

Alchemy 861

Chapter 861: Lack of Ingredients

Alex entered the book store that glowed with warm orange light and looked around.

While they called it a bookstore, it seemed the people here sold information on talismans more than anything. Nearly 70% of everything they sold here was on talismans.

Whisker turned around and helped him locate a staff member who was free. Alex approached the young woman.

"Hello, may I trouble you in helping me find some books of a few information I want?" he asked.

"Ah, yes. What are you looking for?" she asked respectfully, but her eyes moved rapidly trying to understand how he was possibly looking at her.

"Well, I'm just trying to learn about the continent. Do you have anything for that?" Alex asked.

"Hmm, let me see," the woman turned around and looked for a few things. She picked up a book or two and a few talismans. She looked around for a bit and returned when she didn't find anything else.

"I got a few here," she said and pointed to the books in front of her.

Alex looked at the book and read their titles. History of the Northern Continent, and Many sects of the Northern Continent.

"Oh, that's good," Alex said softly under his breath. Learning about the history of the continent and sects was rather important in his eyes.

"What are the talismans about?" He asked.

"Oh, this one had some general overview on the political structure of the continent. Nothing big mind you, or very accurate. This one lists a bunch of places around the continent that are considered the 9 wonders of the Northern continent, and this one is a thorough map of the continent," she said.

"Ooh, a map. That's helpful," Alex said and nodded to himself. "I will take them all. Also, do you have information about umm... the runes that came out about a dozen years ago?"

"Ah, the scripts? Yeah, we have that information. Do you want a design or...?" the girl asked.

"A few designs yes, but mostly how scripting works in general. I want information on that itself," he asked.

"Okay," the girl went and returned quite quickly this time around. "This one is about making a lantern, this one is for strengthening a house. This one is for releasing heat."

"And this is the one that explains how you can do it all," she said.

"Thank you," Alex said and looked at the talismans and books in front of him. 'Hmm, what do I need next?'

SQUEAK~! SQUEAK~!

Whisker cried out from his chest, reminding him that he needs something too.

"Ah right," Alex looked at the woman. "You sell techniques, right? Do you have ones for beasts?"

The woman began showing him what she had, and Alex bought a few that matched both Pearl's and Whisker's spiritual roots.

He was made to pay about 53 True Spirit stones for everything, which he paid more than gladly.

Alex left the bookstore and moved toward the other parts of town. He next entered a formation store and bought a few materials for True rank formations, and even some Saint rank formations which he should start practicing once he entered the Saint realm.

After that was a Talisman store where he bought high-grade papers and some high-grade ink for both True and Saint rank talismans.

In just two of those stores, he ended up spending over 9 thousand True Spirit stones.

After that, Alex entered the Alchemy store where they sold not only pills and ingredients, but recipes as well. He wanted to find some new recipes that were available on this continent only.

Alex looked through the common pills and found that none of the pills had a harmony of over 75%.

As for the True rank pills, none of them had a harmony of over 70% as well.

As for the Saint Rank pill, finding one in the Heaven rank alone was a hard task.

Alex had to consciously let himself know that this city was not something he should judge the rest of the continent by. As far as he knew, this could very well be just an average city when considering everything else.

Alex looked around at the recipes and asked the clerk to tell him what they had. He listened carefully and bought a few of those that he hadn't heard of before.

Surprisingly, most of it was something he already knew. In fact, there were only about 20 or so Saint rank pill recipes, and every single one of those was something Alex already knew about.

He shook his head and decided to buy some ingredients instead. He asked for a few True rank ingredients, which the store provided without any problem.

Then he asked for some saint rank ingredients, but the store couldn't give him any this time.

"Sorry, the customer. We have no Saint rank ingredients," they said.

"Oh, really? But you have Saint rank pills. Are you out of it?" Alex asked. He wondered if he perhaps came by at a rather wrong time.

"No, we just don't sell Saint rank ingredients," the clerk said.

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"Don't sell? But you sell the pills," Alex said.

The clerk shook his head. "We are only allowed to sell pills and True rank ingredients. We aren't allowed to sell Saint rank ingredients."

"Not allowed? Who dictates this if I may ask?"

"The Heaven's Frost sect," the young man said. "It's a rule made by them. Any ingredients that come by us that are Saint ranked has to go to them directly."

Alex frowned a bit. "So if I want to find some Saint rank ingredients then..."

"You will have to find it in the wild, or enter the sect," the young man said.

Alex got a little angry. The sect was trying to have a monopoly of ingredients and was forcing the normal alchemists to not even have a chance at all.

"Is there some sort of alchemy guild around here at all?" he asked.

"Yes, there is one on the other end of this road," the young man pointed. "But you won't find Saint alchemists there. Even if you do, they won't make Saint pills for sure."

"Fuck!" Alex said under his breath. It seemed being a Saint alchemist in these lands was going to be rather tough. He tried to hide his anger and thanked the clerk before walking away.

He then went onto a few more stores that sold various things like clothes and artifacts and bought a few that he thought he might need or might come in handy for the other guys in the village.

Once he was done, he went around a tour of the city.

For nearly 3 hours, he roamed around the city aimlessly, seeing the many cultivators go about their night. The city grew silent by the time he was back towards the store and saw Fan Yanshi and the rest walk out of it.

"Are you guys done?" Alex asked.

"Yes, we are finished," Fan Yanshi said and looked around the city. "It looks like the snow storm has ended too. Let's leave."

Alex nodded and they left. The group walked out of the gate and Alex took out the ship and they got on it.

As they left, something white flashed from Alex's left side, but no one saw what it was as they started flying back towards the village.

Chapter 862: Steps

Not long after Alex's group flew out in the night, a group of cultivators appeared outside the city. All of them were in the True realms, and a few were even in the True Emperor realm.

"Did you see where they went?" one of them asked.

"Yeah, in that direction. Quickly, bring out the boat," another one spoke.

The group was far enough from the city gates that the guards didn't see them, so they weren't hesitating at all about flying after the ones that just flew away.

While one of the men brought out a boat, another one excitedly spoke up. "Did you see how much he spent? At least 15 thousand True Spirit stones. Do you think he's some sort of young master?"

"Who cares? As long as we get his storage bag, we will be set for a long time," Another man spoke.

The flying boat was out. It was a large boat capable of carrying at least 30 people in it. It cost at least 20 True Spirit stones to operate for every 200 kilometers it ran.

The 15 or so people in the group got onto the ship and the ship started. Without any hesitation, the person at the front moved the ship, and it flew in the direction Alex had left.

"Can you see them?" someone asked from behind, a young voice.

"We only just moved. It will take some time," the girl in front of the voice spoke.

"What are you guys going to do when you catch up?" the young voice asked.

"We will see. If that guy hands over his belongings, we can let him go without harm, but if he dares to fight, we might have to kill him," the girl said.

"Ooh, that's bad," the young voice spoke from behind. "You're bad. I shouldn't let you keep going after all."

The girl turned around in confusion. "What are you tal— AAAARGHH!!!!" she screamed immediately the moment she turned around.

The men and women in the boat were pushed around by the woman and a few fell off. The man at the front stopped the ship and turned around angrily.

"What the hell was... that?" his angry voice changed to confusion and surprise when he saw a white-furred cat stand at the back of the ship.

"What is that?" someone shouted.

"I am here to stop you all," Pearl spoke with a proud face. He then took a deep breath and roared.

A massive tiger face appeared in the air and suddenly many different artifacts on the people's bodies started buzzing.

About 4 of the weaker ones, who did not have any defensive mental artifacts fainted all at once.

"It's a strong beast," one of the men said with a solemn face. "We need to kill it or we might die instead."

Various weapons popped up all around the group as they got ready for battle.

Pearl smiled, he was ready for battle too. His right arm suddenly glowed golden and he swung it from afar.

3 golden lines flashed through the air as it went toward the cluster of people on the ship. A few managed to get away, but 3 got caught in the golden ropes.

An arrow flew towards Pearl, but he did nothing and watched the arrow hit his body and fall to the ground. His body was so strong that he didn't need to worry about some normal arrows that were fired by people that weren't even True Emperor yet.

