

Alchemy 411

Chapter 411: Intentional Attacks

Alex looked at the dead Lioness and huffed a little.

"That's one down," he said and carefully looked at the other nine. The other lionesses were also a little wary now that he had successfully killed one of them despite not having a cultivation base at all from what they could sense.

"Dammit! It's still not really working. I need to do something else if I want to truly fight without any assistance," he thought. Although he had stopped everything, he was still using his spiritual sense to check around him in case the beasts sneak attacked him.

He needed to be on guard at all times and Spiritual sense was absolutely necessary for it. However, he also thought that it was stifling his sense of danger and made his actions inhibited.

"No, not yet. It's suicidal if I stop my spiritual sense now," he thought. He wanted to fight at the worst position he could and come out on top, but he also knew his limits.

The beasts got hold of their fear and started making their way towards him slowly.

Alex looked at the three that had bad cuts on their head and necks and decided to go for them next. He jumped in once again to attack the one closest to him.

The Lionesses paw blocked the sword from hitting its head, but at the same time, it was also sent flying back a bit. Alex immediately used the sword to block another attack and used the momentum to turn around and hit the lioness on the back of the head.

He saw another lioness targeting his head from behind and immediately flipped his blade to stab backward. The sword stabbed through the neck of the midair lioness and killed it on the spot.

He was about to twist the blade to let it loose, but another beast attacked him from behind, so he had to let it go and roll away.

At the same time, another beast attacked once more. One after another, he kept dodging every single attack as the 8 lionesses attacked him one after another, not giving him a single moment of rest.

'Sh*t! They're trying to stop me from taking another sword out,' he thought. He was starting to get annoyed at that.

Another one of the lionesses jumped at him, but he didn't run away this time. Instead, he met the paw of the lioness head-on and punched it back. With his other hand, he punched the lioness on the now open head.

A large sound rang out as the lioness got punched with enough strength to the head get dizzy for a few seconds. Alex finally got enough time to take out the sword as the other lionesses couldn't attack with their friend on the way.

Just as the lioness was coming out of its dizziness, Alex swung the sword down on its shoulders. He barely managed to cut two inches deep when the sword got stuck in the lioness' shoulder.

Another lioness attacked from behind at the same time. He twisted through the air as he grabbed the handle of the sword and swung at one of the lionesses with the entire lioness on the sword.

The lioness got released from the sword and went flying into another lioness. Alex quickly looked to the side and saw the lioness with a large cut on its head.

He immediately made his way up to it and dodged its attack before delivering a massive strike on the already wounded head. This time, the strike went past the skull and actually hit the brain, killing the beast in one strike.

"7 more," he said as he looked around. He kept track of where the two lionesses that were slowly losing all blood through their neck were. Any minutes now, they would die, but Alex wanted to make it just a little bit quicker.

He dodged another attack and slipped through the many lionesses like a slippery snake as he made his way to the one with the bleeding neck and killed it.

Similarly, he went through them, losing a sword in the process, and killed the other one too.

Now, only 5 were left.

'Is this low enough?' he thought. He was wondering if she should drop the spiritual sense at this point but decided not to. The lioness with the 6th Meridian Tempering cultivation was too scary for him in his current situation.

So, he went back into the fight again. After another few minutes of struggle, he managed to kill 3 more lionesses. The remaining two were really angry now.

Alex was huffing a lot as using just physical ability to fight was very taxing. It was especially worrying to him that the remaining beasts were at the 4th and 6th realm of Meridian Tempering realm. However, with only 2 remainings, it would become easy to fight now.

Finally, he felt like it was okay to let go of his worries and took in his spiritual sense as well. He was purely going to use his sword fighting techniques to fight the two beasts.

With no more spiritual sense, he could kiss goodbye his perfect guard, but he needed to do that to improve.

"Come!" he shouted at the two beasts.

He didn't wait for the two of them to come and jumped at them himself. His sword wasn't strong enough to harm them at once, and his body wasn't strong enough to survive multiple of their hits, but he still ran towards them.

He struck the weaker lioness and dodged when the stronger one attacked. He fought the two beasts and the more he did it the more he frowned.

'This is not what master mentioned. I'm still not thinking of the sword as part of me, and me as part of the sword. I let the sword have intent, and the sword gives me its sharpness,' he thought.

He felt like he was understanding something that was right in front of him but was just out of reach.

'Intent, I should let the sword know my intent. No, the sword is me, I am the sword. I don't want the sword to cut. No, I... want me to cut the lioness.'

'CUT'

He let himself know of his intent, and let the sword do its own thing. As long as he and the sword were one, it would understand.

He went forward and slashed.

He didn't know if he was hallucinating it or not, but he felt like his sword has a simple white outline to it. However, it was too faint to know if it was really there because it was, or because he wanted there to be one.

He sliced at the weaker lioness who barely managed to dodge it. However, even as it dodged the attack, a thin amount of hair fell from the lioness' neck.

'I did it?' his eyes brightened as he thought that.

To him, that was definitely a success, however small it was. He was starting to figure out the concept behind the intents and he was so happy that he wanted to celebrate. All of a sudden, he tried to move to the side, but...

BANG

He was suddenly hit from the side due to a moment of carelessness. He flew through the air until he hit a tree and broke it in half.

"Ughh!" he said as he stood up. As soon as he opened his eyes, he saw one of the lionesses attacking him, so he rolled over to dodge.

'I can't focus elsewhere right now,' he thought and quickly got up despite the pain on his right ribs. He truly believed that some of the ribs had to have been broken for sure.

Still, he would have to be beaten up a few more times to be dangerously injured.

He stopped thinking about what just happened and prepared to attack once more.

'I am the sword. I want to cut. I need to cut. CUT!' he thought once more and dashed forward to slash at the weaker lioness who tried to block his attack.

However, as if the sword had gained a new life and increased sharpness, it cut through the paw-like it was a piece of butter.

"RAWR!!" the lioness screamed in pain and jumped back. Alex was surprised once more.

'T-that's way too high damage. That's at least in the middle of Meridian Tempering realm,' Alex thought. Up until now, he had been hacking and slashing really hard to cleave through the neck of the lionesses, but the attack just now didn't have as much force behind it.

Due to his focus behind the intent, his attack hadn't had as much intensity behind it, and it still managed to do quite a lot of damage.

'Do intents not follow a person's cultivation base and all have their own damage?' he wondered. He thought back to the competition in which Du Yuhan fought 3 similar strength puppets and overpowered them by just increasing the intent.

Then he won against that guy from his own group by revealing the Sword Qi, which was the next stage after Sword Intent. Even though his opponent's cultivation base was clearly higher, Du Yuhan even managed to beat him.

In fact, Du Yuhan had even managed to push back a True Realm cultivator.

"Does that mean..." He quickly stopped. This was simply too early to be making conclusions and he needed to keep on fighting.

He quickly dodged and rolled aside when the stronger lioness attacked. The lioness didn't let him take any rest and came back to attack every time he dodged.

Alex jumped back, rolled to the side, and dashed sideways so many times that he was starting to get dizzy. 'This isn't going anywhere,' he thought and quickly started calling back his intent.

He needed focus as the intent was in no way natural to him yet if he could even call it that at the level it was at. However, the lioness kept on attacking without stopping.

Alex was starting to get a little tired as well. He couldn't keep it going and needed to finish it soon. Suddenly, he stopped dodging.

The weaker lioness had decided to join the attack, and he welcomed it with open arms. He got hit on the sword, but at the same time, jumped backward to lessen the blow. He was using the momentum from the lioness' attack to get away.

'Finally,' he thought. The lionesses ran towards him, but he didn't need to worry about them as he had ample time to prepare now.

'Cut... cut... CUT!!' he thought to himself. The white light that tethered on the edge of visibility and invisibility appeared once more as it covered the entirety of his sword.

The stronger lioness attacked him right then. He rolled forward to dodge the paw and came face to face with the weaker one. The weaker lioness used its left paw to attack him, while he used his sword in return.

"CUT!"

His sword passed through the left paw and well and went halfway into the skull. He couldn't fully cleave the skull, but that wasn't necessary as he had already damaged the brain and the beast was dead.

He pulled the sword out and turned around to fight the final opponent.

Both of them wasted no time and ran towards each other. Alex's sword was still glowing a little from the intent he had set up.

'CUT!'

He kept reminding himself as he fought the beast. Somehow, his sword wasn't strong enough to cut through the body of the stronger lioness as he did with the weaker one.

'So that's the extent of my sword intent's damage?' he wondered. Still, the sword cut the skin and flesh of the lioness pretty easily and after a minute of continuous fighting, he managed to put so much wound on the lioness that it was simply too much for the lioness to continue fighting.

Alex struck aside the paw and took the opportunity to drive the sword through the left eye of the lioness, killing it finally.

Chapter 412: Visit

Alex immediately let go of his restraints on the spiritual sense and his cultivation. He also brought out a healing pill and ate it as he sighed.

'Only 3 more remaining huh? Should I ask the master for more once she wakes up or should I make my own?' he thought.

The energy of the pill entered his body and quickly healed the wounds on his rib cage. The bruise slowly disappeared and he stopped feeling pain.

'Common Rank pills can't do it that fast right? You really do want a True Rank pill. I wonder when I will be able to make those,' he thought. 'First I need to convert my common Qi to True Qi.'

He checked his surroundings and made sure there was nothing that could sneak attack him right now. He took out the Onyx armor and wore it again. Now that he had the slightest bit of knowledge on how Intents worked, he no longer needed to force himself into such situations.

He looked down at his hands and chuckled a little. Somehow, during all of those minutes he spend fighting, his long nails had somehow not broken despite the heated battle.

'Well, they are durable, I can give them that,' he thought. He looked at the dense forest and wondered if it was at all a good idea to bring out Pearl now.

'Hm... since Meridian Tempering realm beasts are starting to be common now, I should just fight on my own. No need to bring Pearl out and put him in danger,' he decided. He quickly changed the torn robe as well and walked deeper into the forest.

He didn't forget to pick up the alchemy ingredients growing in the forest during the entire time.

'Wasn't it around this deep when senior sister found the Spirit Cleansing lily? Maybe there are some here too,' he thought with optimism in his head.

Every time he came across a beast, he only fought it using his newly founded, still terrible sword intent. It didn't take long for him to realize that his sword intent was about as strong as the 3rd Meridian Tempering realm in terms of damage. It was because of his physical body that its damage during the fight had increased to 5th Meridian Tempering.

'I wonder... if I fully master this, will my damage go higher than it already is?' Alex thought. He thought that was a little too strong and started wondering why everyone didn't try to learn intents from the very start.

If people knew that intent could make your attacks stronger, he didn't doubt they would flock to it. He also didn't doubt that the people who cultivated didn't all know about intent.

'Then, why do they choose not to?' he thought.

He got his answer very soon. It was during his fight with a bird in the 9th Meridian Tempering realm when he started feeling his body getting unusually fatigued.

Not only that, it felt like he needed sleep very soon, or else he would fall down in the forest.

'I see,' he thought. 'No wonder they don't learn it. It's so taxing on the body and mind.'

The body wasn't as bad as a little bit of resting could help him get back on track, but the mind was a different thing. It wasn't easy to refresh a fatigued mind.

And after forcing the way one thought every time one thought, one's mind really did get fatigued.

