

## Alchemy 881

### Chapter 881: Whisker's Improvement

"Start slow. Use the Flame Mastery Scripture to control the fire and pull it up to the temperature it needs to be," Alex explained as Whisker sat next to him, getting ready to put in the first ingredient.

When the temperature was right, Whisker put in the first ingredient and started moving it around as per the recipe.

The movement wasn't smooth, and the ingredient didn't contact the cauldron the entire time, so it was coming out a little worse than it should have.

Alex waited until the ingredient was about to turn to power and reminded the next instruction. "Lower the temperature and... no, lower even more. Yes, now keep it stable. Stable! It's rising, keep it low. Yes, now put the second ingredient."

Alex explained the little beast that was making pills for the first time and noticed an exorbitant amount of mistakes.

He didn't say anything though, as it was obvious he would make mistakes. Even he had made mistakes, despite knowing the recipes by heart when he had first started making pills.

He reminded what had to be done next and where he was making the obvious mistakes, but other than that, Alex was completely letting him do it all on his own.

After everything was done, the mouse tried to use the Elemental Guidance he had learned to put the energy into the powder, but that barely worked at all.

The structure just wasn't of the shape to collect the newly formed energy. Whisker didn't realize this and still continued to form his pill.

After he was done making the little pink ball, he pulled it out and showed it to Alex.

Alex smiled and took it. He placed the pill on a formation in the center, and instantly a number appeared on top.

7%.

"It's only 7%, little guy. What should we do? Do you know where you made the mistakes?" Alex asked.

The mouse thought for a bit and started communicating mentally. Alex heard everything and nodded.

"Yes, those are the primary mistakes. Let's try it again and see if you can rectify them," he said.

Whisker nodded and went back to making another pill.

Alex didn't say many things this time around, except for when he was making some obvious mistakes that he wasn't paying attention to.

A wide smile appeared on his face when he realized this one would be an obvious improvement.

When the pill came out, and Alex took it, a genuine smile formed on his face.

He placed the pill on the formation and a two-digit number popped up.

15%.

"Not bad, Whisker. You did better than even I did when I first started making pills," Alex said.

The mouse made some screeching noises of happiness.

"Alright, tell me what you did wrong this time around," Alex asked. Once Whisker told him everything he could remember, Alex made him do it all over again.

For the rest of the day, Whisker had to make the same pill over and over, perfecting the pill with each successive attempt.

When Whisker ran out of errors he could understand, Alex reminded him of new ones and told him what was wrong.

By the end of the day, Whisker was consistently making pills over 25%.

That wasn't a lot of harmony for Alex, but for someone who had just started Alchemy, that was an enormous amount.

"Every day I work, you will look at what I do, and try to understand it. On our free days, you will make pills from what you've learned," Alex said.

"I will teach you everything I know, and before long, you will start making immortal grade pills too, I'm sure."

Alex was absolutely certain he would be able to make Whisker create Immortal grade pills in no time, however, reality said otherwise.

No matter how talented Whisker was, or how great his curiosity was, he still needed to learn the normal way.

Until things were ingrained into him as if they were muscle memory, he wouldn't be able to improve at all.

Especially with just making pills once a week.

As such, it was only after 3 more months had passed that Whisker was able to make Heaven Grade pills.

Even after another 2 months passed, Whisker still wasn't able to make Immortal-grade pills as he had to pay too much attention to basically everything.

Despite Alex having made him some pills to improve his mind, Whisker still wasn't able to look at the structure and combination while in the middle of making pills.

So, even after learning the pill-forming technique to some extent, he was still not capable of making any good happen with it.

"Don't worry, you will learn it soon," Alex said and sighed.

Whisker had improved quite a bit for sure, but the improvement was quite slow. If someone had given Alex this same level of training, he would have reached over 80% harmony by now for sure.

'I guess that's what talent is all about,' he thought. The little guy didn't have the talent for alchemy, yet he was still working hard and showing results.

Wherever Alex was, he would reach there for sure. He would be slower, absolutely, but he would get there.

As such, Alex had every motivation to continue teaching him and wait for him to get better at it.

He was only in the upper realms of Meridian Tempering realm anyway. He still had much to go through before entering the True realms.

