, I won't be able to fight at all," he thought. He was already second thinking about his decision to walk directly up north as more monsters were showing up.

Still, the feeling of being near a yang jade was too enticing, so he didn't go back.

He finally arrived at the place that contained the yang jade. It was a simple land, filled with sand everywhere like any other place in the desert. His body was telling him it was right there, but he couldn't see any.

"Sh\*t, is it buried?" he thought. He started moving away from the sand from the place he sensed the yang jade from. However, the sand would slide down from the pile he made, filling the hole again. It was slowing down his progress a lot.

He hadn't interacted with sand before and was really annoyed by what was happening. In the end, he started using more force to throw the sand further away such that it didn't go back into the hole he made.

After 10 minutes, he finally made a meter deep hole and jammed his arm through the rest. When he pulled his hands back out, he was holding a yang jade.

It was the second yang jade he had found after coming to the Forbidden Fields. He looked at the stone in his hands and sighed in relief.

"It's not a waste of time if I got at least 2 right?" he thought. He was breathing heavily now as the pressure from the surrounding was making him feel as though he really was nothing but a mortal.

His super-human abilities from being a body cultivator were questionable at best right now.

He took out his sword and looked at it. The metal sword no longer had the same edge as it did when he first got it and was full of dents and chips on it.

"Even my sword is almost as destroyed as I feel," he said. He used his spiritual sense and barely managed to send the yang jade into his storage bag. The pressure was starting to catch up to his spiritual sense too.

"Damn, should I even go on anymore?" he thought. However, a familiar feeling arose inside of him. There was another yang jade nearby.

After a while of deliberation, he went to find that one as well. He fought another few monsters and managed to defeat them. However, the sword was getting more and more tattered and he didn't know how much longer it could hold on. He didn't know how much longer he himself could hold on.

However, there was one good outcome from all of this happening. Just like all the monsters in the desert, his body was getting stronger as well.

It was very slow and annoying, but he was cultivating his body right now. The pressure was making him cultivate his body. It didn't have the same efficiency as his body cultivation with Pearl, and he doubted that anyone could start body cultivating here just like that without at least having a muscle tempering body.

But, if one did have that, they could do it.

Alex could sense one more yang jade a little further away. He didn't want to go there, but it was close enough that he didn't care about the dangers.

He walked towards it and slowly felt that the feeling wasn't getting stronger at all, no matter how close he got to it. The yang jade was right in front of him now and he still didn't have an increased feeling of wanting it.

The pressure was crashing on him harder than ever, but that was not what was causing this loss of want for the yang jade. No, it was actually another feeling of want coming deep inside from him.

This one was similar to how he felt around yang jades but far stronger than any. He could tell that it was somewhere far away in the north, and even then... the feeling of wanting it was much stronger than the yang jade right in front of him.

"Just what is there?" he thought in awe as he looked to the north. It was around 1 am at night, and he couldn't see clearly, but he was sure he could see nothing in that direction even if he wasn't suppressed all around right now.

He picked up the yang jade and unconsciously started walking forward, but then he stopped.

"What am I doing?" he thought. He shook himself out of the intense want his body was making him feel, and started walking back in fear.

"What the hell is there that is making me do things against my will?" he spoke in fear. He immediately turned around and started running in the opposite direction.

Once he was sufficiently far away and could barely feel it anymore, he stopped. The previous time he was here, the yang jades were masking its location, but now without the yang jades, he could feel the small sense of desire his body was giving off.

He could tell that whatever was there in the north was very good for him, but right now, it was very dangerous for him.

"I can't go there right now. I get suppressed the closer I get to the north and at some point, I will end up having to find a monster and d— "

Suddenly, he heard movements in the sand and looked back. Behind him were two pitch-black scorpions standing side by side. They had found themselves a meal.

Chapter 225: Run

Alex got a little scared. He didn't think he could fight scorpions right now. His body was still suppressed quite a bit by the pressure and his sword was nearly useless.

