

## Alchemy 741

### Chapter 741: End of the First Day

Alex was taken to another location on the stage after the first round ended and was given a pill vial each.

"Now begins the second round of today's competition," the second host spoke to them.

'What? There's another one?' Alex thought. Since the room he was in previously was soundproof, he couldn't hear to know that there was another competition there. Not to mention, this one seemed more secretive than the other one.

Alex was handed a talisman paper as well and the host started explaining the rules of this competition.

"There are 3 of the same pills in there, the name of which has not been set yet."

"The pill uses exactly 10 different ingredients, and your task is to name the ingredients. You have exactly 1 hour to name it all and you may use whatever method you require to find out the name of the ingredient."

"You will not be given any other hints aside from the information that the pill is not harmful to eat."

"Points will be based off of the number of ingredients you get correct, and points will be deducted per ingredients you get wrong."

"Your 1 hour starts now."

The moment the host said that every single one of the 20 participants immediately sat down on the ground and started looking at the pills.

Alex sat down too and brought out the pill. It was a greenish pill with specks of black scattered throughout the surface.

Alex took one of the 3 pills out and looked at it. He tried to think of any pill he had made that looked the same as this one, but given how this was a new pill, there was likely no way for him to figure out the ingredients in this way.

He could tell that the pill had about 35% harmony, but other than that, he was getting no information at all.

"Smell then," he said to himself and started taking in the smell of the pill.

He got a distinct acidic, citrusy smell amongst the many other smells and wondered what it could be.

He made a mental list of all the ingredients that he could think of that made this smell when performing alchemy.

Alex then went on through the rest of the smell and one after another, he made 10 different lists of what it could be.

Once he had the list, he started going through each ingredient and seeing if they would ever cause pigmentation on the pill to cause it to become green.

He didn't toss away those that didn't, but he did pay extra attention to those that did.

Once it was all done, Alex wondered what else he could do. He put the pill between his fingers and crushed it.

He checked the powder with his eyes, and once he realized that wasn't helping, he started using his spiritual sense.

He went through the powder and found the 10 different shapes. Then, he started comparing it with the information he had in his mind through the many months of refining pill recipes.

This was a really hard task and Alex barely stumbled on 2 different ingredients that he was sure belonged to the pill.

Still, he waited before writing it down.

He took the powder of the pill and put it in his mouth. The competition holders had mentioned that there was no problem with eating the pill, so tasting it would cause no problem either.

Not that Alex had to worry about it either way.

Alex tried to isolate the multitudes of tastes he was getting. It was hard, but he managed to separate them to a certain level and figured out the 3rd ingredient.

Unfortunately, most of the flavors weren't unique enough to pinpoint them to the ingredients on the list.

"Guess there's only one thing left to do then," Alex thought and took out one of the remaining two pill. Then, without any hesitation, he popped the pill into his mouth and swallowed it.

Alex waited around for a second for the pill to take effect and realized that he could feel his cultivation base elevate a little.

'It improves your cultivation base huh?' Alex thought. That gave him some more ideas.

He felt the energy from the pill for a few moments and started going through his list one more time.

He waited for a few moments for the pill's effects to disappear and ate it one more time to see what he could find out.

There wasn't much difference between the second and the third pill, so there wasn't much Alex could figure out.

'Well, I guess I'm only doing this much then,' he thought as he looked through the 6 ingredients he had figured out.

The rest of the ingredients were hard to figure out and he didn't want to risk points for something he wasn't even sure about.

So, Alex stuck with the answer and didn't write in anymore.

'This would've been so much easier had they given us a pill that we actually knew about,' He thought.

He handed the answer over to the staff around the 50 minutes mark and waited for the hour to end.

Once the hour ended, the results were published.

Alex got 12 points with his 6 ingredients, while someone actually managed to get 7 ingredients.

Most, however, struggled with around 3 or 4 ingredients.

'I need to experiment more with the ingredients,' Alex thought.

Once the competition was over, Alex was let go to the audience. He quickly went and found his mother sitting alongside many of the people from DawnSpring's Alchemy guild.

Alex recognized a lot of them, so he sat together with them.

"That was amazing, brother Yu," they said.

"Yeah, it was fine," Alex replied.

"No, no, that was amazing. You are the first person to get 32 points in the first day's competition," they said.

"Oh, what's the highest point?" Alex asked.

"You can see up there," they said as they showed a large, hovering ranking screen where his name was on the top with 32 points.

The 2nd closest one was at 26 points, which was really surprising for him. He looked at the name and realized he didn't know the person.

"Have Zhou Ren and Xue Meirong not come out yet?" he asked.

"I don't think I've seen those names before here, so likely not," his mother said.

"Oh," Alex said. "Then I haven't yet won anything."

Alex turned around to the group that was currently transitioning from the first round to the second one and noticed Zhanrou.

"How much did Zhanrou get?" he asked his mother.

"I think she got 7 names right," his mother said.

"7 huh? So 14 points. She will need to get 6 ingredients correct in the next one to tie for 2nd place," Alex said.

The host started introducing the 5th group and that was when Zhou Ren came out.

Alex sat and watched Zhou Ren's match which ended with him taking the most points with 8 different ingredients named.

Surprisingly, there were still 5 ingredients on the table remaining by the time all 20 of the contestants had used up their 10 turns.

That meant that either the contestants had gotten the ingredients wrong or didn't choose to answer.

'Each missing ingredient name is more points for me,' Alex thought and watched.

Zhanrou seemed to have guessed only 5 of the ingredients and got 10 points, bringing her total to 24. It wasn't bad on its own, but it struggled against Alex and the 2nd place.

Nothing worth mentioning happened for the 6th group, while Zhou Ren's fifth group was done with the pill as well.

He surprisingly found 7 ingredients in the pill and got a comfortable 30 points to get to the 2nd place right behind Alex.

In the 7th group was Xue Meirong who managed to name 9 of the ingredients, but on the 10th one, she got overconfident and named it wrong. In the end, she only got 16 points from there.

In the second round, she named exactly 7 ingredients, once again showing her capabilities as an alchemist. Alex couldn't help but be surprised at how talented they were.

'Had she not answered the final ingredient, she would've been equal with me. Not just that, had she named it correctly, she would've come in the first place,' Alex thought.

The rest of the group had nothing noticeable and as such, all the 200 different participants were done for the day.

Zhou Ren and Xue Meirong tied for 2nd place while Alex got 1st place in the first day's competitions.

## Chapter 742: Second Day of the Competition

Alex searched around for information on the guild competitions and found some records of older competitions.

According to them, he didn't have to worry about making pills for the 2nd day's competitions as well. It was only on the 3rd day that the competition became about making pills.

According to the records, the 2nd day's competition was most likely going to be about pills, just not making them.

Alex read up some more on the rest of the records in an open library, but no one was looking at him. After all, he had completely changed his face to come out today.

Ever since people realized that the number 1 participant, the 25 year old prodigy, Yu Ming was staying in the one particular hotel, they had been camping it day and night to meet him.

Not only that, there were many people who actually came to meet him too. What surprised Alex the most was that the guild wasn't providing any sort of security as people were openly scanning his room with their spiritual sense.

Fortunately, the room had spiritual sense blocking formation, so Alex was somewhat safe. Still, walking outside wasn't possible, so he had to teleport away from his room to his mother's room and then leave that way.

Fortunately, no one could see past his disguise, so he was fine.

After the library, he went to the alchemy guild to search for Yin treasures, but there weren't any that would help him.

Disappointed, Alex returned back to the hotel and started preparing for tomorrow's competition.

The competition was held for 4 days, over the course of 7 days. So, there was 3 days of break, one in between each.

When the 3rd day arrived, the 2nd day of the competition commenced.

Alex's disguise wore off and he made his way to the competition ground along with his mother and the rest of the people.

Because this was the competition day, no one dared block his path. Not only because they respected him enough to not bother him, but also because the Lightsworns were flying around the city, maintaining peace.

Once Alex reached the cultivation ground, he separated and went towards the contestant hall once more.

"You are number 7," a girl told him as he walked in.

"I was number 3 the other day," Alex told her.

"It changes everyday," the girl replied.

"I see," Alex said. "Thank you for letting me know." He then made his way to Zhanrou who was excited to meet him.

"You left too early the other day. I didn't even get to congratulate you," she said.

"Save your breath, it's only the first day," Alex said. "Who knows what sorts of mistake I will make the following days."