Plenty of time to improve on making pills.

In the last 5 months, Alex himself had only improved once, entering the True Emperor 7th realm. However, he was close to reaching the next realm and would do so in a month or two.

'It's taking much longer as I break through even though I get so many resources,' Alex thought. He knew things would slow down as he got to the higher realms, but he hadn't expected it to be this slow.

Now even breaking through the realms felt impossible to do in just 4 months.

"I only managed to breakthrough 3 times in the last 14 months I've been here, and Pearl only twice," Alex thought.

14 months. How easily time passed nowadays. 'Maybe it's because I'm just sitting in this one room, stuck with nothing much to do,' Alex thought.

He sighed. He couldn't help but worry about his mother, but there was nothing he could do with just worrying.

"Hmm... 14 months? Not exactly right?" Alex thought. Suddenly a thought came to him.

"I spent 4 months in the village, so I must have spent a little less than 10 months in this sect," he thought.

10 months was important to him.

"The Dao mountain opens very soon, doesn't it?" he thought. Only the students were apparently allowed, but since he had done so much for this sect, shouldn't he be allowed too?

Alex walked out the door and went out of the building. He wanted to know when exactly the mountain was opening.

Since he wasn't allowed to speak to any disciples of his own volition, he made his way up the giant bridge and walked towards the elder's section at the center.

The elder that stood guard looked at him curiously and stopped him.

"What do you need?" she asked.

"Senior, do you happen to know any information about the Dao mountain?" he asked. The woman was a Saint realm, so it was obvious she would know, but he still asked.

"Of course, what do you want to know?" she asked.

"It is opening soon, right? Do you know when exactly?" he asked.

"Um, 5 days maybe," the elder said. "It should be 5 days."

Alex looked at the time and frowned. It was close to the end of the day, so there were really just 5 more days left.

'What can I do in 5 more days?' he wondered.

"Do you wish to join too?" the elder asked. "I heard we only have 1966 Saints this time around that will enter the mountain, so the True realms will have about 34 spots to take up."

Alex was stunned by the number of Saints he had just heard, but what was more interesting to him was the number of spots for True realm cultivators.

"How do I take up the spot?" he asked.

"Well... you will need to be a disciple of one of the sect, or something like that," the elder said.

Alex's heart sank a bit before he asked, "I would like an audience with anyone that can give me that authority."

## Chapter 882: Responsibilities and Opportunities

"I'm afraid you can't just get an audience with someone like that, young man," the elder said. "You will have to use some of your contribution points. Do you have any?"

"Uhh... yes I do," Alex said and pulled out his nameplate to check on it.

"Different elders cost different amounts of contribution points to bring out. Which one are you looking for?" she asked.

"Uhh..." Alex thought for a bit, but he really didn't know any important elders' names.

"Ah, Elder Xuan. How much would it cost to have an audience with her?" Alex asked.

"Elder Xuan?" the elder in front of him got a little confused. "The elder Xuan? She's the oldest of the Frozen Elders, you know?"

"Yes, how much would it cost?" he asked.

"That... let me check," the elder said. Since no one ever held an audience with her, the elder had to go ahead and check.

Her eyes went wide when she saw the prince.

"A full 30 thousand contribution points," she said. A normal core disciple could earn about 100 contribution points a week. If she were to ever want an audience with the elder, she would need about 300 weeks' worth of contribution points.

That was 5 years' worth of contribution points on a single conversation.

"I'm sorry, young man. It's just how—"

"Here," Alex handed her his nameplate. "Please summon the elder."

The elder weirdly looked at the nameplate and slowly sent her spiritual sense into it.

When the nameplate activated and she saw the information, her mind went blank for a few seconds.

The name 'Yu Ming' was there, along with the date he had joined the sect. However, aside from that, there was nothing about him. No age, cultivation base, nothing.

The only other thing in the nameplate was his contribution points.

The elder had to count 3 times before she realized the number she was reading was right.

Contribution Points: 56,437

"How did you...?" she couldn't even form a sentence. She looked at the date he had joined and realized it was 10 months ago.

10 month. That meant Alex had earned about 5500 points every month.

Even the best disciples in the sect never earned more than a thousand points a month, and yet the young man in front of her had done so 5 times over.