A golden spear formed of metal energy flew at Pearl. Pearl's paw glowed golden again and he punched the golden spear in the air.

A man flew in with a sword and slashed at Pearl, but his body glowed golden and tanked the sword slash. Pearl then hit the man once and the man flew in the distance and skidded along the snow, bleeding from some broken bones.

3 more attacks flew at Pearl. A flying firebird, an orb of blue light, and some shaking from the ground that turned out to be vines growing in the snow.

Pearl's body glowed golden once again and all the 3 attacks landed on him directly. A massive explosion rang out, throwing snow dozens of meters into the sky.

Even then, the attacks didn't stop. Another arrow flew from the side, containing brown Qi in it. A sword slash flew from another side, and so did a few icicles.

A girl ran up to the boat and freed the 3 people that were captured there before they too joined the fight.

Another person tried to wake the unconscious people, but that didn't work, unfortunately.

The attacks kept throwing snow into the air, and while it looked like something good was happening, the stronger members of the group frowned.

There was neither any resistance from the attack, nor was there any blood from the beast dying.

Suddenly, a woman flew up into the sky, spinning through the air, and landed on the ground with a broken arm.

"Huh?" the group turned around with a confused look. At the same time, another man felt his chest cave in and he was sent flying. He struck the boat with a bang and vomited a mouthful of blood.

Some of them realized what was happening. "It's invisible!" they shouted and suddenly everyone release their Qi to sense the surrounding.

Pearl noticed their Qi and realized he had been caught, but that alone wasn't going to make him stop.

A fist-shaped floating cloud of mental energy flew out of his mind and struck one of the men. The defensive mental artifact began buzzing very loudly, alarming everyone to the fact that Pearl had used a mental attack.

"Be careful," the True Emperor that used the spear said.

Pearl's arms glowed golden again and 3 metallic ropes appeared when he swung his hands. All of the remaining 8 people dodged at once and retaliated at once.

Pearl jumped to the side and dodged the attack.

Then he looked towards the weakest of the 8, one of the girls with the bow and arrow, and ran towards her.

The girl nocked her bow and was about to shoot when Pearl suddenly glowed golden and turned into three different Pearls.

She tried to feel Pearl with her Qi, and so did the others, but there was only one answer in the mind which they knew could not be the truth at all.

All three of the Pearls were the real Pearl. They weren't that far off.

"It's the one on the right," one of them shouted and everyone targeted the Pearl on the right.

8 different attacks flew at Pearl, all hitting the Pearl on the right. Light warped for a split second around the spot where the 8 attacks landed and the Pearl there was shredded to oblivion.

However, the other two kept running.

The two Pearls converged into one and slammed onto the girl, folding her body in half forward as she flew into the distance.

Pearl quickly dodged another set of attacks that flew towards him and once again roared at them.

While the defensive mental artifact buzzed aloud, Pearl targeted the next weakest person in the group, a man in the True King realm with a saber in his hands.

Pearl's body flashed and he turned into 3 once again.

"Which one?" the young man asked in a terrified voice.

The True Emperor woman used her senses to find the right Pearl, but it was hard. After all, to her senses, all Pearls felt like the real pearl.

Still, she had to choose, and once again, like everyone else, she chose wrong.

The real Pearl arrived in front of the young man and attacked him, but the young man managed to pull out a talisman in time to protect him.

However, the talisman only protected him just once and Pearl still hit him a second time, easily breaking his shoulders and incapacitating him.

Only 6 more people remained, each more troubled than the next regarding the fight. They had come out of the city to rob someone rich, and yet somehow they had ended up fighting with a talking cat that was extremely powerful for some reason.

"How are we wrong every time?" One of the men shouted angrily. However, the others didn't have an answer for him. They too were stumped about it.

It wasn't just them of course, everyone who had ever fought against Pearl was stumped by this.

Previously, Pearl could only split his body into 2 different copies. During those situations, it was a 50-50 chance to get right, which most assumed they got wrong when they attacked him.

However, now that there were 3 of him, it was impossible to believe that it was luck keeping them from hitting the right one on the first try.

Of course, it was no luck at all.

Whenever a White Tiger used the White Tiger's Steps, they formed copies of themselves that weren't capable of doing anything but running towards their opponent. Since it was a movement technique, attacks were almost impossible to perform.

However, during those times, as long as the copies were out, they could not be harmed.

Similarly, as long as Pearl's copies were running, his real body was safe. After all, his real body was separated into these very copies.

When any one of the copies was harmed, the part of him in that copy returned to the remaining copies, turning them ever so real.

When all but one copy remained, that copy would gain all of him which had split out, becoming the real Pearl in the end.

Chapter 863: History

With only 6 people remaining, Pearl sped up.

The remaining men and women tried attacking him, but Pearl's physical body was too tough for them.

One of the men immediately disregarded it all and ran back towards the city they had just left. The woman tried to fight back, but Pearl beat her easily with the White Tiger's Golden Claw.

The third man lasted for maybe a minute longer before he realized he needed to run too. Pearl, however, got to the man before he even managed to run.

He wrapped 3 golden strings around the man and tossed him around like a ragdoll.

The three remaining True Emperors realized that Pearl was too strong, even for them. It was a little late to be realizing that, but at least they had realized it.

"Do we run?" the woman asked.

The man with the spear looked conflicted. There was no way to win here, but if he left, all these people that were down were likely going to be killed.

"No, we have to fight," he said.

"I... I'm not fighting that," the other man said and immediately turned tails to run away.

With another person gone, the remaining two had no choice but to run away as well.

Pearl watched the 3 runs, but he didn't follow them. Instead, he looked around the snow at the many people that were on the ground, some squirming in pain, some fully unconscious.

He went up to these people and took their storage bags away. Then, he went up to the boat and took it into one of the storage bags he had just acquired.

Once he got everything he could out of these people, he ran off to return to Alex.

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The sky to the east was glowing purple when Pearl returned back to Alex. Pearl gave a general description of what had happened and how he brought back some things for him.

Alex took the storage bags and kept them to look at it later.

The boat continued flying and the 4 people behind him didn't even realize anything had happened at all. They didn't realize when Pearl had left, and they didn't realize when Pearl had returned.

The sun rose above the eastern mountains when the 5 of them returned back to the village.

When they arrived, the villagers looked confused, and couldn't help but wonder if they had to return because of the snowstorm that occurred last night.

"No, we went to the Snow Road city and returned. We bought everything," Fan Li said out loud to everyone's surprise.

"You guys will have to thank brother Yu because of his help. You won't believe it, but he has a flying boat. We reached the city in like no time at all," Fan Yanshi started describing everything.

Alex spent a little time with the people and then went off to the garden, even though he was told that he didn't need to do anything at all.

Alex agreed, but he just wanted to check on his plants before he returned to his house. He weeded some of the plants out, put some fertilizers in there, and after watering it all, he left.

By the time he had returned back to his room, Whisker was fully asleep.

Pearl came out and sat next to Alex while Alex looked at the storage bag that Pearl had brought him.

He looked through the many weapons and such, but the only thing he found useful from them was the boat.

"Maybe I will give it to these people," Alex said. "Good job."

Pearl smiled and showed his proud face. Alex pet him a bit and finally brought out the books and talismans he had been so excited to read about.

Alex opened the book named 'History of the Northern Continent' and read it.

The book talked about a certain war that no one knew anything about that brought a large amount of destruction to the land. They didn't know much about what the war was about, or who the people were up against.

"Huh? They know about the Eternal War, that's surprising," Alex thought. The war was such obscure information that he didn't think any of these people would know about it.

Just the fact that the war was common information, even though no one knew much about it, was already surprising to Alex.

Then the book talked about the ruler of these lands. T

hey surprisingly knew that a ruler existed and that it was a beast.

They didn't know that they were Black Tortoises or that they were from the immortal realm, but they knew there was a rightful ruler.

In fact, they even knew where the ruler lived.

