

Alchemy 701

Chapter 701: Profound Revolutions of Myriad Combinations

"Profound Revolutions of Myriad Combinations, huh? Quite a big name it's got here," Alex said as he read the front of the book with a serious look.

Even without reading very much into it, he could tell that this was it. Still, he continued reading for a little longer until he finished the introduction.

Then, he put the book down and started thinking a bit as he drank the tea. After a minute, he looked at the old woman.

"How much for this?" he asked.

"Only 6 Saint Spirit stones," the woman said.

Alex frowned when he heard that. "6000 True Spirit stones for this?" he asked suspiciously.

"It's not just any book, you know? It's an immortal grade skill book," she said confidently.

Alex frowned a little. He was too used to getting Immortal grade books for free. Having to pay for one just didn't sit right with him.

Also, because of that, he was unaware of how much techniques even cost in the first place.

In fact, if he thought about it, books of Immortal rank should have their cost in Saint spirit stones, not True spirit stones. This was way too cheap when he gave it more than a second's thought.

But, given the lack of resources for the Western continent, maybe this was the appropriate price.

"Fine, 6000 it is," Alex said and brought out a storage bag. Before he brought out the 6000 spirit stones from it, he stopped for a moment and looked at the table.

"Can you tell me more about this?" he asked the woman while pointing at the prosthetic arm. "I assume you put it here because of my condition."

The old woman smiled. "Sure, let me explain it to you," she said and picked up the wooden arm.

"This artifact was created by Yuan Yening, an excellent artificer that works exclusively for our Spiring Mist Pavilion. As you can see, it is modeled after a real human arm, and can change its shape or size depending on your wish, although it will take some time so that won't be useful in a fight," the old woman said.

"What will be useful is the fact that it is made up of materials that are perfectly capable of conducting Qi without any resistance. And it works with each and every type of Qi, aside from the ones that aren't natural of course," the woman said. "But I suppose you won't be using Blood Qi or some such."

"What grade is this?" Alex asked.

"Saint Earth grade," the woman said.

"Then it must cost a lot," Alex asked.

"Is another 8000 True Spirit stones a lot to you?" the woman asked.

Alex smiled and handed her the 6000 spirit stones. "It seems I am capable of only buying the book for now," he said.

"You can come for the arm any other time you like. I doubt anyone will require it very soon," the old woman said.

Alex nodded and left after taking the book.

The woman sat for a while doing nothing as she knew there was no one waiting outside the door. She looked at the items in front of her and then at the teacup that Alex had drank from.

It was empty. A curious look appeared on her face as she brought out a talisman that contained Alex's information. There, she added a single piece of information.

"Has incredible mental strength and won't succumb to normal mental influence."

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It had been 7 days since Alex had returned home, so he decided to go home for today and learn the technique in private.

Pearl and his mother welcomed him back and they talked for a while. Alex told her exactly what was going on in the guild as well as his trip to the Spring Mist Pavilion.

"Oh, you need some money? Master gave me some a few days ago. He said it was your money," she said and brought out some spirit stones that Qin Shan had handed to her for the many pills Alex had made for him before going to the poison swamp.

"It's fine. You can keep it for now," Alex said. "I'll go learn this new technique now," Alex said and left the room.

Back in his house, Alex brought out the book and started learning it.

As he started reading, he understood what it mean. He flipped through the pages as he finished reading it all in under 10 minutes and in no more than 5 more minutes comprehended it all.

Now, he just needed to practice it on some things. So, he brought out his cauldron and a few ingredients to test it out.

To begin with, he decided to make common rank pills as his priority was to get used to the technique first.

When the cauldron heated up, one by one, Alex put in the different ingredients.

Although he was testing out the technique, Alex wasn't making some random pill, however. It was one of the pills that he had changed the recipe to before he knew how it could be done.

After getting to the True realms, the Alchemy God's Knowledge skill had allowed him to have a knack for finding flaws in a recipe for common pills simply based on instincts.

He didn't need that now with how he had learned to fix the recipe on his own, but this one was much faster than the other one and required far less use of ingredients.

Alex could fix the recipe in a day and it would be nearly as good as what he could do in 2 weeks.

However, the only reason he didn't use it any longer was that it could only be used for Common pills. Also, it wouldn't be as perfect as the manual one.

Once the energy and the powder were ready to combine, Alex used the technique. As he circulated the technique, neutral Qi escaped from him and lingered in the air, waiting.

Alex nodded to himself as he knew this would happen. He then reached into the cauldron with his spiritual sense and started finding the different shapes of the powder, and used the technique to put them together.

Once he did, the technique then automatically followed what he did to as many things as possible. His Qi would go through the cauldron find the many different powders and try to make the same shape as he did.

Once the powders were combined to form as many individual combinations as possible, Alex used Elemental Guidance to move the energy in the cauldron into it.

Then, once everything was done, all Alex had to do was use the other technique in the book to form a sphere with the pre-combined powders.

That was perhaps the easiest part of the whole task. The powders underwent a revolution around the cauldron as they came together to form a single pill out of the many combined powders.

With a wave of his hand, Alex brought out the ready pill and stared at it.

"65%?" he thought as he looked at it. "Did I mess up that much? I must've left it in the cauldron for too long while I made that first combination then," he thought.

This being the first time he was using the technique, he didn't expect it to become an Immortal grade pill.

Still, he expected it to come close to it. This was far from that.

"Guess I will have to train in it a bit longer then," Alex thought and started making more of the same pills as well as the other pills.

The more he used the technique, the more familiar got with its who aspect. It didn't take him long to realize that there were ways to make the process easier on himself.

Alex made 3 types of pills in his process to train and experiment with this technique.

The first type was pills whose recipes were unaltered.

The second type was pills whose recipes he had altered but didn't know the shapes of the powder.

Last were the pills whose recipes he had altered and also knew the shapes of the pill as well as the combinations.

After experimenting with these different pills, he had come to learn quite a lot about his new technique.

First of all, it was imperative that he knew the shapes of the powder. It didn't matter how good the recipe was if he couldn't turn it into a pill fast enough and instead let the powder burn away.

Second of all, while the technique was incredible, far better than simply randomly making the powders into a pill. It couldn't hold a candle to the pill formation technique in his Pill-splitting technique, which was capable of forming the most efficient pill on its own.

Lastly was perhaps the biggest problem with this technique. It used all the powder in the cauldron. On the surface, that looked like it was working perfectly, but most of the time, you didn't want to use all the powders.

If there were excess powder in a pill that didn't have other powders to combine with, you ran the risk of creating asymmetry, which would reduce the effectiveness of the pill even if it held all the energy it could, to begin with.

So, if Alex wanted to make the perfect pill, he needed to make sure he had the perfect amount of ingredients from the start. For that, he would have to get rid of even the tiniest bit of extra material from the ingredients before they went into the pot.

Once he did that, the result Alex received were much better than earlier.

In fact, with pills of the third type, he was starting to touch on the Immortal grade.

Chapter 702: Negligence

1 week later.

Alex sat in an alchemy room in the guild and focused as well as he could while making the pill.

For the pill that improved one's Earth spiritual roots, Alex still had 4 more ingredients to gather. So, in the last week, he only had two ingredients to work with, which he did easily in a single day.

The rest of the week, he had worked on the other ingredients for the other pill he was making.

He had finished it finally last night and had spent the rest of the night thinking of the perfect combination for it.

Now, it was time to make that pill.

Remembering the combination, Alex sent his spiritual sense into the cauldron and started using his new technique to combine the individual particles.

Once his Qi knew what to do, it started working on its own. Soon, his cauldron was full of the combined powder and all that was left was putting the energy into the powder.

This was the part Alex had to be very careful with. The resulting element of this pill was very, very volatile and could explode on his face if he wasn't careful.

The balance between the elements could be disturbed by the slightest fluctuation, so he very slowly started to push the energy into the powder.

Alex found this to be one of the most frustrating pills to make all because of the volatility of the pill.

After what felt like a very long time, Alex finally managed to put all the energy into the powder without making it explode.

Then, all that was left was to use the final technique and form the pill.

Alex opened the lid and pulled out the pill from inside. However, he didn't look at the pill's quality at all. The very first thing he checked was how it worked.

He closed his eyes and used his senses to surround the pill and feel the subtle changes in the air around it.

Even as he held it, the pill was reacting to the slight yang aura that was coming out of it and making it disappear.

The fire Qi from the furnace was also slowly mixing with the constantly escaping energy of the pill and disappearing.

Alex took the pill and walked out into the hallway. The guild staff walked by, but no one bothered him at all.

Alex sensed the Qi in the surrounding suddenly change from only Fire and Yang to any and all. One by one, as they gathered around the pill, they would also disappear from it.

Alex smiled when he sensed that. "It's working," he thought and walked out to the front hall to sense the pill some more.