When she realized that he had done that on top of his daily quota of making pills, her eyes truly went wide.

"Senior?" Alex called out to the woman who wasn't responding at all.

"Yes, yes, I will do it," she said and used her authority to use up his points and summon the elder.



"You may leave now," she said.

"Sorry? You mean to enter, right?" he asked.

"No, leave," the elder said. "Elder Xuan won't give you an audience the moment she has been called. She will most likely come out of her cultivation tomorrow."

"You will be called when she comes out, so you can return for now," the elder said.

"I see," Alex said. 'What the hell? I don't even get to see her immediately?'

He felt a little dejected and returned back to his room. He needed to wait now, so he waited by cultivating.

5 days remained. Hopefully, that was enough time.

The next day came around, and Alex made the 50 pills as soon as he could to continue waiting for her.

He waited and waited, but it didn't look like she was going to come out today either at all, so there would only be 4 more days left.

As he was thinking that he had run out of the day, around evening, he received a message on his nameplate. Elder Xuan was ready to see him.

Alex got happy and immediately walked out of the building. He made his way to the Elder's place as the sun set and arrived there after it went down.

"I am here for my audience with Elder Xuan," Alex explained while handing over his nameplate.

"Oh, let me take you," the elder that was on guard for today said and took Alex over to Elder Xuan.

Elder Xuan was sitting in a room, sipping a cup of tea when Alex arrived.

"Ah, you wanted to see me?" the elder asked in a sweet tone.

"Greetings, Elder Xuan. I have a request that I hope you can fulfill," he said.

"Come inside first. We can talk slowly," the elder said.

Alex nodded and walked in. He sat in front of the elder and was about to speak when the elder stopped him again.

The old woman went on to take a teacup from next to her and poured a cup of tea for Alex.

"Drink," she said as she handed over the cup.

Alex thanked her and smelled the fragrant tea before taking a sip. That sip was all Alex needed to realize he was drinking some sort of treasure.

The tea slipped into his throat, and before he realized he was taking the second sip.

Then the third sip and the fourth.

Alex only got back to himself when he finished the entire cup of tea and felt a serene calmness flow over him.

"Have you calmed down?" the elder asked.

"Yes," Alex said. "Thank you, elder, for letting me drink such a great tea."

"Haha, we aren't here to talk about tea, are we? Go on, tell me why it is that you need me," she said.

"Elder, I want to enter the Dao mountain," Alex said without beating around the bush.

"Enter the Dao mountain?" the elder asked. "Do you know how that's possible?"

"Not exactly, no. But I hear that the ones in the True realm that can enter have to be from the sect in some capacity. Doesn't that mean I can enter too?" he asked.

The elder thought for a moment before answering. "Technically, yes. You can enter. You are a member of the sect and have a cultivation base that is not in the Saint realm yet. By all means, you have the possibility of entering."

"However, there comes another thing that stops you from doing so," the elder said.

"Something stopping me from entering? What is it, elder?" Alex asked.

The elder sipped on her tea and said, "Responsibility."

Alex was taken aback. "Responsibility? Please explain, elder," he implored.

"Do you know how many Saint realm cultivators are entering?" she asked.

"Umm, wasn't it 1966?" he asked.

"Good, you know that." Then she said, "Then do you know how many of those are from the Frozen Heart sect?"

"Umm, around 100?" Alex asked. "There were around 120 elders, so I assume everyone but a few elders would be staying back, I suppose."

"Ah, only know about the active elders. You do not know how many remain inactive, that's understandable," the elder said. "Speaking of just the 120 active elders, the truth is only 50 of them will be going to the Dao mountain this time around."

"Sorry? Only 50?" Alex was surprised. "Isn't this quite an important event for a Saint realm cultivator? Why would they want to miss it?"

"Yes, it is important, but there are a few reasons," the elder said as she sipped her tea. "For example, you might be close to breaking through on a technique you were learning about, or had just learned a Dao and thus have no need for learning another one so soon."

"However, the main reason they don't go is that they have responsibilities. Responsibility to the sect, responsibility to the clan, responsibility to their disciples."

