

## Alchemy 871

Chapter 871: Farewell

"Wait little brother, I will take you back," the woman offered Alex her help even as he was already walking quite far away.

"He doesn't need it," the sect master said. "He's stronger than you and can return on his own."

The woman's eyes went wide. "No way," she said. She was already in the True Emperor 8th realm. How could the man in front of her be even stronger?

"Are you sure, sect master?" she asked.

"Yes," he said. "I can't see through his cultivation at all, although it should be very strong."

The woman looked back at Alex with a surprised look.

"Let's return," the old man said.

"But what about him? Shouldn't we send some scouts to the village to keep track of him or something," she asked.

"No need," the old man said. "Anyone in their right mind will leave now that they have been revealed to be an alchemist. The only way to keep him here would be for me to act against him."

"Can you?" she asked.

"I can," the old man said. "But you don't want to keep an alchemist imprisoned. They are masters at healing you, but they are also masters at poisoning you. You don't want to leave such a fate in their hands, especially ones that you have imprisoned, now do you?"

"I suppose not," the woman said. She looked behind to look at Alex, but he was already long gone.

Then, she returned back to her own work.

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Alex was happy he didn't have to fight the old man. With a cultivation base of Saint Condensation 4th realm, Alex would've surely killed him if the fight was to the death.

He stopped thinking about that very quickly though as his thought went on about running away.

Now that his identity as an alchemist had been revealed, given how dangerous the situation was with the Heaven's Frost sect, he surely couldn't stay here anymore.

'I will have to say my goodbyes,' he thought.

'Still, I can't believe they are all players,' Alex thought.

He quickly returned back to the village where the people were gathered, waiting for him.

"Brother Yu, you're back," Fan Yanshi said the moment he saw him come.

"Brother Yu," Fan Li spoke as well.

The people immediately started asking him as to what had happened, and Alex explained to him the best he could.

"You... you are a True realm cultivator?" Fan Yanshi asked in surprise.

"Yes," Alex said. "I'm sorry for lying to you. I was just looking for a place to lay low for a while."

The crowd hesitated for a bit.

"I see," Fan Yanshi said. "You... you can continue to lay low if you want to."

Alex shook his head. "My identity as an Alchemist has come out, so I will have to leave now," he said. "Please excuse me, I will have to prepare."

Before anyone could say anything, Alex entered his room and closed the door behind him.

The people waited for a while, but before long, they realized that he wasn't coming out anytime soon, so they left.

People woke up the next day and went to their work. But before they did, they returned back to Alex's house to see if he had left.

He hadn't.

Fan Yanshi came to the house multiple times, but Alex didn't leave.

The day was over, and the night came by. Everyone went back to their houses, but Fan Yanshi remained.

However, he too left in the end and went back to his house.

The next day, he expected to see Alex out, but he hadn't. He came by multiple times on the second day too, but Alex still hadn't come out.

That day ended very quickly for him too and so he returned to his house.

The next day, he woke up and went to Alex's house again. This time, there was a crowd, and in the middle of the crowd was Alex.

"Brother Yu, are you leaving?" Fan Yanshi asked. His wife, Fan Li also came up to the crowd behind him.

"You're here, brother Fan. I've been waiting for you," Alex said. "Yes, I am leaving."

"I see..." Fan Yanshi's heart soured.

"However, before I did, I wanted to give you something," Alex said and brought out a storage bag.

"What is it?" he asked.

"Look yourself," Alex tossed the storage bag over to him.

Fan Yanshi looked at what was in the bag and couldn't help but feel overwhelmed by it all.

"This is?" he asked.

"Some things I have no need for at the moment, so I would like to give them to the village," Alex said.

"Inside are many different pills, formations, and talismans, all of which I made myself and which I had spare of. They will be useless to me very soon, so I hope to put them to better use," Alex said.

"Some of them are for harming others, so please be careful when you use them. Most of them can harm True realm cultivators," Alex said. Most could also hurt early Saint condensation cultivators, but Alex didn't want to mention that.

"What?" Fan Yanshi looked up in surprise.

"There are also weapons and shields. Although they aren't as plentiful as the other things I'm afraid," Alex said.

Fan Yanshi checked the storage bag and there were dozens of weapons and shields and armors. No way could this not be considered plenty.

Then, he saw another thing and he couldn't help but be scared for a second.

"Brother Yu, this... we can't take this," he said. There were nearly 5 thousand True spirit stones.

To Alex, it was a small change of spirit stones, but to these people, it was nearly 5 years' worth of work.

"Take them, and use them in cases of emergencies," Alex said. "Also."

Alex tossed him another storage bag, which Fan Yanshi slowly opened.

"The boat? You're giving us the boat? Don't you need it?" Fan Yanshi asked.

"I fly way faster without the boat," Alex said with a smile. Then, he brought out a bunch of talismans and hesitated for a bit.

He took out one talisman before giving them to Fan Li.

"These are all information I could write down about gardening and plants," Alex said. "There are some recipes on medicinal pastes as well as a basic introduction to alchemy, formations, talismans, and scripts if anyone of you wishes to practice."

"Thank you," she said softly. Although the paper talismans were light as a feather, they felt heavy in her hand.

"That's all," Alex said. "Now I must leave."

"Will you come to visit us again?" Fan Yanshi asked.

"If I can," Alex said. "I can't make promises, but I will try."

"Where will you be going?" Fan Li asked.

"Out of the State of Xue," Alex said. "I need to go somewhere where the Heaven's Frost sect won't be able to reach me."

Alex said and walked away, but the talisman in his hand made it hard for him to say his farewell.

He contemplated on whether to give it or not.

"Brother Yu?" Fan Li called him when he wasn't doing anything.

Alex sighed. He didn't have the right to keep this knowledge. "Sister Li, can you come here please," he said.

Fan Li walked up to him with curiosity on her face. "What is it?" she asked.

"Here," he gave her the talisman. "You guys deserve to know this. I've known it for over a decade now."

Fan Li took the talisman and read it quickly. As she did, her eyes went wide and tears filled them quickly.

"Brother Fan, everyone," Alex spoke out loud. "Sister Li."

"Farewell."

Alex flew off.

Fan Li remained there with her hands on her mouth as she read the talisman over and over and over again.

The talisman said that the person responsible for sending all the players here was looking for a way to bring them all back, and in just two more decades, he would do it.

"What is it? Why are you crying?" Fan Yanshi asked as he approached his wife, who simply handed him the talisman.

As Fan Yanshi read the talisman he too started getting emotional and his hands started shaking.

"We found our way back home," Fan Yanshi shouted and started crying with tears and snot dripping down his face. He immediately hugged his wife who started weeping all out as well.

"We're going home, Emily. We're going home."

## Chapter 872: Intrusion

Alex flew through the night sky, through what was a blizzard in its own right.

Whisker was staying in his robe, looking far in the distance at some possible light source. Anything that was less than a city, Alex wouldn't stay around in.

He would stop from time to time to catch some rest, and cultivate. But mostly, he was flying through the land, heading east, towards what he considered one of the most important places on this continent.

The Dao mountain.

A mountain that helped you in gaining dao was incredible, to say the least. There was some confusion about how a person not in the Saint realm could enter, but he would know about it when he arrived at the foot of the mountain surely.

The way he was headed, there was only a single town marked on the map. A nameless town that held the Frozen Heart sect.

Alex would have to make a stop there before heading towards the Dao mountain through the mighty mountains all over the north of the continent.

Alex was now flying over the mountain range that divided the states of Xue and Dong. If he followed the mountain range south, he would come across the Endless Tunnel where he could mine the ores of Starforged Tungsten.

'Later,' Alex thought to himself and continued flying.

It would take him about a day to reach this nameless city. It would take much less if he could fly with all his speed, but the blizzard troubled him a bit.

Not to mention, the Northern continent was a large piece of land. Compared to the Western Continent, it was much larger. It was about 3 times as long as the Western continent with about one and a half times the vertical width of the Luminance empire.