Alex was beyond surprised at this knowledge. Back in the Western Continent, no one even seemed to know about the White Tiger's existence. Granted, the White Tiger had died about 5 thousand years ago, but he would still have expected someone to know about it.

"The White Tigers did decide to not interfere with the humans and just ruled over the beasts, didn't they?" Alex thought. He continued reading.

Aside from knowing that there was a ruler, there wasn't anything much about the Tortoise in the history book, as all generations of tortoises that ruled this land generally stayed out of the world, and acted more as its protector, than its ruler.

At first, the people didn't dare to try and become something of a ruler themselves, mostly in fear of the ruler taking offense to it.

However, as time went by and the general public started forgetting that a ruler even existed, more ambitious people came to be.

These people formed sects and tried ruling for a while, but as soon as the strongest one of them overcame the Saint realm and entered the Immortal realm, they were forced to leave, which left the sects in dire straits and under attack by the others that felt like they deserved to be the one.

The coming and going of sects happened for a long time, until about 30 thousand years ago, when a sect came around that ended up becoming so big that no one could topple it.

The Snow Immortal sect.

The sect managed to survive by always having two leaders each time.

Even when one of the Saint realm leaders of the sect could break through, they didn't do so until there was another one to look after the place when they were gone, who would then immediately start searching for their replacement.

The sect ended up being so big, that it was called a Super sect, with branches at every corner of the continent, each with its own leaders, all of which reported back to the main sect.

The Snow Immortal sect pretty much ruled the Northern Continent.

However, about 8 thousand years ago, when the leader of the sect at that time tried to break through, he brought tragedy onto the land.

No one understood why, but when the leader of that time tried to break through, he couldn't survive the process at all and died.

That wouldn't have been bad, but the process was so powerful and so destructive, that the mountain the leader was breaking through was blown to smithereens.

The many sect elders and the other leader died at once. Then, the strongest people of the main sect were gone, with the branches still intact. Then, the 5 strongest branches at the time took advantage of the situation and broke off from the Snow Immortal sect to become their own sects.

The 5 sects became ancient sects with a history of nearly 30 thousand years thanks to them belonging to the Snow Immortal sect. In fact, it was said that they even targeted the main sect and stole away their resources, forcing the Snow Immortal sect to have no choice but disband.

There still remained a Snow Immortal sect, but it was a mid-range sect at best now with no hope of being a high-tier sect, let alone an ancient sect.

The 5 sects that split from the Snow Immortal sect decided to rule their own piece of land and split the continent into 5 different states.

The State of Bing was now governed by the sect that had come to be known as the Nether Poison sect. They were a sect that mastered using Poison, not unlike the Royal family of the Western Continent.

The State of Xue was now governed by the Heaven's Frost Sect, which was one of the more normal sects of the land.

The State of Dong ended up being governed by the Frozen Heart sect, which was famous for being a woman-only sect that used some sort of technique to remove part of their emotion towards men and become stronger as a result.

The State of Shuang was now controlled by the Blue Spring sect, which was also a beast-taming sect, and one of the only few ones on the entire continent.

Finally, the Sta

te of Re was under the governing of the Blazing Earth sect, the only sect of the 5 that did not have anything to do with cold or ice, as most of the land of the State of Re never even saw snow.

These 5 sects were the strongest and largest sects of the Northern Continent and its current definite rulers.

After that, there was nothing informative in the history book aside from the beast's rebellion in the Central continent, followed by an overwhelming victory in the Western continent.

Alex shook his head when he read that and closed the book. He was done reading.

However, that was just one book, and he had so many more to read.

Chapter 864: The Nine Wonders

Alex next read the political structure of the land, and while it was informative, it wasn't really something he was excited to learn about.

It only talked about the tensions between some minor sects that he would never have anything to do with. The bigger sects that ruled the land never really tried to attack the other State and start an all-out war. That was just not profitable for them.

Alex ignored that book and moved on to the talismans he had.

The next talisman he had was something that apparently noted down many famous spots to visit in the continent, including what was known as the 9 greatest places, which was also known as the 9 Wonders of the Northern Continent.

The talisman had information on two mountain peaks that were side by side where one spewed out lava, while a glacier flowed down the other one.

There was mention of a place so dense in water Qi that it was forever misty.

There was a restaurant in a city called Frost Haven Restaurant where they made delicacies using only ice made up of spirit waters that apparently someone had to test.

There were places with arenas where people went to go to fight and earn money for themselves.

There were tombs and locations where people from before the war many thousands of years lived. Of course, they were empty now, but people could still visit if they wanted.

There were also the Forever Isles that were to the south of the Northern continent. It was a set of many islands that seemed to stretch forever into the ocean.

Along with that, there were many more 'normal' locations that the talisman said that people had to visit.

After reading through what was basic in his eyes, Alex finally reached the end of the list that contained the 9 wonders of the Northern Continent.

The first one was the Secret Realm of the Ruler.

"They really do know about it," Alex thought as he read.

The talisman made note of land in the far north of the State of Xue where a monument stood. If one activated the monument, they would be transported to the realm where the ruler lived or at least had once lived.

The people weren't sure if the ruler was still alive or not, but they knew where he was and cautioned people against going to that area without any preparation.

The next location on the talisman was something known as the Endless Tunnel.

About 2500 years ago, when the Heaven's Frost sect and the Frozen Heart sect realized that the mountain range between the State of Xue and the State of Dong was too treacherous for even normal cultivators to travel, let alone mortal merchants, they decided to open up a tunnel through the mountain range.

On either side, the Saint realm cultivators attacked the mountain to break it down, and they did manage to break off a decent amount of it, they soon realized that their attacks were useless.

The mountain range was formed out of some incredible material that was named to be Starforged Tungsten. Even just the metal ore was so incredibly tough that it took multiple saint realms to attack it and break just a small part of it.

The saint realms soon found out that they had come upon an incredible treasure and instead of opening a passage, they decided to mine it.

Since the tunnel that was supposed to open never did open and would take forever to open given how tough the ore was, it was named the Endless metal.

Since the sects couldn't spare Saint realm cultivators to harvest the ores due to how incredibly time-consuming it was, they allowed anyone to simply come and harvest it themselves, so long as they gave 50% of what they harvested to either the Heaven's Frost sect or Frozen Heart sect depending on which side of the tunnel they were on.

The next wonder of the Northern Continent was the Lightning Peninsula. As the name suggested, it was a Peninsula located in the south of the State of Shuang, where Lightning rained as if it were snow.

It was a natural phenomenon that started not very long ago. No one knew how it started or why, but experts could only guess that it was due to some weird magnetic fluctuations around the bay there.

The next wonder was to Alex's massive surprise, the Intercontinental Teleportation formation of the Northern Continent.

"Right, they have one," he thought. Due to the Western Continent no longer having one, Alex had for some reason though

t that no other land would have it either.

But they did, and Alex wondered if he could use it to go back home. However, when he read up on the information in the talisman, he got dejected.

The resources used to run the teleportation formation, now that there was no midway point in the central continent, were so massive that a normal person simply couldn't expect to use them.

Even the ancient sects would have to bring out a good chunk of what they had in their treasury to activate it, and even then they could only go to the Eastern continent or the Southern continent.

For most people who could afford to use this formation, it was much easier and cost-effective to simply fly over to the Eastern continent and then cross that land to fly over to the southern continent.

Alex was dejected that he couldn't use the formation as it was now just a relic of the past. Something one would only use in the worst emergency cases.

He shook his head and continued reading.

In the same State as the teleportation formation, the State of Re, there was a group of volcanic mountains.

There was exactly a dozen to be precise where the best Fire elemental materials grew.

Even though the Blazing Sect was right next to it, the mountain ranges were public to everyone. However, these weren't the mountains that were considered the wonder of the continent.

In between these mountains was another mountain, hidden inside a secret realm, known as the Thirteenth Volcanic Mountain. It was a place with much more fire elements and resources that one could just not get.

Alex made a mental note of this place as it would be an important place to go once he was a Saint realm cultivator.