"Saint realm cultivators simply cannot leave their sects or clans without having someone to protect it in their absence. So, many of them don't get to leave it even when the Dao mountain opens up."

"We are the same. Of us 9 sisters, only 4 will be going this time around, while 5 of us remain behind. That is because we have a responsibility to protect this sect," she said. "Do you have a responsibility?"

"Me?" Alex thought for a second. He was about to say 'no' when he realized his daily quotas were in a way his responsibility towards the sect.

"The pills I have to make every day," Alex said.

"Yes," the elder said. "Because you have to make pills every day, you cannot leave the sect at this time. As such, I'm afraid that you cannot leave at all."

Alex felt devastated. Was there really no way?

"However," The elder continued. "Since you spent so many contribution points to speak to me, my saying no would be almost criminal. So, instead, I'll give you an opportunity."

"Opportunity?" Alex got curious. "What opportunity is it, elder?"

"The Dao mountain opens in 4 days, and one will be able to remain there for an entire month and return after that month ends."

"In a sense, if I were to say yes and let you go, you will have wasted a total of 35 days doing nothing for the sect."

"However, if you can fulfill your responsibility of those 35 days by the evening in 3 days when we leave for the north, I shall give you an opportunity to have an opportunity to enter the mountain," she said.

"Meaning..." Alex understood.

"You have to make 1,750 pills by the evening in 3 days from now," the elder said.

1800 pills. 3 days. 600 pills a day.

"Remember, it's an opportunity for an opportunity for an opportunity," the elder said. "Will you still accept?"

"Absolutely," Alex said without hesitation.

"Good," the elder said. "Go and rest. I will have someone prepare everything required by tomorrow morning when you may start on the journey of accomplishing the impossible."

Chapter 883: Many pills

Alex started his preparation.

Since he was going to be making pills all day long, he needed multiple cauldrons for sure to make all those pills.

He needed to make nearly 600 pills in a day. Excluding the time to rest and cultivate back his Qi, which would be about 4 hours, Alex would have to make 600 pills in 20 hours.

"30 pills an hour," Alex thought. Considering he could do about 5 sets of pills realistically, he would have to make about 6 pills at once.

"That's going to be hard," Alex thought. He could make about 3 pills at once in two separate cauldrons, but they would require a heavy focus on his end because of how many ingredients there would be for him to keep track of.

He couldn't just put 3 ingredients at once and treat it the same as when he made a single pill. He had to split the ingredients into 3 parts and make sure they were getting equal heat.

"Sigh, will I even be able to make 6 good pills at once?" Alex wondered. "What if every pill I need to make is different? No, that's not realistically possible."

"I guess I will have to wait and see."

Alex closed his eyes and started cultivating.

Come morning, someone knocked on his door and Alex walked out to see that it was the elder from the sect that was responsible for looking after him during the day.

"I heard about your arrangement with Elder Xuan. I will be making sure you don't cheat and do indeed make all the pills that have been requested," she said.

"I see, thank you, elder."

Alex took the bag full of ingredients and recipes and took it back into the room to start preparing the pills.

"I don't have time to waste," he said to himself and looked at the two cauldrons that were heating up already.

He took a few minutes to then look at the entire list of pills he had to make and separated them based on the amounts. There were 3 pills with amounts in the hundreds that needed to be made.

"I will have mental fatigue by the end and won't be able to make different pills one after another without taking some break," he thought. "If that's the case then leaving these 3 pills for the end might be a better idea."

Alex started with other pills.

He prepared the ingredients and lowered the temperature on both the cauldron before putting in 6 of the same ingredients into the 2 cauldrons.

Once they were in, he started moving them all around with proper caution. Then, he dumped more and more ingredients as time went on.

When it was finally time for the pills to be made, Alex split the powder into 3 parts on his own and clumped them together to form a ball.

Since there was no technique to be used here, at least not without wasting some time, he had to do it manually.

The pills popped out of the cauldrons and he placed them in the formation one after another.

56%. 61%. 62%. 59%. 62%. 57%.

'6 is really pushing it,' he thought. Aside from not being able to use all of his ability, he was also making some obvious mistakes for the sake of not wasting time while making these pills.

Fortunately, they were still Heaven grade.