Fighting any monster right now was difficult for him. Fighting 2 monsters at the same time were completely suicidal. There was only one thing that Alex could do right now, and he did exactly that.

He ran.

He ran away from the scorpions and maneuvered his direction towards the river. However, the pressure in the area was stopping him from showing off his best physical ability, and running in the sand wasn't exactly the easiest thing to do.

As such, his overall speed at running was very weak. The scorpions didn't stand there either. The moment they saw Alex run, they followed him as well.

They were used to the pressure and their exoskeleton was strong enough to handle it right now. And they didn't have a problem running in the sand as Alex did.

So, even if they weren't exactly the fastest thing in the desert, they were fast enough to keep up with Alex. They were actually much faster than him and were going to catch up sooner than later.

Alex put all of his hope right now on the fact that the pressure would lower once he ran further south and he wouldn't have to worry about his body functioning at a lower rate than usual.

However, in his terrified state, he forgot to realize that the same thing applied to the scorpions as well. The further away they went, the faster they were becoming.

And soon, one of them caught up to Alex. It brought forth its pincers to grab at his legs, but Alex jumped up and dodged it. However, because of that, he rolled forward and came to a stop.

He had now stopped and both of the scorpions were upon him.

"Sh\*t, " he thought. He couldn't run away anymore, so he took his sword and got ready to fight. He had one weapon, fighting against their 6, he had to be very careful now.

"That venom will be dangerous," he thought. He didn't want to die in a place like this, especially not from a scorpion sting.

His eyes flickered side to side as he looked at both of the scorpions. Suddenly, the second scorpion moved forth and tried to snap at him with its pincers.

Alex dodged the pincers and swung his sword at its overextended hands. The sword was nearly at the hand when the scorpion's tail came right at him.

Alex had to stop his movement mid-attack and return the sword back to stop the stinger. He barely managed to change its direction so that it hit the ground and not him.

He stopped breathing for a moment to let the venom's smell go away from the air. He immediately turned his sword around once more and swung at the overextended tail.

It was a clean sweep, but he managed to cut only half of it. "Their body is too strong," he thought. He immediately ducked as a pincher grab went just past where his head previously was.

After that, Alex rolled to the side to dodge the tail.

He had been keeping an eye on the second scorpion, and when it did, he managed to dodge it quite easily. He was about to go attack the overextended tails once more, but the other scorpion came running at him.

It immediately jumped into the air, shocking Alex. When it landed, it was on top of Alex and was attacking him with its pincers. Alex jumped and rolled to the side, dodging the scorpion.

Immediately, he ran back and attacked the scorpion's tail once more. This time, it came completely off. However, at the same time, the pincers came towards Alex's torso.

Alex swiftly returned the sword back to the scorpion in a uniform motion and tried to attack its hands.

However, Alex made a mistake. He didn't think before he attacked and instead hit the pincers instead of the arms.

CRACK

A massive snap sounded out in the surroundings as Alex's sword snapped in two at the base. He didn't even manage to get a single scratch on the pincer and yet his sword was now in 2 half. There wasn't even half a sword attached at the handle he could use to fight with.

"Sh\*t," he cursed at the situation. He jumped back to dodge the next pincer that was next to him. But then, the other scorpion had made its way here too.

So he dodged once more. They were relentless in their attacks and weren't giving him much room to fight with. He desperately wanted to use the escape technique he had learned, but without Qi it was useless.

"I can't do this anymore. Running away is not the option," he thought. It was time to properly fight back. The scorpions were already attacking him.

His Elusive Heavenly Sword's footwork was pretty good, but he couldn't use it as well in the sand. So, his dodging ability had also gone down.

So, he decided to care about the one with the tail more than the one without it. Their pincers were way slower compared to their tails so the tail was what he was worried about.

The scorpions snapped at him once again and attacked him. Alex didn't dodge. Instead, he jumped over the skeleton and landed on it. It was the one without the tail so he had no worries.

The scorpion wiggled its half tail around and tried to hit Alex, but it couldn't reach him. He started punching the back of the scorpion while constantly taunting the other one.