People watched curiously as he walked out, but Alex didn't give them any thought. His attention was only on the pill and being in a new environment to check the pill's reaction to the environment.

Slowly, the reactions started to get weaker and weaker. Alex was now watching how long it would last.

"Alchemist Yu," someone spoke from the corner of the hall, but Alex didn't hear it.

"ALCHEMIST YU!" another person shouted, jolting Alex awake. He turned around and saw Han Daiyu with her hands next to her mouth as she was ready to shout again.

Next to her was Liang Qiu. Both of them looked ever so elegant, only that Han Daiyu also had a hint of barbaric tendencies.

"Sister Han, Sister Liang, what are you two doing here? Do you need a pill?" Alex asked as he walked over.

"No, we're here to talk to you about the progress on the pill," Liang Qiu asked.

"Oh, it's going alright. I'm just waiting for the last 4 ingredients. I have about 40 each, but I should be able to start today or tomorrow for it," Alex said.

"Oh, and what's this pill?" she asked, looking at the white pill in his hand.

"Oh, it's something I made just now. It's an important pill," Alex said, not explaining much.

"Should you keep a pill out in the open like that? Won't the customer get angry at you?" she asked.

Alex's attention slowly went back to his pill to see if the energy in it was gone or not. "It's not for the customer. I made it for myself," he said.

"Then why not eat it?" she asked.

"This is the first time I made it. It took over a week to get here, so I want to see how the pill works outside," he said in an absentminded tone.

"What? You've been working on this pill for over a week? What about ours?" she asked.

"I'm working on that. Still need that 4 ingredients," he said.

"How long has it been since you worked on it?" Han Daiyu asked.

"Almost a week," Alex said without thinking much as all of his attention was on the very faint aura of the pill that was close to disappearing.

"WHAT?!" Liang Qiu shouted, garnering looks from everyone in the hall. "You haven't worked on our pills for a week? Alchemist Yu, we trusted you to make our pills," she said.

Alex's attention nearly wavered, but he kept it on the pill. "I know, but this pill is important as well," he said as he finally saw the last little aura of the pill dissipate away.

"How is your pill more important than ours?" Liang Qiu got mad. "We gave you a job, that means you do our work. Alchemist Yu, please don't neglect our work, or we will be forced to go elsewhere with the work."

Alex clutched his pill and finally looked up at the fuming face of Liang Qiu. "Sister Liang, I can assure you, I have not neglected your pill for a single moment," he said.

"Oh yeah? Then what is this pill?" she said, pointing to his palm.

"As I said, this is important," Alex said.

"Doesn't matter if it is important," Liang Qiu said. "Only thing that matters is you neglected our pill for the sake of making yours."

Alex's face frowned a little as she finally got on his nerve.

So, he reached into his storage bag and brought out a pill bottle with a single pill inside of it.

He handed the pill over to Liang Qiu and waited.

The fuming Liang Qiu looked confused now. "What is this?" she asked.

"An almost Immortal grade True pill. That's for you to eat," Alex said.

Liang Qiu opened up the stopper and looked inside. "What does it do?" she asked.

"I don't know. Can be a good pill or a bad one. Can be a healing pill or a poison pill. Can make you the most beautiful woman in the whole world, or can turn you into a man," Alex said. "Eat it and find out."

Liang Qiu hesitated, as anyone would. "I'm not eating this," she said.

"Why not?" Alex asked.

"Because I don't know what this does," she said.

"Ah, I see. Well let me make something up then," Alex said as he gave a thinking expression. "Yes, this pill helps improve your Wood Spiritual root."

Liang Qiu frowned. "Are you mocking me, Alchemist Yu?" she asked.

"No. Do you not trust me?" Alex asked.

"Of course not," she said.

Alex took one step forward. "Then why do you trust the words of a demon that lived thousands of years ago, and wanted nothing but to destroy humans? Why do you trust the words of someone that doesn't even know how pills work?" he asked.

"That... I..." Liang Qiu couldn't speak. "Are you saying the recipe is false?"

"No," Alex said. "I'm saying there's a possibility it is false. The pill does seem to do what it says it does, but if there's the slightest chance it does something else, I cannot let you or anyone else take it."

"So? What are we supposed to do? Find a scapegoat for us and feed it?" Liang Qiu asked.

"Yes," Alex said with a smile. "Except I'm not a horrible person to test a random pill on another human being."

"Then?" she asked.

"Then I am going to test it on myself," Alex said.

"What?" Han Daiyu finally spoke from the side. She had been watching Liang Qiu get angry and had let her handle it, but this tangent of the conversation made her speak up.

"You will test on yourself? Didn't you just say it was dangerous?" she asked.

"Yes, it is," Alex said. "But I have a way to make it less dangerous."

"How?" Liang Qiu asked.

"This," Alex finally opened his closed fist and showed the white pill to her again.

"What is this?" she asked.

"True Nullifying Pill. If taken immediately after eating a pill, it can revert the effects of the pill."

"Only caveat is that you must eat this pill within the first five minutes of making this. I made this nearly 7 minutes ago, so this pill is a dud now. But, I will make a better one later," he said to her.

Liang Qiu looked at him with a shocked expression. "You are going that far for the job?" she asked.

"Sister Liang, I told you from the very beginning, that the only thing holding me up is the lack of ingredients. As soon as I get them, I will make your pill."

"And for the sake of making sure the pill is in fact safe, I also worked on the True Nullifying pill," he said.

Then he looked Liang Qiu straight in the eye with a confident look in his own.

"As I said, I have not neglected your pill even once. Everything I did for the past 2 weeks, and everything I do for the next week, all of it is going to be for your pill."

Chapter 703: Heat

Once the girls apologized and left, Alex went to the reception to see if he could buy the ingredients.

Fortunately for him, there were more ingredients available for one of 4 remaining ingredients. Immediately, he bought those and waited for them to get transferred to the guild later on.

It took him exactly 3 days to gather everything he needed and two more to finish working on them.

For the next 3 days, He did nothing but study the different shapes of the powder he could produce.

Finally, after exactly 20 days, Alex had done it all. Now, all that was left was to make the pill.

To say that he was nervous was to understate it. He was scared. This was not only a very important pill, but it was also a pill that was going to make or break his relationship with one of the greatest sects and one of the greatest families of the empire.

Also, the reputation he could gain from this was so substantial that he may even be able to find a way to make them search for the ginseng.

Alex took a deep breath and began thinking about all the ways this could go wrong.

His Yang Qi could cause trouble when making the pill. Except, he had already taken care of it using what few Yin element poisons he had managed to find in the Poison Swamp from last time.

His control of heat could be a problem. With the Flame Mastery Scripture, it was amazing. It could be better, but that would mean he would have to be perfect with it.

His cauldron could be better. The Golden Jade cauldron of his that he had been using for the last 3 or so years was a True Earth artifact. Meaning, that there were many other cauldrons that he could find and they would be much better than this.

In fact, he had enough money to go buy a Saint Earth cauldron if he wanted to. But he didn't. This one held a sentimental value that no other cauldron could replace.

Unless push came to shove, he wouldn't budge from his stance of not changing the cauldron.

The ingredients could cause problems if they were bad, but Alex had made sure to use the ones with lesser age for his experimentation and kept the ones with greater age for the pills.

That way, he could guarantee that the pill would have the best of the best ingredients to work with. Also, he was going to weigh them on a formation before using them just to make sure everything is right.

He had the best technique he could use to make those pills as perfect as he could make it, so that side was taken care of too.

Finally, the problem could be the recipe itself. Only, there was no way the recipe would be a problem. After all, having spent the entire night on the recipe alone, Alex knew that it was perfection itself.

Once he was sure there was nothing that could be improved and nothing could go wrong, he began.

Once the cauldron was heated enough, Alex put in the first ingredient. Without missing a beat, he started moving it around the cauldron as per his recipe.

Once that was ready, he changed the temperature of the cauldron in an instant and put in the second one.

Then the third one, then the fourth one, all the way to the last one.

He processed the final ingredient and turned it into powder as well.

Then came the time to turn it into a pill, so Alex started by using the Profound Revolutions of Myriad Combinations technique to bring out his Qi.

Once it was out and hovered around the powder, Alex started to combine the ingredients to make a single particle.

Then, his technique worked on its own to combine the rest of the powder as well. Once that was done, Alex quickly used Elemental Guidance to pour the energy into the combined particles.

Afterward, he used the technique to combine the many particles into a single pill. Alex turned down the heat the moment the pill was formed and opened the lid to bring it out.

He put it in his hands and instantly knew how good the pill was.

76%.

An Immortal grade pill.

Alex frowned.

He really wanted to be happy about it. After all, this was one of the best pills anyone in this Empire had seen until now. But for some reason, he just couldn't bring himself to think of it as good.

He had made Immortal grade pills before when practicing the technique previously, so getting one again didn't bring him the same happiness as it once would.

Having done so much preparation before this, he had expected something better to come out of this.

