

Alchemy 751

Chapter 751: Experiments

Alex and his mother returned back from the capital a week later in disguises so no one would recognize them.

Even after Alex was back in the Flowing Brush sect, not many realized he was there. As such, Alex got the chance to miss the many people that came after him because of his newfound popularity.

While this also meant Alex didn't get a chance to find free gifts from people, his mind was way too concerned about something else to care about.

After returning back, Alex immediately went to his work in finding the final remaining ingredient of the pill that would help restore his arm.

He used the 15 thousand True Spirit stones he had acquired from the competition to buy many different true rank ingredients, all of which were Wood Element ingredients.

Once Alex got that, he started going into a secluded Alchemy session where he would refine every single ingredient and compare it to the impression he had received from the Blood Spirit Ginseng.

That began Alex's 2-month-long seclusion where he went through thousands of ingredients, sometimes multiple times through to find the ingredient.

Every day, he would go through about 50 different ingredients while also pacing himself properly so as to not overwhelm himself.

Alex recorded about a hundred different ingredients in this time that felt similar to the impression he got from the Saint rank ingredient, but none of it felt exactly the same.

Alex knew that finding the same one was impossible, but he still wanted to and so he spent all days finding the one that was it.

After the hundred different ingredients were chosen, only then did Alex leave his room to take a few days of break.

When he got out, there was stubble on his face that he would otherwise have gotten rid of had he had the time. He quickly got rid of the beard and went to his mother.

"You're finally out," his mother said. "Did you do it?"

Pearl cultivated next to his mother, while his mother was making some talismans.

Alex shook his head. "I'm just done with the first phase. I've narrowed the thousands of ingredients to just a hundred. I will have to go through again to reduce the number," he said.

"Take your time," Helen said. "There's no hurry. Are you really alright though? You're burning up."

Helen placed her palm on her son's forehead and winced a little at the heat.

"Oh, sorry," Alex said and took in the yang Qi to cool his body again. The yang never bothered him normally so he hadn't realized, but it was clear now that his yang Qi had returned.

"I thought you had it cured," Helen said.

"Not cured, just temporarily suppressed is more like it," Alex said. "Sigh, I might have to use the yin fruit again. I really didn't want to do it until it was time to make the pill."

The two of them chatted for a while and Helen let him know that the people had found out about their relationship. A few of the important families and sects in the empire had even guessed that he was living here and had sent their gifts to him.

"Anything important in there?" Alex asked.

"Uh, let's see. There are a bunch of ingredients, and I mean a bunch of them. It's like they realized you were an alchemist and thought you would need nothing else."

"Aside from that there are a few True ranked weapons and armors, but it's not really of high grade. There are some other weird artifacts too, but none seem really amazing."

"Do you need cauldrons? A few of them sent some too," Helen said.

"Sure," Alex said. "I'll take the swords, cauldrons, and ingredients. You can keep the rest."

"Okay," Helen said. "Oh right, there have been a few people that came to meet me directly and are requesting for you to teach Alchemy in public. Can you do that?"

"I don't know. I'm not really the public speaking type," Alex said. "Not to mention I won't be able to do anything until I make the pill and then visit the Icy place."

"How about this? Tell them I will give a week-long alchemy lesson within the next year," Alex said.

"Great, I will let the people know when they come the next time," Helen said.

Alex stayed around for a while longer and talked to his mother. He fought with Pearl for a few hours afterward to get back into shape and only then returned back to his room to cultivate.

Once he cultivated and was back to his finest shape, he started going through the hundred different ingredients once again.

This time around, Alex went through the ingredients in a different manner. Since he was done with the impression part of the ingredient, he needed to go through and see what the ingredients did.

So, he went through the ingredients and read up on all of them to understand what most of them did.

Unfortunately for him, that didn't help much in narrowing it down. So, he decided to send it all to hell and start making the pill.

One by one, using the 100 different ingredients, Alex started making pills that would work for him.

Of course, he didn't just test the pills with no caution. He prepared a True Nullifying pill for every single one of the pills.

Most of the pills he made surprisingly came to work as healing pills. He cut himself before every test and about 60 of the 100 pills were healing pills.

Of course, they became healing pills of different varieties and different strengths where one was obviously better than others.

10 of the remaining pills deformed his body and were obviously bad pills.

For the remaining 30, they were useless pills. All they did was when Alex ate them, they would stay in his body and create violent energy that would start to wreck his body from the inside.

If not for the True Nullifying pill, Alex wondered how many times he would have died from the pills.

Alex finished the experiments in a month and at the end of it, his arm still wasn't back at all.

'What am I doing wrong?' he wondered. This was it after all. He had narrowed down everything to a list of ingredients and somehow none of them worked.

'What do I do?' he worried. He had destroyed the Blood Spirit Ginseng. Had he not done that, he would have had an ingredient to immediately make a pill when he entered the Saint rank.

"No, I can't be wrong. I can't afford to be wrong," Alex thought and went on to make the strongest healing pills amongst the many he had just made.

It was one that used a Fragrant Ginger vine as the replacement ingredient for Blood Spirit Ginseng.

Alex made the pill once more and ate it. He could feel the healing energy squirming in his body but it never great out the bone and muscles.

'I am definitely missing something,' Alex thought. 'But what?'

After long contemplation, Alex decided to use the final piece of the Blood Spirit Ginseng to once again check what he had been doing wrong.

Chapter 752: Realization

Alex held the last piece of Blood Spirit Ginseng in his hands and then looked at the heated-up cauldron in front of him.

"What am I doing?" he thought, almost disappointed at himself. "I can't refine a saint rank ingredient by myself."

"I need help," Alex thought.

He was getting so desperate that he nearly risked not only ruining the ingredient but also hurting himself.

He remembered what happened when he was in the Mind Tempering realm and tried to refine a True rank ingredient. He had nearly caused the energy to go violent and volatile.

Saint rank ingredient would be way worse than that.

So, Alex decided to ask Qin Shan for help in this matter.

"You want me to refine an ingredient?" Qin Shan was surprised. "I'm sorry young man, but I've never performed Alchemy. I will... I don't know how I could ever do it without messing it up."

"Don't worry, senior. I will train you myself. Besides, I just need your help because you have Saint Qi. I would have done it myself if I had the Qi," Alex said.

"Fine, fine," Qin Shan accepted in the end, seemingly reluctantly. On the inside, however, he couldn't help but be super excited.

After all, the whole world was trying to take a glimpse of Alex's face right now, and he was getting a one on one training for him.

Besides, it was hard to deny the words of someone who made a 92% pill.

Alex gave a personal lesson on alchemy for the whole day to Qin Shan who happily absorbed it all. Later that night, he sent him back to revise the lesson in his mind as the next day he would have to help Alex.

Come next day, he sat in front of Alex in a confident manner.

"Now listen to what I say and do exactly that," Alex said. He then started teaching Qin Shan exactly how to move the ingredients.

"Just focus on moving it, leave the fire and temperature to me," Alex said started focusing on it.

Once he was ready, he told Qin Shan to start.

Gently, Qin Shan dropped the final piece of the Blood Spirit Ginseng and Alex immediately poured all of his attention into gaining the impression of the ginseng once again.

It had been 3 months since he last got the impression, so he was hoping to be somewhat wrong so that he could go on to find other ingredients that would work.

However, unfortunately for him, it was entirely the same. The same wood energy, the same feeling. In fact, he could tell that the Fragrant Ginger Vine was the perfect ingredient to replace it if it was also a Saint rank ingredient.

A minute later, Qin Shan stopped and took some heavy breaths. "Whoo! Saint rank ingredients sure are hard to control," he said.