The other scorpion came rushing at him and tried to snip at him. Alex easily dodged the pincers and continued attacking the scorpion he was on. It was trying to wiggle itself to throw Alex from its back but it couldn't.

Alex was firmly grabbing onto its back with one hand while punching down with the second. The scorpion was now half dead.



## Chapter 226: Victory

The other scorpion tried to use its pincers once more, but Alex could easily dodge it. In anger, it used its tail to attack Alex. Alex jumped out of the way and landed on the sand.

He immediately turned around to see that exactly what he wanted to achieve had happened. The scorpion with the tail had pierced the other scorpion's back with the stinger.

It was now dead.

Finally, there was only one enemy left. Alex was tired, but now was not the time to rest. He stood up and looked towards the scorpion. It was now time to fight it.

Alex remembered the first time he had fought the scorpion a day ago. He had used the stinger to kill that one, so he wanted to kill this one the same way as well.

He ran forward. The scorpion too came running at him, blood dripping on its back from its tail; blood that belonged to the other scorpion. The pincers came as expected and Alex managed to dodge it in time.

As expected, the tail came down too. Alex easily dodged it and jumped onto the scorpion's body, expecting to rip off its tail. He grabbed it with his arms and pulled it.

However, no matter how much he tried, he couldn't rip it off. "Damn, this is way harder than the one back in the river. Just how strong are the ones in the desert?" he thought.

Unable to do what he wanted, he punched and kicked the scorpion a few times and tried to jump off. Suddenly, the scorpion turned around at a terrifying speed and grabbed his left arm.

It tried to snap it, but the most it could do it crush it. Still, that was enough.

"ARGHHH," he screamed as intense pain ran inside him from the multitudes of broken bones. The scorpion didn't let go of the arm and brought around another pincer to grab his right arm.

CRACK

His right arm was gone too. The pain was equally as intense, forcing Alex to cry out as loud as he could. He tried to pull out his arms, but they were firmly in the scorpion's pincers. It was now holding on to him.

Suddenly, it attacked him with its tails. Alex managed to barely move away from his head enough so that the stinger barely went past his head. This time, however, he couldn't hold his breath as the pain was too intense and he had to cry out.

His mind was starting to go numb from the scent of venom. It wasn't enough to kill him or even harm him, but it was making his mind dull and lazy.

"That's... bad..." he barely managed to think, when suddenly, he heard a bunch of notifications.

<Toxic Substance detected>

<Sun God's Divine Yang body disintegrates everything>

<Toxins have been destroyed>

<No Qi found>

His mind went back to being as sharp as ever, as all the venom from his body was destroyed by his body. He didn't think about the notifications for now, and instead, used his legs to hit the scorpion's head as hard as he could.

Usually, the head was protected by the pincers, but now the pincers were in use. It tried to pull back its pincers while still grabbing Alex's hands, but couldn't as Alex was equally as strong.

Instead, Alex pulled his on its pincers with his own broken arms. And then,

BAM

He hit its head with his legs as hard as he could. The scorpion tried to hit him with its tail, but he could dodge that easily. He hit his head as hard as he could while dodging the tails.

The scorpion's head was starting to bleed a little now. Finally, the scorpion let go of his arms to protect itself, but just then, Alex caught it. He was the one now pulling on the pincers while continuously attacking its head.

Finally, the scorpion started to lose consciousness from all the damage its head was taking and stopped fighting. Soon, it had fainted. Alex didn't stop, however.

Now that there was no threat of the tail attacking him, he kept on hitting its head until it was completely destroyed. The scorpion was dead.

He finally slumped onto the ground and cried out in agony as he finally felt all the stress and pain hit him altogether. He slowly lifted his arms to see that around the wrist area, they were completely swollen.

Both of his arms were blue and black, and it hurt like hell. He needed to find a fruit to eat to heal himself a little or just directly go to the sect.

After a while, the pain subsided and he could no longer use his arm. If he were to come across some monster here, it would be bad. He stood up and looked around. He found his broken blade a little further away, so he walked towards it. It was beyond usable now.