He sighed. "It's only the first one. No need to get hopeless," he told himself and prepared the next set of ingredients.

Once ready, Alex made the pill once more, and once more, he couldn't get the result he desired.

"How can I do better?" Alex thought to himself. "Is there any way?"

The recipe was perfect. The ingredients were the best they could be. So was his technique.

His Yang Qi was under control so that wasn't the issue at all.

If anything, the only thing he could improve on was the cauldron. But how could he? That was something his master gave him. Did he really need to change it?

"No, that's not the only thing I can improve," Alex thought as he put on a strange face.

There was indeed one more thing he could improve. But could he? Could he turn what was already nigh perfect, into something perfect?

"I have to try," Alex thought and stared into the fire. Or more accurately, Alex started looking into the temperature of the fire, and its heat.

All this time that Alex had made pills, he had been content with his control of fire. After all, what better could he have asked for?

But now, he wanted more. He needed more.

But then again, how could he get more than what he already had? How could he gain better control at Heat?

Heat... what was heat exactly?

If he remembered the science lessons his mother taught him, Heat was one of the forms of energy and one of the fundamental truths of the world.

Heat was the energy stored in a body, manifesting itself as temperature.

Heat was the energy that moved from one thing to another based on the difference in their temperature.

As Alex stared more and more into the fire, he started understanding even more.

Temperature couldn't exist without the concept of heat. Hotness was just the presence of a lot of heat. Coldness was just the lack of heat.

Alex's eyes stared at the fire, but his mind was somewhere else by now.

If he wanted a fire to lower its temperature, he had to take the heat away. If he wanted to increase its temperature, he had to put energy into it.

As Alex thought more and more about it, he soon fell into a trance.

Outside the guild, energy stirred in the air as the worldly laws started to slowly descend onto the ground.

In Heaven's peak school, Shangguan Quan was standing in front of a massive rock that was carved with a spear strike.

The wound on the rock had such an intense Spear intent to it, that Quan felt like he was going to be cut to pieces by it.

Suddenly, he was forced to look to the side as the disturbance nearby caught his attention.

Han Hongqi was the only member of the family that stayed in the ancestral home for now. Most of the other members were in the capital, enjoying their life.

He was cultivating his Earth Demon physique when he too felt a disturbance in the natural law, forcing him to stop and stare outside.

Ga Xueyuan's attention flickered away from her customer as she was forced to look outside with a confused look.

'Was there another Saint realm expert in the city?' she wondered. 'Must be quite lucky to learn a new law while breaking through.'

Then she went back to speaking with her client.

Every other saint realm expert noticed the laws descending, but not a single one of them even considered the possibility of it being someone else aside from a Saint realm expert.

As such when Alex opened his eyes, fully understanding the Dao of Heat, not a single person came to bother him for the disturbances.

Chapter 704: Finishing the Pill

Alex opened his eyes and they shined brightly with enlightenment.

He slowly moved his hands forward and the fire responded to his will. With a single thought, Qi moved out of him of its own volition, and the Qi in the air moved to the fire too.

Not even a moment late, the fire grew hotter by nearly 200 degrees. This was incredible.

Usually, no matter how fast, there was a gradual increase in temperature. With Alex, it was quite a bit fast thanks to the Flame Mastery technique and also very accurate.

However, now it was instant. The amount of time it took for the temperature to change was the same amount of time it took for the Qi in his body to leave.

For a person who had gone through Mortal Cleansing and had improved his meridians through constant training for over 2 years, releasing his Qi was everything but an instant.

Unfortunately, that didn't help him in Alchemy as much as he would have wanted it to. Having an accurately hot fire was never the problem at all.

After all, the temperature of the fire was never what mattered. It was the temperature of the cauldron rather that defined how an ingredient was going to behave.

However, the Dao of Heat didn't simply extend to fire itself. It extended to everything that existed and had heat, no matter how low.

So, when Alex tried it, he realized that even without the existence of fire itself, he could heat up the cauldron to the required temperature, and he could do it instantly.

Unfortunately, he still needed the fire. Changing temperature was one thing, but keeping it constant, however, was completely different.

The amount of focus and Qi he would require to make a pill without using fire was way too high.

So, in the end, Alex still needed the fire. Still, these two things together had already made an incredible difference for his alchemy going forward.

So, once he was done learning how to manipulate heat, he started making the pills once more.

He heated up the cauldron but that took no time at all. The moment he thought about it, the cauldron was ready for the first ingredient.

Alex put in the ingredient and started processing it. Once he was done with it, he put in the second ingredient.

Before the second ingredient even finished falling through the cauldron, both the temperature of the cauldron and the fire switched to the required amount instantly and he processed the 2nd ingredient too.

Then the third and the fourth.

After all 16 ingredients had been processed with almost no time in between them, he started forming the different combinations and soon afterward finished forming the pill.

Once the pill was ready, Alex brought it back out.

80%.

"Holy shit!" he thought to himself. This was definitely one of the best pills he had ever made.

Still, for some reason, he thought he could do better.

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After making about 10 more of the pills, Alex finally ran out of ingredients to make any more.

He stopped and went forward to complete the next set of steps he needed to take before passing along the pill back to the two girls.

So, he started making the True Nullifying pill.

Alex needed to be very careful with this pill as it was extremely volatile. So, he took as long as it required him to make the pill.

Right when he used the technique to form the pill, Alex took out a 75% Harmony pill from the one he made before he acquired the Dao of Heat and ate it without a second thought.

Even as the pill went down his esophagus, Alex needed to make a decision. He could either convert it into Qi or have the pill take effect.

Since he was testing the pill, he let it take effect.

Just as the pill started dissolving in his stomach, the True Nullifying pill was ready.

At the same time, Alex employed the Jade Skin technique as that was the only earth technique he could use at the moment.

Alex took the True Nullifying pill and waited a few seconds before he took it.

The moment he felt his Jade Skin technique get even the slightest bit better, he immediately ate the True Nullifying pill.

Instantly, he felt hollow. As if he was a bubble that had just popped.

The energy that was in fact affecting his body was immediately destroyed and what little effect it had on his roots was also eliminated.

When it all passed away, and he started feeling normal again, he had the widest smile imaginable.

He had done it. He had not only made the pill but also made sure that it was an actual pill that improved one's Spirit roots.

It was not a harmful pill at all. He could now give it safely to the two girls that had given him the recipe.

Of course, he hadn't done the testing for those two. It did help to get on their good side, but their safety was never his concern. He could simply make them the pill and be done with it.

It was not even his own safety that made him take the True Nullifying pill's approach.

It was the thought of his mother eating this pill that made him want to test it before letting her have it.

Alex knew how great his body was. Anything his body deemed harmful, it destroyed, leaving not even a trace of it.

As such, if the pill he ate did do something bad, his body could handle it. However, his mother had no such body.

Alex had been worried from the start. What if he gave her the pill and it turned out to be a bad one? He couldn't imagine the thought of giving her some pill that he didn't know about.

That was the one and only reason he decided to test the pill.

Now that he had done it, he could happily go ahead and give it to her. So finally, after who knew how long, Alex left the alchemy room and walked out.

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It was early morning when Alex returned back to his home to rest. The mental fatigue of working non-stop for a week and then comprehending a dao had left him feeling tapped out.

So, he spent the next whole day simply cultivating and resting.

The morning after that, Alex opened his eyes and brought out one of the better pills to eat and improve his spiritual root.

The moment he ate the pill, he could feel the roots getting better. He didn't know if that was some sort of placebo effect or not, but once he used the Jade Skin technique, it was perfectly clear that his Earth Spiritual root had been improved, albeit not by a lot.

At least, not when compared to the Supreme Spiritual roots that his Metal and Yang roots had become.

Once he was done, Alex left his house and went over to his mother's house to give her the same pill.

They talked for a while before Alex needed to leave. He needed to visit both the Heaven's Peak school and the Han Ancestral family home to deliver the pill.

However, just to be sure that he didn't have to do that, he went to the guild, hoping to see the two girls.

To his surprise, they were in fact there. Alex was glad he came by here first.

"Sister Liang, Sister Han, I'm glad to see the both of you," Alex said.

"Alchemist Yu, where were you? You made us wait for so long," Liang Qiu said.

"My apologies, were you waiting on me for a long time?" Alex asked.

"For you to make the pill, yes. For you to come out of the room? No," Liang Qiu said. "We got some of our junior disciples to come here and stake you out. The moment you left, they let us know and we came here first thing in the morning."

"I see, well I'm glad that you came here because you are just in time," Alex said and pulled out two pill bottles from his storage bag and handed them over.

"Your pills are ready," Alex said.

The girls opened the bottle and saw the dark brown pill. "Is it safe to eat?" Liang Qiu said.

"Yes," Alex said. "It does do what it says it does."

"I see," Liang Qiu said. "Then I hope you won't mind if I check the pill's harmony."