"You are too pessimistic," Zhanrou said. "What group are you today?"

"7," Alex said. "What about you?"



"2," Zhanrou said. "I'm kinda glad I don't have to go against you today."

"Me too, I guess," Alex said. "I wonder if its on purpose because of how high our points was for the first day."

"Maybe? It would make sense to separate us for the sake of entertainment," Zhanrou said.

"Congratulations on being first for the first day," Zhan Rou said. "But its only one day. You can't just be good with ingredients. You need to be good with the other aspects of cultivation as well."

"You weren't bad yourself, brother Zhou," Alex said. "I'm afraid you will do way better now that you're so motivated. I might have to step up my game."

Zhou Ren showed and hid an angry face in seconds and instead smiled. "Yes. Its a shame we're not in the same group. It would be fun to compete from the start."

He walked away, leaving the two of them to talk to each other.

After a few minutes, the staff started moving around and soon the host started starting today's competition.

Not long after, the 1st group was called upon.

Silence ensued throughout the whole room as they were once again not made privy to the contents of today's matches.

Alex sat down nearby and waited for the matches to end. Unfortunately, they weren't allowed outside to see what was happening as that would give them an advantage, so Alex had to wait for over 6 hours before it was his turn.

By the time his group was called, the only person that was still remaining that he recognized was the middle aged man in the corner of the room.

This was the man who took the 2nd place on the first day.

Alex stood up and left for the checking area before he was let outside.

Once outside, Alex saw the crowd cheer up when they saw him. Suddenly, a pressure he hadn't felt yet started forming deep inside of him.

'Am I feeling nervous?' he thought. He couldn't see why that wasn't the case. In front of so many people, having to do his best when he didn't even know what was happening, he was slightly scared.

Not to mention, his arm depended on it.

Once again, Alex and the rest were passed along empty talismans to write it, only he wondered what he was going to have to write.

Alex was then handed a storage pouch which he checked inside to see 10 different vials, all with numbers on them.

"Your job now is the check into those vials, recognize the pill, and write down the ingredients required for that pill in the order of the recipe."

"Each answer is worth 2 points. For every wrong answer, you will lose two points. For every right answer that is not in the correct order, you will lose 1 point."

"If you cannot recognize the pill, you may call the staff to help you. However, for each pill they will reveal to you, you will lose 1 point from your overall points."

"You are allowed to eat the pill if you wish. Begin!"

Alex took out the first vial and opened the stopper to see a pinkish pill.

He smelled it once and immediately recognized the pill. "Swift Fox's advancement pill," Alex thought. The moment he did, the entire recipe for the pill came into his mind.

Without hesitation, he started writing the entire list of ingredients in the order they would go in.

Once done, he opened the 2nd vial and recognized that pill too. So, he started writing down the ingredients for that pill as well.

Then the third, and the fourth. It was on the 5th pill that Alex had to slow down and figure out what the pill was.

He looked at the color and analyzed the smell. Using those two info, he went through his mind to see through all the pills he had made until now.

Since this was a test about knowing recipes, he was sure that there was no recipe that would be hard to acquire, but that still left hundreds of pills to sift through.

Finally, he found what he was looking for and wrote down the recipe.

He did the same for the sixth and the seventh pill as well. Then, he was stumped on the 8th pill.

The 8th pill was completely white with no impurities on a visual level. It had some mild smell but nothing you could smell from a normal distance.

Alex tried to go through his mind but there were just too many generic white pills that smelled like nothing, so it was hard to tell what the pill was.

In the end, he had to eat the pill to figure out what it was.

As soon as he ate the pill, Alex felt the Qi around him get pulled in even faster than normal.

'Ah!' he thought and remembered a pill he made not very long ago for a mission.

'That pill huh?' he thought and wrote down the ingredients.

The 9th pill was the same. A generic white pill with no smell. Without hesitation, Alex ate the pill and felt his face start to change.

'I see,' he thought and quickly wrote down the ingredients of the pill.

Finally, he ate the 10th pill and felt a little squirming on his left arm as if it was trying to heal it.

'Got it,' he thought and named the ingredients for that one as well.

Once all done, Alex handed over the talisman to the staff who checked it.

"All correct," the staff said. Just like that, Alex got another 20 points.

#### Chapter 743: Third Day of the Competition

Alex moved on to the second event of the day and soon realized it was a written exam with 20 questions, 1 point each.

They would also deduct 1 point for each question wrongly answered so it made it hard for everyone to simply guess.

Alex read the questions and surprisingly found most of them easy. The exam lasted about an hour, and Alex finished it in about 20 minutes.

He went over his answers a couple of times but nothing seemed wrong, so he gave his answers to the staff and had them evaluated.

Just as he hoped, he got the perfect 20 points.

'That went well,' he thought as he walked towards his mother's location. However, before he could get far, a staff member suddenly stopped him.

"How can I help you?" Alex asked him.

"Dear participants, as you may know, on the third day there is going to be a speed pill-making competition. We would like to know what pill you would like to make for that," the staff asked. "You can answer me right now or go to the guild before tomorrow noon and answer there."

"Oh, uh... I will make the... Purple Crane pill," Alex said.

"Thank you," the staff then went away, leaving Alex to go back to his mother and the rest.

"Good job," his mother said as he arrived. "You're still in the lead."

"Am I?" Alex turned around and saw the rankings.

He was in the first place with 72 points, and both Zhou Ren and Xue Meirong were trailing behind him at 70 points.

"It seems no one got an answer wrong today," Alex said. He looked through the ranking and as expected, most of them got the full 40 points.

He waited for a while and watched through the rest of the competition, but there was no one to do better than him so he had nothing to worry about.

"Just 2 more days of this and my son will get first place," Helen said.

Alex doubted he could keep this up for 2 more days. He was going to have to start making pills from the next competition onwards and that was going to be problematic.

After all, due to his condition, it had been nearly 2 months since he last made a pill or even dared to make one.

'I need to go practice,' he thought. He turned to his mother and asked for his items before leaving the competition ground.

He told her that she would only see him on the day of the competition itself.

Alex then went to the guild directly and got himself a room to start making pills. He brought the ingredients for the Purple Crane pill and prepared his cauldron.

Then, one after another, he put in the ingredients and began. The Purple Crane pill only had 6 ingredients, as opposed to most other pills that had at least 10 or higher normally.

As such, this was the perfect pill to choose for fast pill making. The only problem was that this was a very well-known pill and everyone else would go for it as well.

So, Alex had to use the advantages he had to become faster than everyone else.

As he moved the ingredients around, Alex realized that he was having trouble maintaining the fire's temperature despite his Dao.

If he let the fire be, its temperature would slowly creep up until it was so hot that his pill was getting ruined. Then, he would have to pull his attention away from the ingredients and fix the temperature before going back to the ingredients.

Alex trained for the whole night, but he barely saw any improvement. What little adapting he did became useless as the more Alchemy he did, the more he lost Qi, which in turn made him cultivate to gain Qi and that increased his yang once more.

Frustrated, Alex left the room multiple times to go find some yin treasures. However, each time he went to the staff, the answer was still no.

Alex trained for the entire next day as well as the night and finally left the guild on the day of the competition.

He met his mother outside the competition ground and gave her his things before going to the waiting hall.

He found Zhanrou and the rest waiting around, but he was too frustrated to make small talks.

Surprisingly, he was given group 1, which included no one from the rest of the top 10.

Then, the competition began and Alex walked out.

The cheers he heard from the audience rang full and far wide. He had come to the competition with a certain prestige and had kept it up throughout the first 2 days, even exceeding the expectations of many.

Had he done a little worse than the others, he might have been called a dark horse of the competition. But since he was doing so good, he was now considered one of the better ones in the tournament.

A lot of the people even expected him to win the whole thing with how it was going.

That just created a sense of pressure for him that he didn't need right now.

He waited for the host to start explaining about the speed competition, but contrary to his expectation, the competition that was being held currently was a different one.

"For the first round today, you will all be making a new pill you've never seen before," the host said.

Each one of them was passed along a talisman with a recipe and Alex understood where this was going.

"You will have exactly one hour to learn the recipe and make the pill," the host said. "You will be ranked from best to worst based on your pill's harmony."

"You may begin the moment you get your ingredients," the host said and immediately a group of staff members came up to them with storage bags.

Alex looked into the storage bag and was beyond surprised to see what he did.