"I will need to be more careful," Alex thought to himself and started making the pills once again.

Over the next hour, he managed to do the same 4 more times. It was slow, of course, but he was only starting, and there were also way too many different pills he had to constantly change between.

Not to mention there weren't always 3 pills he had to make. Sometimes, they would be only 2, and in those cases, he was forced to make only 2 instead of 3.

As such, by the end of the hour, Alex had made about 26 different pills in total.

"That's... not bad. I do need about 30 pills an hour, don't I? I can surely improve further later on," Alex thought and started making the pills again.

In the next hour, he made 28. Then after that, 32. By the fifth hour, Alex was starting to make 30 pills on average. Some hours it was more, some hours it was less.

When the 6th hour ended, so did Alex's saint Qi. All the Saint Qi he had prepared for making this pill had ended as he made nearly 180 pills in the 6 hours.

However, that didn't mean he was out of Qi. Before beginning the day, Alex had eaten a pill to improve his passive Qi collection, and as such had gathered enough True Qi to fill his cultivation base all over again.

It wasn't as good as Saint Qi of course, but it was plenty powerful still. With his entire Qi as True Qi, Alex was able to keep going for another 4 hours and ended up with nearly 300 pills made in the first 10 hours.



Then he was out of Qi.

"Time for my break," he thought and went to sit down by his bed where he started cultivating. Alex was quite happy with the result he had. With how many pills he was making, he was certainly going to pass in 3 days' time.

"Actually, I will have to improve my timing around the 3rd day, right?" he thought. "The elder did say she was leaving around the evening."

He would have about 12 hours to make pills on the 3rd day. "Well given the pills I left for the final day, I should be fine," Alex thought.

In 2 hours, Alex cultivated with many different resources to regain all of his Qi. Then, he went back to making pills again.

The first hour back, he made 32 pills.

In the second hour, he made 31 pills.

In the third hour, he made 32 pills.

On the fourth hour, the door opened and the elder walked in.

"Elder? Is something the matter?" Alex turned around with confusion. Why was she disturbing him?

"How many pills did you make?" She asked him.

"Uhh... 401 pills," Alex said.

"401?" the elder had seen it all happen, but the number still struck her as something crazy. She sighed for what she had to do next. "Good, hand it over," she said.

Alex nodded and gave her the pills. "If that's all then I will go back to making pills elder," he said and turned around.

"You don't need to make pills anymore," the elder said.

"Why not?" Alex looked at her with a confused expression.

"Your 15 hours quota for the day is over. You can make more pills if you want after I leave, but any pill not created in my presence will go towards contribution points, rather than your quota," she said.

"Wait, what? No! Elder, I still have 1400 pills to make," Alex said with panic clear in his voice.

"Yes, and you will do so when I return back tomorrow. For now, rest," She said and turned around to leave.

Alex tried to stop her, but the elder didn't listen to his words. She left the building and left Alex with 1400 pills to make in what he now realized was just 30 more hours.

"No, with 12 hours on the final day, I only have 27 hours to make 1400 pills."

That was going to be a problem.

#### Chapter 884: Getting Behind

Alex made preparation for the next day. Knowing that he was only going to have 15 hours to work, he needed to make the best of his time.

One thing he realized was that if he wasn't so extravagant with his Qi, he could extend it to 15 hours, given that he takes two pills with a 7-hour interval in between.

Next, since he was going to have to make more than just 6 pills this time around, Alex started having thoughts of making either 8 pills at once with 4 pills in 2 cauldrons, or 9 pills at once with 3 pills in 3 cauldrons.

After a little thought, he realized that the second one was rather hard, so he had to stick to the first one.

"I should be able to reach about 700 if I did that," he thought. Of course, making 8 pills at once alone was hard too, but he had no choice.

Alex then ate a pill that improved his mind and waited until the elder arrived.

The moment she was there, Alex began making the pills. He had already planned exactly what pills to make and when, and as such he had no hesitation when he began.

The elder watched him with a pitiful look, as she knew that it was nearly impossible to make 1350 pills in just 27 hours.

He would have to make 50 pills for that, which meant he would have to improve his output by nearly 66%. He had already pushed it to the last day, could he really do it this day?