He sighed and just left it there. It had helped him as much as it could. He silently and carefully made his way back towards the river. Along the way, he met a few monsters, but thankfully, they were weak enough that he didn't need to use his hands to kill them.

Finally, he reached the shore. He needed to jump once more. He didn't know if he could do it without his arms or not, but he tried. He walked a little back to make some runway and ran as fast as he could.

In a single leap, he flew high into the air and went past the shore on the other side, landing on the grasses. There were no monsters on this side like last time when he jumped to find the centipede. "Thank god," he said in relief.

He rested for a few minutes there to let his throbbing arm stop hurting. Then, he went to the river and drank some water.

Afterward, he turned around and walked towards the cliff, back to the sect.

Chapter 227: Okay

Alex was walking up the cliff with both of his hands inside his tattered robes. It was still nighttime, however, dawn was soon approaching. Alex looked along the side of the cliff and saw nobody.

'Everyone must be sleeping peacefully now that they didn't have to worry about food and water anymore,' he thought. The walk uphill was steep, but it wasn't a problem to Alex.

There was a lingering pressure around him as he walked upwards that was slowly leaving him and his cultivation base was starting to return. Soon, his body was invigorated by the yang qi being released from the meridians and the pain and fatigue in his body slowly subsided.

Soon, the pressure stopped affecting him and his entire cultivation base came back to full. The first thing Alex did was looking into his storage bags and find a healing pill.

He didn't hesitate at all as he took out one of the true pills his master had given him when he left for the Tiger sect. Without even checking what pill it was, he ate it.

A wave of energy passed along his body as it found its way to his arms. A little energy was spent away when it reached the tattoo on his arm, but most of it still went to the broken bones and torn muscles.

Slowly, his arms were healed and were back to normal. Then, he got a set of information.

<You have consumed 'Body Restructure Pill'>

<Sun God's Divine Yang Body disintegrates everything>

<' Body Restructure Pill's energy aligns with your spiritual root>

<Excess energy turned into Qi>

<You have obtained 1,548,656 Qi>

"Ahh, finally," he said as his hands stopped hurting. He put his yang stones into his storage bag and reached the cave on the cliff. The two elders were slacking around as there wasn't anything to do.

As soon as they saw someone approaching, they focused back on their work. But when they saw that it was Alex, they lost their guards. "Is it time for you to leave, disciple?" the elder on the right asked.

"Yes, Elder," Alex said.

"Very well, let us call someone to take you back," he said.

"No need elder, I will call someone myself," he said as he took out the communication talisman and called his master. Her first reply was her telling him to just come directly to her, but once he explained that it had to do with the sect and the disciples down at the forbidden fields, she couldn't stay back.

From up above the cliffs themselves, she came down flying.

The elders were a little surprised to see that Alex had called the sect leader herself, but said nothing as they knew their relationship.

She looked at his tattered robes and asked worriedly, "Are you okay? Do you need pills?"

Alex felt warm in his heart hearing that. "No, Master, I'm fine. I called you to talk about the other disciples in the Forbidden Fields," he said.

"What about them?" Ma Rong asked. Alex explained everything exactly as he had heard from the 3 disciples and later from Song Zun himself. He let her know that Song Zun was actually a clone of someone that entered the Hong Wu sect in search of something, and that something was in the Forbidden fields.

Ma Rong listened in shock as she heard how the different disciples had come to be used by Song Zun to look for Yang Jade and in the end, how Alex killed him.

Her eyes went wide when she heard this. Even the elders beside her were shocked to hear that someone fought in the forbidden fields and actually managed to kill the other person.

"Are you... really okay?" Ma Rong asked softly.

Alex gave a soft smile and said, "Yes, master. I'm fine. I didn't let it drag me down."

"Good, Good. Come, let me take you back. Let the elders here take care of the other disciples," Ma Rong said.

"Okay,? master," he said.

"I will send a few elders here, make sure you get all the disciples out. If every single one of them were to die of hunger now, that wouldn't be fair to them. Their crime isn't worthy of death," she said.