'I can probably do much better once I find it easier to use Intent. Still, my mind will probably get fatigued then too,' he thought.

Seeing that he was dangerously close to falling asleep, he quickly concealed his cultivation fully and put on the invisible veil. Then, he started walking back, but while taking a different path.

Once again, he had all the ingredients he could want right there. 'I should do this more often,' he thought. After an hour of walking, he brought out Pearl and let him walk next to him.

It was now safe for Pearl to come out again. Pearl happily fought all the beasts they came across and killed them all. It was still shocking to Alex to see this little fluffball kill so many giant beasts like they were nothing.

Soon they were out of the forest. Alex quickly put Pearl back into the tattoo and flew back to the sect. He quietly landed in the outer sect and walked his way back to his house.

Once inside, he finally laid on the grass in the courtyard as the fatigue caught up to him. 'Yeah, I'm not going to use Intent so freely again,' he thought.

Thankfully, he could log out now and not have to worry about this mental fatigue for now.

Before that, he went to his master's house to check if she was alright. The girls were there, but these were different from the ones yesterday.

"Has there been any change?" he asked.

The girls shook their heads. "No, junior brother. Sect Leader has still been sound asleep ever since we took over last night," the girl at the front said.

"I see. Thank you for looking after my master," he said.

"No, no. She's our sect leader too. We are doing this because we want to," the girls said.

Alex nodded and left. He went back to his house and looked at the time. '6 AM huh? Should I leave?' he wondered and quickly decided he should.

After all, he had his assignments to do.

So, he logged out. For the next 4 hours before classes, aside from eating breakfast with the girls, he spent most of the time focused on his assignments.

The assignments for the first years were quite easy, so he could easily finish them in about 4 hours for each. He just needed to do this a little more after returning from the classes and he would finish the assignment for one of the subjects.

He didn't spend all of his time doing assignments, however. Midway through, he would get bored so he went on the internet for quick 5 minute breaks.

During one of those breaks, he went to the forum to check on his post about Structure and Composition. Surprisingly enough, the post was decently popular.

It wasn't popular enough to be on the first page of the forum, but just enough that people who browsed it for longer than 20 minutes easily found it.

One of the things that surprised him the most was the increasing number of negative comments on the post. Most of the people were calling his decision to become an alchemist stupid, as that would take forever to become good at.

He simply laughed at these people and forgot about them. Before getting back to his assignments, he noticed that he had received another message.

Once again, Spicy_Gourd was asking him if he found anything else. Alex quickly replied no, and got back to the assignments.

He went to his classes and returned back before finishing the last bit of assignment he had left for this one subject. Afterward, he logged back into the game.

The first thing he did after entering the game was checked his nails.

"Damn, it's been nearly a day and they still haven't fallen off," he thought. He was starting to believe that his hypothesis about the nails being permanent was close to being true.

He had a few more tests to do with the pill, however. Aside from the duration of the nails, he still needed to learn about the durability of the nails and the length of the nails with the different Harmony pills.

He also needed to know if eating a pill after already consuming one had any extra effects. If it did, he needed to know what.

With all of these things to do, he decided to go to the place with the swine once more.

Just then, his nameplate vibrated inside his storage bag.

'Hmm?' he took it out and scanned it with his spiritual sense. There was a message for him on the nameplate to go to the elder's hall and find the Grand Elder as soon as possible.

'GrandMaster wants to see me? Why?' he wondered and quickly went down the sect leader's mountain. He made his way through the sect valley as he reached the Elder's Hall.

'Where's grand m— Oh, there he is,' he thought and quickly walked up to the grand elder who had been standing in front of the doorway.

"Good Afternoon, Grandmaster," Alex greeted the Grand Elder.

"Oh, you are fina— What's wrong with your hands?" he asked, seeing the 9 long nails on his hands.

"Oh, it's a new pill I'm testing. It grows your nail and makes them harder," he explained.

"You made a new pill?" the Grand Elder said in surprise. The elders around them also stopped to see why the Grand Elder had just exclaimed.

"Ahem, tell me about that later. For now, come with me," He said and brought Alex back in. They walked through the hallways past a few doors. "There, go into the room," he said.

Alex nodded and opened the door. Just as he did that, Spiritual sense suddenly went past him, making him stand on the spot. He was too scared to open the door now.

However, his willingness didn't seem to be a factor, as the person on the other side opened the door without waiting for him to do so.

Immediately, a wave of fragrant perfume hit his nose as two slender hands wrapped around his neck. "Junior brother, you are alive!!"

Luo Mei hugged Alex the moment she saw him and didn't let go. Alex looked past her and saw that Wen Cheng was standing a few meters behind her.

"Master! Sister! You guys returned?" he said in surprise.

"Haha, that's all you can say after terrifying us to death?" Wen Cheng asked with a dry laugh.

"Umm... I wasn't at fault though, Master. Someone kidnapped me," Alex said. He then turned towards Luo Mei who was crying while hugging him and said, "It's okay, sister. I'm alive and fine. I was just stuck in the formation that disoriented me, and I could leave it."

"Sniff Sniff! I'm just glad you're okay," Luo Mei said with watery, red eyes.

"Yes, I did hear it from Elder Chang that you were kidnapped by someone that you didn't recognize?" Wen Cheng asked.

"Oh, that..." Alex quickly checked his surroundings with his spiritual sense and then sent it to Wen Cheng. A few words appeared in his mind that completely shook Wen Cheng to the very core.

"So that did happen! We were right," Wen Cheng said.

"You guys guessed it?" Alex asked in surprise. Luo Mei looked at the two in confusion as she couldn't pick up any hints from the conversation.

"We knew he was after you, so once he went missing, it wasn't very hard to guess. Still, we couldn't make any accusations without evidence, so we had to sit around doing nothing but hope you were alive," Wen Cheng said.

"About him, by the way," Wen Cheng continued, "did he...?"

Alex nodded.

"How?" Wen Cheng asked.

"He overexerted his mental strength in my spiritual sea and died," Alex said. He didn't mention anything about the dark shape he saw or the yellow fog.

"I see... serves him right," Wen Cheng said as he gritted his teeth. "I'm just angry I didn't get to kill him on my own," he said.

Luo Mei couldn't continue listening to the cryptic conversation and asked who they were talking about, but Wen Cheng replied with the "it's better if you don't know it" reply.

"By the way, where were you?" Wen Cheng asked.

Alex quickly calculated where he should have been based on how long the caravan took to reach that one city and answered.

"That brings up the question I've been wanting to ask for a while, Master," Alex said.

"Did you guys not search for me very hard?"

Chapter 413: Mocking Swine

"Huh? What do you mean?" Luo Mei asked.

"We've been searching for you all this time. Even when we learned about your arrival, we were deep in the southern forest, looking for you," Wen Cheng said.

"Huh?" Alex was confused now. "But I should have been visible. There was a massive fog created by the formation and there was a barrier too, so that should have been visible at least. Or maybe you heard some explosions. I was constantly exploding cauldrons many times throughout the night too."

"Huh?" Luo Mei said in confusion. "We definitely flew through that part of the forest multiple times. We did it at night too. I can swear that it was so silent in the forest, if a single wolf howled, we would've heard it from far away. However, we didn't hear a single explosion any time, ever."

"Yes. We definitely looked through that place. Are you sure you're not getting the location of your imprisonment wrong?" Wen Cheng asked.

It was Alex's turn to get confused now. He was absolutely sure that he had gotten the location correct. 'Then why did they nev— Ah!' he thought.

He suddenly rummaged through his bag and brought out the paper that explained the Spirit Disorienting formation and made sure he knew what the formation did.

'3 base formations - Fog, Disorientation, and Space bending,' he read the description again. That wasn't it. He then took out the information about barrier formation.

'2 base formation - Barrier, and space expansion,' he read. He remembered how the space inside the barrier was expanded.

"Hmm... neither of them have anything to do with hiding noise though," Alex said as he showed them the two formation rods. Just as he said that he remembered.

"Ah! Wait a second," he said as he brought out another 2 rods. These were the same rods and Alex quickly presented them to his master.

"There was this rod outside the formation too. However, I never got around to learning what it is or if it is even part of a formation," Alex said. "Maybe this was it?"

"Hmm... I will take these and get them tested," Wen Cheng said and took the rods.

The three talked for a little while longer and caught up.

"Alright, we will return now. I've been ignoring sect work for the last month and need to urgently get back to it. The first elder is good at handling the sect in my absence, but I shouldn't rely on him too much. My change in power won't be smooth once your sister breaks through if I neglect it any further," Wen Cheng said.

"When do you plan on returning to the sect?" Luo Mei asked.

"Umm... I don't know. I made a lot of pills during the last month and need to get them tested. So, maybe after 10 days. Hopefully, I can test all of my pills during that time," Alex said.

"Alright. Come whenever you are ready," Wen Cheng said. "We'll leave for now. Take care of yourself."

"Goodbye Master, Sister." Alex saw them off.

Once the two of them left, Alex looked around for the grand elder, but the old man seemed to have gone somewhere, so he went to the core mountain, and through there, he went to the location of the swine farm once again.

Alex greeted the Elder on guard and went in. He went to the location where the swine were locked up and took out the pill that increased the nail once again.

He quickly fed the swine and watched the hoof grow out a little more. It grew about 2 centimeters again. He broke off the hoof of the right leg and kept it.

He then fed the swine another pill and watched. This was something he was curious about so he was making sure every step was recorded.

The hoof on the right leg of the swine grew to about 2 centimeters, but the one on the left grew only 1 centimeter.

"Oh, so another pill does help in growing the nail more, but it reduces effectiveness," he concluded. He cut the hooves once again to bring the swine back to its original form.

He fed another pill and watched the hoof grow 2 centimeters again. This pretty much confirmed that if someone didn't have long nails, to begin with, they would grow about 2 centimeters of it.

He then checked the durability of the hooves he had and found that the strength in the nail did in fact increase as the number of Harmony in the pill increased.

An increased number of pills however had decreased effectiveness, so taking more than one pill at a time was unnecessary.

The only thing he still couldn't figure out was the duration these nails lasted, but he was pretty certain they didn't expire and that this was a permanent effect.

'That's one pill done,' he thought and sent his spiritual sense through his storage space to look at the 8 other pills he had made while stuck in the formation.

After the first pill, he had come to an understanding that increasing the Harmony of the pill was not necessary at all. He needed the pill to just enter Mortal grade so he could test it out. He could perfect the recipe once he learned that it was a good pill.

He went through the swine to test the rest of the 8 pills. 2 of those pills turned out to be pills that just gave Qi, which was useless to him so he crossed them off of his list.

1 of the pills made the swine's heart beat faster, almost as if it was doping the swine, but to a much weaker level when compared to actual doping pills that existed, so he ignored that as well.

1 of the pills made the right hind leg of the swine slightly longer than the left one. Alex shook his head when he saw that effect. He doubted anyone would ever need such a pill, but still decided to sell it since that was the only thing he could do.

2 of the pills healed at a different rate but were both not as good as the other healing pills out there.

1 of the pills opened up the sweat glands of the pig and made it sweat far faster than normal.

The last pill, however, was something he hadn't expected, or rather, didn't dare expect. When he fed the last pill to the pig, he looked at the information the formation was giving him regarding the swine's vitals and other things.