"Yes, the higher the rank, the harder it becomes to handle them," Alex said without any emotion on his face.

While he was capable of making small conversation, his mind was entirely focused on finding what he would do now. The last piece of Blood Spirit Ginseng was gone and he had found nothing new.

He could just wait until Saint realm to get his arms back as everyone else told him. However, no one knew why he was really doing this.

If it were only for him, he could've waited to make the pill once he reached Saint Realm and not have destroyed the Blood Spirit Ginseng.

But given how rare the ingredients were, he doubted he would get more than a single set of ingredients. What then? He would be healed, but what about his master?

Wen Cheng was back in the crimson empire without a hand and a few fingers on the other one. His Martial Uncle was without a leg, and so were the many other elders that fought on the night when his master died many years ago.

He wanted to help them too. He was sure that they would never enter the saint realm, at least without any external help. As such, if he didn't make a pill for them, he would never have them healed.

'What should I do?' he started feeling panicked and stressed. He had a few people around him but none of them could help him right now.

His mother wasn't helpful in alchemy. Shen Jing had gone home and wouldn't return for another decade or more.

Aside from these two, there were a few others he could rely on in most cases, but not this.

"You must have been in a lot of life and death battles," Qin Shan suddenly spoke, taking him back to what he was doing.

"Sorry?" Alex asked as he didn't quite hear Qin Shan.

"I said that you must have fought a lot of life and death battles, or been around a lot of deaths," Qin Shan said.

"Not really around humans, but for beasts yeah," Alex said. He had killed a lot of humans already, but compared to beasts, the number was insignificant.

"No wonder," Qin Shan said with a sigh.

"No wonder what?" Alex asked.

"No wonder you can stand this thick of a bloody stench," Qin Shan said.

"Yeah, you get used to it. You just need to ignore it and focus..." Alex trailed off as he realized something and abruptly stood up.

"Stupid!" he called out himself. "Why the hell am I ignoring the Blood Aura of an ingredient named Blood Spirit Ginseng?"

"Are... you alright?" Qin Shan asked.

"Yes, thank you, senior. You helped me realize my mistake," Alex said. "If you'll excuse me, I have to be somewhere."

Alex ate a face-changing pill and went to the guild to buy a bunch of true rank ingredients with Blood Aura in it. From what he hoped, he would pair the Ginger Vine with one of these ingredients, and hopefully, the blood aura would do its job.

So, Alex returned back to his place and started making the pill once more.

He put in the ingredients as per the recipe with a lot of mistakes along the way as his body had heated up to a point where making pills was getting hard again.

Still, he forced his way through it and prepared the pill. As he went along and was on the final step of the process, he put in the Fragrant Ginger Vine.

Once that was refined, most of the time, he would make a pill out of it. However, now he was going to put in another ingredient because of its blood aura.

Alex took out a red leaf and was ready to place it in when he stopped as a bunch of information appeared in his mind.

Fire. That was the elemental energy of the ingredient in his hand. If he were to place this ingredient in, the fire would very easily cause problems for the Water energy that was the current result.

'This will destroy the pill,' Alex thought. He switched through the other ingredients, but very easily, any one of them could ruin the pill.

Alex turned what was in the cauldron into a pill and started thinking of what other choices he had.

'I need blood aura without it having any other energy,' he thought.

Chapter 753: Blood Aura

Ingredients with blood aura usually came from a location where blood was spilled. Since blood aura wasn't natural, without death or at least heavily injured human or beast, such ingredients were impossible to obtain.

As such, many of the ingredients had mutated to the point that they were carnivorous and would kill any beasts that got close to them to improve themselves.

Blood Ginseng, a common rank ingredient was mostly vines above ground that would grab and kill any beasts that walked close by it.

Similarly, other ingredients also had evolved to kill beasts and humans for themselves.

As Alex recalled all of this, he realized the main problem he hadn't thought out before going out to buy a bunch of such ingredients.

It was the fact that any ingredient that had a blood aura was a byproduct of the death around it.

At the center of it all, the ingredient itself existed which had its own energy. As no ingredient had neutral energy, any ingredient he did put in the recipe would drastically change the final result and end up becoming a different pill from what it already was.

'I need pure blood aura and nothing else,' Alex thought. 'How can I do that?'

He started going through his mind once more to remember more about the blood aura, but he couldn't think of any ingredient that he had read about that did have only it.

As he thought more and more, Alex's mind went back to the time in the Demon realm when Song Shing attacked the door that wouldn't open.

The Song family were known as a bunch of Blood aura users whose entire arsenal revolved around fighting using blood aura.

Alex remembered the attack he did. He had brought out a vial of blood and used it to attack the door. The attack had been quite strong as well.

'Blood,' Alex thought as he realized. "Will blood work?"

He needed to try it out immediately. Alex thought about how he could find blood to use, but it would be hard to come by unless he went and killed some beasts.

However, even then it would be difficult.

"I can't use just blood," he thought. "Blood contains energy too."

He remembered the Blue Flame Monkey's blood that was also an ingredient for this part. The blood was of Fire attribute, so it was impossible for just blood to be an ingredient.

'Maybe I can keep the ginger vine in a blood overnight for it to gain blood aura?' he wondered.

With no other choice, Alex cut his palm and collected a bowl full of his own blood. He placed the ginger in the bowl, and left it aside to cultivate after eating a blood rejuvenating pill.

The whole night, he was anxious, but he managed to keep himself from getting distracted and focused on his cultivation.

The next morning, he got out of cultivation with a hopeful heart and went to check on the ginger vine.

Alex instantly took out the Ginger Vine and even without checking anything else, he knew he had passed somehow.

Having stayed in the blood overnight, the Ginger Vine was absolutely full of blood aura. While it wasn't of the same level as the Blood Spirit Ginseng, this was good enough for a True rank pill.

Alex excitedly thought of making the pill when the vine in his hand gave information about itself that immediately disappointed Alex.

The Fragrant Ginger Vine that was supposed to be a Wood Element ingredient, was now a Yang Element ingredient.

Having stayed in his blood overnight, the extreme yang from his body had messed with the ingredient.

"Dammit!" Alex cried out. He was so hopeful, and it had even worked. And yet, he still failed.

He started cursing at his own body for being so full of Yang. He needed blood from a body that was without yang.

'Wait,' Alex thought. 'No, I still have a way, don't I?'

Alex quickly brought out the Saint ingredient that was part of his rewards for winning the competition.

The Blizzard's Rainbow Core.

The fruit looked like a multicolored apple, and the moment Alex took it out, the surrounding chilled to a few degrees lower than it previously was. It wasn't the same sort of drop in temperature as the water that the princess had given him, but it was close enough.

Alex took a deep breath and started cultivating as he ate the fruit. The Yin energy from the fruit started invading Alex's meridians and fighting with the Yang energy in his body.

Very soon, Alex could feel the yang in his body lowering to a point where it was nonexistent.

It lasted an entire day and night as Alex took things slow, but somehow it felt like just a couple of hours for him.

When Alex opened his eyes the next morning, he could feel not a single bit of Yang in his body.

Using the opportunity, Alex immediately cut open his palm and gathered another bowl full of blood, and placed another Ginger into it.

Alex spent the next whole day once again cultivating and only stopped when it was time for the Ginger to be ready.

Alex took out the ginger from the bowl and was immediately surprised at the even stronger blood aura that was coming off of it. It was almost as if leaving it in the blood for a long time was helpful.

Alex took a deep breath to calm his mind as he took the Ginger out to check its properties.