Now that Alex thought about it, the Western Continent was much larger than it would appear in the maps because over a third of the land was hidden in the Beast realm.

'Still, the Northern continent is quite large,' Alex thought. Of course, that wasn't to say it had more or fewer people. Given how treacherous life seemed to be here, compared to the other continents, the population was most likely less when considering the ratio of land.

His thoughts continued as he kept flying.

Sun rose from the east, and while light did shine through the thick clouds, it still snowed relentlessly.



Also, now that it was daytime, there was no light to guide Alex at all, so all he could do was check his compass and hope he was in the right direction.

He continued flying for half a day before he noticed something. Whisker saw a patch of black far away on the ground.

If it were in the mountain, Alex would assume it was some rock showing through, but since it was in the ground, it was most likely something man-made.

At least he hoped so.

Whisker's vision was still hampered by the constant snowing, so Alex slowed down and got closer so that he could see it with his spiritual sense.

As he got lower, he felt something pass through him.

He had entered some sort of formation. Instantly, multiple bells rang on the ground and a dozen or more people flew into the sky to confront him.

Alex thought of running away, but that would only make things worse and the people that had flown up were all Saint realm experts.

'So many,' he thought.

"Greetings, I mean no harm," Alex said to the people that flew up. He reeled in his spiritual sense so that he didn't come off as rude or invasive.

The group of cultivators flew up to his eye level and looked at him.

"Who are you, intruder?" the girl at the very front asked.

"Senior, I'm sorry. I was looking for a city that lies around here. I seem to have intruded your place," he said.

"What city? There is no city here," the woman said.

"Huh? There should be a nameless city here. It says so on the map," Alex said and tossed out a map towards the woman.

The woman looked at the map and frowned. "It clearly says our sect is here, and yet you try and dare lie?" she asked.

"What?" Alex frowned. "Wait, is this the Frozen Heart sect? Is that massive city shown on the map just the sect?"

"Of course," the woman said.

Alex's eyes went wide. 'Just my luck,' he thought. Unknowingly, he had entered the domain of one of the ancient sects with resources spanning back nearly 30 thousand years.

'I should have known a city without a name was suspicious when there was such a big sect nearby,' he thought.

"My apologies," he said. "I will leave right now."

"You cannot come and go into our sect as you please," the woman said.

"Senior, please. It was an honest mistake. Certainly, you can let go of those right?" he asked.

"I can not," the woman said with a cold voice as her aura started enveloping Alex.

Alex couldn't tell the cultivation base of the woman exactly, but it was in the Saint Foundation realm.

A Saint Foundation realm cultivator was trying to capture him.

Alex frowned. Then, he fought off the aura that was trying to constrict him and ran.

"Get him," the woman said.

The other 11 women that were around her suddenly flew off behind Alex.

Alex pushed his spiritual sense to the max, capturing the 11 women in his senses, who were quite surprised. They couldn't see his cultivation base, but he wasn't in the Saint realm certainly.

They couldn't understand why his spiritual sense was so strong. For that matter, they couldn't understand why he even had spiritual sense.

Alex brought out a sword the moment he saw the women prepare their weapons and attacks.

"Whisker, go back," he said.

11 different attacks flew right up to him. Alex turned around and created a tongue of fire right behind him where the attacks were coming from.

"Explode."

The fire exploded into a blinding light, destroying most of the attacks that were flying in his direction, while also sending him flying back.

He had used a bit too much of his Qi and intent in this one, so the explosion was stronger than what he could have handled.

His face was fine thanks to the mask, but the rest of his body was charred for the most part. His burnt skin slowly healed as the power of the Undying God went into effect.

The girls however weren't stopped for as long as he had hoped they would. They all came to attack him but suddenly stopped.

They paused and turned around to look at the woman that was their leader.

"That's a surprise," she said as she flew up to him. "Not a saint, yet you are still capable of learning a Dao."

"Thank you for the compliment," Alex said, but deep inside he felt a bit of dread. Nobody had ever noticed his Dao aside from Shen Jing, and now someone did.

The Northern Continent was truly something else.

"Will you come with me willingly? Or will you continue fighting?" the woman said.

"Surely you don't expect me to come with you when you plan on hurting me, right?" he asked.

"Hurting you?" the woman gave a surprised look. "If I planned on hurting you, you would already be dead."

The temperature in the surrounding suddenly went down as everything around Alex started freezing solid. Even the air got dense and sank down.

Alex felt his body start to grow stiff as the world tried to freeze him.

It was the world that tried to freeze him, but the one making the choice was the woman in front of him.

She was using her dao to freeze him.

Alex could survive the cold, but this was something else. There was Intent here, wishing to hurt him, so even if the cold didn't hurt him normally, it did a bit now.

Immediately, he used his own dao to create heat onto his body and then onto the air around him, and started fighting the woman's own authority over the world.

The woman gave a surprised look. "2 different Dao? Color me surprised," she said.

Alex was one step away from calling out Godslayer when the woman suddenly stopped.

"I am not going to hurt you," she said. "We are not evil cultivators that kill anyone that comes by us. But, we also can't simply let you go."

"What do you intend to do with me?" he asked.

"You will go through a trial, where we will determine whether you have any bad intentions towards our sect or not."

"If we find out that your intentions are bad, you will surely be killed, but if you really did come here as just a mistake, you will be let go of immediately," the woman said.

Alex thought for a moment. Was going with someone just because they said that was a good choice? But what other choice did he have right now?

"Fine," Alex said. "I hope your words are true."

"I hope your words are true as well, young man," the woman said. "It will be a shame to lose such a talented individual."

Alex sighed and finally stopped being on edge. His senses finally landed on the women and only then did he manage to focus on anything aside from their cultivation base.

Each one of them looked colder than the other, but each one was also more beautiful than the rest.

"Come with me," the woman said and flew down. "I will take you to the elders."

### Chapter 873: Trial

Alex flew down with the woman, constantly on his edge to make sure she didn't land some sneak attack on him while he had his guard down.

As he got lower towards the ground, his spiritual sense that was now out finally saw the sect for what it was.

A city.

"So it really is a city," Alex said absentmindedly.

"This is the Frozen Hearts sect. You need at least this much to accommodate all the disciples and elders of the sect," the woman said. "Also, pull back your spiritual sense before you offend someone you shouldn't offend."

"My apologies," Alex said and quickly pulled his spiritual sense until it was about 50 meters in radius.

"Pull it back further," she said.

"I'm afraid, I can't do that. I will have no way of telling where you are if I do so," he said.

The woman's spiritual sense landed on his face. "What's wrong with your eyes?" she asked.

"I can't see at the moment," he said, not explaining any further. "If you don't mind me asking, what's your name?"

"Me?" she repeated. "You can call me Gan Murong. I'm the leader of the group of elders responsible for security."

Alex felt weird watching the woman speak. Her voice spoke with a jovial tone from time to time, but her face never revealed a single expression that would point to her having fun in this conversation.

They continued flying, and Alex was stunned at this moment. "Just how big is the sect?" he asked.

"You can tell just by... right, it's about 10 kilometers in all directions. Although, that's just our building," she said.

'10 kilometers in all directions?' Alex was surprised to hear just how big the sect itself was.

"Here we are," she said and landed somewhere. Alex landed behind her and suddenly saw 20 different spears point at him from out of nowhere.

He was ready to attack, but the spears stopped a few meters away from him.

"Come," the woman said.

Alex carefully walked and the spears followed. The spears were held by True Emperor realm cultivators, and it looked like they were all guards too.

There were so many strong cultivators that guarded the sect. How many more would there be in the other parts of the sect?

Alex continued walking and found that he was being taken along some rather narrow hallway.

"Is this the way to the elders?" he asked, worried that it might not be.

"No, this is not," the woman said. "It will take time to gather the elders. Until then, you will be imprisoned."

"What? That's..."

"Do you have any problem with that?" the woman asked.