In the State of Shuang was a massive forest filled with beasts from the Skin Tempering realm, all the way up to the Saint Soul realm.

It was known as the Forest of the Demonic Beasts and was the only place on the continent where one could find almost every kind of beast.

The Blue Spring sect, the ancient beast-taming sect got their beasts from precisely this forest.

Next up was the Dao mountain. Even from just the name, Alex could understand what the mountain could be about. However, he didn't want to trust his intuition and instead decided to look at the description.

However, to his pleasant surprise, the explanation was exactly what he had hoped it would be.

The Dao mountain was a location at the northeastern corner of the Land of Dong where one had an easier time learning the Dao.

The opportunity apparently came from some sort of fragrance created by some flowers that blossomed on the mountain every year. So every year, a set amount of people were able to go up the mountain to smell the flower, fall into a trance and learn some Dao.

Unfortunately, according to the talisman, the Dao mountain was hard to enter without becoming a Saint realm. Alex wondered what the problem was, but there was no other explanation.

"I will have to check it out on my own," he thought.

Next up was a place known as the Domain of War that lay on the southeastern corner of the State of Dong. Alex got curious and read further.

This place was a land torn by battle from ancient times, where intents, Qi, and aura from all types of attacks and weapons still remained in just that part of the land.

Since they came from Immortals apparently, the intents wouldn't just disappear and instead, people could go to it and train against it.

That was a brilliant place for anyone trying to hone themselves, and Alex needed just the type of place too.

Finally, the last location was a place known as The Nine Wells of Time. It was located on a hill in the State of Bing where one could go and drink water from these wells, and depending on the well, one could see their past or a potential future.

Alex was truly surprised after hearing about a place like this and couldn't wait to visit here.

After reading the 9 different locations, Alex couldn't help but be excited about most of those lands, but those would have to wait until he reached the Saint rank.

'I have to hurry up,' he thought. He put away the talisman and brought out another one.

This was the map of the Northern Continent, and Alex read it.

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p>There were 5 states divided among the 5 different sects. Alex searched for the Ruler's realm that was so popular and his eyes nearly fell out when he realized just how far in the north he was.

Most of the cities and sects were towards the south, near the hotter areas, and he was here in the north where there were barely any people living.

"Yeah, I really need to hurry up."

<A N: There is a simple map I made in the comments. I didn't name everything there, but you should be able to figure it out based on the limited resources I had to denote the 9 Wonders.>

Chapter 865: Useless

Alex's next talisman was about the runes that he was so looking forward to learning about.

He read through the talisman for a bit and his eyes narrowed when he realized that it was quite an easy method.

The most important thing about carving runes on objects was the rune 'Resonance'. In talismans, it was a rune that was used to connect two talismans to each other so they could communicate with each other.

His mother had taught him that when she made the communication talisman for him a few years ago.

You resonated two talismans with each other so they could easily be used to send and receive messages.

However, in the cases of scripts, you could not use the scripts without a power source, that was more than likely not going to be just a single person pumping in Qi. So, you had to resonate the script to the power source, which in almost all cases was the Spirit Vein under the earth.

The way to resonate with them was that you took a talisman that could store resonance and copy the resonance of the Spirit Vein, which was always naturally resonating, and apply it to the script.

The script would try to resonate with resonance stored in the talisman and slowly drift towards resonating with the Spirit vein below.

It could only work up to a certain distance, so the script had to always be close to the location where the spirit vein was.

The resulting resonance of the script would always be close to what the spirit vein's resonance was, but it would never be the same.

To connect the script to another script, as one would in the cases of teleportation scripts, you would first do it normally on one end where you would resonate a power source to the script.

Then, you would take the new resonance of the script, copy it, and take it over to the other script you wanted to connect it to.

There, you would resonate the two different scripts and connect them, and only then would you take the power source's resonance from there as well and connect it to the other script.

Once all the scripts and their power sources resonated, you would finally be able to use it.

"Damn, it is really simple," Alex thought. He looked at the information on how to make the resonating talisman and realized he had the ingredients.

So, he quickly brought out his brush and paper and started drawing the talisman.

10 minutes later, he was ready with the talisman and thought of what he could do. He didn't have anything appropriate to test the scripts on so he was forced to use formation plates he had just bought.

It was a waste of money, but he had a ton of that at the moment.

Alex started carving some scripts using the same pen he would use for formations. He made a small script that would illuminate his room.

After the carving was done, he took out a True spirit stone and used the resonance talisman on it. The spirit stone started vibrating all of a sudden and the talisman captured it.

Then, Alex took the talisman and pasted it on top of the metal plate, and poured his Qi into it as well.

The metal plate started vibrating and so did the talisman. The talisman's vibration didn't change, but the metal plate did, and it slowly changed towards the talisman's vibratio

n to match the resonance.

After a few seconds, it was done. Then, Alex slowly put the spirit stone on top of the plate, and before he even touched it, the plate activated on its own to illuminate his entire room.

Alex smiled at the successful scripting and nodded to himself. Now that he had learned it, he was going to practice some more.

For the rest of the day and night, he did nothing but practice it while continuously cultivating the 2 techniques and using his mask.

Once morning hit, Alex got up and returned to work.

After he was done with his work, Alex left the village and went out into the open area to practice his techniques.

The 21 Sword Array, Infinite Heavenly Ice Spear, and Blood God's Manual needed training before he could be proficient at it.

Not only that, he needed to teach both Pearl and Whisker some new techniques.

Whisker wasn't a fighter at all, so he couldn't find him anything new that he could use to fight with. Instead, he got him some movement techniques.

The first technique was one that allowed him to move through the earth without much problem, and the second technique allowed him to move through the water.

Aside from that, Alex had taught him his defensive technique. He had thought of teaching an escape technique too, but the thing that Whisker had to worry about the least was dying.

Pearl got a few techniques too. Mostly, since he was lacking some ranged attacks, Alex got him some.

The first was a technique, not unlike Alex's own Iron Fist Punch, where Pearl could send out a metal paw attack.

Then, the next one was a technique that allowed him to send out a shockwave of metal energy in a cone in front of him.

Aside from that, there was also a barrier technique that created a metal barrier in front of the user.

The three of them learned the technique as well as they could. Whisker had some trouble reading of course, so Alex had to teach him exactly what to do.

Once they learned everything, they started practicing.

Late at night, Alex returned back to his home and ate some food with the villagers there.

Alex watched them eat and remembered something. Fan Yanshi and a few others had been at the edge of the Organ Tempering realm for a while, so he decided to help them.

After returning back, Alex brought out his cauldron to perform alchemy after a long time.

He brought out the ingredients for a pill that would help one breakthrough and started making the pills.

He made about 20 pills in total in just an hour after using the pill-splitting Qi. Meaning that he had refined a batch of ingredients every 6 minutes to make a pill.

Given that these were common ranked pills, Alex could do that easily.

Once he was done with them, he proceeded to make some medicinal pastes using what he had grown in the village, and what he had bought from the city.

He made a few vials of healing pastes, antidotes, and other useful pastes.

Once done, he finished the rest of the night cultivating.

Early morning, Alex went out and found Fan Yanshi, who was on his way to t

he beasts to feed them.

Alex stopped him and handed him the pastes.

"Brother Yu, you made these?" he asked.

"Yes," Alex said while bringing out the pills too.

"Thank you," Fan Yanshi said with genuine gratitude in his voice. "I didn't think you would be able to make some so— What's this?"

Alex handed him the pills as well. "It's a pill that will help you break through to Meridian Tempering realm. It should help you guys a lot."

Fan Yanshi looked surprised for a few seconds, but then his face got melancholic as he said, "Thank you, Brother Yu, but this is useless."

"Useless? Don't say that. Take it, I'm sure you'll be able to break through," Alex said.

Fan Yanshi gave a sad smile and pushed it back. "Trust me, brother Yu. It's useless. Just take it back and use it on yourself when it's time," he said.

"Brother Fan, you may think like it's useless, but it's not. Even with the worst talents, with this pill you can breakthrough," Alex said.