There was only 1 set of ingredients.

'So I have to get it right on the first time for a new pill I've never seen before?' Alex worried when he saw the ingredients.

This wasn't a speed thing so he could take his time, but he still only had an hour to prepare the pill.

Alex sat down and closed his eyes to visualize what he was going to do. He thought of putting the ingredients in the correct time and order, collecting the ingredients, and finally preparing the pill.

In his mind, nothing could go wrong, but Alex knew there would come some problem.

'How am I going to make the pill in the end? Should I use the technique or just clump it all together. If I do use the technique, how am I supposed to figure out how to make the combination?' Alex thought.

Since this wasn't something he had made before, he couldn't visualize the powders before getting into the pill. Not to mention there were ingredients in there that he had never interacted with, so he didn't even know what shapes they would form when put through the recipe.



'I can only rely on my luck now,' Alex thought as he decided to not use the technique in the end.

He brought out his cauldron and started heating up the cauldron while he prepared himself.

Then, he started making the pill.

The moment the first ingredient went in, Alex started increasing the temperature to reach the required amount. Thanks to his Dao of Heat, that happened instantly, but as his focus shifted to the ingredient, the temperature slowly slipped out of control.

Alex immediately focused back on the temperature and lowered it while also moving the ingredient around.

Then he changed it once more and put in the second ingredient. The problem with the temperature kept popping up each time he put the ingredients, but he was always conscious of the temperature so he thought he could keep it in check.

A few problems appeared here and there, but mostly he thought he did a fine job with the ingredients.

Once it was all powdered, Alex pulled the energy into the powder and then formed a pill out of it without using any technique.

When the pill finally formed, he brought it out and looked at it, only to get a disappointed look on his face.

His pill barely reached 44% harmony.

Chapter 744: Struggle

44%.

'That's bad, but it is a new pill that no one has made before, so maybe I didn't do so bad,' Alex thought.

With 19 other True Heaven Alchemists here, that was a bit of hope, but that was all Alex had at the moment. He was sure he could've knocked it out of the park if he had a regular body, but he didn't, so he was stuck with the 44%.

Alex got his pill tested by the staff and waited for the rest of the people to finish making their pills. A few minutes later, most of them did.

42%. 31%. 45%.

All sorts of different numbers popped up in the tester as Alex counted only the points that numbered above him.

There were exactly 4 different people that got more points than him, making his 44% the 5th highest in his group of 20.

'16 points,' Alex thought. That was better than whatever his pessimistic self today was expecting to get.

After the first round was over, Group 1 was taken to their next round which was the speed pill making. Whoever made the pill the fastest won.

Everyone was handed their ingredients as soon as they entered and the host started explaining the competition.

As expected, the one that made the pill fastest and had it tested got the 20 points. Everyone after that got fewer and fewer points until the person in the last place got 1 point.

Alex didn't want to be that person.

'Worst case scenario, Zhou Ren and Xue Meirong get 20 points, putting them 2 points ahead of me. If I can get 20 points in this round, I can stay at a comfortable distance from them.'

'With only 2 points difference, I can easily beat them in the final competition which is all about making the highest grade pill,' Alex thought.

"You will need above 30% to have considered passed."

"Alright everyone, go to your seats," the host said and waited for everyone to sit in front of the furnace.

"Begin!"

Alex immediately brought out his cauldron and used the Dao of Heat to get the cauldron's temperature to the appropriate amount.

It should have been instant considering he had the Dao, but due to his body, he overshot a bit and had to bring the temperature down.

At the same time, he put in the first ingredient. He managed to do that before most of the other people's cauldron was even half heated.

Alex had an advantage in this regard and he was going to use it. He moved around the first ingredient when he realized the fire was going up way too fast.

Since this was a speed test, he was worried he would be slow if he spread his attention between the fire and the ingredients, but he didn't have a choice.

When the fire got hotter, he had to move away from his focus and deal with it.

Once the first ingredient was powdered, he prepared the second ingredient and readied the temperature by dropping it to the appropriate level.

However, due to him compensating for the fact that his Qi was heating up his fire, he ended up overreaching and made the fire colder than it needed to be.

So, to counteract that problem, he heated it up again. However, because he was scared of making the same mistake again, he did it in small increments until he was at the perfect temperature.

Only when the temperature was correct did the 2nd ingredient go into the cauldron. Alex moved around the ingredients like normal while constantly checking the fire to make sure he wasn't screwing it up.

When it came time for the 3rd ingredient, he slowly increased the fire and it took a few moments to reach the proper temperature.

Then he put the 3rd ingredient.

While he had a headstart, these common mistakes started dragging Alex more and more down. By the time he had the 5th ingredient ready, his headstart no longer made a difference as most of the others were starting to catch up.

'I need to be faster,' Alex thought and increased his pace to match up with the others, but it was hard, especially when he kept on making mistakes.

By the time he was done turning all ingredients to powder, everyone was basically on the same stage as he was in.

Alex hurriedly poured energy onto the pills and started forming the pill.

As he did that, from the corner of his eyes, he saw a few people stand up and move forward.

'Dammit! Faster,' Alex thought and pushed himself hard to finish forming the pill.

As soon as it was done, he pulled the pill out and rushed forward to put it into the tester.

He didn't even see how many other people were around him as he waited for his pill Harmony to go above 30%.

He shouldn't even have waited for that as it obviously would. Alex turned around the moment he reached above 30% and counted the number of people that had finished before him.

6.

6 people had finished before him and had earned the 15 through 20 points, leaving Alex with 14. Combining with the previous 16 points, Alex now had 30 points for the 3rd day of the competition.

Alex sighed and started walking away from the stage when staff stopped him again.

"What pill will you be making for the final day?" the man asked.

Alex thought for a moment and said, "Body Rebinding Pill." It was a healing pill that Alex was used to making and was one of the very first pills he ever refined the recipe for.

As such, he had the most practice with it and hoped it would be a lot easier to get his points with it.

Once the staff took the note, Alex walked back to the audience.

"Hey," he said to his mother with a sigh of dejection.

"Aw, don't be sad. You did well. You did very well," Helen said. "Come sit, I'm sure the rest of them will make a lot of mistakes too."

Alex sighed and sat down to watch the match. He looked at the stage and noticed only one person from the top 10, who was towards the bottom of the group.

He didn't really care for that person so he ignored him and looked at the 3rd group that was doing their new pill competition.

Xue Meirong was there and she was sitting around doing nothing. 'She must be reading her recipe,' Alex thought.

He looked up at the rankings and saw his name still in the first place with 102 points, but people were getting close.

And not a single one of the top 10 rankers aside from him was even done.

Alex went back to watching Xue Meirong make the pills. When ignoring the prideful side of her, one could see a really hardworking girl that was doing what she loved and had been doing it ever since she was very young.

There was nothing fantastic about her alchemy, no flourishing moves or crazy techniques. It was all simple Alchemy that anyone could do. However, even if it was simple, she worked hard to do the simple thing precisely and perfectly.

Once she was done with the pill, she had it tested and as expected, she did amazing by getting a solid 56%. That put her in a league above most of the other participants in her group.

Which also meant she got the 20 points and was now at 90 points total.

Even if she did her absolute worst and got 12 points in the next round, which she wouldn't, she would still catch up to Alex and have exactly the same points as him.

If Alex wasn't aware of how the scoring went for the final competition from all the records he read, he would've likely thought that his chances at victory over the whole tournament were over.

While Xue Meirong moved to the speed competition, Zhanrou came out to the new pill competition.

Xue Meirong scored 20 points as expected, finishing nearly a minute earlier than all of her contemporaries.

'110 points,' Alex thought with a grave face. 'I will have to get at least 8 points more than her in the final round to just catch up. If I want to win, I will have to get 9 points higher than her.'

'This is going to be hard.'

#### Chapter 745: Final Day

Zhanrou got 20 points in the first round and another 20 points in the 2nd round, bringing her total up to 108, 6 points higher than Alex.

More people came along as more rounds were held and they got high scores too. Soon, Alex was starting to reach the lower end of the top 10.

With 3 more rounds remaining, he was sure he would fall out of the top 10.

Zhou Ren walked out with the 8th group and sat down to make his pill. The fire that was burning red and yellow a moment ago suddenly turned white as Zhou Ren used his powers.

The white flame burned smoothly like liquid smoke and after a few minutes, Zhou Ren put in the first ingredients.