Alex grumbled for a bit. "No," he said. This was better than just getting attacked or even fighting back.

He was then taken to a rather wide room and pushed in. "You will remain here until it takes time for me to gather the elders. Once they are gathered, you will be called," she said.

Alex nodded and turned around to go sit on the bed.

"Wait," the woman said.

Alex turned around, curious as to what she might need.

The woman extended her hands and said, "hand over your storage bags."

"What?" Alex was taken aback. "No, it's mine."

"I can not let a prisoner remain in a prison with all of his treasures. You must part with it until the day of the trial. If you are innocent, we will return the storage bags back to you," she said.

"What if you steal things from here?" Alex said.



"Steal? Hah! We are the Frozen Heart sect. What need do we have to steal from someone that is not even a Saint yet? Do you believe our sect to be so petty?" she asked.

Alex frowned and thought for a moment. After careful consideration, he took all of the storage bags he had and handed them over. "I trust you to keep your words."

"If you are innocent, you have nothing to worry about," she said and walked away, closing the door behind her.

Alex tried to peek outside with his spiritual sense, but he couldn't see anything beyond the door. There was a formation blocking his spiritual sense to just this room.

He touched the ring on his hand and was glad that at least the items that were important to him were on him.

He looked around the room, but it was a simple room with frost building all over the walls.

With nothing else to do, Alex sat crosslegged and started cultivating.

Time passed slowly, and he was lost in them. While the elders were let know about him, he continued cultivating day after day.

And nearly a week later, the door to the room finally opened again.

A young woman walked in. Her face was cold, and her cultivation base was at the peak of the True Emperor realm.

Alex had to admit that this girl was beautiful. Certainly one of the most beautiful women he had seen in a long time.

Which made him wonder if that was their reason for sending her. Were they trying to lure him with a beautiful face?

"You are called to your trial. Please follow me," she said.

Alex stood up and followed. However, every step of the way, he stayed on guard, making sure to never let a single thing go past him without him noticing him.

The dark and gloomy walls of the sect made it look anything but alive. Alex couldn't even see any lanterns in the room, which only made him wonder if there were some other sources of light in the hallway they were walking through.

If not, were they walking through the darkness? Sure a cultivator could see quite easily with even the least bit of light, but not having any didn't seem like something an ancient sect like this one would do.

Finally, the girl led him to what he could only imagine as a massive room. He spread his spiritual sense and it wasn't until it was about 50 meters wide that he finally reached the ceiling.

'So it isn't an open room,' he thought. As he walked forward, he noticed multiple sources of aura all around him and his spiritual sense saw them as well.

Most of these were middle-aged or elderly women. Not a single one of these were men at all.

9 of them sat around on tall chairs and looked down at him.

"Kneel!" one of the voices ordered, but Alex didn't move.

The girl that brought him here hit his leg from behind to make him buckle, but all she did was hurt her own leg.

"I would like to remain standing if you will allow me, elders," Alex said to the 9 figures.

"Bold," one of the women said and scoffed a bit.

"Fine, remain standing," the woman at the center said. She put forth her hand and something flew off of it. His storage bags.

"You may have them back," she said.

"Thank you, senior," Alex said and started looking for what was missing.

"Don't bother. We don't steal from juniors," the woman said.

Alex nodded and stopped. Not because he believed them, but rather because he didn't want to offend them.

"Murong, bring it," the old woman shouted, while the other 8 waited for her to keep speaking.

The guard leader, Gu Murong, that had brought Alex here came from the side along with something.

She held a box in her hand and when she arrived in front of Alex, she opened the box and showed a pill inside.

"Do you recognize that pill?" the old woman asked.

Alex sensed it and nodded. "It's a Truth Seeking pill," he said, feeling a little amused at how many times this pill was being used recently.

"Good," the old woman said. "Now eat it."

Alex took a deep breath and grabbed the pill before eating it. As it entered his body, instantly, his body devoured it and nothing remained.

The old woman waited for a while before speaking again.

"What is your name?" she asked.

"I am Yu Ming, senior," Alex said truthfully.

"And what sect do you come from?" she asked.

"I belong to no sect," Alex said.

"No sect, huh? What are your intentions in entering our sect grounds?" she asked.

"I had no intentions of entering your sect grounds. I mistook the sect for a city I could stop by to rest," he said.

"No intention you say," the old woman spoke curiously. Despite Alex's confession, she still didn't trust him at all. After all, there were many ways to hide one's memories even from themselves until a certain time arrived.

"If you have no intention towards our sect, as you speak, why do you hide your face from us?" she asked.

"My eyes are wounded, so I wear this mask to keep it from bothering others from seeing the medicine I have to put on behind these," he said.

"Really? Take it off," she said. "I want to see if your face is anything recognizable."

Alex hesitated for a bit, nodded, and slowly pulled it off. His face was fair, and nothing was wrong, but his eyes were black, almost all of them covered in a dark crust of the dried paste.

"What's wrong with your eyes?" the old woman asked.

"Enemy attack, senior," he said. "Someone poisoned my eyes, and I now need to use the paste to heal myself."

"Hmm," the old woman thought to herself for a while. "Murong tells me you know two Dao, is that true?"

Alex hesitated for a bit, but since they already knew, there was no reason to hide it. "Yes."

#### Chapter 874: Forbidden

'Oh my god', 'He's lying', 'No way', and many such sentences were blurted out in the span of a few seconds when the 9 elders heard that he had understood 2 Dao.

"Show us," the elderly woman at the center spoke, and everyone went quiet.

Alex sighed and moved his hand so that he was pointing ahead of him. Suddenly, a meter away from him, the air started glowing red.

Particles in the air burned as slight smoke appeared out of nowhere, and the 9 women felt the air shift as the newly formed hot air began to rise to the ceiling while the cold air came downwards.

They also felt the world's energies moving onto the point in front of the young man, letting them know for sure that he was using some sort of Dao.

"Use the next one," the woman said and Alex nodded.

A small tongue of fire appeared in front of him and using the least bit of energy he could, Alex exploded it.

The bang from the explosion shook the room, but aside from that, it did nothing. Still, the women managed to see the movement of Qi in the air and knew it was Dao.

"Wow, you really did manage to learn two different Dao," the woman said. "Are you really not from any sect?"

"I haven't been in any sect for over a dozen years now," Alex said.

The elderly woman nodded. She hadn't found anything incriminating amongst the items in his storage bags. However, there was something that made her extremely curious about what she saw in his items.

"I found a lot of artifacts and books and many other things from your storage bag. How did you come by them?" she asked.

"A few of my enemies ambushed me and I killed them. I got these items as spoils," he said.

"Oh... and, did you get the empty talisman papers, formation plates, and alchemy ingredients the same way as well?" she asked.

"Uh, no I bought those," Alex said.

"Do you wish to start learning how to make formations and such?" the old woman asked.

"Not exactly," Alex said. "I already know how to make them. My intention is only to improve."

The woman's eyes narrowed and the rest of them got closer to look at him too. "For all of it?" she asked.

"Yes," Alex said.

"You're a formation master, a talisman maker, and..."

"And an Alchemist," Alex finished her words.

GASP~!

All the women there gasped at once when they heard that.

"Alchemist, he says."

"We found a criminal."

"Find his master and kill him."

Alex suddenly realized he had said something wrong. Were they angry that he was an alchemist?

"Who taught you Alchemy?" the woman at the center asked.

"Uhh... my master," Alex said.

"Who's your master? Name him!" the woman demanded.

"Uh, may I ask what's the problem? My master has been dead for over a dozen years now, so surely her name won't help you," Alex said.

"Your master is dead? Then name the sect or organization your master belonged to. Letting someone pass along Alchemy knowing that it is forbidden in these lands is not a crime we can simply let aside," the woman said.

"What?" Alex cried out in surprise. "Alchemy is forbidden? Why?"

"Because we say so. Now tell us," the woman said.