The elder had only thought that when Alex put in 8 different ingredients in 2 different cauldrons. He was surprised at first and even shocked when he finished making 8 pills at once.

However, when she saw that he took nearly 13 minutes to make the pills, she realized that he could only make 40 pills an hour, when in fact he needed to make 50.

Alex improved his speed in the upcoming hours, but even then he could only make about 45 pills an hour.

The problem with his pill making mostly arrived when he didn't have 4 pills of the same types to make at once, and he thus couldn't make the ideal 8 pills at once.

Also, another problem that Alex, unfortunately, didn't foresee came upon him, forcing him to be unable to make the pills constantly.

Just 4 hours into the pill-making process, he realized that he was running out of Qi and would have to continue on with his True Qi. Not even the pill he ate was helping him.

He had used as little Qi as possible, but he was still spending it on 8 pills rather than 6, so the usage was overall higher than yesterday.

By the 5th hour, he had already started making the pill, and by the 8th hour, he was out of True Qi as well.

Alex started cultivating at once without moving and started counting the pills he had made.

About 360.

Alex didn't cultivate all the way through and stopped only after an hour or so. Since he didn't have to go on for 8 more hours, he didn't bother cultivating the whole time.

Starting from the 10th hour, he once again made more and more pills.

By the time the elder entered the room, Alex had made about 280 more pills.

Overall, he had made exactly 643 pills. It wasn't exactly a bad result. Hell, this was the most Alex had ever made in his entire life.

Alchemists would be depressed if they ever learned how many he had made with just 14 hours of pill making.

However, that didn't make Alex happy at all. Even as he handed the 643 pills to the elder, he was already thinking of the problem that lay ahead of him.

Tomorrow, in just 12 hours or less, he would have to make 706 pills. What he couldn't do today in 14 hours, he would have to do tomorrow in 12.

That was problematic.

The elder took the pills and left, and Alex was left alone, thinking for himself to come up with ways to improve himself.

What could he do? Considering he wasted an hour to cultivate in between tomorrow's pill-making session, he would have to make 700 pills in 11 hours.

That meant he would have to make 64 pills in an hour or so.

'Damn it!' Alex thought. 'That's just not possible.'

Alex could try to make 3 pills in 3 cauldrons, but that meant that he not only had to split his Qi in between 9 ingredients instead of 8, but also to an additional cauldron, and an additional source of heat.

Not only that, he had to split his Dao too to another source, making it way too mentally taxing for him.

But what could he do? That really was the only way to do it, wasn't it?

Alex rested for a while, with hopelessness filling his heart. He felt depressed for a bit, thinking that he had no chance of visiting the Dao mountain.

However, he quickly picked himself up and went ahead to cultivate for the night.

Whether he had a chance or not, he would find it the hard way by not managing to make all the pills in time.

Alex prepared as best as he could before the elder arrived the next morning and started making the pills once again.

This time, the elder saw him bring out 3 cauldrons, instead of just two.

For a split second, Alex thought of using 12 ingredients, but that would be way too much. The mental fatigue he would suffer from increasing his workload by double when compared to the first day didn't sound like a good idea when he was already at his limit.

He also couldn't make it 10 pills, by having the pills split into 3, 3, and 4, as the asymmetry of the whole thing would require more focus than it just being 9 or 12.

So, he was stuck with making 9 pills every time.

Fortunately, now came the span of pills that were mostly the same with their amounts being in the hundreds.

Alex had made the right choice to leave those for the last day, so for the most part, he would definitely only have to make 9 pills in each cauldron and all of them would be the same.

Alex started. Since the 3 cauldrons were pre-heated, he put 9 different ingredients into them and instantly split them into 9 segments in the 3 cauldrons, and individually moved them around while keeping an eye on the heat.

When they were powdered, he lowered the temperature on all 3 cauldrons at the same time and put in the next set of ingredients.

He tried to waste as little time as possible in between the moves and as a result, managed to form the pill in around 9 minutes.

After testing all 9 pills one after another in the formation, cleaning the cauldrons for the next use, and then heating it up again, he lost another minute.

In effect, every pill took about 10 minutes in total.

So, in a single hour, Alex managed to make 54 pills in total. That wasn't bad. Only, it wasn't enough.