"Yes!" he shouted out as he realized that the Ginger was still a Wood ingredient. Only now it was full of Blood Aura.

Alex took another deep breath as he started preparing the ingredients once more for the pill and started making it.

Without his yang body to make problems, and the perfected recipe after tons of retries, Alex had a really easy time making the pill.

There was still a lot of little fixing here and there left to do, but even with that, he managed to make an 82% pill.

Alex wanted to immediately eat it and test it, but he needed to be safe, so he continued heating the cauldron as he brought another set of different ingredients and made the True Nullifying pill.

As the pill was on its final stage, Alex started undoing the bindings on his puppet arm and it came off easily.

"I hope I do not need you anymore after today," Alex softly said as he finished the final stages on the True Nullifying pill.

As soon as the pill was formed, Alex got rid of both the fire and the heat in the cauldron.

At the same time, he brought out the healing pill and placed it in his mouth. The moment he swallowed it, Alex could feel a wave of energy pass through his body.

Alex immediately pulled out the True Nullifying pill just in case there was a problem, however, nothing bad happened yet.

As the energy moved around his body to repair what was broken, it finally reached his left arm.

Alex tried to keep away his anxiousness but that was impossible. For what felt like a long time, nothing happened, but then he felt a little itch on his stump.

Soon, the itch grew to an unstoppable degree and Alex felt like he needed to scratch it, but he held himself.

As the itch grew, Alex saw his stump wriggle as if going through a cramp. Just after that, it violently started expanding forward as bone, muscles, veins, tendons, and skins all started appearing one by one.

As if the pill had a knowledge of his genetic features, his left hand slowly grew to look exactly like the one he lost.

What was just until the elbow, grew to the wrist. Then the numerous bones of the palm started emerging as fingers grew out of it.

The bones were soon covered by muscles, which were then covered by skin. His fingers were bare for a few seconds before nails grew back on them.

Alex looked at his left arm in a daze as it grew to be exactly what it was supposed to be.

He moved his new arm a little. He grabbed stuffs. He felt the heat, the cold. He even hit it a little to feel the pain.

"I did it," he softly said to himself as it dawned on him that his arm was really back. "I really did it."

He had finally done what he had set out to do over 9 years ago.

Chapter 754: Blood Experiments

"Mother! Mother!" Alex shouted as he knocked on his mother's door.

"What is it? Is something wrong?" Helen hurriedly opened the door in worry. However, when she opened the door, she was met with a really excited Alex.

"Look!" Alex lifted his left hand with a child-like glee in his face.

Helen looked at his left arm for a few seconds before she realized what she was looking at.

"You did it?" she asked.

"I did it," Alex said excitedly.

"Oh, my sweet child. Congratulations," Helen said as she hugged her son. "Pearl, come look what your big brother did."

"Oh, what did brother do?" Pearl came out of the room.

"Look Pearl, my arm's back," Alex showed it to him.

"Your arm?" Pearl was surprised for a second. "Brother you finally got it back."

"Yes," Alex said.

The three of them celebrated Alex getting his arm back and even Qin Shan was joined in on the fun after he was notified of some loud screams from his mountain.

Throughout the entire time, he was there, Qin Shan had his mouth wide open as he couldn't believe what Alex had achieved.

"You were a big help in this happening, senior Qin," Alex said. "Had it not been for your little help, I might have been stuck around with a failed pill."

"I helped?" Qin Shan asked.

"Yes," Alex said.

"So you made a pill that can restore lost limbs?" Qin Shan asked.

"Yes," Alex said. "Or at least I would like to think I did. There are some concerns on whether it can heal just my injuries or everyone's."

"Why would you be concerned about that?" Qin Shan.

"The final ingredient requires me to keep it in blood for a little while so it can absorb the blood aura. Since the pill I made had my blood aura, I'm still not sure if it can work on others or not," Alex said.

"You should test it soon," Qin Shan said.

"I was already planning to," Alex said. "I have quite a few on the ingredients dipped in my blood there. I had to draw out so much blood for this that I feel kind of woozy right now."

"You deserve to rest more than you deserve this celebration, son. Go take a break," Helen said.

"Okay, mother," Alex said and returned back to his room.

Alex then cultivated for 2 whole days before he was back to being in the perfect condition.

Once he was, he took out the ingredients from the blood and started making pills with it.

As he continued making the pills, Alex started making fewer and fewer mistakes. By the time it was his 4th pill, he was reaching 85% consistently.

One of these times, he even reached 90%.

In total, Alex ended up making about 12 different pills and he needed to test them. He couldn't just have any person test it for him just in case it was bad.

So, Alex instead went to the guild to find some Pill Swines to test it on.

Alex found one that had its limb cut off due to a pill's reaction and became the perfect testing swine for him.

He fed it the pill and watched. The swine started getting irritated immediately and started rubbing its cut-off end on the ground from the intense itching sensation it was feeling.

Alex understood what was happening, so he quietly watched it get better. Within half a minute, the pig's little leg was starting to wriggle out, and within the next minute, it had a new leg.

"Yes!" Alex thought. "It works on others too."

There were a few more testing to be done, but Alex was happy that he now had a recipe in hand that could fix a lot of problems that would otherwise remain unsolved until one reached the Saint realm.

"Alright, let's get back to more testing," Alex thought.

There was one thing that he desperately needed to try. That was to use others' blood instead of his own.

Alex went around the Flowing Brush sect, requesting blood from everyone. Soon, he had a cauldron full of blood.

Alex wasn't worried about blood types causing problems in a pool of blood as cultivators never had that problem. At least not in the same way mortals did.

Alex went out of his way to make sure he didn't get blood from the individuals that had a superior Spiritual root. He couldn't risk the blood having an element.

Fortunately, there were many people in the Talisman-making profession that were there for exactly the reason of not having talents for the fighting profession.

Once his cauldron was filled from the blood of thousands of volunteers, Alex got a bunch of Fragrant Ginger Vines and dumped them in the blood, and let it rest overnight.

The next morning, Alex went to check on the vines, but there was no blood aura. So, Alex decided to let it be for a little longer.

The next day, there was still no blood aura. Alex wondered if he put in too many vines at once and took out about 3 quarters of it.

At the same time, wondering if there was some sort of mistake, he used his own blood as well to separately test if the speed was the same.

The next morning, Alex's blood created a vine with a thick blood aura, while the cauldron full of blood was barely starting to make a change.

Alex brought out more vines until there were about 5 remaining in the cauldron full of blood. Then, he decided to wait and see exactly how long it would take to reach the point of concentration as his blood did in just a single day.

While waiting for that to happen, Alex focused on other things and broke through to True King 6th realm while Pearl was still at True King 7th realm.

At the same time, he also noticed that his Yang energy was starting to come back, and now he couldn't make any more of those vines as his blood would contaminate them with his Yang.

He needed attribute-less blood after all.

It took the cauldron full of ingredients nearly 25 days to turn the 5 ingredients into having a thick blood aura.

Alex then proceeded to make 5 different pills using them and tested them too.

Afterward, Alex tested one of those pills and it worked as well as the first one did.

"So, the pill doesn't exclusively need my blood," Alex thought. "But it needs a lot of blood from ordinary folks. I can't use beast blood as they are all full of elemental energy."

"I can't use the blood of most talented folks as their blood is likely contaminated too. I would likely get a far faster result if I had Saint realm cultivator's blood but how hard is it to find one that doesn't have a superior Spiritual root."

"Even if it did work, would they be willing to draw so much blood just to cure a True realm cultivator?"

Alex started thinking about more and more things as his thought went past just the normal ways to acquire blood.