He looked at the vitals and back at the pig. He was expecting the current pill to have something to do with the non-physical aspect since the main ingredient of this pill didn't have any physical effect.

The ingredient was a type of grass that he hadn't found in the alchemy garden of the Hong Wu Sect. He could only find it in the southern forest or by buying it through the stores.

The ingredient was called the Bright Soul Grass. According to the book Zhou Mei had given him, the grass was supposed to help the soul of anyone that ate the grass to be more profound.

Alex didn't understand what it meant, but he still expected to see some non-physical. He waited for a few seconds for the pill to do its work, but nothing happened at all. He didn't even feel any Qi movement in the swine's body.

The swine started turning left and right, up and down, and even tried to turn around at one point, but nothing more happened at all.

'What?' he was confused. He waited a bit longer, but there was nothing. The light in the enclosure had lit up from the swine eating the pill but there was definitely something wrong here as he didn't have the slightest hint of where the energy affected.

He went against his instincts and fed the swine another pill. The swine didn't immediately eat the pill and instead looked at Alex with its clear human-like eyes.

'What does it want?' Alex wondered as he looked at the pill and pushed the pill towards its mouth. The swine hesitated for a bit, but still ate the pill in the end.

Alex carefully looked for the pill's energy in the stomach now. The energy appeared for a split second before dissolving into the bloodstream. After that, he had no idea where the blood took the energy.

He waited for something to change in the vital signs information to the right. Aside from a slightly faster-beating heart, everything else was fine.

He looked at the final pill he had of this type as it wasn't really necessary to have a lot to test it.

"Sigh, am I really gonna feed this pill and not know what it did?" he thought. Still, he needed to learn, so he brought the pill in front of the pig again.

Instead of trying to eat the pill, the swine instead turned its head sideways so as it didn't have to. It went so far as to tilt its head and not give Alex any attention.

"The hell is wrong with this swine?" he thought and waited for it to eat the pill. However, the swine didn't eat the pill at all.

"Sigh, it must be a really bad pill if even a swine refuses to eat it any further," he believed. So, he pulled back the pill and turned around to feed it to another pill if he could find anything.

Just as he was going to do that, the swine turned to him and stuck its tongue out to mock him.

"What?" Alex was really surprised now. "Why is the swine teasing me? Are the swines supposed to be this intelligent? I thought they were a dull creature with no mind for themselves," he thought. He couldn't understand what was happening here, so he decided to call the elder.

However, just then he stopped. 'Could it be?' he wondered and walked towards the swine once more. It looked a little afraid now that he had suddenly returned.

"Do you want to go free?" Alex suddenly asked. The swine looked at him with a confused stare. 'So it doesn't understand what I'm saying, but is smart enough to understand that I'm trying to communicate,' Alex thought.

'Did my pill make it intelligent?' he wondered. He needed to stop experiments on this swine as it had gained enough sentience.

'Do I test if I'm correct though?' he thought and turned to another swine that was just a normal pill swine with no emotions on its face. Alex walked up to it and handed it the last pill he had left.

The swine made no fuss and ate the pill without hesitation. Within a few seconds, Alex looked at the swine's face and saw that it was starting to look up and down as if it had just noticed that it was in a cage.

It then looked left and right and saw that it was inside a cage. Finally, it turned around to see that it had no place to go at all and had a face of acceptance.

Alex sighed when he saw that face. Seeing a swine have emotions made him sympathetic towards the swine.

However, the biggest surprise he got here was definitely going to be the pill he had made. If he was not wrong, the pill increased the mental ability of someone. Meaning, it increased their mental strength.

If the pill did what he thought it did, then he could definitely use it to increase the density of the spiritual sea and thus better his spiritual sense by a lot.

He would have to work hard to make the pill with a very high harmony, but that was acceptable for him if he truly could somehow improve his spiritual sea in any way.

Once he was done with the swine, he didn't know what to mark them and called an elder for help. The elder took the swine away after seeing their change and Alex was free to return home to do what he wanted to do.

Chapter 414 - Improving The Recipe

Alex returned back to his house learning a great many things about his pills. Among the 9 new pills he had, he already got rid of 5 of them and had only kept the remaining 4 as a choice for improving. ;

Even amongst them, there were really just 2 that he cared about. ;

The pill for the nail was something he really liked, especially when considering that the beasts could use it to have stronger and longer claws. It was basically like adding weapons to their claws. If he improved on that pill, he could surely sell it to people that had beasts and would love for them to get stronger. ;

The next pill he cared about was obviously the pill that gave the swines intelligence. The fact that it increased the mental capabilities of the swine, he fully expected it to increase the strength of the water in his spiritual sea as well. He was now hopeful about increasing the reach of his spiritual sense and couldn't wait to acquire the pill.

As for the pill that made someone sweat faster and the pill that increased a person's heartbeat, basically dopping them, he was still on the fence about them being useful at all. ;

"Whatever, I need to worry about this mental pill alone," Alex thought. "How many Bright Soul grasses did I get yesterday?" he quickly rummaged through his storage bag to check. ;

In total, after nearly 8 hours of scouring the forest, he had acquired about 32 Bright Soul Grasses. While that number sounded quite high, it wouldn't last him through the whole night if he tried to experiment with the pill to improve it. ;

"I don't know if there is reduced effect with each pill use like how most of the permanent pills have, so I need to make sure I only eat the best of the best pill," Alex thought. ;

Nodding to himself, he went to check on his master again. After learning that she was sound asleep, he went to the Southern Forest once more. ;

He called out Pearl who came out of the tattoo saying "Meow". Alex heard 'Brother' in his mind again and smiled.

He then quickly checked Pearl's nails and saw that the claws were still sticking out of his paws. 'So it doesn't disappear after staying in the beast space either huh?' he thought. ;

"Do you want to fight again?" he asked. ;

"YES!" Pearl's voice resounded in his mind. ;

They went through the forest once more, finding many different Alchemy ingredients and high-level monsters. Alex could now easily fight anything that was below the Mind Tempering realm. With beasts

in the 1st realm of Mind Tempering, his victory chances went down by a lot as that was a whole Minor Realm above his own.

Also, beasts got way more intelligent in the Mind Tempering realm and most of the time just ran away when they saw that they couldn't win. ;

So, the most Alex could do was test his sword Intent here and there on beasts that were willing to fight against him. He felt like he got a little bit stronger with his Intent, but not much. ;

He needed that feeling of fighting with someone strong once again to hone it better. ;

Pearl on the other hand was having the time of his life. The only thing he was angry about was that after killing each beast, he wanted to eat their core, but the core would automatically get transported to one of Alex's storage bags at random, and he would be left with nothing. ;

Quite a few times, he caused ruckus like the little child he was for not getting the core. His instinct told him to eat whatever was inside, but once he didn't find anything, he no longer knew what to do. ;

'I will have to teach him that he won't get a core to eat through his killing as long as he is with me,' Alex thought. But then, he thought of something else. ;

'Wait, how does the core even get transported to me?' he thought. That led him to question how the names of things floating on top of them worked, which led to an entire can of worms opening that made him question how every single 'game' aspect of this world worked.

"Other people don't get that. So why only the players?" Alex wondered. "Whatever, I will worry about that later. I should finish this quick and return," he thought.

So, he spent the next two hours the other way around and got as many ingredients as he could. By the time he had left the forest, he had gathered about 40 more of the Bright Soul Grasses and that was enough for him to do some experiments to improve some of the aspects of it. ;

He quickly returned back to the sect and went to his house. He looked at the time and realized he had about 3 more hours of time to test the pill.

He deliberated for a moment on whether to use his actual cauldron or use a black cauldron. After a few minutes of thinking, he decided to go with the black one. ;

Once the cauldron heated enough, he put in the first ingredient. He decided to follow the best recipe he had at the moment since he didn't have another pill with him to check the differences. ;

Since he had to test out the heating speed, and energy release rate at every level, he had destroyed quite a few of these ingredients. ;

Bright Soul grass was quite expensive in comparison to the other basic ingredients he used and he was even deliberating on changing the ingredients. However, that was something he would test later, or ask other people. ;

He didn't know how the pill changed just because one ingredient was changed, and he didn't want to take that risk right now. He had something good in his hand, he wasn't going to want to change it for anything else. ;

Besides, it was a simple pill with around 10 ingredients. He didn't need to try really hard to get something right with how many times he was going to try. ;

He stuck to the recipe and successfully made the first pill. The pill had a slightly blue hue to an overall light brown pill. He checked the Harmony of the pill and without much surprise, it was around 16%. ;

That was all he had done back in the forest before he had moved onto a different pill once he made the third set of changes. ;

Now, he was going to continue from where he left off. Without hesitation, he half-crushed the pill and checked the Structure and Composition again. ;

"I still don't get any information from this," he thought and started making another pill. This time, he remembered the different variations of energy release and used a different one for the first ingredient. ;

The pill came out a little worse than the one before. ;

"Ok, again," he thought and changed the second ingredient's variation. This one came out a little better than the first one. ;

"Alright, this is the norm now," he thought and kept the 2nd ingredient's instruction the same, and changed the one for the third ingredient.

Similarly, he tried for a dozen or so times before he made a pill with the highest harmony as of yet, 29%. That was the best he could do in the 3 hours he had. ;

"Time to leave," he thought. Before that, however, he went to check on his master one more time. As he expected, she was still asleep. ;

"Second elder said it was only going to take a short while. Why is it taking so long?" he wondered. ;

He quickly logged out and started his next assignment. This one was a little hard, but he had the next 3 days after today free, so he was in no hurry. ;

He went to his classes and returned back. Then, without wasting a lot of time in real life, he went directly back into the game. ;

Once he was in, he went directly to check on his master. After returning, he directly entered his alchemy room and started doing what he was doing this morning.

He had changed the recipe so much that it was unrecognizable, aside from the ingredients themselves. He continued changing from that again. ;

He changed the direction the 4th ingredient moved in, then he changed the 5th ingredient's speed at which it moved inside the cauldron. Once he saw that the 2nd change resulted in a worse pill, he reverted and changed something else. ;

Since he didn't know much about the structure of the powder, he was going to wing it until he got lucky.

As for the composition, he did his best and made the pill using every single speck of powder that was inside the cauldron, whether it was freely available or hidden in some nook and corner. He went through the cauldron thoroughly and made sure to not miss a single bit of any ingredient. ;

That had really helped him in making the pill have higher Harmony. Still, he didn't know how much improvement was the composition, and how much of it was the structure of the powder particles. ;

He had no choice but to leave everything up to luck. At least until his master woke up and explained it to him. ;

"I hope master knows it at least. She did act like she understood what the Royal Alchemist meant when I told her about what he had said," Alex thought. ;

However, while he was hopeful, he was fully expecting her to not know either. If she knew about it, then there would be no reason why the Second Elder shouldn't know about it. But clearly, ; as Zhou Mei had said, even her Master didn't know about them. ;

"I can't do anything but just try," he thought and grind until midnight. After midnight, he felt his body just did not have enough Qi to make the pills anymore. He might have been able to make pills for a much longer time had he taken it slow. ;

But, since it was just making the same pill over and over again with only a slight change each time, he couldn't stop himself from doing it at the speed he did. ;

By midnight, he had around 8 hours of pill-making under him of the day, with over 60 pills made during the time. About 15 of those pills were made by the pill splitting into two. ;

'How can a pill that can not hold all the energy within it, hold it all when it is split into two?' Alex questioned. He had been questioning this for quite a while, but now that he learned more, he decided to see if he knew anything new. ;

He decided to check the pill with his spiritual sense. When he focused on the pill with high concentration to see minute particles, he was shocked. ;

"Hollow?" he thought in surprise. Hollow was perhaps not the correct term, but the pill was definitely not as packed as when it was just a single pill.