"Brother YU," Fan Yanshi said with a louder, stern voice. "Please, I'm not being pessimistic here when I say it's useless. I'm being realistic. I can never breakthrough to the Meridian Tempering realm."

"What? Why not?"

Even as Alex asked the question, he knew the answer. There really was only one reason. However, he didn't want to believe it.

"No..." he looked at Fan Yanshi for an answer.

Fan Yanshi gave the same incredibly sad smile and said, "I see you've realized. Yes, I do not have any spirit roots. In fact, I have remained in the Organ Tempering 9th realm for 10 years now and will for the rest of my life."

Alex was stunned. This was perhaps the very first time that he had actually met someone that didn't have a spiritual root at all.

"That means you can never breakthrough to..."

"The Meridian Tempering realm, yes," Fan Yanshi finished the statement. "I'm thankful for your thought, brother Yu. But these pills truly are useless."

Alex felt sympathetic for Fan Yanshi. Such a good man was failed by life to be born without Spiritual roots.

"I'm sorry, brother Fan. I didn't know," Alex said. "Still, take it. You can give it to the others then."

Fan Yanshi stayed his hands and instead gave the same sad look to Alex while shaking his head.

Alex felt his heart sink when he understood that expression.

"Everyone?" he asked.

Fan Yanshi nodded. "That is why we are no longer in the sect, but living here. Since we can no longer improve, the sect doesn't want us there," he said. "Still, we are good labor, so they let us stay around and grow resources for them."

"I see," Alex thought to himself. He couldn't help but feel sad about it.

"No need to get depressed over us, brother Yu," Fan Yanshi said. "We're already used to it. In fact, most of us have also stopped cultivating altogether since there is no longer any point."

"You, on the other hand, probably have good spiritual roots. Take these and use them when you reach the peak of the Organ Tempering realm," Fan Yanshi said.

Alex still wanted him to take it, but there really was no point anymore. "I will try and make other pills then. Surely you won't reject healing pills or antidotes to poisons and such," he said.

"Haha, no, I will happily accept it," Fan Yanshi said.

Alex smiled and nodded.

Fan Yanshi then left for his own task, and Alex left for his garden as well.

He looked at the many people as he walked by. Some wore fresh new clothes, ones they had just delivered from Snow Road City.

Some worked on talismans in new papers that were just bought as well.

Other people were cooking food that smelled great thanks to the new spices that were just brought in.

Here and there, the people of this small village, filled with ones that could not cultivate as he could, went about their daily life.

Alex felt sad for them, for they would never hope to see immortality. However, given how happy these people were just as they were right now, maybe that wasn't necessary.

Maybe, just maybe, he should feel happy for them for they were happy themselves.

Alex smiled once his mood brightened and went to the garden to help out.

Between cultivating, training, teaching, and gardening, Alex didn't even realize when 3 months passed by.

He had broken through to the 5th True Emperor realm not long ago. A few months more and he would break through to the 6th True Emperor realm.

Pearl had broken through to the 5th True Emperor realm as well. While he had started earlier than Alex had, they were now equal in cultivation base.

Whisker was the one that had the most improvement of all. He was now at Bone Tempering 8th realm. A little more and he would enter the Organ tempering realm, becoming as strong as most of the individuals in this village. &n

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Alex's harvest from his garden had also been quite good. While the important ingredients had yet to grow, it was only a matter of time.

At most, in just 3 months he would be able to harvest ingredients that would improve the little Whisker's mental prowess.

Given how he was already able to speak in broken words using his spiritual sense, if his mind was improved even more, he would surely be able to fully speak normally.

'How is he faster than Pearl?' Alex wondered. But then Pearl was less than a year old when he had started learning words, so maybe it didn't matter.

Alex was in the garden early in the morning where there were quite a few more people than usual.

Given that this was the day of the harvest, they were there to reap everything they had sowed for that quarter.

Alex tried to help, but as always, they told him to tend to his own garden. After finding out that he was aiding them with pills and pastes, they didn't want to impose more on him than necessary.

Besides, he had already taught them almost everything there was to learn about these plants for them to grow normally.

Alex sighed and moved on to his own garden after Fan Li's insistence. As soon as he arrived, Whisker jumped out of his robe and got to work.

Throughout the last 3 months, Whisker had really grown as a gardener. Of course, he couldn't plant trees or anything, but he could clear weeds and check for any bugs that would come to eat the plants.

He was really good at killing those bugs and insects too.

Alex looked at him almost professionally clear the weeds, and he thought, 'Should I teach him more? Maybe go into how gardening works and how you can plant something? Maybe even how you can harvest them?'

Alex would be more than happy if Whisker obtained such a skill from him. Given that he had fire spiritual roots, Alex even thought of teaching him Alchemy itself.

A small mouse, that wasn't even supposed to be able to cultivate, making pill sure would be a sight to see.

'Maybe I should teach Pearl too,' he thought. Pearl didn't have Fire spiritual roots, but it wasn't very necessary. He just wouldn't be able to learn the Flame Mastery Scripture was all.

After Whisker was done clearing the weeds, Alex harvested what was ripe and ready to be picked. He then brought some ice and watered the plants as well. Then once he sowed some seeds onto the empty land, he was done for the day.

Alex was excited to teach Pearl and Whisker some things about gardening, so he quickly returned to his room and taught them a few things about gardening.

Alex started off with the easy plants and slowly moved on to the harder ones. He also taught concepts that were taught to him by Wei Ruoran in the royal palace back in the Radiant city.

Pearl was incredibly bored with what he was being taught but still stuck up with it. However, Whisker showed no sign of boredom. He simply stayed there, consuming every single piece of information that came his way.

Seeing how well he was learning —and Alex knew that Whisker was learning since there was no way he could forget this information— Alex only got more motivated to teach them.

It was about 3 hours into the teaching when there was suddenly a knock on the door. Alex stopped the Noise Canceling formation and shouted, "Who?"

"Brother Yu, can you open the door please?" Fan Yanshi asked from the other side.

"Wait a bit," Alex said and walked out, while Whisker quickly ran into his robe to help him see. Of course, Alex didn't need Whisker as he was looking around with his spiritual sense now, but it was still necessary for the mouse to be there just for the sake of appearance.

Alex opened the door and saw both Fan Yanshi and Fan Li standing on the other side. Fan Yanshi was all smiles, but Fan Li had slight anger on her face that was hard to hide.

"Is something wrong, brother Fan?" he asked.

"Oh no, nothing's wrong. It's just that today was harvest day and we got paid, so we were thinking of going to the city, and wondered if you would help us in that," Fan Yanshi said.

"Ah, right. I forgot completely," Alex said. He was so into teaching the beasts that he forgot to be there to watch the transaction.

"Right, right, you must want my boat. Sure, we can go," Alex said. "Also, how much did we earn this time around?" &n

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"290," Fan Yanshi said.

Alex paused for a bit. "290?" he asked. "But the harvest this time around was even better than last time."

"Yes, but apparently the price of ingredients has lowered again, so we didn't get much," Fan Yanshi said.

Alex frowned a bit. "Price decreased? No way that can happen twice in such a short amount of time, right?" he asked.

He knew for a fact that the price wasn't low because there was an increase in supply. That was almost impossible this far out north unless every other village gained someone like him all of a sudden.

There was definitely foul play here.

Chapter 867: Complaint

Alex flew on a boat with Fan Yanshi and Fan Li sitting behind him. They were on their way to the Frigid Rune sect to complain about how they had been treated lately.

Fan Yanshi was a little reluctant because he understood just how little they meant to a sect that was around for nearly a thousand years now.

However, he still understood that they could not let this continue. Not only were they lowballed every time they tried to sell something nowadays, but they were also provided with some of the worst resources that could barely grow anything.

Alex steered the ship until he saw the mountain range in the distance, behind which was the sect.

After around 10 minutes, they landed next to the mountain and walked up to the pass between the mountain range where people from the sect stood guard.

Alex was about to go ahead and speak, but Fan Yanshi stopped him. "Please, let me do the talking. I'm from the sect so my words will hold whatever little bit more weight they are worth," he said.