There wasn't anything fancy about the rest of the moves he did, but the white flame made it look amazing regardless.

Soon his pill was done and it came out with 58%. Without even waiting, Alex knew he had gotten the 20 points.

The white fire burned for the 2nd competition as well as Zhou Ren finished first and got another 20 points.

Another person from his group also did really well, coming in 2nd at each round and got a total of 38 points and caught up with Alex.

The rest of the 2 groups also had 3 people that ended up getting equal or above Alex in the ranking.

By the time the third day was over, Alex was in 12th place.

"Don't worry son, you'll be fine," Helen tried to console him. "Besides, you just want your arm back right? You can reach Saint realm for that."

'And cultivate behind closed doors for who knows how many years,' Alex thought.

"It's fine, mother," he said. "I'm still not out of the running. Since the final competition counts the pill's Harmony as points, I just need to make better pills than everyone else."

"Oh, okay. You can do that," Helen said.

"Hey, brother Yu," Zhou Ren spoke as he walked toward Alex. "I saw the ranking and couldn't help but be surprised. What happened? Why are you so low?"

"I was just off my game today. I will bring my best on the final day," Alex said.

"Oh, okay," Zhou Ren said. "I must have been stupid to think you were only good on the theoretical stuff and couldn't actually make pills. Well, see you later."

"I don't like that guy. Why is he so snarky?" Helen asked.

"He was born to a big family and is kind of a big deal amongst the younger generation. His ego is inflated as a result. Let's not worry about him. I'm going to the guild again to see what I can do for the next competition. You two should go back to the hotel room. I will go back to the guild and see what I can do."



Alex left the competition grounds and went to the guild once again to practice.

The entire time he was there, he did nothing but make the one pill he had told the staff members he would.

As it was a healing pill, there were plenty of ingredients available for him by the guild.

Alex started making the pills and realized he was truly getting terrible. Most of the pills he made ended up being in the high 60s, not even touching 70s.

When he did do almost everything perfectly, there was still enough mistake to cause him to get 72%.

Unless either Zhou Ren or Xue Meirong got 63% or less on the final round, he was screwed.

Alex started to get anxious but calmed himself. 'I don't know how well they can do. I just need to do better,' he thought.

Before making the next pill, he took some time to take in every yang energy he had been releasing subconsciously.

Then, he split his attention to keep his Yang in check. This made him incredibly slower than normal, but that was a trade-off he was willing to make.

Even with that, it wasn't like he wasn't making mistakes, but he did end up getting more than 75% this time around.

He tried some more and took it slow for the most part. Soon, he realized that if he wasn't being hasty, and made sure to get rid of all the yang around him and stash it within him, he could perfectly reach 78% too.

'That's good,' he thought. He didn't like the feeling of having all the yang inside of him, but he had no other choice.

Over the course of the night, Alex cultivated to get ready for the next day.

In the morning, he walked out with newfound vigor and hope in himself for the next competition.

Alex arrived at the competition ground not long after and met up with his mother.

"How are you feeling?" she asked.

"Great," Alex said with a genuine smile. "I think I can do it."

"Good, now go," Helen sent him off.

Alex went over to the staff that took him to the waiting list and was assigned group 10.

After a few minutes, Zhanrou came in and she got group 10 as well.

"What a coincidence," Alex said.

"No, it's not," Zhanrou said. "It's the final day so they are going to make it exciting by making the highest rankers in the same group. Brings out more competitiveness."

"Oh, so that means—"

"It seems we're in the same group finally," Zhou Ren said from the side as he walked over the Alex.

"It seems so," Alex said.

"Oh, my bad. I was talking to sister Zhanrou here since she and Xue Meirong are the only ones that have a chance against me today," Zhou Ren said.

Alex didn't let his emotion waver at the blatant disrespect and instead channeled his anger into motivation.

"If you think you have a chance of beating me, you are sorely mistaken," Xue Meirong arrived to say to Zhou Ren.

"We will see who's right later," Zhou Ren said and moved away.

Xue Meirong turned away from him and Zhanrou and humphed away as well.

"Group 1 gather up!" the staff started calling for the first group. "The rest of you can leave and go watch the competition. Group 2, make sure to come here as soon as the Group 1's round is complete. If you are missing when it's time for you to go on stage, we will mark you absent."

Alex and the rest walked out of the waiting area while Group 1 left for the stage where the host was already starting the competition.

"How do you think your chances are?" Zhanrou asked.

"It's good. I should be able to get a lot of points," Alex said. "What about y—"

"What pill are you making today, young man?" the host asked out loud to the first person that entered the stage.

"Disciple Ascendancy pill," the young man answered.

Next up, a girl came up and the host asked the same question.

"Disciple Ascendancy Pill," the girl said.

Another person came up and once again the host asked the same question.

"Disciple Ascendancy pill," the third person said as well.

Alex watched curiously as of the 20 people that entered, 18 of them were making the Disciple Ascendancy pill.

"What's going on?" Alex softly asked Zhanrou.

"You don't realize?" Zhanrou asked.

Alex shook his head.

"Do you remember the test you had us take when we tried for the Royal Alchemist job?" Zhanrou asked.

"Yes, I made you make my... Disciple Ascendancy pill." Blood drained from Alex's face faster than his mind understood what was going on.

"No way!" he said.

"I'm afraid that's the case," Zhanrou said. "You gave your recipe to so many people that over the last year, it was spread throughout the empire."

"It isn't talked about much because it is such a low-level pill, but it is the best recipe we have for in the whole empire, so everyone is going to use that recipe, including me," Zhanrou said.

"No, but if that happens then..." All forms of motivation Alex had been feeling just moments ago were gone.

Who cared if he could make 78% pill after trying really hard if others could easily reach 75%.

"It seems everyone is making your pill, brother Yu," Zhou Ren said from the side. "Seriously though, it's an amazing recipe and you should be proud of yourself for refining it to such perfect... even though you lack the ability to make good pills."

Alex was feeling so angry that he nearly punched Zhou Ren. Instead, he ignored the man and walked directly to his mother, and sat down beside her.

"What's wrong? You seem mad," Helen asked.

"I am," Alex said. "Everyone is using my recipe today and they will use that to beat me."

"Your recipe? What? But they are so much better. If they use that then..."

"They will easily close up on me and I won't get the necessary points," Alex said. "Dammit! How the hell do I get 9 points more than them when I will now barely get 3 points more if I'm lucky."

Helen started to panic as well. "How did they get your recipe?" she asked.

"I used it for a test a year ago for the royal family," Alex said. "I had no idea such a simple thing like that would come back to bite me."

Helen didn't know what to do and only watched her son become restless and panicked.

Just then, she saw a girl appear behind Alex and place a hand on his shoulders.

"Brother Yu, I finally found you," the girl said.

## Chapter 746: Weight Measuring Formation

Alex turned around to see Shurin standing behind him. "Shurin? What are you doing here?" he asked.

"I've been searching for you since the day before yesterday. Where have you been?" she asked.

"I've... been in the guild, holed up, practicing," Alex said.

"Whatever, you need to come with me now. The princess wants to see you," Shurin said.

"I'll be back in a bit, mother," Alex said and left with Shurin. She took her around the stage until he reached a secluded area in a high tower.

The princess was inside, watching the competition in the comfort by herself.

"You're here," the princess turned around. "Finally. I hope I wasn't late in finding you."

"What's going on?" Alex asked,

"I saw your performance the day before, and I must say it was less than great," the princess said.

"Sigh, yeah, I feel less than great right now," Alex said.

"Does it have anything to do with you finding Yin treasures?" she asked.

"Kind of. I have a problem with me currently, the solution to which I haven't found yet. So, I use Yin treasures as a temporary cure," Alex said.

"Good thing I thought so then," the princess said and brought out a box from her storage bag. The moment the box came out, Alex thought the room's temperature dropped by nearly 5 degrees and that was before the box was even opened.

"What's that?" he asked.

"It's a royal treasure I took out from the treasury," the princess said. "Well, we call it a treasure, but really it's just a drop of water that our ancestor found that is full of Yin Qi."

"We don't know what to do with this, so it had been sitting around in the treasury for a few hundred years now," the princess said.

"And you're giving this to me?" Alex asked. "Why?"

"Because we appreciate all you've done," the princess said. "Also, you must show the world what is possible with Alchemy. Show how great one can get will pills."