"Yes, Sect Leader," the elders said.

"Come, let's go," Ma Rong said as she wrapped him with her Qi to pull him up.

"It's okay, Master. I can fly on my own," he said as wrapped his body with it himself. After not using Qi for 3 days, it felt like a dam had been opened as it all came flooding out.

Soon, he was hovering in the air, and both master and disciple were flying away. The Elders were shocked to see a disciple actually being able to fly.

"No wonder sect master took him as her disciple, he is so talented," one of them commented. They waited for more elders to arrive and once they did, they went down to the forbidden fields to call them back.

Alex was surprised to finally see the back of the sect leader's mountain. He had never been on this side of the mountain. It turned out, the back of the Sect Leader's mountain was actually part of the cliffs in the forbidden fields.

Finally, Ma Rong reached her home and flew down and so did Alex.

"Come in, tell me more about what transpired in there. I want to hear everything," she said.

Alex nodded and walked in. Back at the cave opening, he had only given them a general story about what happened, but in here, he told her everything.

He told her about the first day and how nothing happened, aside from the fact that a disciple tried to kill him, so he broke all of his arms.

Then about the second day and his meeting with the boss, Song Zun, and how he managed to kill him thanks to being able to use his spiritual sense for a few seconds.

"That bastard! I should've just crippled his cultivation like I originally wanted to. instead, I cared about what the other elders would say and just threw him in there for 2 months," Ma Rong said.

Alex nodded and finally, but reluctantly, explained to her about his adventure on the other side of the river.

This had truly shocked Ma Rong to her core.

## Chapter 228: Approaching Danger?

"You went to the other side of the river? You were supposed to only stay on this side of the river.? Did Lang Shun not explain how dangerous the other side was for the mortals like us?" Ma Rong started scolding him, rightfully so.

"But master, I am a body cultivator. So it was mostly fine going to the other side. As long as I didn't go very far away, the monsters wouldn't be very strong," Alex explained.

"Still, the desert is an unknown ground, we don't know what lies over there," Ma Rong said. "You were supposed to stay on this side of the river because there were no monsters here. Why would you go looking for monsters on your own?"

Alex was a little surprised at this question, and a little confused too. "I remember both you and martial uncle telling me that the monsters were on the other side of the river, but that's not true."

"I fought plenty of monsters on this side of the river too. I even found a few corpses on this side of the river. Going to the river itself was very dangerous," Alex said.

"What? No... that can't be. The monsters have always stayed on the other side of the river. That has been the case for the last few years I have been a sect leader," Ma Rong said.

"Oh... what about before that?" Alex asked.

"I don't know. Not many people from the previous era are still active right now. The only one who is would be..." Ma Rong stopped talking and instantly took out her communication talisman and called someone.

Soon, she got an answer back, and her eyes started getting wide.

"Even beyond the river... there was grassland before," Ma Rong said in shock.



"What?" Alex was surprised too. He was expecting to hear if there were monsters on the other side, but the answer he got was different. 'What does that mean?' he couldn't help but think.

"It can only mean that whatever is stopping the monsters from leaving is weakening. But that would mean that monsters could leave far away and there weren't any beyond the river banks right?" Ma Rong asked.

"Yes," Alex said.

"Then it can only mean that the monsters don't live on the other side because they are being stopped from leaving. It means that they don't choose to leave it. Which would tell us that... whatever is making them stay on the other side of the river, and is turning the entire land to the desert is growing."

"In other words, soon, the forbidden fields will also become desert. After that... the sect," Ma Rong's eyes were beyond wide after realizing what information her disciple had brought back.

"Does that mean our sect is in danger?" Alex asked.

"Possibly. But not right now. You shouldn't worry about it unless you plan to become the sect leader," Ma Rong said.

"No, no. I don't want to become something like that," Alex said while shaking his head.

"Something like that? You think being a sect leader is bad?" Ma Rong asked with a smile.

"Oh no master, I think it's wonderful. I just don't see myself as one," Alex said.