Alex frowned a bit but nodded in the end.

Fan Yanshi walked up to the guards and introduced himself. "Hello seniors, I am someone from one of the villages affiliated with the sect and have some things to complain about. Who should I speak to?"

The guards looked at them carefully and then pulled out a talisman before contacting someone.

"Wait for a bit, someone will come by soon," the guard said.

Fan Yanshi nodded and stayed around in the snow outside. It was turning evening, so they needed to quickly get done here and leave for the city.

The people in the village were already making lists of what they wanted this time around.

A person came out, an older woman with streaks of white hair on her head and a cultivation base of True Emperor 8th realm.

"I was called?" the woman asked.

"Yes, elder. These people are from one of the sect's villages and want to complain about something," the guards explained.

"Huh? What do you want?" the older woman turned to the three.

"Elder, we come from the village nearby where we survive by selling what we grow for the sect back to the sect. However, recently even though our harvest has grown, our earnings have lowered."

"Is the sect really paying less for everything now?" he asked.

"Huh? No, prices have not lowered. What do you mean?" the older woman was confused.

"Then have we been lied to?" Fan Yanshi asked.

The woman frowned and brought out a talisman. "Who's your handler?" she asked.

"Sha Yuan," Fan Yanshi said.

The woman looked at the talisman. "No, the prices here are... okay. You could argue for a few spirit stones more, but based on what you have harvested this quarter, you do get only 350 True spirit stones. That's a lot better than most other villages do, you know? They barely even reach 300," she said.

"What?" Fan Li cried out in surprise from behind before quickly clutching onto her mouth.

"Please forgive my wife, elder. She's surprised because we did not get 350 True Spirit stones. We only got 290," Fan Yanshi said.

"Huh? But it says here you got 350. Are you saying your handler lied? That's a big accusation, you know?" she said.

"Yes," Fan Yanshi said. "He lied. Not only did he lie, elder, but look at what he gives us as resources for the next harvest."

Fan Yanshi handed over the storage bag and the woman checked the bag.

"What the hell? Why are these so bad?" the woman was surprised. A flash of anger showed up on her face and she looked at the guards.

"Go call this Sha Yuan outside," she said.

They waited for a few minutes before the guards brought out the young man who was immediately worried when he saw the situation.

"Disciple Sha Yuan, can you tell me everything you did today in their village?" she asked.

"Nothing much, elder. I simply took what they harvested, paid them, and gave them the resources," he said while glancing at the three.

"And how much did you pay them?" she asked.

"350 True Spirit stones," he said.

"Lies!" Fan Li shouted.

"What lies? Why would I lie?" the young man shouted back.

"Are you really telling the truth?" the elder asked.

"Of course, elder," he said. "Do you believe these untalented fools who can do nothing but feed off of the sect?"

The older woman frowned. "Then what about the resources? Why are the resources that they are getting so bad?" she asked.

"Bad resources? I do not know about that, senior. I just grabbed some randomly and took it. My apologies, I should have checked," he said.

"No, he's lying. He said that it was because the sect was lacking in resources, so we had to use the trash ones," Fan Yanshi said.

The older woman frowned. She couldn't tell who to believe here. She asked one of the guards to go bring another batch of better resources for them in the meanwhile.

Then, she got to thinking.

The four of them saw the contemplative look on the elder and knew that she was thinking, but it was impossible to say what she was thinking exactly. Was it in their favor or not?

"What's there to think about so much?" Alex asked from the side, derailing the older woman's train of thought.

"Please don't speak while I'm thinking. These things are hard to discern," she said.

"Well, just feed him a Truth Seeking pill. He will tell you if it's a lie or not," Alex said.

"That's easy to say, young man. But using such a big pill for such a small case isn't worth it," she said.

"But it will help us get through this faster," Alex said.

"It will, but I'm not willing to spend such an important pill for this," she said. "Pills are already so hard to get by anyway."

"Huh? I mean, if you don't have one, I can let you use one," Alex said as he pulled out a pill from his storage bag. "Here, eat it."

Sha Yuan looked confused and frustrated, while the older woman's eyes shined. "Where did you get this pill?" she asked.

"Did you make this pill, brother Yu? You don't have to use it here," Fan Yanshi said.

"He couldn't have made it. It's a True Rank pill. If he can casually make a 100 True Spirit stones worth pill, he wouldn't be here to complain," she said.

She tried to gauge if the pill was a fake one, but the aroma and slight fluctuations of energy coming from it proved that it was a real one.

"It costs 100 True spirit stones for a pill?" Fan Li looked surprised. "Brother Yu, you can't use that."

"It's alright. Where else would I use such a pill?" he asked.

"Maybe sell it?" she said.

"It's fine," Alex said and turned around to look at the elder. "You are fine with me feeding him the pill, right elder?"

The woman narrowed her eyes, trying to look at his expression, but she could see nothing through the mask at all.

"If you want to end a few dozen true spirit stones worth of disagreement using a pill that costs twice as much, then be my guest," she said.

"Of course," Alex said and placed the pill in front of Sha Yuan to eat. "This disagreement is not about the money after all."

"What? No, I'm not eating that," Sha Yuan said.

"Eat it," the elder ordered.

"But, Elder it could be poison. They are trying to poison me," he said.

"It is the real pill," she said. "And if I'm wrong, I have an antidote to save you. Now eat it."

The young man was forced to eat the pill in the end, and then the truth came out.

It was true. He was duping the villagers by not paying them what their harvest was worth.

The female elder was a little surprised, but she had already expected it. However, what was more surprising was the fact that he had duped the sect as well.

It turned out that not only did he pay less to the villagers, but he also hid some of the harvests from the sect.

It was obvious that the handlers took a few things for themselves, but in the overall span of things this never really harmed the sect since what was stolen from them was negligible.

However, when the female elder found out that he had stolen nearly 10% of the harvest from the village last time, and nearly 25% this time, she became furious.

Sha Yuan was made to bring out everything he stole from the sect, plus the spirit stones he got and in addition to that, more of what he owned as compensation and punishment.

Then, he was removed from his job as a handler, and Fan Yanshi was promised that he would

get a new handler soon.

Sha Yuan was taken by the guards to be imprisoned and punished by the sect's law enforcers for a month or two.

"Here, these belong to you," the elder said. "I hope you can forgive us for our mistake."

"Of course," Fan Yanshi said. "It wasn't the sect's mistake after all. It was just the one individual."

"Thank you," the elder said. "Now, if you will excuse me."

She turned around and left.

Fan Yanshi and Fan Li looked at what they had just obtained.

"So much money," she said with shining eyes. "We're rich."

Alex and 4 other people flew on a boat towards Snow Road city. It was a clear night with the silver moon hanging in the sky, fully reflecting the light of the sun back onto the world.

With such a clear night, the group had no worries about any snowstorm to fight through this time around.

So, when they did reach the city, they didn't even realize they were here because of the nonexistent barrier this time around.

The 5 of them entered and they immediately went to the general store. Alex asked to leave once more and left for a place where pills were made.

He was a little confused about something and wanted to check it out. Just earlier this evening, the conflict with Sha Yuan had required him to bring out a Truth Seeking pill.

That was a simple matter for him, but the elder there had said it cost a hundred True Spirit stones or so.

Pills shouldn't cost that much. Even his pills of Immortal grade would only read hundreds of True Spirit stones in the auctions.

There was no way these pills were of Immortal grade. When someone mentioned anything about pills, they would usually compare the price on an average level.

An average pill was considered to be around 40% in harmony. Which meant a pill of 40% harmony cost 100 or more spirit stones here. That was absurd.

Alex had a general idea of why that might be, but he still wanted to find out if his hypothesis was true, so he arrived at a place that wasn't different from the Alchemy guild.

The previous time when he was here, Alex had gone to a pill store, but the price there wasn't written, so he didn't know how much they cost. However, those should cost quite a lot because the ingredient there belonged to the alchemists or rather the sects themselves.