"I want people to have a high bar they can work up to, and I want you to be the one that sets the bar," the princess said.

"Thank you," Alex said.

"How long do you need to... cure your problem?" she asked.

"A whole day maybe, I don't know," Alex said. "Oh no, we don't have much time."

"Alright go, we will talk later," the princess said.

"Thank you, princess Xumei," Alex said, bowed, and left. He directly ran to his mother and told her what he was going to do.

"Where are you going? The hotel?" she asked.

"No, the guild is closer," Alex said. "How's the first round going?"

"They are halfway through making the pills," Helen said. "You should hurry."

"I'll see you later," Alex said and ran off. He blitzed through the street and arrived at the guild.

Some of the staff that recognized him were surprised to see him there, but he didn't stick around to talk with any of them.

He entered one of the rooms and immediately started cultivating with the Winter Moon cultivation technique. Once he was in the zone, he brought out the box and felt the air chill again.

Then, he opened the box and the air became even colder. 'What do I do now?' he wondered as he looked at the small drop of water.

There was one thing he could do that would be the best way to work, but he wasn't sure if it was safe or not as this was a highly Yin-ish treasure.

"Oh, what the hell," Alex thought and drank the drop of crystal clear Yin water.

Immediately, a chilling cold entered his body, freezing the pathway to his stomach. Alex felt his organs start to freeze and slow down.

At that moment, without even thinking, he released all the Yang he had been holding back currently.

The Yin and the Yang started mixing with each other and started circulating his meridians while he cultivated.

Alex closed his eyes and left the two to do what they did best.



At first, the Yin and Yang became violent, seeking to destroy each other. However, soon they found harmony in each other and the violence ended.

Alex continued cultivating for who knew how long. Even the urgency he had felt was gone as the two found equilibrium and maintained each other.

After what felt like an entire day, Alex opened his eyes and stopped cultivating.

The moment he did, the equilibrium vanished. After stopping the Winter Moon cultivation technique, Alex found that his Yang was starting to overtake him again.

However, this time around, it was so little that it wouldn't even be noticeable for the most part, let alone be an inconvenience.

"The competition!" Alex finally remembered and ran out of the guild. When he arrived outside, he saw that the sun was to the west and it was way past the afternoon.

"Oh no, how long did I stay in there?" he thought and ran back to the competition grounds.

He quickly ran to the audience stands and found his mother.

"Mother! What's going on? Am I late?" he asked hurriedly.

"Oh god, you're finally here," Helen felt relieved finally.

"What's going on? What round is this?" Alex asked.

"It's the 9th round. Your turn is next. Quickly go," Helen said.

Alex nodded and gave her everything but a single storage bag and ran towards the waiting area.

Even as he was going, he could hear the results for the 9th group being announced.

65%. 67%. 63%.

Everyone was using his pill and scoring really high points. In fact, one of them even managed to get a 72%.

Alex rushed through the waiting room and arrived at the back of the room where they were being scanned before being ready to get sent to the stage.

The other 19 participants looked at him with surprise.

"You're finally here," Zhanrou shouted with relief.

The others most made a grunting noise while Zhou Ren gave a mocking smile.

"I had thought you would have given up by now. It seems you got a little kick in you just yet," Zhou Ren said.

Alex smiled back at him. "Just keep watching, you will get a little kick in you later too," he said.

He ignored his agitated face and went to get his storage bag scanned.

"Hmm?" the saint realm expert made a frowning face. "What is this? This is not allowed."

"It's a weight measurement formation," Alex said. "I need it for the ingredients."

The Saint thought for a moment and asked, "Do you really need this?"

"Yes," Alex said.

The Saint turned around to converse with his colleagues and turned around after a few seconds.

"Okay, what exactly do you plan to use it for?" he asked.

"Just checking the ingredient's weight," Alex said.

"Anything else?" he asked.

Alex shook his head.

"Okay, someone will sit by you while you use it and take it away after you're done. Understood?" he asked.

"Absolutely," Alex said.

Once everything was set, everyone was let onto the stage and introduced one by one. As they came out, everyone was once again asked the same question as to what they were going to do.

Out of all 20 of them, everyone that went ahead of Alex said the same pill's name.

Disciple Ascendancy pill.

"What pill are you making, Contestant Yu?" the host asked.

"A Body Rebinding pill," Alex said.

The crowd murmured a bit when they heard that and even the host showed a surprised expression.

"I hear you were the one that perfected the recipe for the Disciple Ascendancy pill. Mind telling us why you're not making that pill like everyone else?" the host asked.

"It's simple," Alex said. "Everyone else doesn't have choices with the recipes as I do."

"Oh, are you saying that this pill you are going to make... do you..." the host didn't have to fully answer the question for everyone else to understand what he was implying.

Alex smiled at the host and walked to his position.

"It seems we are going to get an amazing round folks. It's the time you've been waiting for all day long. For the top 20 of the competition so far to compete together for the first time and once and for all let us know who the best alchemist of the younger generation is," the host said.

Then he turned to the contestants. "Get in position," he said and waited.

Once everyone was in place, a slew of staff members came up front and handed them their ingredients.

"You have one hour to make the best pill you can ever make. Begin!"

Alex heard rustling from all around him as people started preparing their cauldron.

However, Alex didn't bring out the cauldron. Instead, he brought out the formation plate.

A staff member sat by him and watched him do what he did.

Alex took the ingredients out one by one and started weighing them against the formation.

The staff was truly surprised to see him measuring. After all, they had expected some sort of shenanigan from him to win at this competition after yesterday's unworthy showing.

Alex checked through the ingredients. 20 grams. 52 grams. 33 grams.

He used his fake arm to break away some of the ingredients as they were too heavy.

Alex then checked a tree bark that needed to be 45 grams. However, when he measured it, it was only 43 grams.

It was missing 2 grams.

2 grams didn't look like much, but that was 2 grams missing which the other ingredients would latch onto when forming the pill, thus creating a massive problem that would lower the percentage by a lot.

"Sir," he said to the staff member. "I cannot use this bark. I will require another ingredient."

Chapter 747: Multiple Immortal Grade pills

"Another ingredient? What's wrong with this one?" the staff asked softly so as to not alert the rest of the contestants who were already underway in the competition.

"This bark isn't of the right weight. I need one that is at least 45 grams, which this is not," Alex said.

"Certainly that is no problem, right? It's just a few grams," the staff said.

"Sir, I am trying to make the best pill I have ever made in my life. If you are going to deny me of that opportunity, then I would like to speak with someone else," Alex said.

"Okay, okay, I will talk with the host," the staff said and went to the host. He whispered a few words and the host walked up to Alex.

"Is it true that you need another ingredient?" he asked.

"Yes," Alex said.

"But the round has already started. I cannot delay the round for you," he said.

"It is fine. I can wait for you to bring the ingredient," Alex said. "If you cannot, I have the ingredient with me. I will just need you to ask it from my mother in the audience."

"No, if you are willing to wait, we will get it for you," the host said and ordered someone to go get one that was at least 45 grams.

Alex closed his eyes and waited, knowing certainly that the host didn't have a favorable opinion of him in this matter.

However, it was important so he was willing to disregard other people's thoughts for his own opportunity.

After 10 or so minutes, a staff member finally returned and handed him the ingredient.

Alex took the bark and weighed it. 46 grams.

He lightly scratched a bit of the bark until it was 45 grams and was finally ready to make the pill.

By the time he was starting to make the pill, the others were starting to finish their pills. Just a few minutes and they would have their pills ready.

Alex handed over the weighing formation as he promised and pulled out his cauldron and placed it on the furnace.

The moment the cauldron touched the fire, both the fire and the cauldron heated up to exactly 544 degrees as the recipe required him to.

Not a degree higher, and not a degree lower. Alex waited for a minute as he watched the flame and cauldron and there was absolutely no fluctuation on his part.

What little Yang energy his body was releasing had absolutely no effect on his alchemy today, and that gave Alex confidence he hadn't felt ever since he made those Earth spirit root enhancing pills back in DawnSpring city.

Alex took out the first ingredient and placed it into the cauldron. The moment the ingredient touched the base of the hot cauldron, Alex could hear the sizzling sound, and he started moving it around to quickly pulverize it.

After 5 and a half slow rotations, he could see the ingredient was done being refined, so he turned up the heat again.

With his Dao, the fire increased in temperature and so did the cauldron. At exactly the same time, he placed the second ingredient.