He tried to understand it, but he was just too fatigued at this point. "Sigh, let me just cultivate for the night," he thought. ;

He called out Pearl and asked him to cultivate. However, before that, he popped a monster core into his mouth and fought the monster in the spiritual sea. ;

Once the beast was dead and the yellow fog swallowed it all, he gained quite a bit of Qi. Using that, he broke through to the 7th Meridian tempering realm. ;

He felt that the speed was quite fast, but when compared to the other players, it was slow. ;

He asked Pearl to start, and soon, he too started and fell into a deep trance before going unconscious. ;

Early in the morning, he finally woke up again. He thought he heard someone speaking close to him and slowly opened up his eyes. ;

In front of him was a figure sitting in a lotus position, watching over him. ;

"Oh, Did you wake up?" ;

Alex's eyes immediately went wide in full joy and happiness. ;

"Master!"

Chapter 415 - Terror

"Master!" Alex exclaimed in absolute joy as he looked up to the person in front of him. Ma Rong was sitting ahead of him wearing a dark green robe.

"Master, you're awake," he said with a large smile on his face.

Ma Rong's face which was initially a melancholic smile soon turned into a genuine, happy smile. "I see you've made it back alive. I believed you would," she said.

"Yes, Master. I got back a few days ago," Alex said.

"I heard. I woke up about 4 hours ago, and the elders told me everything," Ma Rong said. "Still, give me your own recollections of what happened," she asked.

"Oh, about that..." Alex explained everything that he could remember. There was not a single thing he left on the table, except for the figure in his spiritual sea that spewed out the yellow fog.

"I see, so it was him." Ma Rong's cold voice sounded almost ethereal. The grass she was sitting on slowly started to stop moving as they froze solid and the ones a little further away, started getting frost on them.

"Master, are you okay?" Alex asked as he stood up and walked towards Ma Rong. Suddenly, as soon as he got close to her, an intense feeling from deep within him came to the surface making him stop then and there.

His legs refused to move a single more step as his body started shaking without any hints of stopping. His eyes were wide with fear in them like he had never felt before.

To him, this felt like his world would collapse at any moment, and that he would no longer be able to live in it.

Ma Rong's eyes flashed a hint of worry when she saw him frozen in fear. She immediately controlled the anger she was feeling towards Zexi and the cold aura around her disappeared.

The frost on the surface of the grass blades disappeared and the frozen patches of grass started moving again. Finally, Alex could grab hold of himself and move.

While he knew that there was no danger, his heart still betrayed him as a deep sense of terror appeared in his mind when he saw Ma Rong a little in front of him. This wasn't to the same level as just moments before, but it was still very fearsome.

'What just happened? Why did I fear Master of all people? And why did my body not respond to the fear at all? I thought it did so with every suppression,' he thought.

"I'm sorry. I still haven't reigned in my unlocked Constitution yet so you had to feel that. It must especially be bad for you considering your body is a yang-type constitution," Ma Rong explained.

"Is... that so?" Alex thought. He felt like someone just dumped a bucket of ice-cold water on him. His body he was starting to get so confident in was actually so inferior to his master's that it froze at the slightest hint of terror from her.

'I guess that settles it then. My body is in fact only divine grade,' he thought.

"It's okay now," Ma Rong said as she walked towards him. Alex instinctively put one foot back to move but stopped himself.

'I can't get scared of my master,' he thought. Ma Rong smiled and placed her hands on his head to teach pat his head.

The moment she touched him, it felt like he had lost all control of his body and dropped to the ground. For a second, he felt his vision blur and he nearly lost everything in sight.

"W-What's wrong?" Ma Rong asked while all flustered. "Wh-What's happening to you?"

Alex finally got back to his feet and huffed. "Ma-Master, I think your body's Yin is suppressing me way too much. It might be better if you don't touch me now. Just standing near you is making me terrified," he said.

Ma Rong's hands stopped where they were and slowly folded back as a sad face appeared on her face.

Alex stood up to see tears in her eyes and realized how what he had just said came off as. "It's okay master. You will just have to learn to hold your aura in and I will be fine. Or I can just enter the True realms soon and can maybe not be so useless against your aura, haha."

Alex tried to think of ways to stop Ma Rong from feeling bad about him. "Uhh... oh yeah, Master, why did you go to the Forbidden Fields? I heard that you took a hoard of elders there too," Alex asked.

"That was... I was worried about the desert encroaching on our lands and wanted to see how much closer they had come," Ma Rong said.

"Huh? Can't you just check from afar? You should be able to see if you fly up high, right?" Alex asked.

"Yes, but I had only ever seen it from far away and thought that I would get a much better understanding of the situation if I saw what was going on up close," Ma Rong said. "Unfortunately, it turns out I should not have gone there. That place nearly put me in a coma."

"Well, it also made you quite strong now. If not from it, I don't think your body would've unlocked its constitution," Alex said.

"Sigh, I guess so," Ma Rong said and simply shook her head. "Alright, continue what you were saying about your life inside that formation."

"Ah right, so..." Alex told her that with nothing else to do inside the formation, he made a small furnace and tested the different ingredients just like she had said.

Ma Rong's eyes shone in surprise when she heard that. "So, you did learn it just like we first intended. Good," Ma Rong said as she praised him.

"How much did you learn?" she asked.

"I experimented with the different ingredients everyday master and made 9 different types of pills," he said with a proud face.

"9?" Ma Rong said in surprise. "How many of them worked?" she asked.

"Uh, 5 of them turned out to be quite a trash, 2 of them are pills I am not sure if it's worth investing my time in, and finally the last 2 are the one that's really fantastic," Alex said.

He quickly showed his nails and started explaining what the pill did. He continued explaining how many experiments he did, and what he had concluded.

"Hmm... Not bad. I think your assessment is correct. Especially about it being a permanent type pill. Besides, it seems it will benefit beasts more than it will us. We might be able to establish a business with the various beast sects to provide this pill," Ma Rong said.

Alex was surprised that she was already seeing so far into the future and was thinking of selling the pills to beast sects, while his mind was on auction still.

"What about the second one?" she asked.

Alex didn't understand the second pill fully even by himself, and definitely required Ma Rong's help in this. So, he explained everything to her as well as he could.

"Hmm... intelligence, that's a very delicate subject. I will have to check this by myself. Come," she said and flew into the air as she flew towards the swine place. Alex flew and followed right behind her.

They soon reached the swine place and Ma Rong walked to one of the swine before feeding it a pill without hesitation. The swine ate the pill with no emotion on its face.

Slowly, as Ma Rong watched, the emotion of confusion appeared in the swine's eyes. As all the different beasts gained intelligence, it looked around to see what was caging him.

"That's... I've never seen a Common Rank pill do that," Ma Rong said in surprise.

"Right, master?" Alex asked. "I was thinking the same thing. I was hoping I could increase my spiritual sea's thickness and thus increase the range of my spiritual sense. That would work right?"

Ma Rong thought for a second. "Yes, it should. In fact, the True rank pill that increases your mental energy also has Bright Soul Grass as a side ingredient. I think you accidentally found a weaker version of the pill," Ma Rong said.

"Oh wow. Really? That's quite lucky," Alex said.

"How did you learn to make new pills this easily?" Ma Rong suddenly asked.

Alex just looked at her and answered, "it's easy once you get to know the element each of the ingredients has. Then you learn the rate at which they release their energy and then you make the pills. You just put them in order and go with what would be necessary according to the state inside the cauldron,"

"Of course, you would need quite a few variations of the pill to get the harmony high, but that's it," Alex said.

Ma Rong was stunned at the level of non-nonchalance Alex had when he mentioned it all. "So, you used a lot of ingredients to experiment with and then used spiritual sense to do the rest?" Ma Rong asked.

She fell into thought as she started to realize what other opportunity the opening of her spiritual sense had brought her. 'Maybe I should go back into a few weeks' worths of secluded cultivation and try to make some new pills,' she thought.

However, now was not the time. She had just come back to being awake and couldn't immediately disappear once again. In a sense, both of Alex's masters had the same problem right now.

"You really used your advantage to its most, huh?" she said with a chuckle.

"Of course Master. If I have the things necessary to boost me in my path to become a better alchemist and I don't take it, then I would just be an idiot," he said. "I don't want to be called that again."

Ma Rong sighed. "Yeah, I guess that works for you. Just keep in check your habit of overusing ingredients as you seem to have learned. That's not really a ve— "

Ma Rong felt something in her storage vibrate just the tiniest bit. "Hm?" he thought and took out her talisman. She looked into the talisman with a spiritual sense and opened her eyes in confusion.

"What's wrong, master?" Alex asked. He wondered who contacted her this soon after her recovery just a few hours ago.

"It's Master. I don't know why though; he says there is someone there to meet me," Ma Rong said. "Come, he is asking for you too."

This time, it was Alex's turn to get confused. "Why me?" he asked.

"I don't know, but it seems to be quite important from the tone of his voice. Let's go and see," Ma Rong said and walked out of the swine hall and flew back towards the Elder's Hall.

Alex followed her close by, but a little behind since he was afraid of randomly falling from the great height if he ever came in contact with her.

They both landed in front of the Elder's Hall and walked in to find the Grand Elder waiting for them. Next to Grand Elder was an old man in a purple robe.

Ma Rong stopped and immediately bowed a little when she saw the man. "Butler Kang, it's good to see you again," Ma Rong said politely.

"Ah, Sect Leader Ma doesn't have to bow in front of this lowly me," the man in the purple robes bowed even lower than Ma Rong.

Alex looked at the interaction of the two with a hint of curiosity.

"Butler Kang has been looking for you for the past 3 days and had to be sent back due to you not being available at the time. However, since you are here now, I decided to let him talk to you," the Grand Elder said.

"I see," Ma Rong said. "I'm sorry for the inconvenience I might have caused you with my absence, Butler Kang. Please let me know why you were looking for me.. I will do my best to be of help to you."

Chapter 416 - Surprise

"Sect Leader Ma is still very kind. This old man doesn't need anything himself, it's the young lord that is in need of your assistance," Butler Kang said.

Both Ma Rong and the Grand Elder's eyes immediately flashed with caution and worry. "Is... there something wrong with the lord?" Ma Rong asked.

"Ah, no no, the lord is fine and so is the mistress. The one in need is someone important to the lord. I can't reveal any more information right now. The Lord has asked that the matter not be spread very far," Butler Kang said.

"I see," Ma Rong said. "I will leave right now then."

"Yes, and um..." Butler Kang stopped her for a second before looking at Alex next to her. "Is this young man the one called Yu Ming?" he asked.

"Yes, this is my disciple Yu Ming," Ma Rong introduced. She then turned to Alex and introduced the Butler to him.