Alex smiled back. "Go ahead."

Chapter 705: Fighter

Liang Qiu and Han Daiyu both brought out pill testers and proceeded to put their pill into them.

Alex waited as they watched the fog around their testers start to grow. Even Alex got a little curious about it.

He wanted to know if the tester was in fact accurate around higher percentages. After all, the testers themselves were formations with not a lot of Efficiency to them.

The girls watched as the fog reached 50% and continued to grow without stopping. Of course, they knew the pill was going to be better than that, so they patiently waited.

As the fog grew past 60%, they finally showed signs of nervousness. From the pills they had seen before, around 65% to 70% was the best they could hope for.

If Alex was lucky, he would have reached 75% even. They wanted him to be lucky.

Soon, the percentage grew past 65%, and with each increase after that, they watched in fear as they half-expected the fog to stop growing.

However, it wasn't going to do that. The fog continued to grow and soon went past 70%. Still, it did not stop.

The girls were stunned beyond belief. They thought they would be able to see it now, something they had never seen before.

An Immortal grade True Pill.

Finally, when the fog hit 75%, their face was a sight to see. It was fortunate that they were in the corner of the hall, very early in the morning.

Otherwise, a lot of people would've noticed their faces and would've definitely been interested in what they were seeing.

"Alchemist Yu, you... you are an Immortal rank alchemist now?" Han Daiyu asked with a shocked face.

"No," Alex said. "You need to make more than just a single type of pill to become an Immortal alchemist I believe."

"But since you made this, you should be able to make others too right?" Liang Qiu asked.

"Of course," Alex said. "But I will hope you keep this a secret for now. I don't want people coming to me expecting an Immortal grade pill. After all, you saw how time-consuming it is to make this pill."

"If that is what you want," Liang Qiu said. "Still, I can't believe you were able to make a pill that reached 75% in ha—"

Her words stuck in her mouth as her eyes widened once more when she saw the static number on the tester.

She had assumed that the tester would stop when it reached 75%, so she had begun speaking, but who would've thought it would increase so much.

Han Daiyu too quickly stared at her own tester and then at Liang Qiu's. Both of their pills had the same Harmony.

Together, they spoke in a very serious voice.

"83%".

"How?" Liang Qiu asked.

"3 weeks, sister Liang. That's how," Alex said. "Also, I had to improve on 2 other things aside from the pill recipe itself. That was how I was able to improve the pill past Immortal grade."

"This is incredible!" she said. "I don't know how I can ever repay you for this."

Alex shook his head. "You don't have to pay me anything for those two pills. Consider it my payment for bringing such an incredible pill recipe to me," he said.

"What? But we do need to pay you," Liang Qiu said.

"Ah, I believe you misheard me," Alex said. "I don't need any payment for those two pills. Yes. But I suppose you would want to buy these pills too, right?" he asked as he brought out a storage bag.

"What's that?" Liang Qiu asked as her spiritual sense slowly entered it and saw what was inside.

"There are 12 pills in there," she said with a hint of shock in her voice. "Are those all...?"

"Yes, they are the same pill. Although they aren't as good as the one I gave you, they are still Immortal Rank," Alex said. "So... will you buy them?"

"How much?" the girls didn't even need to say yes.

"Your wish," Alex gave them the reins.

5 minutes later, Alex was about 3000 True Spirit stones richer. Each one of those 12 pills was sold to the girls for at least 200 True Spirit stones, which Alex was quite happy about.

"Thank you, Alchemist Yu," the girls said. "We would like to come to you whenever we need something again."

"Sure," Alex said with a smile. "But this time you might have to go through protocol." Alex pointed to the reception.

"Of course," the girls said.

"Oh yeah, one more thing," Alex said. "I don't doubt that you will be showing these pills to your elders and they will want to rope me in. Please tell them I am not interested."

"Nothing they can give me will interest me at all to join you guys. Sure we can have a friendly relationship, but I won't be joining at all," he said.

"I see. I will pass along the message then," the girls said. "Once again, thank you, Alchemist Yu."

After that, the girls left, leaving Alex alone with the newly acquired money.

He added that money to some he got from his mother this morning and a smile crept on his face.

"Screw this," he thought. "I'm not staying armless anymore."

* * * * *

Alex showed off his new arm to his mother and Pearl.

"It looks quite real," Helen said as she stared at his arm.

"Why are you joking, mother? It looks nothing like a real arm," Alex said as he looked at the puppet-like arm.

"Oh, I thought you wanted to hear that," she said.

"No, I'm just showing off my new arm. This should help me for the next... what? 10 years it might take me to reach Saint realm?" he said.

"It will take you 10 years to reach Saint realm?" Helen asked and started counting in her mind.

"You have to breakthrough 24 more times to reach Saint realm. If you hurry, at 1 month per breakthrough, it will only take you 2 years," Helen said.

Alex shook his head. "That's impossible. At my current cultivation base, advancing once every month is too risky. Even once every 2 months is barely acceptable."

"It has to be close to 3 months per breakthrough, that being for my current realms. As I break through more, I will need to put in more and more distance between each breakthrough," Alex said.

"Even the best of the best disciples from the great sects, who get all the resources one can find, don't go over less than 9 different in 3 years."

"Han Daiyu broke through maybe 5 times in the last 3 years, and Liang Qiu broke through a similar amount too," Alex said. "So, I know I can't rush myself through this."

"Alright, alright," Helen said. "What are you going to do now then? Wasn't your original plan to find ingredients for your arm? Now that you seem to not want an actual arm anymore, what do you want to do?"

"That's where you're wrong, mother," Alex said. "I still want my arm, and I will take opportunities if they show themselves for me to get my arm back."

"But I can't keep waiting for it to show up. I need an arm for the times when I will need them," Alex said. "Especially because I use a sword that won't take my Qi in at all, I need an extra arm to use my techniques when I fight or use another sword side by side."

"I see," Helen said solemnly. "So you really take fighting with such high regard, huh?"

"I have to, mother," Alex said with a serious face as well. "This is not the world we lived in where the law protected the weak. No, this is the world where the strong live and the weak die."

"If I can't become strong and defeat those that come after us, I can't protect you, I can't protect myself."

"I already lost someone because I was weak before... I don't want to go through that again," Alex said.

"I see," Helen said with a sad look on her face. "It took me a while to realize, but now I do. My son that left his house to go study in the university is no more."

Alex's heart stung a bit when he heard that and a single tear dropped from the edges of his eyes. "I'm sorry, mother. I have become someone you hate."

"Nonsense!" Helen shouted. "I don't hate you. I could never hate you. What I hate is this world that forced my sweet little boy to become a fighter just to protect himself. That is what is hate."

More tears streamed down Alex's eyes as he involuntarily went to hug his mother. Helen took him with open arms.

"I'm a fighter too, and a sweet little boy," Pearl said from the side, bringing a bit of chuckle into both of the human's silent cries.

"Come," Helen called Pearl and hugged him too.

After their emotions faded away, Helen asked, "What do you want to do now then? You don't need to force yourself to learn talisman, formations, or even alchemy."

"You won't be searching for a way to get your arm back either. So what do you want to do now?" Helen asked.

"I... I think I will focus on my cultivation for now," Alex said. "I will have to train a lot for that. I might need to visit the Eastern mountains a lot."

"Why the Eastern mountains?" Helen asked. "What's wrong with fighting against normal people?"

"Where would I find normal people to fight— Wow, how did I not think of that before?" he said to himself.

Helen smiled. "I will talk to master later."

Chapter 706: Training

"This is the training hall we use for disciples to train in," Qin Shan said as he gave Alex a tour of the place where he would be training.

"Does this suit you?" he asked.

Alex looked at the wide and open room with enough space for him to maneuver around as he trained.

"Yes, this will be perfect," Alex said. "But there's another problem."

"What? What's wrong with this room?" Qin Shan asked.

"Not with the room, sect master," Alex said. "With the fighters."

"What's wrong with my fighters?" Qin Shan asked.

"I feel a little awkward fighting with people that may spread rumors of my ability," Alex said.

"Do you know a lot of techniques?" Qin Shan asked

"Not techniques... exactly," Alex said. "You'll understand when you see me fight."

"Alright, how about if I make them swear to secrecy?" Qin Shan asked.

"Will that matter? How do we make sure they keep their promise?" Alex asked.

"No, we make them make an oath to the heavens. That way if they do break it, they will suffer Qi deviation at best, and lose their soul at worst," Qin Shan said.

"What?" Alex looked a little shocked. "You can do that?"

"Did you not know?" Qin Shan asked.

"I don't think anyone in the Crimson Empire knows about this. If they do, nothing is public," he said.

"Well, if you make an oath to the heavens, it forms a seal on your spirit. If you break the oath, the seal damages your spirit," Qin Shan said. "That will be enough to keep your secret right?"

"Yes," Alex said.