"Senior, I don't come from these lands. I come from the state of Xue. One of the reasons I ran was that I didn't want to get hunted down in that state. Is the situation the same here?" he asked with fear in his voice.

"We don't stop people from learning Alchemy here, but we do forbid it from letting someone pass what they learn to others. If you did come from the state of Xue, then I have no reason to punish the sect or organization your master belonged to. Rather, I have no authority," she said.

Alex was very much weirded out by the situation on this continent. Why the hell was that in both of the states he went to, there was some sort of law punishing Alchemists?

"Congratulations, you have proved your innocence," the woman said, making Alex feel surprised and happy.

"Am I free to go now?" he asked excitedly.

"Ah, not yet. There are still a few more questions we have to ask," she said.

"Okay," Alex said, wondering what they might be.

"You said you came here by accident. Can you tell us where you were intending to go?" she asked.

"I wanted to go to the Dao mountain to possibly learn some more Dao," Alex said.

"Hah! You wanted to go to the Dao mountain?" the woman repeated amusedly. "How do you intend to enter when you're not even a Saint?"

"Uhh... I intend to find some other way," Alex said. "I read that even those that didn't enter the Saint realm can go in there."

"Yes," the old woman said. "But only if they are part of the 5 Ancient sects. Did you not know that?"



"What? I didn't know that," Alex said and frowned a little. "Is there no way?"

"You can join one of the ancient sects? But the better way would be to simply break through to the Saint realm. All Saints are allowed free entry," she said.

Alex's frown didn't disappear as he fell into thought.

So if he wanted to enter the Dao mountain, he had to either break through to the Saint realm or enter one of the 5 giant sects.

He wanted to keep his freedom, so joining a sect didn't feel right to him. But, if he wanted to wait until he entered the Saint realm, that alone would take at least 2 years.

"Is there no other way?" he asked.

"No," the woman said.

"I see," he thought. "Can I join your sect then perhaps?"

"Are you a girl?" the old woman chuckled.

"Haha, I suppose I can't," he said. That was to be expected. 'It looks like I might have to go back to the Heaven's Frost sect.'

But he simply didn't want to go to that sect. That sect was trying to have a monopoly on Alchemists, and Alex simply didn't feel right joining them.

"If I may ask, which sect treats Alchemists the best?" he asked.

"None," the old woman said.

"None? Not even the Heaven's Frost sect? They have a monopoly on Alchemists though," he said.

"Yes, but they don't treat them well," the old woman said.

Alex frowned. Was that true?

"Alchemy is taboo in the northern continent, so I'm afraid no matter where you go, you will have a disadvantage. Most will try to keep you confined, others will push you away from their land," she said.

"Can I ask why?" Alex questioned.

"No, you may not. That is how the rule is," she said.

Alex frowned. What the hell was he supposed to do now then? Seeing his frown, the woman spoke up.

"I have a suggestion for you," she said. "Become our alchemist."

"Sorry?" Alex was confused. "Why?"

"We're lacking good alchemists and desperately need some. If you join us, solely as a pill provider, you will get many cultivation resources, which you can use to quickly break through to the saint realm," she said.

"Don't you hate alchemists?" Alex asked.

"What made you think that?" the woman asked.

"You forbid Alchemists from passing down their knowledge. Isn't that because you hate them?" he asked.

"No, we do not hate Alchemists. We appreciate them very much," she said.

"Then why the forbidding?" he asked.

"You will not get an answer from me," the woman said. "Now chose. Will you leave here and go somewhere else, or will you stay until you enter the Saint realm and in return get aid from one of the best sects on the entire continent?"

Alex frowned.

He frowned because there was really just a single choice he could make in this case.

"Fine, I will join your sect as an Alchemist. And only as an Alchemist. Also, I will leave whenever I want," he said.

"Very well. If you are worth it, we will work hard to keep you from leaving then," the woman said.

"Murong will take you to your quarters. You will be under constant surveillance, so be careful what you do," she said.

"Also, you are not allowed to speak with any of the disciples unless they speak with you first. Got it?" she asked.

"Understood."

Chapter 875: Along the Bridge

"Was the senior at the center the sect leader?" Alex asked as he and Gan Murong left the building.

"No," Gan Murong explained. "The Frozen Heart sect has no sect leader. We have the 9 elders who collectively make decisions for the sect."

"Oh," Alex was surprised, to say the least. "She was the one talking and asking the questions, so I assumed she was the one with the most power there."

"In a sense, she does," Gan Murong explained. "In the Frozen Heart sect, there must always be the 9 elders who are known as the Frozen Elders. They are the highest authority in the sect."

"Whenever an elder gets too old or wishes to no longer be a Frozen Elder, another normal elder is elevated to the post of the Frozen Elder."

"There have been many such changes, but Elder Xuan is the only Frozen Elder that has been here since the formation of the Frozen Elders. So, she garners respect from the rest of the elders, and as such is in a way not that different from a regular sect leader in how she's treated," Murong explained.

"Ah," Alex thought. "Ever since the Frozen Heart sect was formed... does that mean right after the Snow Immortal sect was destroyed 8 thousand years ago?"

"Of course not," Gan Murong said. "The Frozen Elders formed some 5 thousand years ago after most of the male elders had either left or went into closed cultivation. Now, no male elder or disciple remains in the sect any longer."

"Right, that makes more sense," Alex said. "It's hard to imagine someone could live 8 thousand years."

"There are some," Murong said. "But I guess they all went into closed cultivation very long ago, so I'm not sure if they count."

Alex nodded. He knew humans were capable of living even longer as a Saint cultivator, but the humans from these realms did not have much potential, to begin with. Still, being alive for 8 thousand years was not bad at all.

"If you don't mind, can you explain to me a little about what you guys cultivate here? I read that you lose emotions towards men, but how does that help you make stronger?" he asked.

"Ah, it's the opposite," Murong said. "The Frozen Heart scripture we practice is one of the best Heaven grade cultivation methods for anyone from Self tempering realm to the saint realm. It gives you a giant boost in power, especially when it comes to using yin or water arts."

"However, as a result, we lose the emotion of love. It's not just for men, but for everything. We lose all emotions of love."

"That is not to say we are emotionless," Murong said. "We do care about people, we do laugh, feel sad, angry, and everything else the other people can feel."

"We... we just can't feel love," Murong said. "It's tragic in a way really, but what can you do? You can't get strong without losing a few things."

"Some lose their childhood, some lose their family. Some lose friends and time. Some even lose their humanity to become stronger. If we really think about it, we are luckier than others when it comes to it," Murong said.

"Also, the Frozen Heart scripture isn't everything we make the disciples read. Only that those who haven't cultivated the Frozen Heart scripture aren't allowed to enter the Core disciples, or be part of the sect once they are all grown up," she said.

"Meaning they can leave and have a normal life if they wish?" Alex asked.

"Yes, they can," Murong said.

"I see," Alex said. "Would you mind if I bring out my Seeking mouse? I wish to see the sect through his eyes."

"Oh, sure. Go ahead," Murong said.

Alex nodded and called out Whisker. The little mouse came out from his right shoulder plate and jumped into his robes.

'Do not use your spiritual sense.' Alex made sure the mouse heard it the moment he was out.

"Oh, seeking mouse have cultivation base?" Gan Murong was surprised. "Since when?"

"He seems to be a mutant beast," Alex explained. "Also, he's incredibly slow at cultivating. Although, I guess he's still a little better than other Seeking Mouses."

"You got lucky. Where did you find the little guy?" Murong asked.

"Ah, do you know the realm of the Ruler in the state of Xue? I got him in a forest not far from there. I tried searching for more, but I couldn't find any," Alex said.

"Oh, we'll have to send some disciples to check the area sometime later then," she said.

Alex saw the world through Whisker's eyes. There was no mountain here. No volcano to warm up the land.

Even at day time, the cold atmosphere gave the city-like sect an abandoned look. If it weren't for the occasional disciples walking by, greeting Gan Murong, Alex would have definitely thought there was possibly no sign of life in the sect and the ancient sect of Frozen Hearts sect was nothing more than a facade.