"This senior is Butler Kang. He is the head butler of City Lord Fu himself," Ma Rong explained.

Alex finally understood why the two of them held the man in such high regard. Being the head butler to the city lord himself, the butler would have an unnaturally high status in the city.

"Greetings, senior," Alex immediately bowed and greeted.

"Greetings, my child." Butler Kang turned towards Ma Rong and said, "You've got yourself a very good disciple, Sect Leader Ma."

"Yes, I do," Ma Rong said with a smile.

"Young Lord has asked that we bring your disciple with us too," Butler Kang said.

Ma Rong looked a little concerned. "Has he said why?" she asked.

"I'm afraid not. Bringing back your disciple was more of a passing remark by the young lord. I did not dare question why," Butler Kang said.

"I see... then we should move," Ma Rong said and started walking out. Alex followed behind her, followed by Butler Kang at the back.

As soon as they reached out of the hall, they all flew away. From the Hong Wu sect, the City Lord's manor was merely a few minutes of flight away.

Alex flew comfortably, keeping up with both Butler Kang and Ma Rong. Butler Kang looked back multiple times surprised how well a youngster was at keeping up with the two of them.

'The young man must be using some incredible technique to hide his cultivation base so well. I can barely see that he is in the Meridian realm, even then that's because of my own cultivation base. How is he flying so well with such little cultivation?' he wondered.

"We are here," Ma Rong told Alex and slowly dropped to the ground.

Alex looked at the massive house with a large garden in front and even a large backyard behind. He had always seen this place from far away when he was flying, but this was the first time he actually visited this place.

He too followed behind Ma Rong but didn't forget to keep his distance from her. He didn't want to accidentally fall to the ground in such a place. Together, he and Ma Rong went up to the gate.

With Butler Kang behind them, the gate opened without any questions and let the two of them go inside. There were dozens of people working on the front garden that stopped to look at the new arrivals. Once they saw who it was, they went back to their work.

Even inside the manor, there were people who were working that would check who came sneakily.

The old butler took them to a waiting room and let them wait there while he went to inform the city lord about their arrival.

"Ah, you are finally here, Sect Leader Ma," A female voice appeared from the side.

Ma Rong immediately stood up to greet the woman who just walked in. "Greetings, Lady Mo."

"Hello," Alex greeted her as well.

"Hm, do I know you?" Lady Mo said with a hint of confusion on her face for a second before recognizing him. "Ah, the young man from that time. How are you, junior? It must be fun being the direct disciple of two sect leaders, right?"

"It's... quite amazing actually," Alex said with a smile towards Lady Mo.

Lady Mo still wore the purple robes she did from back when Alex had first seen her. Her beauty didn't seem to have aged a day either.

Alex could almost promise that she was from a noble family that married the city lord from her manners and elegance and how she handled herself.

"Lady Mo, do you know why we are called here?" Ma Rong asked.

"Ah... it's... I think it's better if I let my dear husband speak about it himself," Lady Mo said.

Ma Rong didn't say anything and waited. Alex looked around the house and was generally amazed by it all. The house was fully white all around and was filled with different art pieces that were purple and red in color.

"Sect Leader Ma," Butler Kang came and spoke from the side. "Please come, the young lord is waiting."

"Um, Butler Kang, what about my disciple?" she asked.

"Haha, he is being specially requested in there as well," butler Kang said with a smile.

The old butler took them through a corridor to the other side of the manor that seemed to have not as many people. In fact, there was barely any person in these parts.

Finally, they came across a door that had two people standing in front of it. One of them was a black-robed female that seemed to be a guard of some sort, and the other one was a handsome, young man in his late 20s.

With his purple garment and a smile on his face, he seemed to exude confidence and elegance in everything he did.

"I've brought them, Young Lord," old man Kang said.

"Thank you, old Kang. You may leave for now," the young man said.

"Greetings, City Lord Fu," Ma Rong said as she bowed a little towards the man. Alex greeted him almost immediately as well. He bowed a little to show some respect.

"You are finally here, Sect Leader Ma. You cannot understand the frustration I went through by not having you available for the last 3 days," City Lord Fu, Fu Wen said.

"My apologies. I, myself was sick for the last 3 days, so I couldn't be of any help to city lord," Ma Rong spoke as respectfully as she could. She was so respectful that Alex started to wonder if the lord really even deserve that.

Just because he had the blood of the Royal Fu flowing through him, it didn't mean that he was in any way closely related to the current emperor or even the previous one.

That led Alex to believe that that was not the case, and he was in fact close to the current emperor.

'He's not the emperor's son, that's for sure,' Alex thought as he remembered the names of the only 2 princes of the country, and he had seen the second prince already.

There was no way the crown prince was going to become the city lord of a city so far away.

"Oh, you were sick? An Alchemist becoming sick, now that's concerning. Should we be worried in any way?" Fu Wen asked.

"Oh, not at all. It was something only relating to me. There are no reasons to worry," Ma Rong said.

"That's fortunate," Fu Wen said. He then turned to Alex and said, "Junior brother, long time no see. How are adapting to being in two sects at once? Are you okay?"

"I'm very much fine, City Lord. Thank you for asking," Alex said.

"Haha, I had to. You must have done quite a few exceptional things to be noticed like that. I see your cultivation base has jumped quite high too," he said.

'What?' Alex's face was full of confusion. 'Is his cultivation base high enough to counter my Immortal Concealment technique?' he wondered.

'Also, is he talking about me getting that alchemy win? That shouldn't have been so noticeable," he thought. As he thought, his eyes started to wander and it accidentally fell on the eyes of the dark-robed guard standing far behind Fu Wen.

Alex suddenly lost all thought process as he kept looking at those eyes. The guard quickly brought down her eyes, but Alex's eidetic memory didn't let him forget it.

He kept on thinking about those eyes and tried to sift through the many memories of his to find the person with those eyes. It took a while, but he finally did it.

"It's you," Alex suddenly blurted out loud. Both Ma Rong and Fu Wen were a little surprised at the outburst.

"Ah, I'm sorry for speaking so abruptly like that," Alex immediately apologized when he realized what he had done just now. However, his eyes still showed the shock he had felt just now.

'Guard? But how?' he couldn't help but ask himself.

"What's wrong, Yu Ming. Why did you shout?" Ma Rong asked.

"Um, the guard over there... I think I know her," Alex said. "However, when I saw her she wasn't a guard. Instead, she was the daughter of a noble household."

"Huh?" Ma Rong was confused for a moment, but then remembered Alex's story about how he came back in a caravan due to a lady from a noble family thinking of him as a bandit.

"City Lord Fu, may I request that you ask that guard over there to drop her mask. I would like to know if my disciple is correct," Ma Rong said.

"I'm afraid I can't do that, Sect Leader Ma," Fu Wen said with an awkward smile. Ma Rong got even curious about the whole thing.

"You can't?" she asked with a slight hint of confusion.

"Haha, I wouldn't deny a request of yours for no reason, Sect leader Ma. Especially when I brought you here with a request of my own. The truth is... I do not have the authority to command her to do anything at all," Fu Wen Said.

"Oh," Ma Rong got more curious and asked, "Then who does?"

"Did I hear Yu Ming's voice out there?" a voice came from behind the locked door. Clicks and clacks could be heard as the person slowly opened the door and walked out.

The first thing Alex saw was slender, white arms through see-through blue clothes, followed by a person in a light blue robe.

Alex recognized that voice from somewhere and looked at the person once she fully emerged. Alex looked in shock as he saw who it was.

Immediately, Ma Rong bowed down. Her bow this time was much deeper and more respectful than when she did it to Fu Wen.

"My greetings, your royal highness," Ma Rong said.

The person standing in front of them was the princess of the Crimson Empire, Fu Wuying.

"Yu Ming, bow in front of the Royal princess," Ma Rong whispered to him quite sternly.

Alex woke out of his daze and bowed down as well, saying the same greeting as Ma Rong.

"Haha," the princes smiled. "There's no need for that. Junior brother Yu Ming and I have been quite well acquainted during our few days in the caravan. We should be beyond such formality by now."

Alex was confused for a second as to what she meant, but once he saw the guard behind her, everything clicked together.

Fu Wuying... Ying Wu... they were the same person all along. Alex's shock hit harder when he realized that he had been with the royal princess for nearly 3 days and he didn't even know it.

Ma Rong was shocked as well, as she had put 2 and 2 together as well. "I apologize on my disciple's behalf if he did anything to offend you, your highness," Ma Rong said.

"You don't need to apologize at all, sect leader Ma. Your disciple was in no way disrespectful," Fu Wuying said with a smile.

Fu Wen turned towards Fu Wuying and said, "Um... dear cousin. Can you cut the chitchat for later, and get to the task at hand?"

Chapter 417 - Halfway Mortal Cleansing

"Ah, I'm sorry," the princess immediately apologized. "Let's go in quick."

She opened the door and entered. Fu Wen smiled and showed Ma Rong and Alex the way inside. Even as they went inside, Alex looked towards the guard, but the guard wouldn't turn to look at him at all.

Comparing her to the woman in red robes— the difference was truly immense.

Alex ignored her for the moment and walked in. The people in front of him stepped aside and went around a bed to show a woman with very black skin on the bed.

Alex knew that woman quite well. After all, he had spent the 3 days in a caravan in the same carriage as her. 'The princess' mother? No... that was probably a lie too. This woman is not the empress I saw that day,' Alex thought.

"Sect leader Ma, this is my mother," Fu Wen said, lifting up the veil of confusion from Alex's mind. "It has been a few months since she has been in this condition and I was hoping you would know something about it."

"Um... City Lord Fu, if this is your mother then... you should have already asked senior Lai, right?" Ma Rong asked.

"Yes, we did. But he couldn't come up with anything either," Fu Wen said as he shook his head.

"Then, I'm afraid I might not be able to do much either," Ma Rong said.

"To be honest, we aren't expecting any result from letting you check up on her, Sect Leader Ma," the princess said. "Our expectations will be very low from the very beginning, so freely check her without any worries."

The princess moved to the side and let Ma Rong check her.

Ma Rong went up to the sleeping woman and was slightly shocked at how black her skin was. There was nobody so black in the entirety of the Crimson Empire. She checked her wrist, temperature, breathing, eye responses, and anything else she could.

She checked for quite a while and noticed two things that were very unusual to a human body.

First, her skin was fully black. While Ma Rong had heard about such people existing, she knew for sure that the Emperor's sister-in-law was not one with such skin. So, the black in her skin was fully unnatural.

Secondly, her body was very hot, to the point that Ma Rong thought she had a fever.

She continued checking to learn more about her.

"Hm, she isn't exuding any cultivation aura at all. Do any of you know what her cultivation base is?" Ma Rong asked.

"Hm. Wuying, do you remember?" Fu Wen asked.

"Um, I think it should be somewhere between the 2nd True Emperor realm and 4th True Emperor realm. Aunt had already reached that stage when she went on the expedition to the southern forest a few years ago," Fu Wuying said.

True Emperor realm— Alex was shocked to hear that. Even his master was in True King realm. 'How talented must she have been to reach True Emperor realm at such a young age,' he thought as he looked at her face.

"Senior Lai already figured out this part right?" Ma Rong said.

Fu Wen's eyebrows suddenly perked up. "Yes, we sort of know the cause of her problem already. I was just wondering if you could find it out as well so that we know if you two are figuring out the same thing," he said.