'What if I reveal this recipe and suddenly people start mass murdering mortals to gain their neutral blood? Can I handle their death on my hand?' Alex thought.

As Alex kept thinking, he soon realized that there was no way he could ever reveal the existence of this pill to anyone else. At least, not the recipe.

"Well, how the hell do I go about consistently making these pills now?" he thought. As far as he could tell, he would need the blood from someone or something with both a really strong cultivation base or bloodline, and with blood that have no attribute to them.

As far as he was concerned, there was not a single person in the empire that was just that. Not even himself.

"I guess this one is just going to have to be a secret then," Alex thought as he looked at the 15 different pill vials, all of which contained Immortal Grade True Body Regenerating pill.

He knew there were far more than that just in the Crimson Empire that needed such pills.

Alex then looked at his own body. He would be happy to give away some more blood if it meant saving someone from being without legs and arms or even other organs.

However, he couldn't, now that his blood was full of Yang again.

Alex sighed as he realized what he needed to do now.

"Time to go to the Icy Hell."

Alex punched a metal puppet as hard as he could and watched it say the words 'True King 7th realm'.

"Finally," Alex thought as he checked his left arm.

When his arm had come back, Alex had been too excited to worry about anything. Then, for an entire month, he went on a testing spree where he ended up figuring out that revealing the recipe was a really bad idea.

Aside from that, he had also realized that his arm that came back wasn't very high in body cultivation as the rest of his body.

While it was in the True realm in terms of strength, it was in the lower end of the True Realm. So, for another month, Alex spent his time cultivating his left arm along with Pearl.

At the same time, he also prepared for his journey to the Icy Hell by making many different pills, talismans, and formations.

When Qin Shan found out he was going there, he was beyond furious, saying that this was a very quick way to kill himself.

The Icy Hell was well known amongst the upper Echelon of the Luminance empire as being one of the more unapproachable locations on the continent.

That, and the secret realm that lied to the north. Compared to the Icy Hell, the Poison Swamp was tame to most people.

His mother started worrying after her master told her the truth and soon she started telling Alex not to leave.

It took him a rather long time to explain to her why he needed to do this. Even then, she was very worried about him.

"I will keep Pearl here then," Helen said to Alex as he got ready to leave.

"Are you sure?" he asked.

"Yes, he will tell me if something bad happens to you. If I get any sort of information as such, I will bring the whole empire to look for you," Helen said.

"Okay, if you say so," Alex said. "Alright, I will leave now mother."

"Take care, and make sure to message me from time to time," Helen said.

Alex left.

It was late afternoon when Alex flew southeast where the Icy Hell domain was.

Since he was going to fly above the eastern mountain ranges that were full of beasts that would want to attack him, Alex concealed his aura to be less noticeable.

Saint Realm beasts would find him if they were more or less alert, but since they had no reason to do so, there wasn't any need to worry for Alex.

Night fell soon and the moon rose to the sky. The bright, spotless moon shined brighter than the stars around it.

Countless mountains went past Alex, but he kept on flying. The night was mostly quiet, but he could hear roars and other beastly noises from down below from time to time.

Soon, the sun came up and he could feel the heat on his body. However, the cold air around him never left.

Even as the sun rose higher in the sky, the air was continuously colder and colder.

'I'm here, aren't I?' Alex thought as he started seeing the snowcapped mountains. He was in the region where the Icy Hell was. The Icy Hell itself however wasn't here yet.

So, Alex flew on for much longer until he started seeing snow everywhere.

At that point, it started getting so cold that his flying boat started to have ice forming all around it.

'Time to get down then,' Alex thought as he took back the ship and flew down from the sky.

As he landed on half a meter deep snow, Alex immediately spread out his nearly 200-meter wide Spiritual sense and started looking for the main thing he was here for.

Yin treasures.

According to the princess, this was where many of the Yin treasures originated from, including the drop of yin water that she had given him to temporarily get rid of the yang in his body.

In the 400-meter diameter of the circle that was his Spiritual sense, Alex didn't find any treasures, so he started walking further ahead.

Perhaps due to the lack of sun because of the forever-covered snow land, there weren't many plants in general, let alone ones that were alchemy ingredients.

Still, he had heard about Yin treasures growing here so he could only continue forward.

As he was walking, Alex felt light thumps on the ground coming from up ahead. 'What's that?' he wondered and slowly climbed up the shallow mountain.

When he was at the top, he saw a giant bear of white fur and icy blue body stand on a pool of blood-red snow and the carcass of... something.

It ate the dead body with its now bloody snout and then suddenly turned towards Alex.

Alex feared it a bit at first, but then he noticed that the bear was on the verge of entering the True Emperor realm.

'I have nothing to worry about,' he thought and ignored the bear, but the bear didn't ignore him.

Suddenly, it charged through the snow, kicking it everywhere, and lunged at Alex.

Alex suddenly made a fist with his left hand and used his Qi as well. Then, as soon as the bear was close to him, he punched it directly on the side of its snout.

The heavy bear was suddenly sent back as it skidded on the snow, revealing the barren ground underneath.

"You want more?" Alex asked as he was surprised at how strong he was even when he was holding back.

The bear looked at him with fearful eyes and suddenly ran away.

'That felt good,' Alex thought and turned around to walk deeper into the cold. Soon, the cold was starting to get to him. Not in the same way any other cultivator would feel, however. He was just getting uncomfortable.

At that point, Alex let his yang aura radiate out of him as there were no more reasons to hold it back.

Alex got deeper into the cold, but thanks to his Yang aura, he felt nothing. He continued searching for Yin ingredients but they were really hard to come by.

In the 4 hours he had been here already, he had barely managed to find a single yin flower, and that too wasn't of a very high rank.

So, he could only go deeper.

In the next 6 hours, Alex found 2 more ingredients, neither of which were particularly good.

To him, an ingredient that wasn't at least a pseudo-Saint rank was now useless. So, even as night fell once again, Alex needed to get deeper into the cold.

Around 4 hours in, Alex found a tree that was on Yin energy. While it wasn't the best quality, he decided to gather the ingredient just in case.

However, before he did so, he noticed something. Hidden below the snow under the tree was a snow fox that was waiting for him to approach.

Its body was so easily camouflaged into the snow that Alex nearly didn't notice it. Alex then sensed the beast's cultivation base and realized it was a True Emperor beast.

But of course, it wasn't very strong, so Alex was ready to fight it. He acted like he didn't notice the fox and got closer.

Suddenly, the beast lunged at him and Alex punched the fox. However, even as his fist reached the snow fox, he realized something was wrong.

Stopping mid-attack, Alex immediately jumped to the side and rolled on the snow. Where he had been previously, now there was a snow fox with its fangs baring at him.

The fox that had lunged at him was nowhere to be seen or sensed. If not for him sensing the fox's attack on his leg, he wouldn't have dodged the attack.

'What was that?' he wondered. 'A clone? No, an illusion? How did it manage to create an illusion that seemed so real to my spiritual sense as well?'

As Alex asked that, the beast suddenly split into two. Alex knew one of these two foxes was fake, but he couldn't tell which one was it.

"Two can play at this game."

Alex's body blurred for a bit as a Yang clone of his appeared next to him. He stood side by side and got ready to fight.

Since he was going to fight a beast, he decided to win at its own game and dropped to the ground.

Claws appeared from his hand as his metal energy of his went to work.

"Come!"

Alex suddenly dashed forward as a tiger did. At the same time, his yang clone did so too and the both of them looked like 2 fighters fighting against two foxes.

Alex slashed at the snow fox, but his hand passed through. At the same time, the snow fox also went through the fake Alex and realized it had been duped.