Alex was making sure to make no mistake on his part for this pill. He wasn't taking any chances by letting the previous powder stay in the cauldron far too long while he fumbled around, waiting for the next ingredient to be put inside.

While the ingredients once powdered didn't burn up like they would when they were ingredients, it was only because the other ingredients would soak up the heat.

If the powder alone was left there, it would certainly lose some of its ability to take in the energy.

In the grand scheme of Alchemy, that mattered very little. It hampered maybe a percent or two. However, right now, every single percentage counted, so Alex did his absolute best to not let any ingredient take in more heat than it already had.

As soon as the third ingredient was done being powdered, Alex instantly moved away heat from the fire and cauldron into the air and decreased its temperature.

At the same time, he put in the fourth ingredient and continued.

Alex was so into his pill that he didn't even notice the people stand up from their spot and walk up front to hand over their pills.

Some looked excited, while some looked disappointed. Some were nervous as they wondered how good their pill was, while the others were confident that this was the best pill they had ever made.

The host let them put their pills onto the 20 pills testers and had the percentages checked.

67%. 65%. 69%. 72%.

One after another, the number started popping up. As it did, the ranking in the sky kept on changing as well as the people from this group started jumping into the top 10.

Xue Meirong stood up from her spot with the pill in her hand. While she was stubborn, she still had to acknowledge just how great this recipe was.

As her father had told her that day, whoever came up with that recipe was a master of Alchemy.

She agreed with him as well. Only —she turned to look at Alex— she didn't want to believe it was him.

She searched for an open tester and walked towards it. However, before she reached it, Zhanrou appeared out of nowhere and placed her pill in it.

"Oh, didn't see you there," she said with a smirk on her face.



"Goddammit! You always like taking what's mine," she said and turned away to another tester and placed her pill in it.

The two of them acted like they were focusing on their pills alone, but their rivalry was too much to keep them from making side glances at each other's pills.

As the testers fogged up and went past 50%, they watched their result with bated breaths.

60%, 65%, 70%. It didn't stop.

71%, 72%, 73%. Around that part did the pill finally started slowing down and it looked like it would stop.

74%. And then, 75%.

The crowd was shocked, to say the least, as the first Immortal grade pill ever appeared in the competition. Two of them at once too. But it wasn't over yet.

The percentage went up to 76% and it stopped for Zhanrou. However, it didn't stop for Xue Meirong at all.

The pill went one step forward and stopped at 77%.

A happy smile appeared on Xue Meirong's face as she looked at the 77% pill.

"Congrats," Zhanrou said after losing to Xue Meirong.

Xue Meirong looked at her with surprise, forgetting for a moment what she was even doing in her happiness. "Oh, congrats to you too, I was just ahead by a single percent."

This was too happy an occasion to drown it with smugness and disdain towards others.

The ranking in the sky flickered as Gu Zhanrou appeared in the 2nd place and Xue Meirong appeared in the 1st place.

She had a definite chance of becoming the 1st place if only—

"Step aside, ladies," Zhou Ren appeared behind her. "It's my turn now."

Zhou Ren placed his pills onto the empty tester in between them and waited for the fog to rise up.

Zhou Ren was the only person waiting for his pill to work and the eyes of the contestants, the host, the staff, and everyone in the audience were on his pill now.

Zhou Tianqiu sat alongside Zhou Zirong, who was a relatively young man, and watched his son's pill from a separate building just like the princess.

"Just watch, your nephew will catch up to you in no time," Zhou Tianqiu said.

"I hope so. I expect a lot from him," Zhou Zirong said with a smile.

"He will, I assure you," Zhou Tianqiu said. "The recipe these kids have is nothing but perfection. My son will do great."

"Yes, the recipe is indeed great," Zhou Zirong said. "That's why I'm more curious about the recipe maker."

"That kid?" Tianqiu's face was angered for a split second as he remembered Alex and the night when he went to personally ask for the medicinal paste recipes.

"He's nothing. Didn't you hear about his performance on the 3rd day? The kid got 30 points in total and lost his first-place ranking. I guess he's only good when it comes to ingredients and recipes."

"When it comes to actually making pills, he's but a common man with no talent at all," Zhou Tianqiu said.

"Is that so?" Zhou Zirong asked with his smile not fading for a single second. "But I have heard different rumors."

"What rumors?" Zhou Tainqiu asked.

"Well, let's just say we might have an interesting round in our hand," Zhou Zirong said, not answering the question.

"Doesn't matter," Zhou Tainqiu said with a massive grin on his face. "Can he beat that?" He pointed to his son's result that had finally settled on the stage below them.

Back on stage, Zhou Ren's eyes went wide in shock because of his own pill. He knew he had done well, but not this well.

Zhanrou and Meirong couldn't help but be shocked when they saw the result.

Zhou Ren had outdone himself and made a pill with a Harmony of 79%, shocking everyone in the audience.

"I did it! I won!" he exclaimed, only to get shushed by the host.

"Huh?" he was confused and looked around to see a single tester empty. "Someone's not done yet?"

He turned around to the furnaces and saw Alex move his arm around in various gestures. Then he finally stopped and so did the fire.

Alex opened his eyes as the lid popped open and let out a single pill.

## Chapter 748: Result

Alex held the pill in his arm and wondered what he did wrong— what mistakes did he make?

As he stood up to take the pill to the front, he couldn't help but mull over that exact thought.

What did he do wrong?

There were 3 things in his mind that were wrong with the pill he just made.

First, there was a problem with the ingredients. It wasn't the amount that was the problem, but perhaps their age, or maybe how long they had been kept without a container.

Some of the ingredients had lost a bit of energy.

Alex reached the front and placed his pill into the tester. While not many waited for his pill to show the result, there were a few that were desperate to know that result.

That included Zhou Ren, as Alex alone now stood between him and victory. He tried saying something to Alex, but Alex wasn't hearing anything. He was lost in his own thought.

He was still thinking of the things that he did wrong today.

The second thing that was wrong in today's pill-making process was his method of putting in ingredients. Every time he put an ingredient inside, he needed to lift the lid of the cauldron.

While he did use Elemental Guidance to keep the energy inside like most Alchemists used on a normal basis, there was still a chance that the energy escaped and thus brought down his pill's overall harmony by a couple of percentages.

Alex watched the fog grow on the tester as it smoothly went past 40% and crossed 50% not long after.

As it went up, he thought of the third problem that might have occurred that caused his Harmony to be lowered.

The third problem was his pill-forming technique. While he had to admit that his technique was amazing, far superior to just randomly clumping up powder to make a pill, it was still a far cry from the technique that formed his split pills.

If he had that, he would certainly not have lost a single percentage of his pill's Harmony today because of the technique.

Aside from that, Alex saw no other problem today. His ingredients were properly measured, there was no downtime between the ingredients being powdered, the temperature was being perfectly manipulated, and there wasn't a single mistake in the pill-making process.

Even his cauldron just being a True grade cauldron didn't affect him at all due to his Dao of Heat that allowed him to instantly heat stuff.

It was just the 3 problems that hampered him today.

And that was why he couldn't reach 100%.

A small smile appeared on Alex's face as other people's faces were a mixture of shock and surprise.

"Tha-that can't be true," Zhou Ren mumbled to himself.

"How..." Xue Meirong couldn't even finish her sentence.

Most of the other people were simply way too speechless to say anything. In fact, the entire crowd was silent, including the people outside the competition ground that were watching the match on the giant, floating screens.

"This has to be a mistake, right?" Even the host himself couldn't believe the result.

"That tester must be broken," Zhou Ren said. "Test it again."

"Yes," the host agreed and empties another tester before placing Alex's pill into another one.

When he did that, the whole crowd leaned in closer to see the result again.

1%, 2%, 3%, the fog quickly started covering the glass as it blitzed through the early numbers.

10%, 20%, 30%, they passed in the blink of an eye.

Before people even realized what was happening, the fog reached 50% with no sign of stopping anytime soon.

55%, 60%, 65%. Alex was already reaching the Harmony that most other people barely reached in their lifetime. As they watched, it soon reached 70% and kept climbing up.

When it touched 75%, Zhanrou and Meirong quietly watched the fog. When it rose 1%, it was the same result as Zhanrou.

When it rose 1% again, it was the same result as Meirong. When it rose 1% again, it was now better than both of their results.