"I think I have an idea as to what is happening," Ma Rong said. "Her body was for some reason stuck in the middle of mortal cleansing, wasn't it? The filth that should have been removed fully was stuck halfway on her skin and thus turning it black. Her filth from the meridians must also be stuck inside it since it was only removed halfway."

Fu Wen was surprised when he heard her explanation and said with wide eyes, "Yes. That's exactly the reasoning the Royal Alchemist gave too," he said with a smile.

Ma Rong nodded when she heard that. "Well, Senior Lai must've been faster than me though," Ma Rong said.

"Don't sell yourself short, Sect Leader Ma," Fu Wen said. "So, do you know what we can do?"

"Before that, how did she go through Mortal Cleansing, but only halfway? Did she... find a Divine Devil's fruit?" Ma Rong asked.

"Yes, She did," the princess answered. "When returning from her expedition to the southern forest, she apparently found a Divine Devil's fruit. Only... it wasn't ripe, and would need another few hundred years to fully ripen."

"I guess... she believed she didn't have to wait that long and ate it right there."

Ma Rong shook her head. "The only way I can think of healing her is to continue her Mortal Cleansing," Ma Rong said. "But that is impossible."

"Sigh, you're right. Senior Lai said the same thing," the princess said. "He is constantly searching for ways to make pills that can induce Mortal Cleansing, but as you said, that's impossible."

"Still, can you give it a try, Sect Leader Ma?" Fu Wen asked.

"I... I will see what I can do," Ma Rong said.

"Master..." Alex called her from behind. "Will getting the black stuff off of her skin help at all?"

"Hmm... I don't know. It would certainly be a good idea to start with that," Ma Rong said. "However, the main problem should be the filth stuck around her brain and meridians."

Alex thought for a second and took out a pill before handing it to Ma Rong. "Master, what about this pill?" he asked. He successively handed her the recipe for the pill as well.

"Sweating pill? You made this?" Ma Rong asked.

"Yeah, it's one of the more useful, but still useless pills I made. It opens the sweat glands on your skin and makes you sweat buckets load of sweat. I wondered that if we fed this to her, won't she sweat away all the filth?" he asked.

"Hmm... that's... not a bad idea. It just might work," Ma Rong thought. She then turned towards the princess and asked, "Your highness, did Senior Lai ever try to make pills that made her sweat?"

"Um, I'm pretty sure he did try to make them, but I don't think he ever succeeded in making ones that could open up her skin big enough or make her sweat enough to force the black filth out of her body."

"That's fine. My disciple's pill here can do that. I just need to improve it," Ma Rong said.

"Improve it?" the princess asked. "Can't you just feed that pill to her?"

"I'm afraid not, your highness. This is a common pill; we will need a True pill to be able to heal her to a level similar to what this pill will do to anybody below the True realms."

"Fear not, however. Since we have this recipe, it shouldn't be very hard to recreate this pill. Please send this recipe to Senior Lai as well so that he could help us as well," Ma Rong said.

"Yes, we shall do that," Fu Wen said as he took the recipe with some sense of joy. While he didn't get a cure for her mother's problem, he got hope.

"Thank you, Sect Leader Ma," he said.

"It's my pleasure to be of assistance, City Lord Fu," Ma Rong said.

"Thank you to you too, junior brother," Fu Wen said to Alex.

"Oh, you're welcome, senior," Alex said.

"If there is nothing else to do, we shall take our leave," Ma Rong said.

"Yes, let me show you the way," Fu Wen said as he went to the door and unlocked it.

"How's your formation training going on?" the princess asked from the side as she moved towards Alex.

"I... haven't had the time to continue with it, your highness," Alex replied.

"Oh, that's a shame. You seemed to be quite good at making formations too," the princess said. "Also, you don't have to call me that. Just call me Sister Wuying."

"That's..." Alex hesitated. Calling a princess his sister would imply that he was of Royal blood too, and that would be disastrous if someone found out.

"Haha, if you can't, then just call me princess. No need for the Your highness," the princess said.

Alex smiled and said, "I will do that then, princess."

"Good, let's go now," she said and walked towards the door.

Alex instinctively shot an eye towards the guard who was still looking elsewhere. The princess saw this and chuckled.

"Don't blame her for how she acted during the journey. She was under orders to be strict towards anyone that came close to me and was to keep me and Aunt under constant supervision."

"Also, she was ordered to act high and mighty so that people would not notice the lowly servant by her side as she would hog all the attention. It sort of worked," the princess said with a smile.

"I see," Alex said.

"Well, she was also quite annoyed when I told her that you noticed her that one time in the capital. She really prides herself on her ability to stay out of sight with her speed. So when you saw her that time, she was really angry."

"That was also the reason I let you get in the same carriage as me. You did something that was close to impossible," Wuying said.

"Oh," Alex said. 'That... that accident was what made her notice me? I can't even do that again even if I wanted to.'

"I wanted to know more about you during the tournament, but I never found you. Especially since I didn't know your name at the time, it was impossible to find you," the princess said.

"Plus, you changed your face for the final result, so there was no way for me to find you. If you hadn't, maybe my father would have been interested in you too," the princess said with a smile.

"The Emperor?" Alex asked in shock. 'I was that close to meeting the emperor. I don't know if that is a good idea though,' he thought.

The princess said goodbye and didn't leave the corridor. She promptly returned back to the room and would stay in that corner of the manor, away from the prying eyes of the servants.

Fu Wen brought the two of them all the way outside to see them off.

"Thank you again, Sect Leader Ma, junior brother," Fu Wen. "At least one of the problems on us is going to go away very soon," he said.

"One problem?" Ma Rong asked with confusion.

"Oh, it's nothing. It's just that Uncle has gone somewhere without notifying anyone and hasn't returned in over a month, so people back home are worried," Fu Wen said.

"I see. If it's the High prince then who would dare do anything to him," Ma Rong said. "Anyway, We will leave now, City Lord Fu. Farewell."

With that, both Alex and Ma Rong flew back towards the Hong Wu Sect.

Chapter 418 - Lost Skill

Ma Rong flew through the air, and Alex maintained his distance. Along the way back, she did not speak a single word and kept to herself.

Only when they reached the sect did she speak and say, "Come to my place." Alex nodded and followed behind her quietly.

Once they were inside, Alex felt a rush of spiritual sense go past him as Ma Rong checked the surrounding. Alex did the same and noticed that the girls that were looking after his master were all gone.

He then noticed Ma Rong's serious face and asked, "What's wrong, master? You seem worried."

"That's because I am," Ma Rong said. "They are already suspecting malpractice against their uncle. What did you do with the body? Did you destroy it?"

"Uh... no. I buried it underground, inside the formation," Alex said. He started getting worried too now. "Can they find the dead body?"

"I don't know. There are beasts with a sense of smell so good that they can smell the other person's aura on you. Hmm..." Ma Rong thought and quickly pulled out a pill.

"Here, eat this now," she said.

Alex quickly ate the pill without hesitation and felt his entire body suddenly convulse. It then released back to normal as an inordinate amount of Qi from his body was forced out from every single pore in his body.

This was a painful experience to most people, but thanks to the Mortal Cleansing that Alex went through, there was no filth to stop the sudden release of Qi and they all went out in record time.

"That was faster than I had expected," she said with a face full of surprise.

"Aura Removal pill..." Alex said mindlessly.

"You've seen this pill before?" Ma Rong asked.

"Uh... no. I just remember the recipe," Alex hastily made up an answer.

"I see. Well, that pill should have removed whatever aura Zexi left on you," Ma Rong said. "Thankfully, the princess was too busy making herself hidden to search for you. Or maybe they don't expect him to have truly gone missing yet."

"However, once they realize a High Prince is missing, they will truly try to find him. Hopefully, his body decomposes by then," Ma Rong said.

"It should be fine master; It has already been over a month. His body should be at least halfway decomposed," Alex said.

Ma Rong shook her head. "No, Cultivator's bodies take much longer to decompose. Sigh, we can only hope the beast invasion keeps everyone on constant alert and not enough time to go search for him," Ma Rong said.

"Alright, we should get to making the pills now. You need to improve on it as well," Ma Rong said. She then took out her nameplate and notified the elders that she would be busy for a few hours.

She then walked into the alchemy room and sat down to make the pill. Alex sat down opposite her and waited.

"Show me all the pills that you did make," Ma Rong asked. "Maybe there are some useful ones."

"Okay," Alex said and gave her all the different recipes that he had.

"Hmm... this is useless, this does nothing basically,... you said this one increases heartbeat?" Ma Rong asked.

"Yes," Alex replied.

"That might be useful somewhere, especially for mass-producing given how low cost the materials are," Ma Rong said. She continued looking through the other pills and found nothing useful.

"I guess the 4 of these are the only good ones," Ma Rong said. "Still, it's not a bad idea to have those other 4 work as cheap alternatives to most pills that the outer sect disciples will use."

"We can end up using less expensive materials to train them," Ma Rong said.

"Ah, I didn't even think about that. Of course! Using these pill recipes as training pills is a great idea," Alex said.

"Okay, I will show you the method to improve pill recipes. Do you have any questions before we start?" Ma Rong asked.

"Uh, yeah. I have quite a lot actually," Alex said.

Ma Rong's eyes perked a bit. "A lot? Ok then, ask," she said.

"What exactly are Composition and Structure?" he asked. "I tried understanding on my own, but I got nowhere."

Ma Rong's face got a little shock on it. "Where did you learn about it?" she asked.

"Um, in the library back in the capital, and also the Royal Alchemist said something about my pill's composition and structure needing work," Alex said.

"I understood a little, but I feel like I got nowhere close to what is required to understand it all," Alex said.

"Sigh, the truth is, I too don't know anything about it at all. The only one who knows about it, as far as I know, is senior Lai," Ma Rong said.

"The Royal Alchemist? He is the only one?" Alex said in surprise. He was hoping that his master would know about it. "So, am I not going to understand it at all?"

"I have asked senior Lai myself too. All he says is that it has something to do with the shapes of the pill and powders and how they are mixed together."

"I see, I guess I will learn it myself once I learn more," Alex said.

Alex asked a few more questions that he had come across while making pills back in the formation. One of the most common questions he kept asking himself was how people practiced with ingredients that were rare.

"Well, there are 2 assumptions you're making that a normal alchemist just wouldn't make with rare ingredients," Ma Rong said.

"First of all, you assume someone else hasn't used the ingredient before. Most of the time, you can find recipes that already have the ingredients in use. You can just read that recipe and understand the rate at which the energy is released through that."

"You can also understand what energy is released through it most of the time."

"The second assumption you make is that just because something is rare, you have to protect it. Just because something is rare, doesn't mean it has value. You can destroy that ingredient and take the opportunity to learn from it."

"Most of the time, Ingredients aren't both important and unknown. As long as the ingredient is either one of it, you can easily learn about it," Ma Rong said.

"On the off chance, however, when you come across an ingredient that is blatantly important yet you've never seen before, don't use it."

"Spend time learning about it as much as you can. Learn its weight, its size, its density. Try and see how much liquid it holds, if any at all. Try and see if there are parts that would be hard to destroy with fire."