They walked upon what looked like a massive bridge that slowly sloped downwards until it reached the ground down below. Alex made a whisker look behind him and saw that he had been in a towering castle with multiple stone bridges coming out of it from all sides, moving down to the cityscape.

There were multiple houses down below, all that looked like a normal city. But from what Alex understood, these were houses that belonged to the disciples.

If he was right, then the 3 walls that circled the city were to separate the Core disciples from the inner disciples, who were separated from the outer disciples.

The bridge sloped forward and they walked down it until they were at the edge, where there was a flight of stairs that took them nearly 50 meters down.

Only after coming down from the bridge did Alex finally see the enormous amount of female disciples wearing crystal blue robes that walked around.

Some of their eyes turned curious when they saw Alex. Most of them were surprised as male disciples weren't allowed in the sect.

If he was a guest, then he wouldn't have come down here either.

However, seeing as he was with the leader of the Law Enforcing team, they quickly bowed and stepped aside.

Alex was subtly checking the cultivation bases of the girls that walked by him, and to his surprise, each one of them had a cultivation base of True King realm or higher.

Not a single one of them was lower than that.

"Senior Murong, are these all Core disciples?" he asked.

"Yes, they are all core disciples," Murong said. "There are nearly 3 thousand of them in the sect."

Alex's eyes went wide. "And they're all over True Lord realm in cultivation base?" he asked.

"One of the requirements for entering the core sect, aside from learning the Frozen Heart sect is being in the True King realm or higher," she said.

Waves of shock hit Alex the likes of which he would have never imagined. Hearing that this was an ancient sect that was many thousand years was good and all, but hearing that there were 3 thousand different women that were all in the True King realm or higher was something he had never expected in his wildest dream.

That was akin to having 3 times as many competitors as in the Tournament of the Champions back in the Western Continent, and that included disciples from all over the empire.

Being able to bring this many disciples from just the Core sect of the sect was something else.

"Wait, do you mean there are more of such disciples if we don't count the requirements?" he asked.

"Of course. Many of the inner sect disciples are no less scary than the core sect disciples," she said.

Alex took a deep breath to gather himself. "Just... just how many disciples are there in this sect?" he asked.

"Hmm, should be around 200 thousand," Murong said. "There's a constant flow of disciples coming in and going out, so it is hard to tell."

"200... thousand?" Alex's first instinct was that she heard the question wrong, but she clearly explained why there were that many too.

Were these ancient sects these big? Then, another question came to his mind.

"Senior, if it isn't too much of a bother, can you tell me how many Saint realm cultivators there are?"

#### Chapter 876: The Alchemy Room

"How many Saints? Hmm... that depends on how many elders we have. As of right now, I can't tell you, but it should be somewhere between 100 and 120," Gan Murong said.



"Sorry... 120 Saint realm cultivators?" Alex was ready for a preposterous number, but this was too much. Wasn't that the number of the entire Luminance empire?

Was a single Ancient sect really that much better than the entire Luminance empire?

Alex wondered just how great the Western continent would have been currently if the people from over 5 thousand years ago didn't steal from the continent.

'Speaking of which, the Frozen Elders were set up around the same time too right?' he thought. 'I wonder if there is any relation between those two events.'

"This way."

Gan Murong continued on, taking him through winding roads, through the same looking buildings until she came to an area of the city that was sparse and wide open.

At the center was a rather large house, and Alex could see smoke coming up from the chimney.

"This is where you will be staying. It is primarily a place where disciples can come to learn Alchemy, but we will make a room for you to stay in," she said.

"Sorry, learn alchemy? Do they learn on their own or...?" Alex asked.

"We have a teacher inside that teaches them alchemy," she said, and quickly followed it by, "yes, I know. We're hypocrites. You don't have to remind me that."

"I wasn't going to say that," Alex coughed a bit and turned aside.

"You didn't have to. That's what any normal person would think," Gan Murong said. "Now let's go inside."

Alex nodded and opened the door to walk in.

The fresh smell of herbs and flowers blew out with the hot air as the cold air from outside moved in.

The hallway was big and a few disciples moved across from room to room. They all turned curiously to look at the only male that was entering the room.

Alex nodded towards the girl who looked at him, but aside from that, he did nothing. After all, he had been ordered to not speak to any of the girls without them speaking to him first.

"Right, about that order to not speak to the disciples, who do I speak to if I'm in need of something?" Alex asked.

"This is an important location in the sect as this is the only place where pills are made for all of the 200 thousand disciples and the nearly 150 elders. As such, there will be quite a few elders that will constantly be on guard here. You can speak to them," Murong said.

"Oh, I see," Alex said. "Also, are there any Saint alchemists here?"

"There are 2," Murong said. "But they're mostly focused on making pills for the elders. For the disciples, we don't have nearly enough."

"Here, down the stairs," Murong showed him through the house and went to an underground location where he felt multiple Saint realm cultivation bases.

The saints were standing outside 2 different rooms, as if on guard.

"These are the rooms where you will be making pills. They are large enough that you can make the pills and live in there. This is only reserved for Saint alchemists, but you are given a special place here because you can stay far away from the other disciples here," she said.

Gan Murong opened one of the doors and let Alex inside. Alex looked inside curiously and saw a rather fancy-looking room with marbles laid down on the floor.

The room was massive, nearly twice the total area of the house he was staying in in the village.

As soon as you walked inside, you were confronted with elevated steps in the middle of the room that led to a well-established set of formations that were just an activation away from spewing out fire.

Directly over that was a chimney that led smoke out of the room.

To the right, in the corner was a bed and it too was in a place that was slightly elevated as well.

Given the distance between the two of them, it was pretty much good enough to be his room.

Alex looked around at the formations that were crafted directly onto the walls and nodded to himself.

"This is nice," he said. He released his spiritual sense to look at the other things and noticed something weird. He walked up to the bed and pulled it aside to reveal a formation under it.

"Why's there a teleportation formation here?" he asked with a surprised look.

"That's not for you to use," Murong said. "You can't use it without something to give you authority anyway."

"I see."

"Rest for today. Someone will come to give you your task tomorrow. Is there anything particular you can't do? If so, I will let them know not to send those your way," Murong said.

"Uhh... Please don't have me make Saint rank pills. I don't know if I'm capable of those just yet," Alex said.

Murong chuckled a bit. "Why would I make an alchemist that hasn't entered the Saint rank make Saint rank pills?" she asked and shook her head. "You will be making mostly True rank pills and maybe occasionally some common pills."

Alex nodded. That he could do.

"I was told that I would be under constant surveillance. Does that mean I won't get any privacy at all?" he asked.

"Not entirely, no," she said. "The elder outside will be watching you the entire time she is here and while you are making pills. You will have 15 hours a day to make pills, and the remaining 9 hours to rest and cultivate. Those 9 hours will be without surveillance."

"In addition, you will get a free day once a week where you will also not be under any surveillance."

"That's... annoying," Alex said. "An alchemist cannot make pills for 15 hours a day, you know?"

"Don't worry, you won't have to make pills every minute of those 15 hours. There will be a daily quota you have to fulfill to receive the rewards the elders promised you. After you are done with that, you are free to do whatever you want," She said.

"But, if you do wish to continue, then any extra pills you make that day will be counted towards your contribution points. You can use that contribution points to get yourself whatever you want from the sect," she said.

"Hmm, that sounds better. Doesn't feel outright like slavery," Alex said. "Oh right, outside I saw the open land. Is there some reason why it doesn't have any buildings on it yet?" he asked.

"Uhh... no? It was just to separate this place from the other houses I believe," Murong said.

"Ah, is it possible for me to turn it into a garden? I wish to grow some plants there," Alex requested.

"Um, I will ask the elders about it. I can't approve of it myself," Murong said.

"Thank you, and one last thing," Alex said. "Can you tell me when the Dao mountain opened the last time?"