"Alright, alright. You brought back useful information, so I won't punish you for not obeying what I said. So, you said Song Zun used all the yang jades to strengthen his body?" Ma Rong asked.

"Yes. He made some sort of formation to use yang jade as a power source and tempered his body," Alex said.

"Are you sure about that? Do you know much about formations?" Ma Rong asked.

"Uhh... not really, but I learned a few things about them in Tiger sect, and I do know it needs a power source to run, and he didn't have one," Alex said.

"Do you know what formation it is?" Ma Rong asked.

"Hmm... no. I know around 20 formations, but that blueprint matches none of them," Alex said.

"Alright, draw me the formation. We can ask the experts in the Cardinal city when we go are there tomorrow," Ma Rong said.

"Oh, we are leaving for the capital tomorrow?" he asked in surprise.

"No. We are leaving for the capital in a few hours. We will be reaching there by tomorrow," Ma Rong said.

"Oh, it takes that long?" he asked in surprise. He had been on bullet trains and those took a few hours to cross hundreds of kilometers. If it took nearly a day to reach there even with the speed his master had taken him then...

"Just how far is the Cardinal City?" he asked.

"Hmm... I don't think it's been measured yet, but it should be something like 10,000 kilometers," Ma Rong said without any amazement at that number.

Alex however was shocked. 'Woah, 10,000 kilometers? At that much distance, I could go back and forth from home to Oakleaf City around 12 times,' he thought.

That was truly a long distance for him.

"Are you surprised at that distance?" Ma Rong asked.

"Yeah. I don't think of distances like that ever," he said truthfully.

"What the hell? Why are you acting like that from just 10,000 kilometers? What will you do if you learned the true size of the crimson empire?" Ma Rong said with a snort.

"True size of the Crimson empire?" Alex asked curiously.

"It's somewhere between 50 thousand and 70 thousand kilometers in length. And something like 20 to 1000 kilometers in width," she said.

"Woah, so long. But not very wide. Why is that so master?" he asked.

"It's all because of the Southern forest. Someplace like Scarlet city, it only allows a single piece of land to exist, while in some place, there could be over 20 cities in a row width-wise. So, it's not the same distance everywhere," Ma Rong said.

"Anyway, enough about the distances. You went to get yang jades for yourself right? You said it helps you? Show me if you got any."

Chapter 229: One after another

"Oh right," Alex said as he took out 4 very yellow yang jades from his storage bag. "I managed to get 4. 1 was from a snake's stomach, the other 3 were in the desert. Song Zun had managed to make the disciples find all the other ones by himself," he said.

"I see, and they are full of yang energy too. So much that I kind of feel uncomfortable around it. Anyway, how do you use it again?" Ma Rong asked.

"Like this."

Alex took one of the yang jades and put it in his mouth. Ma Rong immediately started shouting with her eyes wide open, but it was already too late. He had swallowed it.

<You have ingested a 'Yang Jade'>

<Sun God's Divine Yang Body is turning the yang energy in the yang jade to Yang Qi>

<Purifying the Yang Qi in your body... 2%>

<Purifying the Yang Qi in your body... 3%>

<Purifying the Yang Qi in your body... 4%>

The already hot and vigorous Yang Qi in his body started to feel more hot and vigorous.

<Purifying the Yang Qi in your body... 98%>

<Purifying the Yang Qi in your body... 99%>

<Purifying the Yang Qi in your body... 100%>

<Congratulation, the Yang Qi in your body has been purified and condensed>

<Yang purity at 30%>

The pain was nowhere as intense as he had remembered it. Maybe he was used to being in pain, or maybe his body was strong enough that this little pain was nothing for him.

Either way, he was now perfectly fine even while ingesting a yang jade that completely burned his insides.

"Are... are you okay?" Ma Rong asked with fear in her eyes.

"Of course, master. Don't worry, I know what I'm doing," he said as he took another yang jade and devoured it.

<You have ingested a 'Yang Jade'>

<Sun God's Divine Yang Body is turning the yang energy in the yang jade to Yang Qi>

<Purifying the Yang Qi in your body... 2%>

.....