Alex quickly turned to the real fox and lunged at it, but suddenly the fox cried out loudly.

"Awooooo!"

Alex didn't understand what it was doing until he felt his earrings buzz a little. The fox was using a mental attack and his earring easily stopped it.

At the same time, Alex swung his two claws at the fox and tore off a chunk from its right side.

The beast tried to create an illusion again, but it was in too much pain to do so.

So, Alex took pity on the beast and quickly killed it to keep it from being in such pain.

Once the fox was dead, Alex collected its material and went over to the tree. There he took the Yin treasure from it and went on his way.

Chapter 756: Canyon

Hell was an apt name for this place as nothing living could ever exist here.

The area was a massive plain now as Alex had gone past the mountains and it was all plain past that point.

As far as Alex could see, which was barely more than a few meters due to the hellish blizzard that never seemed to stop, everything in the area was dead.

His spiritual sense however gave a different answer. Everything on the surface was dead. However, there were some things growing underneath the ground, but those too were rare to the point that in a day's slow travel, Alex barely found maybe 3 different items, 2 of which had nothing to do with Yin.

The Yin treasures he did find were good, but he wasn't sure how helpful it would be considering it wasn't exactly Saint rank.

It had been an entire day since he had seen beasts, so at this point, Alex didn't even know if he should feel worried about them at all.

He couldn't think of a single beast that could live here after all.

Alex suddenly stopped and looked ahead with his spiritual sense. Something was on the ground that wasn't either snow or rock.

Alex couldn't exactly tell what it was, so he got closer until he was right on top of it and moved aside the snow.

When he finally uncovered what it was, Alex felt his heart drop.

This was a corpse. Alex saw the wide sunken eyes of a female whose entire body was frozen solid, including her orange robes. Her body was encased in clumps of ice from the snow that likely melted around her before she died.

Alex didn't know how strong this woman likely was, but the fact that she had died here meant she had at least some strength.

'This would be my fate too if I didn't have the yang aura blocking the coldness for me,' Alex thought. He finally started realizing for real how treacherous his path currently was.

The wind suddenly picked up and Alex felt it try to push him back. But he fought through it for a few seconds until it stopped.

Alex looked back at the frozen lady and bowed a little in respect. "Whoever you are, may you rest in peace," he said and walked away.

The dead corpse might have scared him, but his need to find cures and solutions for his body far outweighed his concerns for his own survival.

Alex understood that this was bad, but he couldn't stop himself.

As night fell, the blizzard got even worse so Alex had to stop wandering aimlessly and take shelter.

Since there was nothing to take shelter under, he dug the snow and made a small cavity on the ground where he placed a barrier formation that also generated heat on its own.

The barrier was amazing and kept Alex safe, but due to the constant attack from the outside, he needed to continuously replace the true spirit stones in leather pouches around the formation poles.

Overnight, the blizzard died and the sun rose up. It was still cold as hell, but he would rather just have a cold than cold and strong winds.

Alex undid the formation and walked out of the hole in the snow. Once he was out, he could see the clear sky since the first time he was there.

The sun was so bright that Alex was forced to close his eyes and just look at things using his spiritual sense.

Just as Alex spread out his spiritual sense, he noticed something at the edge of his sense. However, before he could take a look at it, the thing escaped out of the range of his sense.

'What the hell?' he thought. 'What is so strong that I can't even sense it leave?'

Alex started worrying that there was a Saint Rank beast around here. 'Dammit! I knew saint realm cultivators came around here frequently. Of course, saint beasts can survive here too,' he thought. 'I should have been more prepared.'

He brought out a bunch of talismans and even revolved his Qi as he got ready to use the Earth Devour Technique to escape from the area. However, even after a few minutes, nothing came into his sense again.

Alex squinted in the bright light, but there really was nothing around there at all.

After realizing that whatever was here had likely left, Alex continued moving closer towards the coldness to find more ingredients.

'Should I leave?' Alex thought as he trekked further into the coldness. He had already bared his fangs at the Icy Hell, so he saw no point in returning without finding some good ingredients for his body.

'Is it getting colder?' Alex thought. Even as he walked forward, he felt the temperature drop noticeably. Not only that, it was so cold that even the air struggled to move.

Alex arrived at the top of a cliff that led down to a valley of some sort through a couple of hundred meters drop.

'Weird,' he thought. 'I thought I was already walking on a plain. How is it suddenly so high? Is this what they call a canyon?'

Alex looked down at the valley down the cliff and got ready to jump down there.

"Wait!" A voice suddenly called out from close by, freezing Alex in his tracks.

"Who?" Alex asked as he looked around to find whoever was speaking. He didn't need to search much longer as the figure in black clearly contrasted against the harsh whiteness of the snow.

Alex saw the figure with nothing but shock on his face and a small budding fear in his heart. His breathing got irregular and even the yang barrier that he had been creating by letting his yang energy flow out was destabilizing a bit, letting in the coldness inside.

"Se-senior, what are you doing here?" Alex asked.

The figure in black moved closer to him, walking on all fours. The yellow eyes contrasted the deep black fur on his body, making him look extra frightening.

"Don't go any further, young man. You will die," the black jaguar spoke.

After 9 years of leaving him alone, the beasts from the beast realm had finally caught up to him.

Were they going to kill him? Were they going to kidnap him back? Maybe experiment on him?

How was Pearl? Did they capture him already? Was he already taken to the ritual? Was that even a bad thing?

Numerous thoughts ran around his mind while his mind refused to settle on any one of them.

"Are you alright, young man?" the beast asked after seeing Alex not speak for a while.

"Wh-why are you here?" Alex asked. This was at least a Saint Core realm beast from what Alex could tell. Meaning, that the jaguar was stronger than many of the upper echelon of the Luminance empire.

The last time Alex was in the beast realm, he had humiliated them. So, he needed to be extra careful.

"I am here to look after you," the jaguar said. "To make sure you don't do anything stupid, like what you are about to do."

"What I am about to do?" Alex asked as he looked behind him. "Like go into that valley?"

"Yes," the jaguar said.

"Is it dangerous?" Alex couldn't help but ask. "I'm already in the Icy Hell, how much more dangerous can that be?"

"How much more dangerous? What about the fact that what the humans call Icy Hell is just the surrounding? That down there is the real Icy Hell. Is that enough of an answer?" the jaguar asked. "Or do you want me to tell you that the place down there is so cold that even Qi in your body gets sluggish to the point that they don't work?"

"What?" Alex couldn't help but get afraid.

"Come, let's go," the jaguar moved forward.

Alex hurriedly got back in fear. "Don't come near me," he said. "Tell me why are you here exactly."

"I told you, I came here to look after you," the jaguar said.

"You mean you came here to look after Pearl, right? Well, Pearl is not here," Alex said.

"I know. He's with your mother back in Dawnspring city. The leopard is looking after him. I really am here for you," the jaguar said.

"What? How do you know that? How long have you been keeping an eye on us?" Alex asked.

"Ever since 2 years ago when we found you in the mountains after doing a search, we have been keeping an eye on you," the beast said.

"2 years ago?" Alex was surprised. He remembered the beacon being activated, but he thought he was safe and they hadn't been found him after all. However, it seemed it was all a lie.

They had not only found him but also kept an eye on him ever as he went through the empire.

"Come, let's go," the jaguar said.

Alex looked back and realized he really was at the edge of the cliff. If the place was as treacherous as he was told, then it was better to leave.

"Alright, let's go," Alex said.

Just then, something happened. Alex had been standing on the edge of the cliff which was nothing but ice. When he poured out his yang energy all around him, it also affected the ice underneath him.