"Alright, I will call someone who's free to train with you," Qin Shan said and brought out a talisman, but Alex instantly spoke up.

"Only those in the True King realm," he said.

"Okay, only those in the True King re— wait what?" Qin Shan turned around to give a confused look. "Did you misspeak? You mean True Lord realm right?"

Alex shook his head. "There's a reason I'm going so far as to get them to make an oath, sect master," Alex said.

Qin Shan's face quickly got serious and he whispered to Alex. "Are you saying you can fight True King realm cultivators?" he asked.

"Yes, or rather, I can beat every other True Lord realm without any problem," Alex said.

"Oh, now I'm curious how strong you are," Qin Shan said and quickly called over someone.

Not even 5 minutes later, a young man who seemed to be in his late 20s appeared in front of Alex. From what Alex could see, the young man was likely not young at all, but rather in his late 30s.

His cultivation base was at True King 2nd realm.

"Yes, sect master," the man arrived next to Qin Shan.

"Yao Bai, meet the guest elder Yu Ming," Qin Shan said.

"Ah, you must be sister Hei Lin's son. It's nice to meet you, elder Yu Ming," the man said respectfully, even though he was the elder here in terms of age.

"Hello," Alex gave a sincere greeting.

"What am I doing here, sect master?" Yao Bai asked.

"You're fighting him, a practice match," Qin Shan said.

"Uhh..." Yao Bai looked around. "Fight?"

"His idea," Qin Shan gave a shrug. "But first, you must swear an oath to the heavens that you will not reveal anything that happens in this room to anyone else."

"What? An oath?" Yao Bai was scared. "Sect master, I..."

"Relax, it's a one-way oath, and you only need to keep a secret of whatever happens here," Qin Shan said.

Alex brought out a pill from his storage bag as an incentive and threw it to Yao Bai. "Make the oath and you can get more of those pills for free," he said.

"This is?" Yao Bai opened the pill bottle.

"It will help improve your speed of cultivation by nearly 60%," Alex said.

"What?" Yao Bai looked back. "Okay, I will swear."

Yao Bai immediately stood straight and said, "I swear to the heavens that I will not reveal whatever I witness in this room today and will keep it a secret until I am given the permission by guest elder himself."

Alex felt a faint movement of Qi and air in the surroundings and felt something else move upon Yao Bai.

Yao Bai shuddered a bit and shook himself free of the feeling. "Done," he said.

"We can begin," Qin Shan said.

Alex moved over to one side of the training hall and waited for Yao Bai to do so. Once they were both in position, Qin Shan moved over to the side and waited for them to begin fighting.

The fight started when Alex sent out a simple Iron Fist punch with barely any effort in it.

It flew fast, but slow enough for Yao Bai to dodge. Only then did the fight officially begin.

Yao Bai's brought out a metal rope from his storage bag and got ready to fight.

'A metal whip?' Alex wondered when he saw that and noticed something at the end of the whip. There was a sharp dagger on the end of the whip.

'A dagger whip?' Alex thought. He had never seen a weapon like this before.

A shield appeared from Alex's storage bag and hovered around him, constantly moving around to protect him from the attacks.

Alex didn't bring out a weapon of his own. After all, this was the time for him to test his fake arm for the first time.

Yao Bai swung the metal rope and sent the dagger going his way. Magically, the rope extended and hit the side of his shield.

Alex heard a bang and knew it was time to go fight. He dashed forward to attack his opponent, but Yao Bai suddenly stepped on his expended metal rope, and the dagger attached to the end of it came flying back towards Alex.

Alex didn't give much care. The shield moved behind him in time and stopped it. At the same time, Alex dashed forward and punched the man.

The man stretched his rope and caught Alex's punch. However, he was pushed back a little as he hadn't expected him to be so strong.

His eyes went wide immediately and he sent out a long part of the rope around Alex's right side.

Then, he pulled and Alex was suddenly constricted.

"Give up!" the man said, thinking he caught Alex, but Alex only smiled.

The next instant, Alex disappeared, appearing next to the man. He then punched as hard as he could and the man took it with his body.

Alex felt something hard and knew the man was wearing armor. But still, he was sent flying back as he hadn't defended the attack at all.

The man stumbled, caught himself, and got back up just in time to see Alex jump towards him.

The man suddenly spun his rope around, creating a sort of spiral around Alex while he was flying towards him.

The next moment, the man pulled the rope to constrict Alex once again, but a barrier appeared around him, stopping the rope from touching him.

Then, Alex's left hand moved. The moment the barrier went away, his left arm caught the metal rope and pulled.

As a Saint rank artifact, it was stronger than his normal body. Since it was primarily meant to be an arm, it wasn't as strong as a weapon could be, but it was still a Saint Earth artifact.

At the very least, it had the power of a True King realm fighter.

As he pulled on the rope, suddenly, he felt the rope grow as it extended past where he pulled, but the man stood where he was.

Then, the rope shrunk and the man used the opportunity to pull himself.

Alex tried to let go immediately, but his hand wasn't as fast as his real one would be. As such, he was pulled with the rope.

Alex heard a bang even as he was pulled and knew that his shield must have protected him.

Along the way, Alex let go of the rope and landed on all fours.

As if some animal instinct suddenly kicked into him, he dashed on all fours and started fighting like an animal with his claws on both of his hands.

As a replica, the fake arm could do everything his real arm could do, and thus it could also form claws with his metal Qi.

Alex slashed at the ropes and the man's armor. Yao Bai was completely unsure how to fight this fight. After all, he had never seen a man fight like an animal.

Alex was finally using the training he got back in the beast realm where he fought hand to hand against beasts every day.

Qin Shan looked from the side with clear shock in his eyes. He was sure by now that Alex's strength far surpassed his cultivation base.

However, having the strength and being able to use it were two different things. Even seeing him fight like an animal was very surprising for him.

'How the hell did he learn to do that?' Qin Shan wondered. 'How is an Alchemist able to fight this well? That too in just 6 years?'

One could only wonder what Qin Shan's face would be if he knew 3 of those 6 years were non-existent.

Alex flipped and backed away from Yao Bai and got on his feet. He no longer continued to fight like a beast and instead, a warm, yellow aura flickered around his palm.

With a slam, Alex sent the Palm of the Sun directly at Yao Bai.

Chapter 707: Qin Shan's Unending Shock

A yellow palm strike flew towards Yao Bai which he stopped with his own palm strike that shone with golden light.

When the two palm strikes destroyed each other, with his strike barely stronger than Alex's, he started to understand why he was made to take the oath.

The fighting style was already unorthodox, to add on such a massive strength that didn't match his cultivation base— if information about him got out, any and every sect and faction would try their best to get him.

Yao Bai frowned as he thought of this. 'How is a kid so strong? How do I beat him?' he wondered.

He was sure he could beat him, given that he was a bit stronger than Alex, but his weapon was turning out to be of no use against him as the shield stopped everything.

'Best choice for me is to draw out this battle, or take advantage of when he slips,' Yao Bai thought.

Alex sent out an Iron Fist Punch as a golden fist flew through the air towards his opponent.

Yao Bai once again sent back a metal palm that stopped his attack and even pushed back a little.

'So my strength is only around True King 1st realm, huh?' Alex thought to himself.

Yao Bai threw the tied dagger towards Alex, who dodged slightly and caught onto it to pull himself closer.

When he got close, Yao Bai suddenly got uncomfortable and his eyes changed.

It wasn't just him, however. Even Qin Shan's eyes changed a little when he noticed the aura in the air move slightly.

'What's that?' he wondered. He could see it, but did not understand it. After all, Qin Shan had yet to find a Dao of his own, so he didn't know what it looked like.

"Argh!" Yao Bai shouted and let go of his rope as it was burning hot at the moment. At the same time, Alex got close to him and tongue of fire appeared between the two.

'Explode!'

BOOM!~

The explosion rung the area in between them. Alex hadn't put much energy into the explosion and wanted to only use a weaker version as this was a friendly battle.

However, he was still surprised how strong it had become.

'Explosion is fire suddenly heating up to create destruction. Did my Dao of Heat help in the heating process to make it stronger?' Alex thought.

The explosion was certainly faster than it should have been normally and just a bit stronger. But that tiny bit would go a long way in the future.

Alex stopped using his Dao after that fight as it was too strong to use without doing some tests first. So, he went back to fighting normally.

The two of them fought for a while, and slowly but surely, Yao Bai was getting the upperhand. Each conflict between them ended in his victory.

However, he was still unable to win against Alex even after the fight was drawn out.

Yao Bai huffed a little and his face grew worried. 'How is he still so full of energy?' he thought.

After fighting each other for 10 more minutes, both in close combat and ranged attacks, neither of them were on the verge of winning.

Alex was now getting more and more used to his fake hand. He was starting to understand the strength and weaknesses for his arm.

Physically, his fake arm was stronger than his real arm. That was something he couldn't deny at all as his fake arm was a Saint Earth artifact.