#### Chapter 885: Through the Pain

Alex continued making more and more pills, without any mistakes, but he was still only making 54 pills an hour.

By the time 4 hours had passed he had made exactly 216 pills. If this continued, with about 7 more hours of this remaining, he would certainly fail without a doubt.

He need to do something else, he needed to improve the process this late into the game.

But how? Should he really make 12 pills? But then what about the mental fatigue he would have to suffer?

Should he even be caring about that at this point?

Alex finished making another set of pills and put them in the formation to the side to prove that they were indeed all above 50% in harmony.

After they were all tested, he cleaned the 3 cauldrons with his Qi and started heating them up again.

Suddenly, he paused as a thought came to him. He was wasting about 6 minutes an hour doing just this. This which had nothing to do with making pills was taking up 10% of his time.

But then, was there a solution? It wasn't like he could make up a formation or scripts to automate this at all.

'Wait, I can automate it,' Alex thought.

"Pearl! Whisker! Come out," He said at the same time.

"Meow!" Pearl meowed the moment he sensed the external spiritual sense on him, and Whisker looked at him curiously.

At the same time, Alex brought out 3 more cauldrons and placed them on the other side of the formations where one could perform alchemy as well.

He didn't use them as he stuck to the 3 he had in front of him and started making pills. At the same time, he gave a mental command to his beasts to help him when the time came.

Alex focused his everything on making the 9 pills. He finished powdering them, replacing the energy with them.

However, when it came time to form the powder into pills, he moved away.

He didn't form them into pills at all. Instead, he left that task for Pearl to complete.

Since it was only separating the powder in small clumps and then making a small sphere out of the powder, Pearl could do that easily.

After having watched him make pills for years on end, Pearl too knew the process behind alchemy.

Alex immediately moved on to the next 3 cauldrons that he had previously taken out. These were cauldrons that were perfectly heated up to the right temperature as that was what Whisker had been doing this entire time.

Without wasting a single moment, Alex put 9 ingredients into them and started making more pills.

In the meantime, Pearl and Whisker together did what Alex considered a waste of time for himself.



They pulled out the pills, tested them, and then proceed to clean the cauldrons afterward. After they were clean, Whisker started heating them again as per the recipe for the next set of pills that were going to be made next.

When Alex finished putting energy back into the powder, he left Pearl to handle it again and started making the next 9 pills immediately over on the other 3 cauldrons.

Alex was improving his time by a lot, but he was also spending more Qi than he could afford to.

In just 4 and a half hours, Alex had ended up using all the Saint Qi he had in his body, and at the rate, he was going he would use up his True Qi in just the next 2 hours.

After the 6 and a half hours were done, he would be forced to cultivate again.

Alex sighed, but he had no choice. He continued making the pills. By the time the fifth hour had ended, Alex had made exactly 63 pills using the new technique.

He realized that because he was saving himself something close to 2 minutes for every single pill he made, he was now able to make pills 15 times in 2 hours.

So, without hesitation, he continued. When the 6th hour ended, he made 60 pills as this was one of the hours where he had to switch the pills, and thus had to do half and half for one of the turns.

However, the new few hours would be smooth sailing as he was going to have to make this one single pill for a while now.

But, he had to stop around 40 minutes later because he had run out of Qi. Not only that, even his head was aching rather badly this time around as the pill he ate for mental stability had lost its effect already.

Alex would have to eat another one, but that wasn't going to have the same effect as the first one.

Alex stopped and started cultivating, but even as he did that, the thought of losing time made his heart hurt.

So, he decided to do something risky. Something that would generally be considered a very bad choice because of the high chance one had of going into Qi deviation and destroying their own meridians.

While cultivating, Alex started using his Qi and continued his alchemy.

He ate the pill for his mental stability, but with one more very important thing to focus his mind on, it wasn't very helpful.

Still, it allowed him to make 9 pills every 8 or so minutes, and that was something Alex had to thank it for.

By the time the 7th hour had ended, Alex made another 63 pills.

His mental ability to concentrate was going down more and more as time went on, but he still continued.

By the time the 8th hour ended, Alex made about 63 pills, with 6 minutes remaining.

In the 9th hour, Alex made about 69 pills.