The result of his yang energy wasn't noticeable generally as he kept moving around. However, this time he had stood there for a long time as he talked with the jaguar.

A little too long.

The ice beneath his feet melted until it couldn't handle him. Then, Alex felt his body go into weightlessness and he started falling.

Even as he fell Alex tried to fly, but he felt his Qi move sluggishly. The more he fell, the more sluggish his Qi got, until he couldn't fly at all and fell to the ground that was many hundred meters below.

Chapter 757: The Real Hell

As Alex tumbled through the air, his body got more and more sluggish as he failed to fly and finally ended up crashing onto the ground.

The ground crumbled as Alex found himself deep underneath it.

It turned out that the ground was actually fully ice.

Even then, Alex felt pain all over his body. Not only that, he felt the cold as well.

Without hesitation, Alex pushed out as much yang as he could from his body to protect himself while he tried to climb out of the ice.

There was barely any Qi for him to use so he had to claw his way out of the ice.

When Alex finally managed to drag himself out of the ice, he realized what a horrible thing he had just done.

The ice had isolated him from the coldness that was up there, but now, he was open to the elements and was fully bombarded with the coldness.

Alex once again tried to use his Qi, but it barely worked. He barely managed to even take out a healing pill for himself.

'So cold,' Alex thought as he shivered vigorously. He looked back up to the cliff top only to see a horrified Jaguar.

"I need to climb back up," he thought to himself but he wasn't sure if he could. The cold was way too much for him.

Alex once again reached into his storage ring and difficultly pulled out some pills, talismans, and formation plates.

Immediately, he activated all of them. The formation plate landed on the ice and created a barrier. The talisman fell in front of Alex and started generating heat, and the pill also heated his body from the inside.

Alex felt a sense of relief as his body was heated. However, in just a few seconds, it all came to a stop.

"What?" Alex was shocked by the sudden cold that followed the lack of heat. He quickly checked the items and realized that they were all exhausted.

"No way!" he thought. He had barely used it for a few seconds and it was done. Only the pill that was inside his body lasted a normal amount. Unfortunately, that little heat couldn't stop him.

Alex continuously spread out his yang, but it wasn't helping much against the cold. At the same time, he spread his spiritual sense but it barely went past a dozen or so meters.

"What the hell? Not only my cultivation base is suppressed, but even my spiritual sense. This is starting to feel a lot like the Forbidden Fields," he thought.

He looked back up at the cliff and shouted, "Senior! What do I do?"

The jaguar didn't know what to answer. He was simply way too surprised that Alex had even managed to survive in a place that would likely cause trouble for even Immortals.

It was hard for him as a Saint Realm to stand in the vicinity. He couldn't imagine how a True Realm cultivator could survive at the heart of hell.

"Can you see a way to climb back up?" he shouted back at Alex.

Alex looked around and noticed nothing but cliffs. "No!" he shouted. "Let me try something."

Alex couldn't fly, so he decided to climb the cliff with his bare hands. He went up to the cliff wall and grabbed onto a piece of rock.

Immediately, he felt pain shoot through his palm and he had to let go of it. "Argh!" Alex cried as he looked at his palm and saw deep red marks as if he was burned.

'Dammit! Ice burns,' he thought. If he tried to climb this cliff without any support, by the time he was halfway done, he would lose his fingers to frostbite.

He would be willing to let that happen if that helped him reach the top, but it didn't, so he was forced to stay away from it.

"I can't climb this. It's too cold," Alex shouted back.

Then, he sat down on the ice and started cultivating. That was one way to improve his healing, and it was also a chance to see if he could produce more Yang to protect himself.

Alex barely finished a full circulation of his technique after nearly 2 minutes. The Qi in his body had slowed down to a half and it was getting hard to cultivate.

The Jaguar kept thinking of ways to get Alex out, but nothing worked.

The place down there was so cold that no matter what he tried to do, the cold would destroy it.

"Dear Lord, how am I going to answer them if I let this kid die," he worried.

Alex felt a bit better as he cultivated, but it was still quite cold. As he waited for ideas to get out of this place, he started thinking of something.

'This is definitely like the Forbidden Fields. Stagnant Qi, no spiritual sense. I'm half-surprised I can even cultivate at all,' he thought.

His mind slowly drifted to the scene of the dying tree that he promised to take care of the seed. The 3 yellow leaves were full of yang.

The object is full of Yang that he grabbed and subsequently ate.

A Treasure.

'There's a treasure here,' Alex realized as his eyes opened. 'A treasure that far surpasses what is normal.'

Alex stopped his cultivation technique for a moment and switched to the Winter Moon cultivation technique.

Not even a second later, a vast amount of Yin entered his body and started getting rid of the Yang. Alex instantly stopped, but his mind never did.

'This valley really is full of Yin,' he thought. 'No wonder there are so many Yin treasures in the surrounding. Just what sort of treasure could cause create this much Yin?'

Alex started getting excited and stood back up. He stopped cultivating a new hope that appeared in his heart.

When Ma Rong had problems with her Yin Constitution, she had gone to the Forbidden Fields to take care of it.

Which meant, if he stayed around here, he could likely have his constitution fixed as well. He wanted to cultivate the Yin the speed it up, but that was most likely a bad idea considering he would freeze to death before he could fix himself.

"Maybe I should get closer to the treasure and stick around," he thought. The valley wasn't big, maybe a couple of kilometers wide at best, so Alex was more than sure he would be able to get close to this treasure.

"Senior, I will look for other ways to get out of this place," Alex shouted and walked away from the cliff side.

Unlike with the Yang tree, Alex had no idea or feeling that led him towards a path, so he was forced to walk around the place in the freezing atmosphere.

Alex forced out as much Yang in his body as he could, which surprisingly increased even more.

It was as if all this time, his body hadn't even been trying to create yang, and only did so now because Alex needed to.

Even then, somehow the cold was getting to him. Alex shivered his way through the entire valley in search of the treasure.

After going around for hours searching with just his eyes as his senses refused to work much, Alex still didn't find anything.

Night fell soon enough, but Alex kept searching. It didn't really matter much for a cultivator if it was night or day, so he wasn't really worried.

Unfortunately for him, it mattered to his surrounding. Without the day full of the Sun's yang, the Yin in the air grew ferocious and soon Alex started feeling colder than ever.

If this continued on, Alex would freeze to death. He tried to bring out some pills to eat, but they too didn't help much at all.

'I need heat,' he thought as he shivered in the cold, but where in this frigid hell could he even find any heat?

'No,' he thought. 'Every object has heat. Even cold ones.'

Suddenly, his authority over the surrounding grew and the world moved to follow his command. The cold air around him grew colder as Alex drew heat from it.

He felt a warmth that he hadn't felt in over hours and was more than happy. However, the heat didn't last long as the colder the air got, the more difficult it became to bring out heat from it.

As such, Alex was forced to move away from this place where the air was particularly chilly than the rest.

As he moved, he started using his Dao of Heat Conduction to fight against nature to more heat from the cold surrounding to his hot body.

Alex was more than glad that he learned this Dao as he wouldn't have survived today without it.

Alex couldn't stay in one place to gather heat, so he kept moving around until he reached a location where there was barely any heat to pull from.

'Did I walk around in a circle?' he thought for a moment but he saw something that surprised him a lot.

In front of him, in what looked like a really small puddle was some liquid. He got closer and realized it was water.

"What?" Alex thought in surprise. "How the hell is there liquid water here?"

However, upon close inspection, Alex realized that it wasn't any normal water. He started feeling the cold yin aura pierce through his yang aura and Alex soon realized what he was looking at.