"Most alchemists in the True realm use Qi sense to do that, however, since you have Spiritual sense, it must be easier," Ma Rong said.

"Basically, learn about the ingredient as much as I can before it even goes into the cauldron, right?" Alex asked.

"Yes," Ma Rong said with a smile.

"I see, that does make sense," Alex said. He then asked a few more minor questions which Ma Rong easily answered. After a while, Alex was finally out of questions with almost all of them answered.

'Now I just need to learn about Composition and Structure from somewhere else,' he thought. 'Maybe I should meet with the Royal Alchemist sometime soon,' he thought.

"Okay, if you have nothing else, I will start making pills now. Watch and learn how I improve on it," Ma Rong said. "Let's look at the ingredients first."

She looked at the recipe and said, "These are quite easy to get ingredients as well. Its True rank counterpart might be a little hard though. Let me try making this pill alone first."

"Do you have the ingredients?" she asked.

"Yes master, right here," Alex said and took out the ingredients for the sweating pill from his storage bag. Ma Rong put on her cauldron in the fire and got ready.

Once the cauldron was heated enough, he put in the first ingredient. Alex looked at the ingredient with his spiritual sense and followed it closely.

He waited for his master to do 3 turns with the ingredient in a clockwise direction with a flame temperature of 560 degrees. With his spiritual sense, he could see that that was exactly what she did.

The temperature was no higher or lower than 560 degrees, the ingredient was indeed moving in a clockwise direction and lastly, Ma Rong did exactly 3 rounds with the ingredient in the cauldron.

However, unlike Alex's expectations, the ingredient did not get turned into powder.

"Huh?" he was surprised. It took Ma Rong a few more turns to finally turn the ingredient into powder.

"Did you write the wrong recipe?" Ma Rong asked. "Did you not double-check it?"

"I... don't think so... did I?" Alex questioned himself. He hadn't spent much time trying to perfect this pill, so there weren't many recipes to go through.

He quickly checked what he did with what was on the recipe and it was the exact same.

"The recipe is correct, master. In fact, I know all the timings to release the energy too," Alex said.

"Then why didn't it work?" Ma Rong asked.

"I- I don't know, Master," Alex said.

Thankfully, the first ingredient's only job other than the shape of the powder was to release energy. It did not matter what rate it was released at, or how much. As long as all the energy of the ingredient successfully came out with the powder of the ingredient in the cauldron, that was a success.

So, Ma Rong matched the timing with the ingredient and put the second ingredient in.

'1120 degrees, 5 rotations, and in a counterclockwise direction,' Alex thought to himself and waited. With the slow release of energy, the two energy in the cauldron would be able to counter each other at just enough speed so that one of the ingredients didn't get ruined.

Ma Rong upped the temperature and was about to put in her second ingredient. Just as she did that, Alex stopped the ingredient midair.

"Master, up the temperature, it's not enough," he said.

Ma Rong checked the temperature and was surprised that it was indeed not enough. She poured in more Qi to increase the temperature, but that was nearly not as effective.

"What's going on, Master? Just increase the temperature," Alex said.

"I'm trying..." Ma Rong grunted, and barely got the temperature to 1120 degrees. Finally, Alex put in the 2nd ingredient and let Ma Rong control it.

'Hopefully, that little time lost isn't enough to totally ruin the whole operation,' Alex thought.

Ma Rong proceeded to follow the recipe. She did exactly what the ingredient said and realized that the energy wasn't releasing fast enough and that soon, the first energy would ruin each other, leaving up the potential for a hefty explosion.

Ma Rong immediately opened the lid of the cauldron and used Elemental Guidance to quickly shift all the energy outwards. Doing so, she prevented herself, Alex, and her cauldron from a nasty case of exploding cauldrons.

She huffed a bit after having to do that and her thoughts went into disarray. Her eyes started darting around as she tried to search for things in her own mind.

Alex watched in worry, not really knowing what was happening.

Ma Rong quickly slapped her storage bag and brought out a bunch of ingredients. Alex looked at the ingredients and realized it was one of the common rank pills from the library.

The recipe was very simple, and Ma Rong started following it. Alex looked as well, curious what she was trying to do.

However, it became very apparent what she was trying to do, and even Alex started to get afraid.

"M-Master," he said with shock in his voice.

"I-I..." Ma Rong had a blank look on her face as she stared at the ruined ingredients, and with quivering lips, she said out the next sentence.

"I've lost my skills as an Alchemist."

Chapter 419 - Null

"Huh?" Alex exclaimed. "What do you mean, master? How could you lose your skills?"

"I don't know... but I think it has something to do with my newly awakened constitution. The Qi is messing up with my instinct and the recipe. I can't seem to get stuff hot enough to do anything," Ma Rong said.

She tried controlling the fire once more. While she was successful at it, it wasn't at a speed that would help an Alchemist or an amount that was natural.

"What... should we do now, master?" Alex asked. He felt like whatever was happening was really important and didn't want his master to go through that.

"I... don't know. I might have to pour out more Qi to get used to it or see if I can somehow change my Qi back to normal before bringing it out of my body. Either way, I will need to train a lot from now on to get back to where I was, and I'm not even sure if I can ever get there," Ma Rong said.

"I would like to help too, master. Let me know if there is anything I can—"

"There's nothing you can do. Just go and practice improving the pills," Ma Rong said sternly.

"Yes, Master," Alex said immediately and walked out.

He walked down the mountain to his house and went into a private room. Finally, he logged out.

It had been hours since when he should have logged out. However, between Ma Rong's sudden waking up and going to the city lord's house, he finally got to log out at around 12 pm.

'Can I help master at all?' he wondered. Unable to come up with any sort of viable answer, he just shook his head.

He quickly freshened up and ate what he wanted. Once he felt full, he went back to the game to continue improving the mental ability pill.

He put aside his worries regarding his master's situation and fully focused on improving the pill. The trials were quite taxing and took a long time, but he improved it quite a bit.

The pill was now around 48% in harmony. While that was a lot, Alex still needed to improve to get the pill to as high as he could.

He also needed to check if the pill worked on beasts or not, so he went to the forest at night and tested them on some beasts.

Surprisingly, every beast he gave the pill to ran away within 10 seconds of eating the pill.

'So they do gain intelligence,' Alex thought when he saw that. Once he confirmed it, he fought the beasts for a while and returned.

He tried to keep up with what his master was doing during this time, but she never told him anything about what was going on.

His master was already so worried about everything, and now there was another worry placed upon her.

'I wish I could help master somehow,' he thought. However, as a self tempering realm disciple, he couldn't do anything. He wanted to just go and hand over a Heaven-grade pill, but then he wouldn't keep the freedom he currently had.

With nothing to do, he kept on improving the pill.

Over the course of the next week, he made many improvements on the pill and also worked with the nail pill on the side to improve it a little as well.

By now, the nail pill was at 52% harmony at the highest and the mental energy pill was at 51% harmony at the highest. However, he couldn't be sure at all if this was the actual harmony possible from the pill or it was just him being unable to draw out more.

Without handing the recipe over to someone better than him, it was impossible for him to tell if the problem was with the alchemist or with the recipe.

Given that both of his pills were his own made, he couldn't readily hand the recipe over to just about anyone else.

He couldn't hand it over to his master as she wasn't really any good at alchemy now. He couldn't hand it over to his friend since they weren't as good in alchemy. He couldn't hand it to the other elders just because he didn't want to hand over the recipe.

He only had 2 candidates remaining for this. One was the Grand Elder. He could ask his grandmaster to help him figure this out.

However, when he asked him for this, the grandmaster said that he wasn't free at all. With his master spending most of her time recuperating, the burden of the sect had fallen on to him and the First Elder.

So, he wasn't of much help to Alex.

So, Alex decided to go with his second choice, his Martial Uncle. However, his Martial Uncle wasn't in the sect right now. Along with the 3rd Elder and a few other elders, Lang Shun had gone to the different cities of the Crimson Empire to look for Wan Li who was still missing.

So, he wasn't of much help to Alex either.

"Sigh, I guess I can only improve by myself," Alex thought with a sigh. Heaven grade was very good, even exceptional for such pills. However, due to him making Immortal grade pills, he just didn't see them as that impressive anymore.

"I guess I will have to wait a little longer before I consume this pill then," he thought.

Finally, he no longer had to improve the pills at all and could simply focus on other things that he wanted to, namely formations.

At the end of the week, he went to meet his master in her house.

"Master, are you at home?" he called in the communication talisman. However, he got no response at all. He decided to wait for a while and only after 5 minutes did he finally get a message back.

"Yes, why?" she asked.

"I need to speak to you about something," Alex said. "Can I come over?"

"Yes."

After getting the affirmation, Alex went over to his master's house. He sent out his spiritual sense and didn't immediately find his master.

'Huh? Where is she?' he thought.

"I'm right here," Ma Rong's voice appeared from somewhere. Alex sent his spiritual sense in that direction and still couldn't see anything.

It was then he realized that he couldn't see a certain spot in the room at all. He quickly opened the door and walked in. As he has expected, Ma Rong was sitting crosslegged in that exact spot.

"Woah, master. Why can't I see you with my spiritual sense?" Alex asked.

"As I thought," Ma Rong said with a sigh. "My body constitution is getting more and more potent." Ma Rong looked at her own snow-white palms and shook her head.

"Throw an attack towards me," she said.

"Pardon? Attack?" Alex asked.

"Yes, use an attack on me," she said.

"Um... okay," Alex said. His master was super strong so he wasn't worried about hurting her. "Physical, Elemental, or Mental?"

"Do all three," Ma Rong said.

"Okay," Alex said and took out a common sword before lighting it up yellow as he filled it with metal Qi. Once it was fully glowing, he cautioned his master.

Once Ma Rong was ready, He walked close to her, and slashed his sword at her.

The sword moved down fast, but as it got close to her, it lost its energy rapidly. By the time the sword hit her, it was nothing but metal, encased in frost, falling due to the effects of gravity, and not Alex's.

"What?" Alex said in shock.

"Now try an Elemental attack," Ma Rong said.

Without hesitation, Alex punched at her using the Iron Fist punch. The yellow fist of metal energy flew at her, but as it got close to her, it started slowing down.

When it finally reached her, the energy had all but dissipated into thin air. What hit her was nothing more than a puff of air.

"That's... are you freezing the energy around you?" Alex asked.

"More accurately, my body is," Ma Rong said. "Hit me with Heaven's impact."

Alex nodded and immediately sent out an attack using his spiritual sense. His spiritual sea churned as a hefty amount of it escaped from the sea and formed a fist shape that flew towards Ma Rong.

Even as his spiritual attack flew towards her, it slowly lost its energy and in the end, nothing remained when it touched her body.

Alex was shocked that his Master's body was so strong that he couldn't even damage it at all. "You are way too strong, Master. You can easily win against anyone in a fight," he said.

"No. It's only easy against you because I'm stronger. When people around my own strength fight me, I will only have a better stance than them, not become invincible like right now."

"I don't think my body will be able to stop their attacks fast enough to be of very good use. That's just speculation though. In the end, it could certainly be that my body is strong enough to nullify attacks, but that's for later," Ma Rong said.

Alex thought for a second and said, "Oh, wait master. Can I attack once more?"

Ma Rong looked at him weirdly and said, "Sure, go ahead."