However, in a location like this, where he would be the one to provide the ingredients, he wanted to see how much they would ask of him.

"Hello, I wanted to have a pill made and wanted to know how much it would cost," Alex said to the clerk.

"Yes, what pill... do you need making?" she asked, a little surprised by Alex's mask, but she caught herself before she let herself slip.

"A Truth seeking pill at 50% harmony," Alex said.

The woman paused. "50%? A Heaven-grade pill? I'm sorry, customer, but we have no alchemists that can make such a high-quality pill," she said.

"What? You don't even have alchemists to make a 50% pill?" he asked.

"I'm sorry," she said.

Alex frowned, but then he did remember this place was quite far in the north, so there may be other better ones in other cities.

"You can buy some in the pill stores maybe," the woman said.

"Yes," Alex nodded absentmindedly. "If I may ask, how much would the pill cost to make? Given that I provide the ingredients of course."

"If we did have alchemists that made the pill, a 50% Truth Seeking pill would cost about... 140 True spirit stones," she said.

"What the... that's so expensive," Alex couldn't help but cry out.

"My apologies, but that's just how it is," she said.

"Is there a reason?" Alex as

ked. "Is it because of the Heaven's Frost sect?"

The woman's face twisted as she thought of the words to speak. "Kind of. Definitely in an indirect way," she said.

"Can you explain some more?" Alex urged her.

"The sect warns people against being Alchemists, and only says they can be one after joining their sect. But joining an ancient sect is not an easy matter."

"Even if one joins them, becoming a good alchemist itself isn't easy, so they stop," the clerk said. "In the end, there are neither too many alchemists in the sect, nor out of it, and overall, due to the scarcity of the alchemists, the price goes up," she said.

Alex sighed. He knew that the Heaven's Frost sect was trying to gain a monopoly on alchemists, but he didn't think the situation was this severe.

"You guys still have alchemists right? Can you tell me if they are alright? Do they get threats from the sect or such?" he asked.

"No, no threats. The Heaven's Frost sect does make some announcements once in a while to tell people that they will have a much easier time if they join them, but aside from that there is nothing," she said.

"But you did say the sect warns people against being Alchemists, right?" he asked.

"At the start, yes, but they never really go after anyone just because they practice Alchemy," the girl said. "At least not in the open."

"Huh? Not in the open?" Alex said.

The girl looked around, very careful not to speak out of work, and whispered softly, "Alchemists have been known to go missing from time to time. And surprisingly, it is never from the Heaven's Frost sect. You get what I'm trying to say?"

Alex's eyes shined. "Are they hunting down alchemists?" he asked.

"People have requested them to find the alchemists, but they surprisingly never find out what happened to them. And even stop looking for them after a month of 'searching'."

"You can guess what's happening right? Everyone knows what's happening. You get too good and the sect gets jealous so they come for you. That's why we don't have any good alchemists. They don't even want to be one," she said.

Alex frowned. Alchemists were in that much of a danger? He made a mental note of never revealing he was one.

"May I ask how many alchemists have gone missing by now?" he asked.

"Well, there's not an official number, but there should have been at least 50 high-ranking alchemists just this decade. Each one of them was a great and upcoming alchemist too. Such a shame," she said.

Alex shook his head. The sect was going too far to keep the monopoly. He would have to remain safe and not reveal himself.

It seemed Alchemy was going to have to remain a bit of a secret for now.

He walked out of the building and went back towards the general store where the group were.

50 alchemists had gone missing in just the last 10 years. Alex wondered how the sect expected to thrive if that kept on continuing.

If people stopped being alchemists, they would surely suffer too, just from an economic standpoint.

'Whatever, it's not my place to think o

f such problems. What am I going to do? Fight the sect that has a 30 thousand-year-old history?' he thought and shook his head.

He met up Fan Yanshi and the rest who were happily spending the nearly 500 True spirit stones they had received this month.

They were really happy. If they continued earning this much every month, the villagers could soon have to stop worrying about money and could actually start having children like they always wanted to.

After spending all the money on important things and then some, the group left the city.

Alex brought out his boat and while it was still night, they returned back to the village.

Chapter 869: Scouted

Alex went back to his room after returning to the village.

Since he was interrupted the other day, he wanted to directly go back into teaching his little beasts about what he knew.

So, he brought out Pearl and Whisker and had them learn it all from where he was stopped the other day.

Pearl kept rolling around and saying that he was bored, but Whisker was very curious about it all and learned it extensively.

Seeing him learn so much made Alex want to only add more and more content to what he taught.

He taught them for an hour or two, then paused for an hour where they cultivated and soaked in what they learned, and then continued again.

After about 8 hours of learning that, Pearl was bored out of his mind, and even Whisker thought it was too much.

'Uhh... maybe I should stop,' Alex thought.

Just then, someone knocked on the door.

Alex walked out and opened the door to find Fan Yanshi outside. It was around 3 in the afternoon, so Alex was surprised anyone was even looking for him.

"Can I help you, brother Fan?" Alex asked.

"Brother Yu, the new handler is here, and um... she's asking for you," Fan Yanshi said.

"Asking for me? Why?" Alex was surprised.

"I don't know, but they're asking for you specifically," Fan Yanshi said.

'Was I found out? Did the saints notice me?' Alex wondered.

"How did they know who I was?" Alex asked.

"I don't know, but they asked for the alchemist with the mask," Fan Yanshi replied.

Alex paused. "Shit! They know I'm an alchemist?" he asked.

"Yes, that's how they called you," Fan Yanshi said.

'How did they find out?' Alex thought. He thought back to everything that could give him away and remembered the one instance where he had brought out the pill yesterday.

'That elder knows I'm an alchemist,' he realized.

He walked up to the front where a 25-year-old girl with Mind Tempering 3rd realm cultivation base waited for them.

"Are you the one?" she asked as soon as she saw Alex.

"Maybe," Alex said.

The girl frowned. "What's your name?" she asked.

"Yu Ming," Alex said.

The girl brought out a talisman and read through it. "So it's true, you really aren't from the sect."

"No, I came here about 4 months ago. Is that a problem?" Alex asked.

"No, it's not a problem," the girl said with a smile. Then, she brought out something from her storage bag and placed it in front of her.

"Can you pour your Qi on this please?" the girl said.

Alex looked at the formation plate below him and recognized the formation on it. That was the formation not check his spiritual roots.

"No," Alex said. "I will not use my Qi there."

The girl frowned. "It won't do anything bad to you. It just checks your body to see what sort of spiritual roots you have," she said.

"I know, and I won't use it. Please take it back," Alex said.

The girl continued frowning and even got a little agitated. "Brother, please don't be so hard to deal with. I have been asked by the elders to do this. If you continue refusing, I will have to return to the elders and tell them about it," she said.

"Sure," Alex said and turned around.

The girl stomped her foot on the ground and left angrily.

"Brother Yu, was that... do you think what you did was good?" Fan Yanshi asked.

"It's... sigh," Alex didn't know how to explain. "I might have to leave here soon, brother Fan."

"What do you mean?" Fan Yanshi asked with a serious face.

"I don't have time to explain," Alex said and ran back into his room.

Fan Yanshi and the rest stood around, not understanding what was happening.

"Honey, what's going on?" Fan Li asked.

"I... I don't know," Fan Yanshi said. "I think Brother Yu is being scouted by the sect, but he is rejecting it for some reason."

"What do we do now?" Fan Li asked.

"I don't know," Fan Yanshi said then looked up. "Everyone, we should get back to work."

The others that were watching the show reluctantly returned to their job, and so did Fan Yanshi. He returned back to his work which was to feed the beasts in the stable.

He did it for an hour or two before someone came running for him. An elder really had arrived.

It was evening now, and the sun had already gone past the mountains, but the elder in the sky was still being lit up by it.

The female elder, the same one from yesterday, slowly drifted down to the village.

Fan Yanshi thought of calling Alex, but Alex was already there.

"Young man, why did you refuse to take the test?" she asked.

"Because I didn't want to, and I have no intention of joining the sect if that is what you're after," Alex said to the woman.