'A puddle of yin water?!' Alex thought in surprise.

A single drop of this water had helped him revert many months' worth of yang. He could only imagine what a puddle of it could do for him.

Chapter 758: Return

Alex opened his eyes to a gentle feeling of serenity. He looked around his surrounding at the sight of ice everywhere, but there was no cold he could feel at the moment.

The sun shined bright and the rays hit his body directly, yet he felt no heat from it.

Alex closed his eyes again and sent his senses into his body. The Yin orb and the Yang fruit were nowhere to be found again. However, he could feel pure Qi coming out of his naval area.

A Qi that was far stronger than his normal Yang Qi. Alex moved his Qi through his body, and this time there was no sluggishness, no pain, nothing.

It was as if water flowing down a clean creek.

Finally, Alex thought to himself, 'how long have I been here?'

He could tell that it had been a while, but it was quite impossible for him to tell the exact period of time he had been cultivating for.

Either way, he knew it had been quite a while since he had started cultivating, so there were surely some problems that accumulated, that he needed to take care of before they got too troublesome.

Alex took a deep breath and suddenly found himself in his spiritual space where the spiritual sea was far and wide below, while the silver mountain hung in the sky.

It had been more than 7 years since he had acquired the mountain, and finally, he saw some difference.

Had Alex not had a photographic memory, he wouldn't have noticed it at all, but there were some spots on the mountain that were visibly smaller than before.

It was negligible when compared to the entire mountain, but this at least told Alex that the mountain would disappear in the future.

He then moved his attention to the millions of silver threads that flew in the sky and went up the mountain to absorb them.

As he did, he also noticed the massive black goo that covered the artifact's spirit. Alex hurriedly devoured that too until the crystal remained.

Ignoring the spirit, he went back to gathering the silver threads, which took at least half an hour.

After he was done, Alex looked at the surroundings to see no other problem that required his help. So, he left the place and arrived back in his body.

Finally, he stood up from the frozen lake he was on and checked his body one last time. After seeing nothing wrong with it, he tried to fly.

Since his Qi was working fine now, he could also fly perfectly well. Alex flew to the top of the cliff that was closest to him, but he had no way of telling if this was the place he had fallen from.

From the regular snowfall and blizzards, the place changed daily. So, all Alex could do was try to judge the direction using the sun.

He stood on the ice for a few minutes and watched the shadow slightly shift direction. From that, he could tell which direction he needed to go in.

Before leaving, Alex changed his tattered clothes for a better ones and flew away.

He searched for the jaguar, hoping he was close by, but of course, he wasn't there. After flying a little further away, Alex took out his talisman and let his mother know that he was okay.

Helen was beyond rejoiced to hear that and asked him to quickly return back.

As Alex flew, he checked his body once more and was happy to find out that there was almost no yang coming out of his body.

Sure he could create some if he wanted to, but it never released on its own. This gave Alex some hope that it would continue to do the same from now on.

After a little while, Alex brought out the flying boat and rode it all the way back to the DawnSpring city.

When he finally reached back, he went straight to the Flowing Brush sect and then directly to his mother.

"You are alive," Helen started crying the moment she saw and hug her son.

"I'm sorry I worried you mother," Alex said. "I was forced into cultivating to save myself so I couldn't switch my attention to anything else."

"Brother, are you okay?" Pearl asked from the side.

"Yes, I am fine," Alex said. "How about y— wait, what? Pearl, how are you in True King 9th realm already?"

"Hehe, mother made me cultivate every day so I can be strong enough to protect brother one of these days," Pearl said.

Alex moved away from his shocked eyes from Pearl and looked at his mother. She too was as True King 3rd realm, which was 2 realms more than what she was when he left here.

"H-how many weeks was I gone?" he asked cautiously.

"Weeks?" Helen said incredulously. "You were gone for nearly 8 months."

"8... months?" Even in his wildest dreams Alex could never have imagined to have disappeared somewhere for 8 months.

"We tried searching for you the day you had disappeared, but we couldn't find you. What exactly happened?" Helen asked.

Alex proceeded to explain as well as he could. "After the orb entered me, I don't have many memories aside from forcing myself to cultivate. I did feel them entering my naval area, and only after that did I gain proper consciousness again," he said.

Qin Shan arrived not long after and was beyond shocked to see Alex still alive. Alex told him what had happened, but kept the important details to himself.

Alex was surprised when he found out that the empire thought he was dead now. He thought of letting them know he was back, but then he would have to fulfill his promise of the Alchemy lesson that so many of them had very much likely been waiting for.

So, he decided to keep the facade a little longer.

After speaking with his mother and reassuring her that he was alive and okay, Alex walked out of her room to go to his own house.

However, he stopped in his tracks halfway through when he realized that he was sensing something in him.

'A spiritual sense?' he thought as he spread his own spiritual sense around to find the individual. However, this spiritual sense came from way too far away for him to track down the source.

'A saint realm?' Alex thought. In just a few seconds of thinking, a thought came to his mind and he flew away from the location to the outer edge of the sect towards the empty mountains.

The spiritual sense got stronger and stronger and Alex knew he was in the right direction.

"Senior," Alex called out. "You can come out."

He waited for half a minute before a beast arrived in front of him. It looked at him up and down for a moment before opening its mouth to speak.

"You don't seem that dangerous when you don't have the spirit fighting for you," the beast said.

Alex recognized the leopard from back when he went to rescue Pearl from the beast realm. Aside from the jaguar and the puma, this leopard was the third saint realm beast he saw that day.

"Thank you senior, for looking after Pearl and my mother," Alex said.

"I was just doing as I was ordered. Besides, looking after the young lord is my honor," the leopard said.

"Can you let senior jaguar know that I'm alive now?" Alex said. "He must've thought I had died in the Icy Hell region."

"He knows you are alive. He's been going there to look after you frequently. You probably just missed him by a couple of hours. Once he realizes you aren't there, he will come here directly," the leopard said.

"I see," Alex said.

Suddenly a spiritual sense landed on Alex that was different from the Leopard's spiritual sense.

The black jaguar appeared in front of the two and looked at Alex in surprise. "You really survived?" he asked.

"I did. Thank you for looking after me, senior," Alex said.

"You don't have to thank me," he said. "I nearly killed you instead of protecting you."

"No, it was my fault mostly," Alex said.

"Since you are fine, we haven't failed at our job," the jaguar said. The jaguar turned to leave, but Alex stopped him.

"Wait senior, I need to ask you something," Alex said. "Are you planning on taking Pearl back for the ritual?"

Chapter 759: Return

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"8... months?" Even in his wildest dreams Alex could never have imagined to have disappeared somewhere for 8 months.

"We tried searching for you the day you had disappeared, but we couldn't find you. What exactly happened?" Helen asked.

Alex proceeded to explain as well as he could. "After the orb entered me, I don't have many memories aside from forcing myself to cultivate. I did feel them entering my naval area, and only after that did I gain proper consciousness again," he said.

Qin Shan arrived not long after and was beyond shocked to see Alex still alive. Alex told him what had happened, but kept the important details to himself.

Alex was surprised when he found out that the empire thought he was dead now. He thought of letting them know he was back, but then he would have to fulfill his promise of the Alchemy lesson that so many of them had very much likely been waiting for.

So, he decided to keep the facade a little longer.

After speaking with his mother and reassuring her that he was alive and okay, Alex walked out of her room to go to his own house.

However, he stopped in his tracks halfway through when he realized that he was sensing something in him.