However, when it came to using techniques, his fake arm was unable to match his real arm.

Perhaps it was because his fake arm was modeled after a normal human, the channels through which his Qi moved wasn't wide enough to best fast and overwhelming like his real hand.

Alex looked at the tired Yao Bai and asked, "Are you okay? We can take a break if you want to."

Yao Bai felt his heart prick a bit when he heard that. "No, I can keep going," he said as he prepared his whip to fight again.

"Very well, then let us fight seriously," Alex said as he brought out a sword.

"What?" Yao Bai looked surprised. "You're a swordsman?"

"Ah, yes," Alex said. "I was testing out my new arm so I didn't use it, but now I will."

The sword he took out was the poison sword. Since he was intending to stay away from his opponent, he wouldn't have to worry about poisoning him.

Alex put the sword on his fake hand to test it too. To start with, he sent out a wind slash towards his opponent.

The mental whip moved and the dagger at the end of it struck the wind slash, destroying it in mid air.

Alex moved around his fake arm as it felt a little stiff when he used his sword. No, it wasn't the arm that was the problem. It was the fact that he hadn't used his left hand to fight in a long time.

Using it randomly to attack someone, versus using it in a sophisticated manner to send out an accurate strike, it was obvious which one would show him his shortcoming.

The sword moved once again, sending out a water strike this time. Then a fire strike, then an earth strike.

Yao Bai easily stopped all of those attacks as the techniques Alex used were common grade ones that he simply learned to be able to use specific Qi.

'Oh, the last two felt a little stronger than others,' he thought to himself.

Right now, his Fire and Earth Spiritual roots were much better than the other non-evolved spiritual roots of his.

Of course, the strongest one amongst the common elements was still his metal one.

So, when Alex sent out his Penta Sword Strike, Yao Bai had to fight harder to stop it.

Qin Shan looked from the side, his shock never leaving his face. 'Does he actually have all 5 spiritual roots? How is he able to throw out such strong attacks if he had Lesser Spiritual roots?'

Qin Shan simply couldn't understand what was happening.

As the fight between the two raged on. As time went by, Alex slowly added Sword Intent into his attack, and fortunately for him it worked even with his fake arm.

Yao Bai had it harder and harder as the attacks got stronger than ever. 'How?' he wondered.

He wanted to end it, but the battle kept on going. In the end, it was him that was starting to slowly run out of Qi.

Once Alex became aware that Yao Bai was starting to struggle, he decided to end it.

"Careful," he said and suddenly his sword which barely had a white outline suddenly came to life with the whiteness covering it completely.

White sparks flew out of his sword catching both Yao Bai and Qin Shan off guard.

"Sword Qi!" Qin Shan shouted, confirming Yao Bai's deepest fear.

Alex viewed his own sword Qi. Only when he focused did the spark that flew out of the sword take the shape of an actual sword. Otherwise, they were just white sparks.

That made him a little happy. That meant he still had more to learn. He still had room to grow.

Without using any techniques or whatsoever, Alex simply sent out the Sword Qi.

Yao Bai quickly attacked with his own Dagger whip, but it couldn't stop Alex's attack at all.

In the end, Qin Shan had to step in and block the attack.

A water barrier appeared around him and Yao Bai, stopping Alex's attack. The attack landed with a bang, but could do nothing else against the powers of a Saint realm individual.

Qin Shan was about to stop his barrier when he noticed that the attack in front of him hadn't disappeared at all.

Instead, the cluster of sword Qi kept on attacking one after another, attempting to go past the barrier.

They got weaker the longer they clashed, but the fact that they could even do that in the first place was enough to shock Qin Shan once again.

When the bright, white light finally stopped, Qin Shan let go of the barrier and looked at Alex, who did not even break a sweat.

"Junior Yu, how are you so strong?" Qin Shan asked, completely disregarding the existence of a disciple behind him.

"I trained," Alex said, not explaining any more.

"I see," Qin Shan said, not asking for more information. He finally turned around to look at Yao Bai and asked, "Are you okay?"

"Huh? Oh yes... thank you for protecting me, sect master," he said.

"Good work, disciple Yao. You can leave if you want now, but remember your oath. Nothing that happened today is to escape this room," Qin Shan said.

"Yes, sect master," Yao Bai said. He turned to Alex and bowed a little. "Thank you for the opportunity to learn, elder Yu," he said and left.

"I can finally understand why you would want to keep this a secret," Qin Shan said. "You can easily win against anyone in the early True King realm if you were to use your sword."

"I could win even without it if I were to use my other skills," Alex said as he suddenly lost all aura and went invisible.

Qin Shan could barely sense him and even had to use his spiritual sense to find him.

"You just keep on surprising me, young man," Qin Shan said with a sigh. "Alright, I will help you find other disciples to fight against. If those don't work. I will get you elders to fight against. Of course, they will all be swearing an Oath, just like young Yao did."

And that began Alex's year long training as he made his way through his cultivation.

Chapter 708: Resonance

Time passed quickly when one did the same thing over and over for a long time.

Alex's days soon turned into a routine. 4 times a week, every other day, he trained with someone that was around Mid-True King realm in cultivation base.

He had come to find out that his Sword Qi was currently only that strong. Over the course of the 17 or so months, he improved it, but it only went 2 realms higher at most.

On the other hand, Alex himself broke through about 5 more times in the many days, reaching a cultivation base of True Lord 8th realm.

When he trained, he always gifted someone a pill he made, no matter what type it was. That made the people fighting with him happy to be a training partner.

Alex's pills were now consistently in the upper 50s when it came to harmony, and in the upper 70s, or lower 80s when the recipe was something he had come up with himself.

Or at least, that was the case whenever he cultivated with a Yin treasure. If there was no Yin treasure, the yang in his body would get so bad that even reaching lower 70s felt like a chore to him for his own recipe.

Alex desperately went around the city to find Yin treasure, but rarely did anyone have it.

In the past 15 months, he had managed to come across only 20 or so Yin treasures that had helped him calm his Yang build-up.

'I need something with so much Yin that it fully stabilizes my yang,' Alex thought. 'These little Yin treasures aren't helping at all.'

Aside from training, Alex spent 3 days a week going to the 3 different guilds in his city and completing his responsibilities there. After all, he was a True Heaven rank professional there.

Every other free time he had, he spent it all on fixing the recipes he had yet to.

Alex had already learned about the different ingredients that he needed for the pill to fix his arm. He even cut off the whiskers of his own seeking mouse to practice.

He did that partly for himself, and partly to check what the 'Undying' part of the mouse truly was.

The experiment was simple. He cut off Whisker's whiskers and waited. When nothing happened, Alex sent him back to his beast space, where he realized Whiskers grew back his whiskers in just under a week.

So, Alex had relentlessly practiced on the whiskers as well.

Now, all that was left was the ingredient that was the equivalent of Blood Spirit Ginseng. However, even in the many months that went by, there never was a Blood Spirit ginseng in the market.

Other than him, Pearl had also increased in his cultivation base. He had somehow managed to reach True King 2nd realm, which was sadly not as fast as Alex.

Soon, the two of them would catch up to each other, and Alex would once again have a better cultivation base than him.

Today, Alex was all alone in his room. He was attempting to break through to the 9th True Lord realm as he hadn't done so in the last 3 months.

As such, he had left Pearl in his mother's house.

As Alex cultivated the Five Path Divine Yang technique, a wave of Yang Qi escaped from his naval area and rushed up to his entire body.

Alex quickly circulated the Qi and in just a few more circulations, he broke through to the next realm.

If anyone found out that it only took him less than 2 minutes in between the start and the breakthrough, they would likely cry tears of blood as they remembered the hour of cultivation they had to do over the entire night as they tried to breakthrough.

Once Alex was done, he started cultivating once again to stabilize his foundations over the course of the night.

* * * * *

2 months later, Alex let his mother know that he was intending to leave for the Eastern mountains again.

"What? Why would you want to go there? Did someone employ you to make a pill again?" Helen asked.

"No," Alex said. "I'm going there mostly for Pearl."

"Me?" Pearl gave a confused look, which Helen gave him as well.

"Yes," Alex said. "Pearl hasn't been cultivating well, and part of that I assume is because he hasn't been training at all like me."

The real reason Alex assumed was that he had somehow stifled Pearl's cultivation base by not letting him go through the ritual back in the beast realm, but he didn't want to admit that.

He also didn't want to make Pearl go through that as that would likely result in his death.

'I would rather have Pearl slowly cultivate than let him take a risky bet,' Alex thought to himself.

"I see," Helen said. "Well, if you can't help it then I guess you should take him. But you have to be extra careful as you won't have anyone to protect you two."

"Also, take this communication talisman and constantly sent me mess— eh? I don't have any?" Helen checked through her bag and was unable to find any at the moment.

"It's fine, mother. I promise to stay out of trouble," Alex said.