<Purifying the Yang Qi in your body... 100%>

<Congratulation, the Yang Qi in your body has been purified and condensed>

<Yang purity at 40%>

And again.

<You have ingested a Yang jade>

.....

<Yang purity at 50%>

And again.

<You have ingested a Yang jade>

.....

<Yang purity at 60%>

Finally, he was out of yang jades.

He looked up to see Ma Rong's shocked face looking at him like she had just seen a ghost.

"How did you eat that many stones and survive?" Ma Rong asked.

"I don't know master. I could always do this from the first day I joined the sect," Alex said.

"You... you— is anything different now then?" Ma Rong asked.

"Different huh?" he thought as he tried to feel his own Qi. It was beyond vigorous now and it felt really dense and viscous now. He Qi had condensed about 40% once more and could thus hold onto a lot more of Qi in general.

Their strength, however, didn't seem to increase all that much. Aside from the first yang jade he ingested, the following once had only benefited him in condensing the Qi, and not really in increasing damage of his skills, however.

'It didn't even go up a realm in strength from what I can feel it,' he thought.

"My Qi is a lot denser now, so I can probably fly much easier now and use Qi manipulation more effectively. Hmm... feels like the cultivation base is the best it can be at this level," he said and opened up the status page. Then, he hit [Breakthrough]

Immediately, he jumped from Organ Tempering 4th realm to Organ Tempering 5th realm. He had been in the realm for a while now, so he felt it was right to increase it now.

Ma Rong was surprised at the random breakthrough no matter how many times she saw it.

"At some point in the future, you are going to give me a heart attack, I swear," she said. "Alright, go and rest or maybe try to stabilize your cultivation base. After that, be ready to leave at 8. I will come to get you," Ma Rong said.

"Yes, master," he said and left her house.

His master was trying her hardest to not show it, but she really was worrying a lot today. Her precious disciple had to kill someone, Someone had infiltrated her sect for some reason, the forbidden fields were increasing in size.

Then there was the fact that she had to now take disciples to the annual sect competition and also make sure to get good points in the competitions to become a 1st-grade sect.

Alex didn't realize exactly what it must be like having so many burdens on oneself, but he promised himself to help her relieve a bit of it.

He couldn't stop the forbidden fields from increasing in size. He couldn't stop the person behind Song Zun from infiltrating. He couldn't stop her from worrying about the different disciples that would be at the capital city.

What he could do was show her that killing someone hadn't changed him for the worse but instead made him better, and he could help the sect win a lot of points at the competition.

Sun was up the horizon and Alex went inside his home. He realized that he was still in the tattered robes and full of sand everywhere. So he took off his clothes and jumped into the pond inside the courtyard.

"Ahh, this feels so good," he said. "Ah right, come out Pearl," he said as he called Pearl in a flash of white light. Pearl appeared for a moment before disappearing from view as he fell underwater.

Alex used Qi manipulation to carry him out and gave him a good bath too, despite his constant disapproval.

After taking a bath for what felt like forever, Alex got out and changed his clothes to the Core disciple's robe that he was given after becoming one.

Not sure when exactly they were to leave, Alex decided to log out and have some breakfast.

### Chapter 230: Gathering

Early morning, Alex got out of his room and made his way to the kitchen. Hannah was probably still in-game, so he didn't bother preparing anything for her. It was too early after all.

Once he was done, he left her a note at the dinner table saying that it was Friday and he didn't have any classes, so he would eat later whenever he could.

Once that was set, he went back to his room and logged back in. It was still a while before he would be taken away, so he decided to practice his techniques.

Fighting with a mortal body had made his body move way better than it did before. When combined with Qi, he was on a higher level. He practiced the Elusive Heavenly sword.

A slash, a stab, a swing, he practiced every stance there was in the Elusive Heavenly Sword and before he knew it; he was starting to lose vision of the surrounding.

It was just one man and one sword against the world. Soon, Alex lost himself too, and it was only the sword.