"Dao Mountain? That was quite recent. 2 months ago I think," Murong said. "You really are interested in the mountain, huh? Well, break through to the Saint realm and you will get free entry."

#### Chapter 877: First Day at Work

Alex sat down in front of the formations and looked at the talisman in his hand.

The elders or someone of authority had gathered a list of pills that needed to be made, and of those, Alex was handed about 50 pills that needed to be made.

That basically meant that the elders expected him to make 3 pills an hour. That sort of requirement was nothing for Alex though.

'Fortunately, there are no saint pills here,' Alex thought.

There was a reason why he was so reluctant to make Saint pills. The main reason for that was the fact that making pills needed not only Qi and physical endurance, but also mental strength.

For Common and True rank pills, someone with spiritual sense would basically not notice the missing mental strength with pill they made because of how strong it would be anyway. It would take nearly hundreds of pills before they were mentally fatigued.

However, for Saint rank pills, one needed the mental strength of a Saint realm cultivation base. Even the starting saint realm cultivators had nearly twice as strong as Alex's current mental strength.

It meant that if he tried to make Saint rank pills, not only would his Qi have to suffer the burden of Saint rank materials, but his mind, which was half as bad, would also have to suffer alongside it.

So, he was waiting to make them.

It wasn't just Saint rank pills either. Both Saint rank formations plates and flags, as well as Saint rank talismans, required him to have an incredible mental fortitude, which he just didn't have by comparison.

Alex placed his cauldron on top of one of the many formations, and it hovered about 15 centimeters above the formation.

A fire lit under it on its own and Alex couldn't help but sigh slightly. The formations here were just way too helpful.

He didn't even need to do a lot of things aside from focusing on the ingredients themselves. The formations even helped regulate fire.

Alex shook his head and spoke, "I didn't wish to show it to you this way, but I have no choice. Look carefully at what I do, okay? Use your spiritual sense."

Whisker, that was sitting inside Alex's Black and Gold robe, nodded slightly.

"Alright, pay attention."

The first set of pills he had to make were those that would help True Lord realm cultivators break through to the True King realm with rather ease.

So, Alex started making the pill.

Since he was showing how it was done to Whisker, he didn't use any of his Dao, since Whisker wouldn't know how to use it.

He pulled the lid and placed the first ingredient. He felt the elder outside watching him make the pill, but he didn't care. He didn't care that she could see that Whisker had a cultivation base either.

A sect like this would obviously know about Spirit Cleansing Lily, and that was all Alex needed to tell them. Given that they had already searched everything he owned, they wouldn't ask him to fess up anything else either.

Once the first ingredient was inside, Alex started moving it around, following the recipe perfectly while making sure Whisker could see everything that had happened.

He had explained it all to him before, but seeing was better than just listening.

Whisker too was very curious about everything, so he watched everything Alex did. He remembered the recipe, what it meant, and what Alex was doing. He could see Alex was following the recipe perfectly, and before long all the ingredients had turned into power.

Alex then used Elemental Guidance to push whatever energy there was in the cauldron towards the powder, and then simply clumped it all together to form a single pill.

He didn't use his immortal pill-forming technique at all.

Making high-grade pills was fine and all, but he couldn't just start making pills that had 90% Harmony. If the Frozen Elders realized how good he was, they might end up imprisoning him forever, forcing him to make pills till the end of time.

He couldn't have that.

He needed to be just useful enough that they treated him well, and just bad enough that they don't think of him as something they absolutely needed to have.

The pill flew out and it was 63%. Given that the elders were interested in Heaven rank pills, this would be quite amazing in his eyes.

"Did you see?" Alex asked Whisker.

Whisker couldn't speak yet aside from making screeching noises. Given that he wasn't as full of potential as Pearl, he was likely not going to speak for a long time.

But he could think, and as such pass along information through his spiritual sense, which through their bond, Alex could understand.

"Good, you got it. Your job for today is to watch me work all day and memorize it all. Once that's over, you can sleep," Alex said and got to work.

65%. 62%. 59%. 60%.

Even though Alex wasn't giving it his all, and even though he felt that it was somewhat of a waste of ingredients, he was still certain that the elders would be happy with the result.

In the first hour, he managed to make 3 pills because he was slow and showed Whisker what needed to be done.

Starting with the second hour, however, the pills instantly jumped up to 5 an hour. If only he didn't need to make Heaven rank pills, he could've used the pill-splitting Qi to finish those 50 in almost no time at all.

Unfortunately, he had to spend the next 10 hours just making pills.

Whisker was tired by the end of the day and returned to his beast space to rest. Alex didn't say anything as he deserved it.

Alex took the pills and opened the door to greet the elder that stood outside.

"Here are the pills, elder," he said respectfully as he handed them over.



"Are you done with all 50?" the elder outside asked.

"Of course," Alex said. 'Didn't she look at me the entire time? I thought she was supposed to surveying me the entire time I worked.'

"What about Heaven grade? They all need to be Heaven grade, you know?" she said.

"Yes, they are all Heaven grade," Alex said.

"Really? How do you know? I didn't see you test any at all," the elder said.

'Ah, that's the problem,' Alex realized.

"I don't need to test them, elder. Those are pills I've been making forever and know them in and out. Still, if you think I need to test it, I can show you," he said and brought out a few pills.

One by one, he put the pills in the pill tester to show that they were all indeed heaven-grade pills.

"Oh, I see," the elder said. "They are indeed all in the Heaven rank. Although, why are you using such old devices? Those take forever to figure out how good your pill is. Use the testing formation inside the room or request for a better testing apparatus."

"Oh," Alex was surprised. He hadn't expected there to be different pill testers other than the one he was using. He didn't need one, but it was still convenient to have one.

"Thank you, elder," he said. "I'll keep that in mind."

## Chapter 878: Going Wide

Alex planted some fences and then used a hoe to make some divots on the ground. Then, he handed some seeds to Whisker and told him to plant them.

Whisker took the seeds and ran along the side of the divots planting the seeds. He wasn't just planting the seeds either. He was using his knowledge about plants and gardening to plant the seeds appropriately.

From time to time, he would stop and look back at Alex to ask if a seed should go there.

"What would happen if their roots touch each other?" Alex asked the little mouse. Whisker tried to think but there was too much information in his mind to sort through immediately.

"They have contradicting elemental roots, so you don't want them touching each other," Alex said. "Which is why you have to plant them separately, far away from each other."

Whisker remembered the lesson from a while ago and nodded. Then, he continued planting the seeds.

It took about half an hour for Whisker to plant all the seeds. He could have done it faster, but he had to constantly stop and ask if he could do what he was going to do, or Alex had to stop him and explain why what he was doing was bad.

Alex was starting to instinctively know why something was bad and why something was good in regards to the plants, and he was explaining the situation to Whisker rather easily.

Alex then moved some snow from the side onto the dirt and then spread some ashes that he had requested from the sect on top of it. These were volcanic ashes that were very good for the soil, so he was mixing them here.

With a single thought, the snow on top of the dirt easily melted and started dissolving the ashes a bit. That helped the ashes penetrate the soil even better, and reached underground.

Once all that was done, Alex now just had to hope that the winter which was currently plaguing the land would soon be over so the land could see some more sunlight.

From what he had heard, it still snowed a lot in the summer too, but the atmosphere was generally hotter in the summer than in the winter.

Once his job at this little garden of his was done, Alex let it be and walked back into the house and went back to his room.

Today was his one free day in a week, so he was planning on cultivating all day, but he had already cultivated last night, so he was a little reluctant about that.

"Well, let's go back to the trusty Alchemy then," he thought. He was planning on making Whisker start making pills, but he was still having trouble learning how to manipulate things with Qi.

So, until he was able to use Qi to manipulate objects or even just fly, then there was no point in having him start Alchemy yet.

"Well, time for me to improve myself then," Alex thought.

But then, there was another problem. How did he improve himself exactly? What was there to improve even?