"No, sit," Helen said. "I won't let you go without a communication talisman." She continued searching for them but didn't find any.

In the end, she gave up. "Fine, I'll just make one," she said and brought out two empty talisman papers and a vial of ink.

Alex sat down and watched his mother prepare to draw a talisman.

"Do you know how to create a communication talisman?" she asked him.

"Uh... yes?" he said. "I know the design."

"No, design alone won't help you," she said as she dipped her saint rank brush in the ink and drew the rune for 'Communication'.

She followed it by drawing the rune for 'Far', 'Long', 'Text', 'Memory', 'Durable', and various other little runes throughout the left half of the talisman.

Then, she drew the last rune for 'Resonance'. After that, she started drawing Rune Bridge throughout the many runes to connect them.

Once she was done, she drew a straight line through the middle to separate the left half from the right.

Then she drew the mirror opposite on the right half of the talisman as well, creating symmetry in between.

Then, she started drawing the same design on the other talisman paper as well.

Alex watched in genuine awe at how great his mother was at making talismans. He too was good, but he never gave it as much thought as his mother did.

He slowly reached one of the talismans to take it for himself, when suddenly his mother's hand snaked out to slap his own.

Alex's reflexes kicked in and he managed to dodge her, but he still gave her a weird look.

"What's wrong? Didn't you make this for me to take?" he asked.

"What's wrong? Are you really asking that? Did you never learn how to create a communication talisman?" she asked.

"Uh... as I said, I learned the design, is that not enough?" he asked.

"Did you not read that you need to create a resonance between them?" she asked.

"Resonance? I did," he said. "Didn't you already create it though? Look, there's the rune."

"No, not in rune. Resonance for real," Helen said. "Sigh, those poor staff members must have thought you were lazy when you handed them talismans that never resonated."

"Hmm, now that you say it, I did get a lot of weird looks from time to time," Alex said.

"Alright, look," She said and showed it to him. "Whenever you have two or more talismans that you need to communicate in between each other, or work with each other, you need to make sure the talismans know which ones to work with."

"For that, we need to create a resonance between them. The first part of resonance is creating the rune for it. That is what you most likely do and nothing more," Helen said.

"The next step, however, is the most important."

Helen took the two talismans and held the rune for resonance in between her thumb and her index finger.

"You need to create a link between the two runes," she said. "Then, you need to pour in your Qi into the rune and activate it."

As she said that, Alex saw the rune 'Resonance' light up. Suddenly, he heard a low buzzing sound as the talisman paper started vibrating.

"Then, you slowly and steadily continue putting in Qi," Helen said. "At some point, if your stream of Qi on both sides is the same, the two talismans will start resonating with each other."

"Meaning, that the two of them will start moving at the same frequency. At that point, all you have to do is simply let them be and watch."

Helen put down the talismans and let the two of them vibrate for a bit. Slowly, the two talismans started moving closer and closer.

In the end, like two magnets getting really close, the two talismans jumped and snapped into each other, and stayed stuck.

"And that is how you create resonance," Helen said as she took one of the talismans and peeled off the second one to Alex.

"Now, if I send a message in here," she said as she put her spiritual sense into the talisman.

Alex's talisman vibrated and he got a message.

-You will get my message there.-

"Amazing!" Alex said with wide eyes.

"Isn't it? Now, take that talisman and make sure to keep sending me messages," she said.

Chapter 709: Pearl's Training

A week passed since Alex and Pearl came out to train. Alex didn't fight most of the time, leaving Pearl to pick up the slack since he was the one they were here for.

It had been about 23 months since Alex and Pearl left the Demon Realm. When they had entered it nearly 5 years ago, Alex had been at True Master's 9th realm, and Pearl had been in True Lord 5th realm.

Now, Alex was in True Lord 9th realm, and Pearl was in True King 2nd realm. Given their comparison, Pearl really was slow.

He was still just as fast as most of those that were considered talented in the empire. Given his lack of resources, he was perhaps even faster.

However, given the fact that he used to keep up with Alex in cultivation back when they were in the common realms, Alex felt a little bad when he saw Pearl's cultivation slow down.

"We will have to train a lot," Alex said softly as he watched Pearl fight someone stronger than him.

They were currently at the foot of a giant mountain and were surrounded by trees all around. Pearl was in his big form which made him about as big as a normal tiger would.

Pearl's opponent was a blue frog in True King 4th realm. From what Alex could see, the frog used Water and Wood elements, both of which were harmful to the Metal element that Pearl used.

So, he was having a harder time than usual. Not to mention, the blue frog had poison secreted all over its body, so Pearl had to be careful when it attacked it.

His golden claw seemed to be fine for the most part, but if the splashes of poison ever got on Pearl, there would be trouble.

So, Alex held in his hands 2 different kinds of pills, both of which worked to cure the poison of the frog.

Pearl suddenly split into two, one of which was a fake Pearl, but both looked equally real. Even Alex couldn't separate which one was real using his spiritual sense.

A long, pink tongue shot out of the blue frog and hit the Pearl on the left side, before slinking back into its mouth.

The Pearl that was hit suddenly vanished into a bunch of golden light and the Pearl on the right arrived next to it with a glowing golden claw.

The claw slashed onto the blue frog's skin and tore out blood from it. Pearl immediately jumped back and slashed in front of him again.

A golden set of lines emerged from where Pearl slashed and wrapped around the frog as if it was tied up by a rope.

The frog couldn't move at all under the force of Pearl's ropes for a while, and in that time, Pearl gave another strong claw attack directly to its head.

However, even after that, the frog didn't die. Instead Pearl was forced to back away as the frog's tongue flew toward him. At the same time, the frog managed to break through the golden binding and continued fighting.

Alex watched from far away as Pearl used every ability in his arsenal. White Tiger's Golden Claw, White Tiger's Golden body, White Tiger's Dominating Body, White Tiger's steps, White Tiger's roar, and the binding technique that Alex didn't know the name of.

The frog's skill set wasn't even as big as Pearl's since it mostly relied on its poison. So, Pearl was able to easily beat the frog after a couple of minutes.

"Stop!" Alex said when Pearl was about to bite into the frog's body to retrieve the frog's monster core.

"Why?" Pearl turned around to ask.

"I told you," Alex said as he walked up to the frog. "It's got poison all over its body."

Alex tore into the frog's body with his bare hand and ripped it apart to bring out the core with his Qi. After cleaning it up for a bit, he gave it to Pearl.

"Eat," he said.

Pearl jumped at the monster's core, his body already reducing in size, and ate it.

Alex waited for a few minutes for Pearl to digest it, and once it did, it turned around toward Alex.

"I think I can break through now," he said.

"Really?" Alex asked. He had been waiting for Pearl to say that. Alex could already feel himself getting close to breaking through as well.

He was just a few weeks out if his assumption was correct.

"Alright, let's go cultivate some more."

* * * * *

By 2 weeks later, Pearl had already broken through to the True King 3rd realm, which meant Alex's body was equally strong as well.

They were currently fighting a pack of wolves all of which were equally as strong and in the True King realm.

Alex wasn't going for the kill on any of them, just testing out his fighting. He could feel himself getting closer and closer to the time when his breakthrough would happen.

'Just a little more,' he thought as he fought. He could massacre the entire pack of wolves if he used his sword, so Alex kept it to his hands. Even then, the pack of wolves was quite weak against him.

With True King 3rd realm physical attack and True King 6th realm Elemental attacks, Alex's overall damage reached True King 7th realm.

If he added his Sword Qi, that would put his attacks a realm higher than it already was.

It was truly surprising how strong he had come to be in no time at all.

'I'm about as strong Fu Tao was before he entered the Demon realm right?' Alex thought for a moment.

Fu Tao had been True King 8th realm from what he could remember. He was most likely a True Emperor now, halfway towards becoming a Saint realm.

'I should reach what he was back then in just a few days,' he thought to himself.

Alex continued fighting the wolves with his arms and his invisible sword that he could only carry on his right hand for some reason.

When he didn't have a left arm, he believed that it was a mental block that stopped him from being able to use it with an imaginary left hand.

However, now that he had a left arm, he still couldn't use it at all. 'Do I need a real arm to fake grab it?' he wondered.

A gray-furred wolf suddenly jumped at him from behind. Alex ducked and sent out a punch with his left hand directly onto the wolf's stomach.

The wolf fell to the ground and whimpered as it was hurt. It tried to stand up and run away, but the pain was too much for it.

Another wolf came to its aid and stood in front of it, guarding it against Alex.

Alex smiled at their relationship. He wasn't here to kill them, so he let it be and waited for others to attack him.

Pearl was fighting to the side, struggling a little, but still getting by easily.

He had to be both offensive and defensive at the same time and fighting a single monster every time hadn't helped him with that.

Now, the group of wolves would give him valuable training that Alex never could

As Alex prepared to defend against another wolf that was about to attack him, the wolf stopped.