'A spiritual sense?' he thought as he spread his own spiritual sense around to find the individual. However, this spiritual sense came from way too far away for him to track down the source.

'A saint realm?' Alex thought. In just a few seconds of thinking, a thought came to his mind and he flew away from the location to the outer edge of the sect towards the empty mountains.

The spiritual sense got stronger and stronger and Alex knew he was in the right direction.

"Senior," Alex called out. "You can come out."

He waited for half a minute before a beast arrived in front of him. It looked at him up and down for a moment before opening its mouth to speak.

"You don't seem that dangerous when you don't have the spirit fighting for you," the beast said.

Alex recognized the leopard from back when he went to rescue Pearl from the beast realm. Aside from the jaguar and the puma, this leopard was the third saint realm beast he saw that day.

"Thank you senior, for looking after Pearl and my mother," Alex said.

"I was just doing as I was ordered. Besides, looking after the young lord is my honor," the leopard said.

"Can you let senior jaguar know that I'm alive now?" Alex said. "He must've thought I had died in the Icy Hell region."

"He knows you are alive. He's been going there to look after you frequently. You probably just missed him by a couple of hours. Once he realizes you aren't there, he will come here directly," the leopard said.

"I see," Alex said.

Suddenly a spiritual sense landed on Alex that was different from the Leopard's spiritual sense.

The black jaguar appeared in front of the two and looked at Alex in surprise. "You really survived?" he asked.

"I did. Thank you for looking after me, senior," Alex said.

"You don't have to thank me," he said. "I nearly killed you instead of protecting you."

"No, it was my fault mostly," Alex said.

"Since you are fine, we haven't failed at our job," the jaguar said. The jaguar turned to leave, but Alex stopped him.

"Wait senior, I need to ask you something," Alex said. "Are you planning on taking Pearl back for the ritual?"

Chapter 760: Plan to Leave

"Don't worry about the young lord. He does not need to go through the ritual just yet," the jaguar said. "Perhaps we were too hasty to do what we did. He's barely over 8 years old. It wouldn't hurt for him to gain a little more emotional maturity."

"Is lady Ren fine with that? Oh actually, how is Lady Ren? Was she hurt? Is she fine?" Alex asked. The last time he saw lady Ren, she had taken the brunt of 3 different Heavenly Judgment lightning attacks.

That attack had been so strong that Alex felt fearful just being in the vicinity of it.

"Lady Ren is doing... okay," the jaguar said. "She did suffer a bit of damage from the lightning, but it's nothing a little bit of closed cultivation won't heal."

"I see," Alex said. "I'm sorry how it went the last time I was back there. I was way too focused on protecting Pearl and I ended up disrespecting and even hurting you all."

"It's... alright," the jaguar said. "It's in the past now. You can go and focus on your own thing now."

'My own thing,' Alex thought. He thought about what his thing was and realized what he needed to do now.

"Senior, I have a request," Alex said.

* * * * *

2 months passed by in the blink of an eye.

Alex stuck to his room making pills one by one. Since he was 'dead', he made his mother go and get the ingredients for the pills for him.

During this time, he refined the healing pill the best he could and found other ways to make them besides using just his own blood.

Now that his body was full of unadulterated Qi, his blood was the best resource for the pill. However, Alex found that blood from beasts that had a wood element to them also worked to a certain extent.

They were still slow in terms of transferring aura over to the ingredient, but using Beast blood was a much safer way than humans. In fact, Alex now believed that he could reveal this information to the world without fearing the unnecessary loss of life.

Of course, as his status was still unknown in the empire, he was going to keep it that way for a long while.

Alex finished making the pill and brought it out to look at it. Even without focusing on the process much, Alex was still consistently making over 85% pills now. That was just how well his body was working.

He truly felt reborn.

Alex did a logistics check on all the pills and pastes and recipes he had.

He made sure he had enough prepared and finally left his room. He walked over to his mother's place and found her ready to leave.

Qin Shan was also with her asking questions, but Helen didn't have many answers to give him.

"Young man, you're finally here," Qin Shan brought him in. "Tell me, what are you planning? You've been holed up in your room and even told your mother to get ready. Are you leaving for somewhere?"

"Yes, I am," Alex said. "You can come with us if you want to. Although I'm not sure how the sect will take it if you take a few months-long breaks."

"Where exactly are you going?" Qin Shan asked.

"A place I consider my home now. The Crimson Empire," Alex replied.

"The Crimson Empire?" Qin Shan's eyes narrowed for a bit before widening. "The place beyond the northern forest? Are you joking? You will die."

Alex smiled. "No, we won't. I can assure you that," he said.

"Why are you going there?" Qin Shan asked.

"As I said, it's my home. My master, disciple brother, sister, and many friends are there. Also, they desperately require my pills, so I need to go back there," Alex said.

"I see," Qin Shan said. "What about the competition?"

"Competition?" Alex asked. "Ah, I completely forgot about that. How long do we have?"

"Around 9 months. But you will need to go through a preliminary test around 3 months prior to even registering, so really just 6 months," Qin Shan said.

"Oh, then it's fine. We'll make it. I plan to stay there for a few months only. Maybe try and bring some of them here, but that's it," Alex said.

Qin Shan thought for a long while and asked, "How sure are you that we can go across the forest?"

Alex chuckled. "You must be worried about the dangers we will come across in the passage. Well, worry not. After all, it will be the dangers that will take us through the passage," he said.

Qin Shan couldn't understand the cryptic sentence.

"I am taking my mother through there. You can rest assured that I am not making a hasty decision," Alex said.

Qin Shan finally thought for a while and said, "Fine, I'm in. I want to see what this place is like too."

"Great," Alex said. "We leave in an hour."

"AN HOUR?" Qin Shan exclaimed. "I will have to go give some commands while I'm not here then."

Qin Shan left to handle the matter of the sect for when he wasn't around, and Alex helped with his mother's packing.

After an hour, the 3 of them along with Pearl flew to the east where the beasts waited for them.

Qin Shan couldn't help but tremble a little when he sensed the aura of the two beasts.

"Sa-Saint Core?" he couldn't believe it. He finally realized what Alex meant by 'dangers taking them'.

"Young Lord!" the two beasts bowed down towards Alex.

"Young Lord? You?" Qin Shan was surprised, but Alex only chuckled and shook his head.

Pearl jumped down from Alex's embrace and stood in front of the two. "If you try to hurt my brother or my mother, I will tell my grandmother," Pearl said.

"Of course not, young lord," the two beasts said.

"Hmph!" Pearl snorted and looked at Helen with a smirk on his face.

The jaguar ignored his young lord's show-off attitude and looked towards Alex. "We can leave whenever you are ready," he said.

Alex nodded and they left.

Helen held Pearl while sitting on top of the jaguar, while Alex sat on top of the leopard. Qin Shan was forced to fly all alone.

Due to Helen and Pearl's presence, the jaguar didn't speed up very fast, and that let Qin Shan keep up with them.

After flying for what felt like half a day, the group finally saw the forest in the north. They were getting close.

Alex looked down below and saw the nightlife of the Riverweed City, the first city he had been to in the empire.

Once they went past that, Alex patiently waited for what was to come next.

The formation platform.

Once they reached the formation platform, the ground finally got down and the jaguar brought out a medallion from its armband.

However, before he could activate it, Alex spoke up. "Senior, may I try instead?" he said.

"Try? The formation?" he asked.

"Yes, I want to try something," Alex said.

"Sure, go ahead," the jaguar said.

Alex nodded and placed his hand on the platform. Then, he forced his body to produce yang Qi which he instantly poured into the formation.

Before anyone was ready, the formation activated.