The only things that could be improved were either the ingredients or the technique with which the pills were formed.

Other than that, there was nothing else that could be improved. And unfortunately, these two things were something he couldn't consciously improve.

He couldn't suddenly make an ingredient better than it was, and he couldn't suddenly make the technique work better than it was supposed to.

The ceiling in making a 100% harmony pill was high, but he was already reaching it. Just 6% to 8% more and he would have made a perfect pill.

But those 6% to 8% were indeed reliant on luck, and that was not something he could improve upon.

If he couldn't touch the ceiling, then there was really just a single choice left. He would push away the walls.

"If I can't reach high, then it is time to reach wide," Alex thought.

It was time to make more than just a single pill at once.

There were 2 ways he understood he could go about making more than a single pill at once.

The first was to make pills in multiple cauldrons at once. The second was to make them all in a single cauldron.

There were advantages to both and disadvantages as well.

For the first part, making pills in multiple cauldrons allowed you to follow the recipe without having to alter it even in the slightest.

You didn't have to worry about figuring out how many ingredients went into a single batch, or figuring out if the heat needed to be adjusted because there were many ingredients this time around.

You could easily just follow the recipe and make the pills as you always had.

In fact, you could make two entirely different pills using this method too.

Only, there was a problem. You needed to be able to keep track of many things at once, perhaps even more so than a normal cultivator was capable of.

Alex was confident he could split his attention between two cauldrons and make the pills at the same time, only if they followed the same recipe.

Having to keep track of two different pills with all the ingredients, recipes, and different timings and such would be incredibly hard.

On the other hand, making pills in a single cauldron wouldn't really cause any increased problem to one's mental ability to handle Alchemy as the number of things to keep track of would increase at all.

Also, he didn't have to split his Qi to manipulate anything other than the fire and the ingredients.

This was very easy, compared to the other method.

However, this one had more problems than the other one.

For starters, there was only a certain amount of pills one could make in a single cauldron. Too many ingredients and the energy in the cauldron would reach a point where it would be too compact to keep making the pill.

Even if one did indeed use intent to make maybe 2 or 3 pills at once, there were more problems one had to think of.

First of all, making different pills at once was just not something that was possible, not that one would intend of doing so with this method.

Another, more troubling problem was that having more ingredients meant that heat distribution wasn't proper at all.

Each ingredient had certain capabilities when it came to being able to absorb the heat from the cauldron. Adding more ingredients meant there needed to be more heat in the cauldron, which meant the temperature had to be different.

Because of that, to make multiple pills at once, you had to change the temperature portion of the recipe to match the new amount of ingredient so they all got the same amount of heat in the end.

"No, wait a minute," Alex frowned all of a sudden. "That would be true under a normal scenario, but I know the Dao of Heat. I can have the heat in the cauldron constantly be the same temperature using the dao."

"Which means I won't have to change the recipe at all. Only the amount of ingredients."

Alex's eyes shined. He knew what he was going to start with.

### Chapter 879: That Corpse

Due to the second method having fewer cons for him, Alex decided to make multiple pills in a single cauldron.

Since this was the first time he was trying something like that, he started with a common rank pill.

He had plenty of ingredients, so Alex brought out his cauldron and started heating it.

Heat... that would be the most important thing for him to keep track of here as even the slightest deviation in it would affect how the ingredient was shaped as a result.

Alex took a deep breath and prepared the ingredients. He portioned the ingredients as per the recipe, increasing the amount by twice in all cases.

He then brought the temperature of the flame and cauldron to the required level and placed them in the first set of ingredients.

Putting in twice the ingredients, Alex had to make sure to separate them onto the two sides of the cauldron so that they didn't gather up and get heated evenly.

At the same time, he made sure that the temperature of the cauldron never changed at all.

The world was pushing Qi into the cauldron constantly as Alex used his authority over Heat and used his Dao.

Once the first set of ingredients turned into powder, Alex immediately moved it away from the direct head and placed it in the 2nd set of ingredients.

Once again, he separate the ingredient so as to not crowd them up and changed the temperature as required.

He continued doing the same for the following ingredients until all of them had turned into powder. Then, he quickly poured the energy into the powder and formed them into two different pills without using his pill forming technique as that only worked for a single pill.

He brought out the pills and excitedly checked on them.

72%, and 74%.

"Hmm, for being my first try and not using the pill forming technique, this is actually quite good," Alex thought.

These were Common pills sure, but at the point he was, Common pills and True pills didn't have much difference to him given how far above he was from having either of them being difficult for him to make.

"Hmm, let's try with the True pills then," he thought. He needed to make a choice on what to make.

Given the recent demands for pills that helped one cultivate faster in between the True realms, he decided to make those pills.

He ended up on a pill, the recipe of which was in his mind since a decade ago.

As he went on to double the now required ingredients in his mind, a thought came to him that made him feel a bit weird about some things.

For millennia now, the Western Continent was without any connection to the outer world, and yet it was still not doing very bad in terms of Alchemy.

Of course, the lack of Saint Qi made the Saint rank alchemists weaker in general, but it was still comparable to Northern Continent.

Actually, it was doing better in terms of recipes because of the Demon realm they robbed and the meteor shower.

"Wait, is there really no recipe in the Northern continent that's not available in the Western Continent?" he thought.

It had been over a week, and he had made nearly 400 pills, and yet only a few of those were from recipes that he wasn't aware of. And given what sort of recipes they were, Alex was certain they were only available in the Frozen Heart sect too.

So, from his experience, all the public recipes in the Northern continent were recipes he had already learned back in the Western continent, and the Western Continent in fact had way more.

"Did the continent really regress that back because of the quasi-ban on alchemy?" Alex thought. "No, how are the recipes even being shared around in the first place?"

That was when Alex realized something he had forgotten for a very long time. It was something that had happened to him during the very early part of his life in the sect where his body was being controlled by his clone's soul.

"Is that it?" Alex's eyes shined.



He remembered the time Wen Cheng had asked him to go somewhere with him and taken him along with some elders to a location in the southern forest where there was a formation in the middle of nowhere, growing Alchemy ingredients, that included some Spirit Cleansing lilies.

Later on, he had found the man behind the formation and garden, who was already dead underground.

Alex had taken away his storage bags that contained nothing but ingredients and recipes for pills and formations.

That was how he had acquired so many of those recipes. That was what made him learn all the recipes of the northern continent before even arriving here.

It wasn't that the Western Continent had the recipes that were also available in the Northern Continent, but rather that corpse he had found, did.

That man was most likely someone from the Northern continent, and he had teleported to the Western continent.

Alex pulled out a talisman from his storage ring. It was kind of rugged at this point, but it could still be used, he knew that.

Lady Ren had told him that it would be usable in 10 years, and 10 years had already passed for him. If not, he could always go to the location with the extreme Water Qi and have the talisman recharged.

However, that was not why he took the talisman out for now. He was wondering what made the man teleport all the way to the western continent.

"No, he didn't choose to go there. It was random," Alex understood. But if it was random, then he could have arrived at any place in the world. Even the most dangerous places wouldn't be out of reach, and yet the man had used it.

'What prompted him to use such a dangerous talisman?' Alex thought. Then, he remembered that not only was the man a formation maker, but also an Alchemist.

An Alchemist in the Northern Continent.

"Dear god, how bad is the situation here?" Alex feared. If a man would rather face uncertain death than whatever was going on here, then the situation must be more severe than he thought.

'I should really make sure not to show my talent around here at all,' he thought. He put back the talisman and shook his head.

What he had learned just now was something he hadn't expected to, and in some ways, he would have rather not learned at all. Still, this was useful information, so he simply sighed and let it be.

"Yeah, let's focus on making the pill for now," he said to himself and thought back to the ingredients list he was thinking about when he got sidetracked.

Once he was done, Alex pulled out the ingredients and put them into the cauldron.

Despite being True rank ingredients, Alex didn't have much trouble with them as he turned all the ingredients into powder one by one.