Its eyes suddenly went wide with terror and it looked to its right. Alex was surprised by this event so he quickly sent his spiritual sense to his left, where the wolf was staring towards.

He saw nothing. He even stretched it as far as he could, but he still found nothing in that direction.

'What is it—' just as he was thinking that he noticed that all the wolves in the pack had stopped fighting and were staring in the same direction.

That only made Alex scared. After all, if there was anything that could make these wolves fear this much, it would certainly be enough to kill him as well.

The wolves suddenly started running away, going away from the area in a matter of seconds. Not only them, but even the other beast in the vicinity also ran away.

Even birds flew through the air, moving in the opposite directions from where the wolf stared towards.

"Brother!" Pearl's terrified voice came from behind him.

Alex turned around and found the scared Pearl running towards him.

"Pearl, what's wrong?" he asked.

"I don't... I don't want to go back," Pearl said.

"What?" Alex asked.

Before he could say anything else, Pearl turned into a bunch of white light and disappeared into his beast space.

Then, now together with Pearl, Alex felt it too. The ever-so-familiar feeling, that usually came from the south, now came from the north.

Alex turned his horrified face towards the north as he finally realized why the beasts were so scared.

After 7 long years, the Beast realm had once again sent out its beacon to find their candidates with the White Tiger's blood.

Which meant... the saint realm beasts were going to come find Pearl anytime now.

Alex took a deep breath to calm himself down.

"No, I'm too far away. They won't be able to make it here in time before—"

Alex was going to delude himself into thinking he was safe. However, when he remembered how fast Shen Jing was as a Saint realm expert, he couldn't help but imagine the speed lady Ren could reach as an Immortal expert.

If she had survived and recovered from the Heavenly Judgment, then both him and Pearl were going to be in a lot of trouble.

Chapter 710: Take It Back

Alex stayed stunned for a moment. He looked around, trying to think of what to do. The panic he was feeling didn't help much in thinking either.

'Should I run? Should I hide? Or should I stay?' Alex thought.

He was perhaps in the best location he could be in if he didn't want people to get hurt in the process.

It wasn't just the saint beasts that were going to be a problem, but the other beasts that would come attack too.

Especially in the direction where he was in.

'I can't go back to mother. I will only implicate her in all of this,' Alex thought.

Finally, he decided to stay. Neither running, nor hiding would ever get him out of trouble if a Saint beast was dead set on finding you.

He could've escaped if the beast didn't know his face, but they clearly knew who to look for this time around.

'No running,' he thought to himself and put on a resolute face to wait for whoever came to him.

Was it going to be the jaguar? Or the puma? Or was Lady Ren really going to come out herself and put herself in danger?

Alex stood on the empty meadow and waited.

5 minutes passed. Then 10. Then 30. Soon, an hour passed.

Then 2 hours passed, and then 3 hours.

Alex simply stood where he was and waited for the beacon to lead someone toward him. However, even as 4 hours came to pass, no one came.

Finally, the beacon ended and the feeling disappeared. Alex could feel the panic in the air disappear as the beasts went from being restless to tame in a matter of seconds.

Alex on the other hand was only confused. 'Why did they not come?' he thought to himself.

He waited an hour longer just in case, but no one came for him.

'Did they not realize that I've come to the Luminance Empire and went back to check the Crimson Empire?' Alex thought. 'No, they should get a strong feeling from this side.'

Another thought came to Alex all of a sudden that was more horrifying than he would care to admit.

'Is Pearl's potential as the White Tiger's descendant destroyed?' he thought. 'Did I destroy his chance at becoming strong already? Is that why they didn't bother coming here?'

Alex's breathing got harder and harder until he had to force himself to calm down.

'No, it's not your fault. Those beasts probably made a mistake,' Alex told himself.

With a thought, he let Pearl come out, who immediately looked around to see if he was safe.

"They're gone?" Pearl asked.

"They never came," Alex said. Then he gave Pearl a curious look. "Do you not want to go back at all?"

Pearl shook his head.

"Why? Your grandmother is there, you know?" Alex said.

"But they will send you away," Pearl said. "I don't want to be away from you, brother."

Alex smiled, his troubling feelings disappearing like snow on a hot day. He got down to his knees and rubbed Pearl's tiny head.

"Come, let's go back. Mother is waiting for us," he said and the two of them went back to DawnSpring city.

* * * * *

Alex didn't tell his mom anything about what had happened out there. He didn't want her to worry about him more than she was already.

Besides, this was a consequence of his choice, so it was his burden to bear.

Alex went to the guild to find news of the amount of destruction the beasts had caused this time. Along the way, he couldn't help but hope his master, senior sister, and others were fine amidst all of this.

Even though seven years had already passed since the last beast horde attack, he wished they were prepared for it.

Once Alex reached the Formation guild, he asked for information about the beast horde attack to the north.

However, the receptionist told him no such thing took place at all.

"Are you sure?" Alex asked. "No such thing took place?"

"No, sir," the man said.

Alex looked confused. 'Did the beasts not attack? But they clearly were restless in the mountains.'

"Is there no big piece of news out there then?" Alex asked.

"Well, the only big news right now is the competition taking place next week," the receptionist said. "Ah, right. Are you going to take part in the competition, sir? I will have to register you if you are."

"Competition?" Alex gave a confused look for a moment before remembering about the Guild competitions that took place every 10 years.

2 years ago was the Talisman Competition where he found his mother. Now, it was the turn for the Formation competition.

Alex thought for a moment and shook his head. "No," he said. "I don't want to join it."

There was just too much trouble that he would face with joining the competition right now.

It would put him in the spotlight which he didn't want to do. It wasn't the competition itself that bothered him, but rather the information that would be out when he did take part in it.

A 23-year-old True King 1st realm was enough to make the whole world go mad.

It would also make people look into him, causing them to find out that he was a True Heaven Talisman expert and a True Heaven Alchemist.

Then they would go into his background and find out about his mother, and maybe even find out through Fu Tao and the others that he wasn't from this Empire, to begin with.

All of it would be way too troubling for a competition that wasn't even his primary profession.

The receptionist made no remark when he said no. Instead, he said, "Alright, I won't register your name, sir. Since you are a True Heaven formation master, you have the right to go watch the competition."

"If you require, we can pay for your travels, or you can go on your own," the receptionist said.

"Thank you," Alex said and left the guild.

The thoughts of the competition soon left his mind and only the news about the beasts not attacking took over it.

'Wait, so it is all fine now?' he thought. 'Why did they not attack?'

Questions he knew wouldn't get answered kept popping up in his head. So, he decided to stop thinking about it. It wasn't like thinking about something that was going to change the outcome.

Alex went to the Alchemy guild and checked if his one ingredient was on the market yet.

It was not. So, he took some missions and spent the rest of the day finishing those up.

By the end, Alex realized that he needed to go look for another Yin treasure again.

'It is getting harder and harder to find them here. Maybe I should go to the capital,' he thought to himself.

Late at night, he return back to his mother, and an hour later was back in his house.

Now, it was time for him to break through.

Alex sat on the floor of his house and started to slowly circulate. He felt that he wasn't as prepared as he would have hoped, so he needed to take a little longer when he broke through.

As he did, the Five Yang Divine Path circulated Yang Qi throughout his system. The slight pain, or rather discomfort he felt when he used the Heaven grade technique of his technique had slowly started fading over time.

Now, it was perfect for him. This couldn't help but make him wonder if soon he would be able to change the cultivation technique and go a grade higher once more.

For now, he stuck to what he had.

As Alex cultivated and prepared for the breakthrough, something weird happened. He thought he heard someone speaking.

Alex stopped and looked around. "Pearl?" he shouted as he sent his spiritual sense. No one was in the room.

He looked around once more before going back to his cultivation. As he prepared to break through once again he started hearing sounds that sounded like voices.

Alex stopped to look around once more and even stood up to go check. No one was there at all again.

Finally, after making sure no one was there at all, he started cultivating again.

As the time for him to breakthrough got closer and closer, the voices returned. This time, he didn't bother stopping to check who it was and decided to do so after he broke through.

"It's your fault," A voice spoke directly into his mind.

Alex finally stopped once more and shouted, "Who?"

He immediately stood up to look around, yet once again, no one was there. After 5 minutes of being on edge, he started cultivating once more.

"You are useless," the voice returned.

Alex almost stopped cultivating, but he continued it.

"You are the reason Pearl is so weak right now," the voice said. "Had you left Pearl alone, he would have evolved by now and would have become the ruler of the continent. You are the reason he is so weak."

Alex shook his head, trying to get rid of the thoughts. However, they just kept on coming to him.

"You think you will find your father in the southern continent? Lies. You know surely that he's already dead, and there is nothing you can do about it."

"You think you are strong, but that is not your power. Your techniques, your cultivation, your alchemy. You got it all because of me," the voice said.

"And now, I'm here to take it all back and send you to the darkness where you belong."