When it rose 1% again, Zhou Ren's face lost color as he got the suspicion that the previous answer was correct.

When it rose 1% again and reached 80%, his pill had been beaten as well. Alex had won today's round.

However, the fog was not showing any sign of stopping. 81%, 82%... it kept on rising as everyone watched with bated breaths.

83%, 84%, 85%... that was when it finally slowed down. Slowed, but not stopped.

The princess, Zhou Tianqiu, Zhou Zirong, Xue Mufan, and even the Emperor watched the retest with a shocked expressions on their face.

When the pill crossed 86% and reached 87%, Zhou Ren realized Alex now had the exact same points as him and was tied with him for the first place in the competition.

However, that didn't last long as the pill rose again to 88%. Now, Alex had won the competition with no question.

Still, no one cared about that for now, not even the host. He just wanted to see if the result that they saw previously was true, and it was coming dangerously close to being so.

89%, and 90%, the numbers increased once again, making people truly believe that what they had seen before was not a mistake.

So, if that were true, then...

91% and finally, 92%. The fog stopped moving and the result was the same as last time.

92%.

"Holy shit it's true," the host cursed out loud for everyone else to hear. "He did it, he actually did it."

The moment the host stopped speaking, the entire crowd went into a craze at the result. Whether it was the audience, the staff, or the contestants, not a single one of them could shut their mouths as they screamed miracle.

The numbers on the ranking above them flickered as Alex jumped from a 102, getting ahead of Zhou Ren who had a 189, and reached 194 as he obtained the first place.

Alex's name solidified on the final ranking, making him the victor of the Alchemy competition.

#### Chapter 749: Anything You Want

"And here are your winners."

"On the third place, with 187 points, is Xue Meirong from the Falling Lotus sect," the host announced and the people cheered.

"On the second place, with 189 points, is Zhou Ren from the Zhou Family," the host announced again and the people cheered once more.

"Finally, in what can only be called an unexpected event, with 194 points, is Yu Ming. Give him a standing ovation everybody," the host shouted and everyone stood up to clap, including the staff and other contestants.

Alex took the medal he was given and thanked everyone. After that, the event ended.

"Alright, we will see you guys tomorrow at noon, great job today," the host said and left.

"Congratulations, brother Yu. That was amazing. How did you even make a 92% pill?" Zhanrou came to ask.

"Well, I've been making this pill for over 4 years now with my refined recipe, so I kind of know exactly what to do with it. Plus, the guild provided really good ingredients," Alex said.

"Is that so? I should learn from you more," Zhanrou said.



Zhou Ren walked over to him with a dark face. "You have bested me. Congratulations," he said.

"Thank you, brother Ren. You were quite close yourself," Alex said. Zhou Ren felt a sense of shame when he was told they were close.

"Congrats," Xue Meirong said just that one word and left.

The other contestants came and congratulated him. After they left the stage, even more people came to congratulate him.

It was so crowded around him that his own mother didn't get to congratulate him for nearly 15 minutes.

Even after half an hour, the group of people continued coming up to him and congratulating him while constantly telling him who they were and how he was invited to their place.

Alex smiled and nodded as most of their words entered one of his ears and exited through another.

"Brother Yu," Shurin came to him once again. "The princess wants to see you."

"Oh, okay. Let's go," Alex said and ignored the crowd to go to the princess. The crowd was a little angry but there was nothing they could do as they had heard who called Alex.

Alex was taken to a different location this time, a much larger room. When he entered, he was surprised to see that there were more than just the princess and a few servants.

Alex saw many new figures he had never seen before.

A man wore a golden robe with a criss-cross pattern all over it. A woman wore a green robe with multiple shades of green layered on it.

Another woman wore blue robes that looked like waves of water. The man with the crimson robe was one of the eldest in the room.

The bloody-robed man had a thin and short face but somehow looked fearsome. Han Hongqi stood upright in his brown robes next to an older person that seemed to share some features with him.

Zhou Tianqiu stood next to another Zhou family member with a younger-looking, amicable face.

Shangguan Quan stood next to an old woman in black and red robes that had spear Qi flicker around her even as she stood there doing nothing.

Xue Mufan sat with his arms crossed with an awkward expression.

Other than him, there were also figures from the Broken Ravine sect and the Glory's edge sect that Alex recognized from their robes alone.

At the center of it all sat the Emperor, next to whom sat the princess that had called him.

Seeing such a group of high-ranking figures that could easily determine the fate of the empire, Alex felt a little bit scared.

"Greetings, seniors, your highness," Alex bowed a little to greet them all.

"Sit," the Emperor spoke while everyone else remained silent.

Alex sat down on an empty chair in the center of the room.

"First of all, congratulations on your victory in today's competition," the Emperor said. "You have done something today that most of us wouldn't have dreamed of seeing in our lifetime."

"Thank you, your majesty," Alex said.

"No, thank you. You have done a great service to us, young brother. All of us here stand before you to grant you anything you want, so long as it is in our power," the Emperor said.

"Anything?" Alex asked and looked around the crowd while thinking to himself what he wanted. There was really just a single thing he could ever want.

"There is one thing I want," he said as his eyes fell on Xue Mufan.

"Oh, you want to become my disciple?" Mufan asked with a surprised look on his face.

"No, senior," Alex said, restraining his chuckle. "I require some assistance in refining a Saint rank ingredient."

"As I am unable to do it until I enter the saint rank, I will be requiring your help," Alex said.

"Refining a saint rank ingredient huh? Are you going to make some pill?" Mufan asked.

"No, senior. I only need to refine the ingredient alone," Alex said.

"Okay, I can help you with that," Mufan said.

"Is that all you want?" the Emperor asked, clearly surprised that Alex wasn't requesting something better given the opportunity.

"I have nothing I require more than what I have asked for," Alex said.

The Emperor nodded and ignored the many messages he was getting directly.

"By the way, young man, where did you acquire those recipes of yours?" the Emperor asked.

Alex felt a little suspicious that he was about to ask him for his recipes. "I refined them myself, your highness," Alex said.

"Oh? How did you learn to do that?" the Emperor asked.

"Brother Shen Jing gave me a book that taught me how," Alex lied.

"Is that so? Thank you for answering my questions. You may leave now. Xumei, take our little brother out," he said.

"Yes, father," the princess stood up and left her seat. She then took Alex and walked out.

As soon as the door was shut, everyone in the room suddenly turned to the emperor with a confused face.

"Your highness, what was that?" Zhou Tianqiu asked.

"Weren't we going to ask him how he improved those recipes?" Xue Mufan asked.

The various other people also chimed in and asked the emperor the same thing.

"Enough," the Emperor said. "I know what I'm doing. You heard what he said. The technique is not his, but it belongs to someone else."

"So?" the others asked.

"It belongs to someone we cannot offend in the least," the Emperor said.

"We cannot offend?" the people got confused.

"Do you know why I had to find a royal alchemist these last 2 years?" The Emperor asked.

"Uhh... there are rumors, your highness," someone said.

"What rumors?" the Emperor asked.

"The rumors say that the princess has either lost the healing crystal, had it stolen, or it just doesn't work anymore," the woman in blue said.

"None of that is true," the Emperor said. "The person in question came to the palace, took the crystal from us, and I thanked him for it. That is how much we cannot offend him."

"What?" the group was surprised beyond belief.

The Emperor didn't explain any longer and only said, "That is why I didn't force him to reveal his secrets. While the young man might be weak, he has a backing that our entire empire cannot offend."

"Not to mention, do you really want to offend a 25-year-old True Immortal alchemist that is already in the True King realm?" the Emperor asked.

The group unanimously shook their head, despite feeling angry at having to do so.

\* \* \* \* \*

"You did better in today's competition than I could've ever hoped to. Were you hiding your skills when you made pills for us? The best I saw from those were at 80%," the princess said.

"Of course not, princess," Alex said. "I was just not in the right state to make pills at the time."

"Your condition that requires Yin treasure?" the princess asked.

"Yes," Alex said. "While it wasn't that bad early on as I continued finding Yin treasures, over the year I found myself developing an immunity to the Yin in most treasures. So I kept needing something better."

"Were it not for you bringing that yin water, I would've never been able to show the result I did today. In a way, you are responsible for my result today. Thank you for that," Alex said.

The princess smiled. "So, what are your plans now that you have won the competition? Do you still plan to go to the Icy Hell?" she asked.