When he was done, the entire cauldron was full of powder from the ingredients on the bottom and their energy floating on the top.

The next process here would be to use Elemental Guidance to pour the energy into the powder, then turn the powder into a pill.

That was what he had done last time, which had made the two pills over 70% harmony.

However, for some reason, Alex thought of something else.

"Since I'm making two pills, will that work?" he thought. The powder had stayed in the heat for a slightly longer period of time, but that shouldn't do much harm to the overall result.

Alex took a deep breath and Qi moved on its own through his body, releasing involuntarily out of his hands and into the cauldron.

As soon as they entered, they grabbed onto the entire pile of powder and halved them at once.

The powders were then very easily formed into pills and suddenly a vortex appeared above each of them, pulling in the energy from the surrounding into it.

Alex waited patiently for the pill-splitting Qi to do its work.

Not long after, the two pills were prepared and Alex quickly pulled them out before looking at their harmony.

He had made some errors towards the end where he had waited a bit longer than he should have, and still, he somehow acquired such amazing results.

88% and 92%.

"Holy... shit!"

#### Chapter 880: Improvements

Alex made the pills once again and ended up on two pills that were at 89% and 94% harmony.

The pill-splitting Qi was an absolutely amazing technique to use for making the two pills at once. Not only did Alex didn't have to waste any time with moving energy and forming combinations on his own, but he also didn't have to focus on it at all as the technique worked on its own.

To this day, Alex was still amazed at how the technique worked. He didn't have to do anything and somehow it worked on its own.

He wondered if he would ever learn how that worked.

Alex continued making more and more pills, and at some point even reached as much as 95% with the process.

Alex started getting more and more interested and started using the weight measuring formation to make sure he wasn't leaving anything up to chance and tried again.

For the remainder of the day, he made about 30 different sets of twin pills, and the highest he reached was 96%.

Alex soon came to realize the advantage of using double ingredients instead of a single one. Because there were more than normal ingredients in the cauldron, the individual combinations that were capable of accepting the energy were also more than enough to make a perfect pill.

This meant that under the right circumstances, if luck was on his side, Alex might end up making a pill that took all the correct combinations, and as such end up with a pill that had 100% harmony.

100% Harmony. How long had it been since he had started making pills again? More than a decade long, and he was now approaching something that felt impossible at the time.

If only his master was here to see him.

Alex shook his head and returned back to work. He made a few more pills before going back to cultivate.

He decided he would also try out making pills using multiple cauldrons in the coming days, but for now, he needed to cultivate.

Starting the next day, Alex used the new method to make multiple pills at once. While it did surprise the guard outside, as soon as she learned the idea behind it, she didn't have much to say at all.

At least not to Alex. She did pass on the information to the Saint rank Alchemists that belonged to the sect.

However, those saints had been making pills for a long time and had already had those thoughts. However, without the Dao of heat, which they were so desperately hoping to learn soon, they didn't dare change the recipes to fit the pills.

As such, Alex became the only person to make two pills at once.

Because he was now making 2 pills at once, Alex could easily make about 10 pills an hour. As such, in just 5 hours, Alex was starting to finish his daily quota.

After that, everything he made was for the contribution point that would be granted to him at the end of the week.

Aside from that, Alex focused on cultivating his eyes and physique and spent the other time on the garden and Whisker.

Pearl did nothing but cultivate on his own in his free time. He wanted to practice the new techniques he had received recently, but there was nowhere to test them.

The training ground of the sect was accessible to him, but they were quite far away, and he didn't want to go there.

As such, both Alex and Pearl were stuck in the small room, cultivating by themselves.

Still, it wasn't so bad. They had reached a point in their cultivation journey where they didn't need to train to be able to continue with cultivation.

Instead just diligently cultivating was enough to keep their body and mind in top condition.

As such, Alex could simply cultivate and improve himself without having to do much.

Time passed before Alex knew it and it was already 3 months since he had been in the Frozen Heart sect.

Every day, he made somewhere close to 120 pills, of which all of the extra 70 pills would go towards his contribution points.

Alex had thought of using the contribution points to request some things for himself, but what he received from the sect for his daily quota alone was enough to make him realize that he didn't need it.

He received different types of fruits and pills, all of which could be used to further his cultivation base and speed it up by a lot.

Alex distributed his earnings between the three of them, and even then it was quite a bit for him.

For someone who wasn't used to using cultivation resources to improve himself, this almost felt like cheating.

In the 3 months, he was here, Alex had broken through again, reaching True Emperor 6th realm this time around.

Aside from that, Pearl was also close to breaking through as well.

Whisker was the one that perhaps showed the best improvement. In just 3 months, he had gone from the Bone Tempering realm to the Organ tempering realm.

In a year or two, he would certainly enter the true realm.

Considering Alex and Pearl's speed of cultivation, Whisker was very, very slow. However, going by normal individuals of this world, he was very fast.

After all, most people would take at least 5 months to go from the Bone Tempering realm to the Organ tempering realm.

Whisker was finally starting to be able to manipulate objects with his Qi, and could even manipulate multiple of them, so Alex decided to start his journey in cultivation.

He took out one of the random cauldrons he had received and made Whisker bond to it in the meantime.

Alex spent his own time making more pills, either by making them all in a single cauldron or using multiple cauldrons at once.

He was starting to be able to use up to 3 cauldrons if he gave his absolute everything, but he usually stuck to just 2 for the sake of not making many mistakes.

He was getting good at that, so he was also starting to mix and match the techniques so that he could make multiple pills on multiple cauldrons.

Making pills from different recipes was hard, but doing so with pills of the same type helped Alex make up to 4 pills at once.

'If only there was a way to make 3 pills in a single cauldron,' he thought. But then, the pill-splitting Qi would become useless for the most part.

Alex had to reluctantly stick to 2 pills only, but since he could use multiple cauldrons he was still doing quite good.

There was still some problem in making the best use of the two cauldrons, but that would take patience and practice.

For now, the best pill he had made while making 4 at once was 92%. That was quite great considering that he could still improve.

As for making 2 pills in a single cauldron, the highest he had reached in the last 3 months was still just 96%. However, he wasn't saddened by this knowledge as he was sure he would soon do better than this.

Of course, he was only thinking this all when he was making pills for himself. During the other times when he was making the pill for the sect, Alex was starting to go up to 4 pills in a single cauldron.

Since he didn't use any technique in the end, the pills rarely got better than 65%, but that was still quite amazing for the sect as Heaven-ranked pills were nearly impossible to get in a state where Alchemy was forbidden to be taught to anyone else.

Self-teaching would never help them improve to the same level as he had.

Over time, Alex started making more and more pills in the 15 hours he was allocated to work on, and the elders were starting to learn about it.

He had intended to hide for the most part, but he was becoming somewhat of a celebrity inside the upper echelon of the sect, who were starting to look at him as someone worthy of entering the sect.

As such, in the coming days, Alex's resources that he was to receive were also improved to reflect upon what he was doing.

Alex enjoyed the newly found resources and spent his entire time using them with his two beasts.

Their cultivation base improved, but not by enough to be noticeable. Whisker, however, was making proper improvements.

Around 2 months later, Whisker was finally able to completely refine the cauldron he had received.

Whisker was the least talented of the three, and as such Alex could finally understand what normal cultivators would have to go through to improve themselves.



In the 10 months of time Whisker had cultivated diligently to reach halfway through the Organ Tempering realm, Alex was already in the True realms, and so was Pearl.

Pearl was in fact still an infant when he had reached True realms, so it was fascinating for him to see a 'normal' cultivator's journey through his own pet.

"Are you ready?" Alex asked the mouse.

Whisker nodded and stood in front of the giant cauldron that was sitting on the fire.

It was his free day, so Alex was going to teach Whisker how to make pills on the days when he wasn't under surveillance.

If the little beast could really make pills, that would surely cause commotion in the sect and he didn't want that.

Alex prepared himself and looked at Whisker who was ready as well.

"Let's begin."