The woman was a little surprised. "So you realize we're here to get you to join us. Can you tell me why you don't want to join our sect?" she asked.

"I have no intention of joining any sect," Alex said.

"But you're an alchemist. Do you have any idea how dangerous it is for alchemists to be out by themselves in this world?" she asked.

"I have some clue," Alex said. "But that threat alone isn't going to make me join you, so please just go back."

"I'm afraid I can't do that. I come here under the sect master's orders. If you want to refuse, then refuse to him. If he is okay with that, then you may return back to them," she said.

Alex frowned but nodded. "Okay, let's go."

The elder smiled and her Qi grabbed onto Alex. Alex let her pick him up and take him away while the rest of the villagers watched him leave from the side.

"You did good," the elder said as they flew.

"Yeah, well I'm still going to refuse," Alex said.

"Don't be so stubborn," she said. "Also, can you really see through that thing? Are there holes?"

"I can see, don't worry," Alex said.

"You must have a very recognizable face if you are hiding it then," she said.

Alex didn't answer.

They reached the sect and the elder quickly brought him in before taking him down the mountain to the massive valley that was the sect.

This reminded Alex somewhat of the Hong Wu sect, only these mountains were either volcanic or snow-filled, so no one actually lived on the mountains themselves.

Many disciples of all cultivation bases looked at him curiously.

Alex ignored them and stared at the rather fancy-looking blue building with scripts all over it.

"How many alchemists do you have in this sect?" he asked.

"None," she said. "It's hard to have one when people are afraid for their life. Besides, we teach talisman here, so it's hard to keep a disciple's interest."

"Then why do you want me?" he asked.

"Because we desperately need some. Always paying for pills is not the way to go," she said.

"Can you protect me from the Heaven's Frost sect if I were to join you?" he asked.

The woman hesitated for a bit before saying, "we don't know if its the Heaven's Frost sect that is responsible for everything>"

"Don't we?" Alex asked. "Would you be willing to eat a Truth-seeking pill to answer the question again?"

The woman hesitated even more. "We can hide you," she said. "If you remain hidden, you can grow for a long time."

"Yeah, I don't buy that," Alex said. "Let's just go to the sect master so I can refuse him."

"There's the sect master," the woman said, pointing to the blue building with the scripts.

"Then call him out," he said.

"What? No, he will meet us in there," she said.

"I am not going inside a building with so many scripts all over it," Alex said. "You surely understand why I am reluctant, right?"

Being trapped inside a barrier was the last thing he wanted to do right now.

Being trapped while with a Saint realm cultivator that is most likely a Saint Foundation or a Saint Core was even worse.

"Fine, if you're going to be stubborn, then stay here. I will go call him," she said.

Chapter 870: Talk with the Sect Master

Alex waited outside the tower while the woman went to bring out the sect master.

An elderly man that looked to be around 60 years walked out of the building along with the woman.

"This is the young man that keeps declining, sect master," the woman said.

The old man continued forward, but his spiritual sense landed on Alex before he arrived. The old man paused.

He disappeared from the woman's side and arrived next to Alex.

"You're strong," he said.

"Tsk!" Alex frowned. This was the one thing he was worried about and it came true.

Since he wasn't yet a Saint realm, his Immortal Concealment technique could barely hide his cultivation base. He had hoped that now that his Qi was much denser than normal, it would hide him, but unfortunately, it didn't.

"I... I can't tell what your cultivation is, but it's strong. Who are you?" the old man asked and his spiritual sense landed on Alex.

But the old man couldn't see his face as the Mask was impenetrable.

"Greetings, senior. I am called Yu Ming," he said.

"Yu Ming... and what does junior brother Yu Ming want from hiding himself as a villager?" the old man asked.

The woman behind the saint realm old man was a little confused by the conversation. She couldn't understand why the Saint would call him strong.

"I merely seek to stay lowkey and cultivate. I simply happened to find one of your villages and have no intention towards your sect," Alex said.

"I... will believe that," the old man said. He looked Alex up and down for a moment. "What is that mask?"

"Nothing that should concern you, senior," Alex replied.

"It's certainly a treasure," the old man said. "Don't worry, I will never do anything to antagonize a potential alchemist. You are one right?"

Alex nodded. "I can make some common pills," he said.

"Oh, I hear True pills are just the same. I'm sure you can make it if you have the ingredients," the old man said.

"I'm sure I could," Alex said. "But if I did, I would put myself in danger, wouldn't I?"

"I reckon you would," the old man said as he scratched his chin and followed. "What if we could hide you?"

"I'm sorry, senior, but I really have no intention of joining a sect," Alex said.

"You don't have to join the sect. You can just be an alchemist that works for the sect. We will pay you well," the old man said.

To be honest, Alex was very tempted by the offer. All he had to do was make some pills for the sect, and he could happily spend his time in peace until it was time to break through to the Saint realm.

However... "What about the Heaven's Frost sect? What if they find out?" Alex asked.

"They won't, I promise y—"

"What if they did? Would you be able to protect me?" Alex asked.

"Our sect is merely a thousand years old. We have no such capabilities to fend off an ancient sect if what they want is with us," the old man said.

"Then I must disappoint you and reject your offer," Alex said.

"Young man, please reconsider. I foolishly opened my sect in the domain of the ruler and realized too late that most people won't migrate here. As such I am really lacking in manpower, especially ones that can make formations and pills."

"Formations I can forgo, as I can substitute them with scripts now. But there is nothing to substitute alchemy. As such, I will need to keep you here even if you desire not to," the old man said.

Alex's eyes narrowed. "Senior, do you believe that I am polite to you because you are my senior, or because you are more powerful than me?" he asked.

"Is that not it?" the old man asked.

"No," Alex said. "I am polite to you because you and your sect members have been polite and helpful to me."

"However, if you start to become rude, I will become rude as well. So, please do not go there," Alex said.

The old man was about to say something when he stopped. "Will you really not join my sect?" he asked.

"No," Alex said. "But, if you are in need of pills, I have a few with me that I can sell to you. Because you have been polite to me, I will set them at a discount."

"Really?" the old man's eyes went wide and a smile appeared on his face.

"Yes," Alex said and brought out a storage bag with pills he obtained from the cultivators he had killed back in the Demon realm. He had taken out most of the Saint ranked pill for himself, so he was only selling True pills now.

"Please check," he said.

The old man's spiritual sense fell on all of them and he started getting excited.

"I will write you a list of the pills and what they do," Alex said and took out an empty talisman to write it all.

After finishing, he handed it to the old man and asked, "how much do you think I can get for these?"

The old man thought for a bit and gave an answer. "About 30 thousand True spirit stones," he said.

"I will sell these to you for 20 thousand," Alex said.

"Are you serious? Do you really want to give so much discount?" the old man asked.

"Yes," Alex said. "It looks like you need it."

"Thank you, young brother," the old man said and took out the spirit stones. "Did you make all of these pills?"

"Some I did," Alex said. "Some I got after killing the people that tried to steal from me."

"Oh," the old man was a little taken back. "Haha, it's a good thing I didn't try that then."

"We should be done here, right?" Alex asked.

"Ah, yes. We are done," the old man said.

"Then I shall leave," Alex said and turned around.

"Wait," the old man stopped him. "You are a guest of mine. Surely I can't send you just like that. Please come with me so i—"

"Thank you, senior. But that will not be necessary," Alex said. "I will return now."

"Where do you live again?" The old man asked and the woman by his side whispered to him the location.

"Oh, with those failed players," the old man said. "I will let them know to treat you better."

Alex stopped. "Failed players?" he asked.

"Yes," the old man said. "They are a part of a group that calls themselves players who seem to have an unnatural amount of talent. However, these are ones with no talent at all as they don't even have spiritual roots."

"The villages are formed with mostly these individuals, alongside others as well," the old man explained.

Alex stood stunned as he finally understood why there were so many people with no spiritual roots or talent in cultivation at all.

They were all players. In fact, they were all most likely players that had died and were cloned and were sent back to the outer world after their original body was gone.