After a while, he abruptly stopped practicing. Alex felt a sort of mental whiplash from suddenly being in control of his body once more, fully conscious.



"It happened once again..." he thought. The first time he learned the sword technique, he had fallen in a trance as well. 'Why does this keep happening?' he wondered.

"You out of it now?"

A question came from the side. Ma Rong was standing at the door, looking at his train.

"Ah, master. When did you get here?" He asked.

"I've been here for 5 minutes now. Took you quite a while to notice me," she said.

Alex just gave small smile and didn't tell her that he didn't notice her at all. He quickly looked at the time and was shocked at how late it was.

'It's 8 am already?' he thought in surprise. More than an hour had gone by without him even realizing it.

"Come one, we are leaving now. People are going to arrive at the place soon," she said.

"Oh, okay," he said as he walked out with her. "Have the disciples who are leaving been already selected?" he asked.

"Yes. There are over 15 disciples who will leave with us. Considering that one sect can only have 3 disciples in each of the competitions at once, and each disciple can only take part in 3 competitions; we will need a lot of these disciples," she said.

"Oh, we can only take place in 3 competitions huh. Have you decided what competition I am going to take part in?" he asked.

"I am going to put you in two of the alchemy competitions. The Ingredients Recognizing competition and the best pill-making competition. As for the third one... I haven't thought about it yet."

"There are other alchemy competitions such as the fastest pill making, where as long as you make a mortal grade pill, you pass the competition. Or the one where one is made to make the most unique pills out there."

"I could put you in the second one, but that would mean you will have to show the different recipes you got from the corpse, and I don't want to do that right now," Ma Rong said.

"I see. Alright, master, I will do as you say," Alex said while nodding. He could be said to be above average in terms of speed in making pills, but he was nowhere near the fastest amongst his peers according to his master.

He flew with his master and landed directly in front of the Elder's hall. There he saw about 11 different disciples and a few elders standing around.

"Hmm... are the 3 not here yet?" Ma Rong asked. Just as she said that a voice came from behind her. "We're here. Sorry, we took a while. Hmm... are the other 2 not here yet, sect leader?" an older man asked.

Alex looked at him and felt like he saw him somewhere before, but didn't know where. 'That face looks so familiar,' he thought. Next to the older man was a girl with blonde hair in ponytails who was looking around with playful eyes.

Her eyes fell on Ma Rong and she quickly greeted her. She then switched her eyes to Alex and was puzzled for a second before she realized who he was.

"Ah, you are the sect leader's new disciple, aren't you?" She said in surprise. It seemed that she was in the knowhow about the sect leader somehow.

Alex was a little surprised. A girl he had never seen before suddenly knew who he was. He looked at her robes and realized that she was a core disciple as well.

'I don't remember interacting with her before, have I?' he gave a confused look as he thought about the girl, but couldn't remember anything.

Even without eidetic memory, he was sure that such a lively girl with a not bad face and child-like attitude would be hard to remember. He was about to ask his master who she was when she instead talked first.

"Yu Ming, greet the First Elder," Ma Rong said. "He is Lang Shun's father, Lang Luoyang."

"Ah, good morning First elder. It is really nice to meet you," he said with a slight bow. 'Martial uncle's father? No wonder he looks so familiar. They practically have the same face.'

He then turned to his master, waiting for her to introduce the lively girl as well, but instead, she just looked at him in confusion.

"What?" she asked.

"Umm... who is she? She seems to know me, but I don't remember ever meeting her," Alex said with his spiritual sense.

Ma Rong nearly face-palmed herself. "Don't you interact with your fellow disciples or what? How come you don't know her?" she asked.

"Umm... master, I usually spend my free time learning alchemy and remember that I have been absent for the last 2 weeks and a half?" he said.

"Sigh, I understand," she said as she looked at the girl and said, "My disciple doesn't seem to know you, introduce yourself, Fanfan."

"Oh," the girl said in surprise and then proceeded to introduce herself.

"Hello, My name is Fan Ruogang, you can call me Fanfan."