"I do, but not just yet," Alex said. "There's a reason I took part in the competition. Now that I've won, I get to make a pill I've been waiting for a long time to make."

"Oh, what pill is it?" the princess asked.

Alex smiled. "You will know after I make it," he said.

"So what about your deal with senior Mufan? Where are you going to have him help?" she asked.

"I... don't know actually. I will think about it after we get our rewards tomorrow," Alex said.

"Why don't you come to stay in the palace?" the princess asked. "That way, you can stay away from the crowd too."

"Actually, that's not a bad idea," Alex said. "Would it be okay if I bring along my mother? She's here with me and I don't want to send her back alone."

"Of course, I don't mind," the princess said. "Besides, I would love to see just what sort of women can raise a genius like you."

## Chapter 750: Rewards

"Here are your rewards."

Some of the big figures from the Alchemy guild including Xue Mufan and Zhou Zirong were present in a secluded section of the guild, along with the top 10 winners of the competition.

Everyone was handed a pile of storage bags, which included the recipes and ingredients as promised.

Alex got 15 thousand True Spirit stones, 3 Saint rank ingredients, 2 Saint rank pill recipes, a bunch of True ranked ingredients and 1 True Heaven ranked artifact.

The artifact that Alex got was a single fist-sized orb of chromatic color. Alex wondered what it was, but he didn't have to think for long as he noticed a talisman by its side that had its information.

[Poison Absorbing Pearl: Absorbs almost all poisons and venoms from the air and one's body. You can later use the orb to use the poison as an attack.]

The orb could only absorb poisons below a certain rank and it couldn't absorb a lot of it, so using it to protect yourself from the Poison swamp was useless, but it did absorb enough poison to protect you on a daily basis.

It was a useless treasure to Alex, but it would be amazingly useful for his mother so he accepted it gracefully.

Alex ignored the Hammerhead Snake's venom, and even ignored the box that contained the fruit that was the Blizzard's Rainbow core, and took out the box that contained the Blood Spirit Ginseng.

This was the ingredient he had been waiting for for a long time and finally, it was here.

Alex slowly pulled open the box and saw the ginseng. The ginseng looked like any old ginseng that one could find. It was a cylindrical body with patches of dirt that descended to multiple tendrils that looked like roots.

What made this ginseng different was its color. The ginseng was fully crimson in color.

Not only that, the moment Alex opened the box, the air smelled of iron, and everyone got alert.

Alex quickly closed the box and put it back into his storage bag. 'Holy shit!' he thought. He had never expected the ginseng to have this strong of a bloody smell.

"You can check your rewards later when you are alone," one of the elders said. "For now, the three of you, come with me."

Alex, Zhou Ren, and Xue Meirong followed the elder and went to a different room where they saw 3 items on 3 different pedestals.

One was a black and gold cauldron, another one was a crimson red whip, and finally, the last one was a giant necklace.

"These are the Saint-ranked items that you are to get. Let us start with young man Yu and see what he chooses," the elder said.

Alex nodded and looked at the reward. "May I check them?" he asked.

"Absolutely, go ahead," the elder said.

Alex walked up front and inspected the cauldron. The cauldron was sturdy and could probably be used as a blunt weapon. It was made up of a material that easily let Qi pass through and also seemed to have some sort of skill forged into it.



When Alex inquired about it, it turned out that the cauldron could keep the energy from escaping while activated.

Alex was intrigued, but he moved on to the whip. The whip was somehow extremely stiff and flexible at the same time. He poured in some Qi and suddenly the whip came to life as a fire burned all over it.

"Be careful not to burn yourself. The whip can produce an incredible amount of fire," the elder said.

"I see," Alex said and moved on.

The final item was the necklace which was a mental attack blocker for the most part, but there was also a skill that created a barrier to stop any attack below the Saint realm.

While that sounded incredible, it would be useless to Alex within a year or two, that he was sure of.

So, circling back to the whip and the cauldron, Alex thought for a moment and made his decision.

"I'll choose this," Alex said as he grabbed the item.

"The whip?" the elder was surprised. "Not the cauldron or the necklace?"

Alex shook his head. The necklace was useless to him soon anyway. As for the cauldron, while it would be useful to him, it wouldn't aid him as much since his Dao was able to cover up any shortcomings of his own cauldron.

Besides, the cauldron he had was his master's gift. He had used it for over 7 years, but he wasn't willing to give up just yet.

"I have made my choice after considerable deliberation, elder. You need not worry about my decision," Alex said.

He had decided to take the whip after realizing that he didn't have any good weapons on him other than the poison sword which wasn't very good.

The other sword was great, of course, but he couldn't use Qi in it and as such, it was pretty much useless for him when it came to real fights.

So, he had gone with the whip choice.

Zhou Ren chose the necklace as expected. Coming from an alchemy family, he had no lacking of cauldrons that he could choose from.

As such, Xue Meirong was stuck with the cauldron despite already having one of the same ranks.

Since the rewards were handed over, the competition had officially ended and they could all go on with their life now.

"Go and train for the actual competition you young folks are always excited about," the elder said as he waved them goodbye.

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Xue Mufan sat in front of a scarlet and green cauldron and had a serious look on his face. By his side, his daughter sat with him, watching him.

"Are you sure you want to do this?" he asked.

Alex sat in front of him with a serious look on his face as well. He held the Blood Spirit Ginseng in his hand and learned the information that naturally flowed into his mind.

The ginseng was 216 years old, and it was a Wood elemental ingredient that was missing Fire energy and Earth Energy.

Alex remembered that, a Wood Elemental ingredient. So, the ingredient he had to find was also a Wood Elemental ingredient that was missing, from his experience, most likely the Fire energy.

Now that Alex knew it, there was another thing he needed to do. He needed to get an impression of the aura of the ginseng. Only through that could he ever learn what sort of ingredient he was supposed to search for.

He took a deep breath and nodded, knowing that whatever he was going to do was about to destroy the ingredient in his hand.

Alex took out a knife and cut the ginseng into four different parts and handed one of the parts over to Xue Mufan.

Mufan shook his head at the waste but said nothing. "Alright, watch carefully. I don't know what you are going to do, but you need to pay attention," he said.

"Yes, senior," Alex said in a monotone voice as the warning didn't register in his ear because of his concentration.

"Alright, at 2122 degrees, 18 rotations counterclockwise at half a rotation per second. Coming right up," Mufan said and tossed the ginseng into the cauldron.

Alex's heart started beating furiously as he closed his eyes and ears to the surrounding, and used his spiritual sense to look into the cauldron and felt the shift in energy.

Wood energy was released from the ginseng of a certain variety that Alex got a distinct impression of. He continued feeling the energy and tried to ignore the bloody smell in the air, but it was too strong to ignore.

Still, he managed to focus on the wood energy altogether. After a few moments, the ingredient was powdered and there was nothing for Alex to sense as the energy remained stagnant in the cauldron.

"Again, please," Alex said.

Mufan nodded and took the 2nd of the 4 ingredients and did it again. Once again, Alex was forced to power through the bloody smell and focus on the wood energy, feeling the certain parts of the wood energy that would help him find the necessary ingredient.

"Again," Alex said and the 3rd of the 4 parts were used up.

Alex did his best to feel every different aspect of the wood energy, including whatever sub-energy of wood that might be hidden in there.

When the ingredient was powdered once again, Xue Mufan looked at Alex and asked, "Again?"

"Hmm?" Alex looked up with a confused look as he didn't hear what he had just said.

"I'm asking do you want to use up the last one too?" he asked.

"Yes," Alex said and was about to hand it over when he stopped. "Actually, I would rather keep this just in case I need a reminder again."

"Suit yourself," Mufan said. "So is this all you needed me to do?"

"Yes, senior," Alex said as he kept the final part of the Blood Spirit Ginseng in his storage bag. "Thank you for agreeing to do this to me."

"It's fine. You barely took any of my time at all," Xue Mufan said. "Besides, I managed to get the recipe for the Body Rebinding pill for my daughter. She's been nagging me to ask you for it forever."

"Father!" Xue Meirong tried to hide her red face but everyone saw.

"My daughter doesn't have the best of manners, but she's not a bad person. I hope you'll be friends with her," Xue Mufan said.

"Of course, senior," Alex said.

"Anyway, I will need to leave now. I've left my sect alone for nearly 2 weeks now," Xue Mufan said as she stood up. "Good luck on whatever you endeavor next."