Alex firmed up his resolve and sent out a palm attack. Suddenly, yellow energy escaped out from his palm as it formed the shape of the palm itself.

It flew towards Ma Rong with great energy, but like everything else, it slowed down. However, for some reason, despite being slow, it had enough force to fly in all the way and hit Ma Rong.

Ma Rong was strong enough to handle that attack, but she was still surprised that the attack even managed to hit her. "What..." she was shocked.

She then checked the residual energy in the air that was rapidly going away. "Yang?" she asked.

"Ah yes, I thought it would work," Alex said. "Since your body is Yin, it might easily stop everything else, but I doubted it would be fast enough to stop Yang energy. Turns out I was correct."

"I also want to see how Yin energy would interact with you, but unfortunately, I don't have any yin attack skills," Alex said.

"Ah, I see. That does make sense. Good to know," Ma Rong said.

"Anyway, why did you come here in the first place?"

"Ah right," Alex said and pulled out a few pill bottles. "These are all the pills I made during the last week or two, Master. I want to sell them, so I was coming here to ask if I should sell it in the sect's alchemy shop or in the auction house," Alex asked.

"Show them to me," Ma Rong asked and checked the pills. "Hmm... are these the claw and mental ones? Sell anything less than 40% harmony in the sect and the higher ones in the auction house."

"I see," Alex said and checked his pills again. There were about 200 or so usable pills and of them, about 30 were over 40% in harmony.

'I guess that works for me,' he thought.

"Is that all?" Ma Rong asked.

"No master, there is something else I need to talk about with you," Alex said.

"Hmm... What is it?" Ma Rong asked.

"You see," Alex said. "It's been around 2 weeks since I've been in the sect, and I think it's about time I leave for Tiger sect."

"Oh, that. Right, you should do that. When will you leave?" Ma Rong asked.

"I was thinking of leaving right now actually," he said.

Ma Rong thought for a second and said, "Alright, go."

"Thank you, Master. And take care of yourself," he said. "Don't fret much if you cannot make pills again. You gained a boon and a curse at the same time."

"If you cannot make the pills, I will make them for you. I will get stronger and learn more soon, I promise, master."

Alex bowed towards Ma Rong once and walked out. Ma Rong looked towards where he went and simply smiled.

She then stood up and walked out too— she had work to do in the sect.

Chapter 420 - Back To Tiger Sect

Alex didn't need to pack anything, so he simply walked down the mountain to go over to the Elder's Hall to let his grandmaster know that he was leaving.

He walked over to the core mountain and met with Kong Yuhan, Zhou Mi, and Zhou Mei. He let them know about him going to the Tiger sect and found it funny when he saw the shock on their face.

"You guys knew by now, right? Why are you getting surprised?" Alex asked.

"Uhh, yeah. But I didn't think you could go to the Tiger sect this easily. I assumed you were a disciple in name alone," Zhou Mei said.

"No, I'm an actual disciple. Although, I've only been there for 2 weeks," Alex said. "This is my second time going there. Alright, see you guys in 2 weeks."

"See you later, Brother Yu," Kong Yuhan said goodbye too.

Alex mentioned his departure at the Disciple Hall too and left the sect. He walked out of the front gate under the afternoon sun and made his way to the sect's Alchemy shop.

Alex had only seen this place once before, so he wasn't sure how business was done here, but he was sure that the shop sold pills and ingredients mostly.

He walked into the quite massive shop and looked around to see a few elders and a lot of inner sect disciples working tirelessly.

He walked over to one of the elders and said, "Good afternoon, Elder. I wish to put a few pills on sale here."

The elder looked at Alex and saw that he was a core disciple, so she took on a much gentler face. "Sure child, what is it that you want to sell?" she asked.

Alex brought out about 85 pill bottles and handed them to her. "There are 2 types of pill here. These 43 bottles contain pills that I call the Strong Claw pill. These pills will increase nails, talons, and claws of anyone by 2 centimeters and make it extremely durable depending on the Harmony of the pill."

"And these 42 bottles contain pills that I call the Soul Nourishing Pill. It increases the mental strength of anyone that takes the pill, including beasts. These will be helpful to increase your resistance against mental attacks or increase your beast's intelligence very early on."

Alex explained a few more details about the pills while the Elder looked at him dumbfounded. Only when Alex was done did the Elder finally speak.

"Um... Child, I've never heard of such pills. Where did you get the recipe?" she asked.

"Oh, I made it myself," Alex said.

"I... see. I thought so," the elder said. "Alright, place your information on that board along with your nameplate. I will input some things into your nameplate," the elder said.

Alex was a little confused as to how the sect running formation would even run out here, but he still did what he was asked to do. He placed his nameplate and started writing on the board what he had brought in today in full detail.

He had to go through the number of pill bottles, to the number of pills in each individual bottle to the harmony of each individual pills.

It was a lot of work and took him about 15 minutes to write it all down. During that time, the elder tested all the pills in a pill tester and dunked the pills all onto a large pill bottle that could easily hold over thousands of pills.

Once it was all done, the elder checked the contents of what she had found against the contents that were written and approved of it.

"Alright, child. It's done. You will be notified in a few days to come to get your earnings," the elder said.

"Thank you, Elder," Alex said and was about to walk out when he stopped and turned around to ask. "By the way, in case I am not in the sect when you notify me, can I request that you send the earnings to my master?" he asked.

"Uhh... sure. Which elder should I send it to?" the elder asked.

"Ah good. Then please send it to the sect leader," Alex said and walked away.

"Okay, the sect lead— The Sect LEADER?" the elder suddenly went wide-eyed. "Yu... Ming! Of course, how did I forget it? That was the sect leader's disciple."

"So young, and he already made 2 pills on his own. I wonder how many hands the sect leader had in these two pills. Should have been a lot. But still, to be able to make 40% pills, that's quite amazing," the elder thought.

Alex wasn't there to hear any of what the elder had said and was already on his way to the auction house. The Pink Cloud auction house was something he was used to, so he came here directly.

Although at first, he had thought that he was betrayed by the auction house and that his information about selling the Spirit Cleansing Lily was leaked, after listening to Zexi and experiencing what he did, Alex understood that one of the employees that knew his information had their mind read.

Alex wasn't going to hold grudge against someone who was attacked. If anything, he now knew how vulnerable even the most tight-lipped information could be, so he was going to be extra careful when dealing with important items now.

"Hello, I am here to auction off some pills. Is miss Cai Ping inside?" Alex asked.

"Yes, please come," one of the girls at the front of the auction house took him inside the auction house and to the familiar room.

Alex sat on the sofa, waiting for Cai Ping to arrive. Before the door even opened, Alex knew that she was here and smiled.

"Good Afternoon, Fellow Daoist Yu. I see that you have been well," Cai Ping said.

"I'm indeed doing very well, miss Cai. How about you?" Alex kept the conversation going.

"I'm doing well too. Ah right, congratulations on making a 60% harmony pill in the alchemy competition. When I heard you won that, I couldn't believe it at all."

"All this time, I believed it was your master who made the pills, but it turned out, it was you," Cai Ping said.

"Well, that was just a stroke of luck in the competition. I haven't been able to reach that level after the competition," Alex said.

"I see. Anyway, what do you wish to auction off this time, Daoist Yu? There are people out there desperate for some pills from the White wolf. They like the fact that you sell many pills at once and they don't have to find the ingredients themselves," Cai Ping said.

"Haha, well... I have some pills," Alex said and brought out a few random pills that he started explaining to Cai Ping about.

At first, Cai Ping was excited, but then she got a little disappointed when she saw how low the pills were. She really wished that he brought out some more pills.

As if hearing her inner thoughts, Alex brought out 6 more pill bottles. He then began to explain about the pills.

"These pill bottles have pills that I like to call the Strong Claw pill, it can..."

"And these pill bottles have pills that I like to call the Soul Nourishing Pill. It can..."

Alex explained in detail what the two different pills did. Cai Ping didn't know as much about pills as the elder did, and didn't realize that such pills hadn't been auctioned off before this.

Alex told her exactly which pills to focus on the most and the price that he believed they should be sold at. Once that was done, Cai Ping set up a contract quickly and signed it.

"Will these pills be sold in tomorrow's auction or should I come sometime next week?" Alex asked.

"It should be sold tomorrow," Cai Ping said.

"Alright, see you tomorrow then, Miss Cai," Alex said and stood up to leave. Cai Ping bade him a farewell, and Alex left. It was about time for him to go to the Tiger sect.

He was still wearing the Hong Wu Sect's clothes, but he didn't let it bother him at all. Without any hesitation, he made his way straight to the sect.

He was once again stopped at the gate by the guards. These were not the same guards from last time, so Alex had to explain to them how he was also a disciple of the Tiger Sect, which the elders found hard to believe.

Only when he told them that he was the sect leader's disciple did they call his senior brother to check.

"Oh, junior brother, are you here to meet master or to stay?" Liu Xun asked.

"To stay, senior brother. I am here for the next 2 weeks," Alex said.

"Ah, good good. Hey, you guys, that's my junior brother, let him in," Liu Xun said.

"Yes, Leader," the guards quickly let Alex in. Alex walked inside and was taken to Liu Xun's room where they talked for a while. During that time, Liu Xun notified Wen Cheng and Luo Mei that Alex had returned to the sect.

They were both happy and called Alex to Wen Cheng's manor on the top of the mountain. It was close to being Night time, so Alex leisurely made his way up the familiar mountain.

'This place sure is easier to navigate than the Hong Wu Sect,' Alex thought.? He saw the many yellow-robed disciples go up and down the mountain.

Alex had already changed his clothes, so all the other disciples saw now was an Inner sect disciple-making his way up the mountain.

It was a straight path to the top, so Alex didn't have to spend any time searching for his way. He also didn't need to hide his identity anymore, so he didn't need to use the invisibility technique anymore.

In about 10 minutes, he finally made his way to the top of the mountain. His master's manor was just a few meters away when suddenly someone stepped in front of him.

"Good Evening, Disciple Yu Ming."

A familiar voice sounded from the man who just stepped in front of him. Alex slowly looked up to see a bald man with no facial hair looking at him. He had a soft smile on his face and his overall posture was very gentle.

Alex knew this person quite well. After all, he was the master of Du Yuhan and Su Min.

"Good Evening, First Elder. How are you? It has been a while since we last spoke," Alex said.

"I've been quite well. What about you? I heard you died during the beast invasion in the capital, but then you came back. What's up with that?" the first elder asked.

"Oh, don't mind that nonsense, First Elder. The reports of my deaths were greatly exaggerated," Alex said with a smile.

The first elder didn't lose his smile either. "I was quite surprised you know when I first got the information that you were the sect leader's direct disciple. I thought I missed my chance at another great disciple. Well, I guess it's the sect leader's luck that he found you before I did," the First Elder said.

"I was quite lucky to have found him as my master as well," Alex said with a smile.

"Anyway, I'm happy to see that our sect didn't lose a mighty pillar for the future. Welcome back, disciple Yu," the first elder said.

"Thank you, First elder. Now, if you may excuse me, I need to go meet my master for now. I will see you later, First Elder," Alex said and walked past him.

The first elder did nothing to stop him and just turned around to watch him leave. He then walked back towards his residence while keeping his smile on him all the time.. He truly was happy to see Alex return.