However, around this time, his mind was getting so bogged by all the different things he was concentrating on that his ability was lowering more and more.

As such, he was forced to give up on the most important thing he had been concentrating on, that being his cultivation.

Having constantly used his Qi, his cultivation had barely helped him gather any Qi. However, it was still enough for him to last the next 3 hours.

Or at least he hoped so. With one less thing to concentrate on, Alex found some levity which he used to continue making pills.

As he did, Alex realized that he was slowly running out of Qi again. He hadn't gained as much as he had hoped.

He wasn't sure if it would even last 3 more hours. However, now was not the time to think about that.

Actually, now was not the time to think at all. Any brain power he put into things that were not making pills only increased his mental usage, thus increasing the fatigue in the already fatigued mind.

By the 10th hour, even as Alex made another 63 pills, he was feeling empty in both mental power and Qi.

Having sat there making pills, even his body was starting to feel the pain.

Still, he kept going. He continued making pills for another hour and ended up with another 69 pills.

In the final hour, for what felt like an eternity, Alex pushed his body to the limit, using every single drop of Qi and mental power to make the pills.

He made it once, then once again, and then once again.

His mind hurt like someone had used a rather strong spiritual attack, and his meridians hurt from not having any Qi to push out anymore.

Still, he found any little Qi he had and pushed it out to make the pills one more time.

The next time was a struggle as there was nothing to use in himself. Still, with a head that felt like it would burst open, Alex started cultivating once more to gain back just the tiniest bit of Qi to continue.

He put in the ingredients, processed them, and after using the last bit of Qi to put them into the powder, he left for the other ingredients.

Pearl quickly formed the pills and started testing the pills, while Alex barely focused himself to look at the 3 cauldrons in front of him.

He tried to push his Qi, but he was a still step away from fainting.

'No, I have to continue, just a little longer,' Alex thought. The 12th hour hadn't ended yet. He needed to continue.

Just then, the door burst open the moment Pearl finished testing the pills which were all surprisingly good, despite Alex's condition.

"Stop!" the elder shouted.

Alex's heart sank. Was it time? Did he fail? Had the elders left already?

"N-no! I can keep going," he barely managed to speak up and tried to focus back on the cauldrons.

"I said stop!" the elder said again and used force to pull him away from the cauldron.

"Elder, please let me go. I promise I can make some more," he said.

The elder looked at him with pity in her eyes, and obvious shock at what he had shown her today.

A smile formed on her face as she brought him to his feet. "Stop. You don't have to make any more pills. You already finished your job."

Alex paused for a moment. "I... I did?" he asked.

"Yes, you made all 1750 pills as per Elder Xuan's request," the elder said. "Congratulations, you passed the test."

Alex was stunned for a second before he started counting all the pills he had made. "... I did it, I really did it," he said.

By the end, before the 12th hour was even over, Alex had made exactly 1755 pills.

#### Chapter 886: Second Opportunity

Alex understood what this meant. If he had passed the test, then he could go visit Elder Xuan.

"Wait, when is Elder Xuan leaving for the Dao mountain?" Alex asked. The Dao mountain opened up the day after tomorrow, so Alex needed to go meet her immediately.

"You don't have much time," the elder said.

"I need to leave," Alex said and tried to move, but a wave of nausea hit him all of a sudden. Not only that, his entire body was extremely fatigued, and with no Qi, his Undying physique wasn't working too.

"Don't worry. I will take you to see Elder Xuan," the elder said and took him.

Pearl and Whisker jumped into their beast space as Alex was taken away from the building.

The land was clad in darkness, but the sky was still a little alight. The sun had set for the sect, but the clouds could still be seen illuminated by the light.

Below the elder's tower, in between two of the bridges that led down to the sect, a group of 100 girls was gathered, along with about 60 elders.

They were a few minutes behind on schedule to leave, but because Elder Xuan had told them not to leave for a while, they had to wait for whatever was going on.

Far in the distance, they suddenly noticed two people flying towards them. Actually, it was more like 1 person was flying and she was carrying the other person behind her.

The elder landed in the snow, in front of the group, and so did Alex.

"Elder Xuan," the elder called out. "He's done it."

The elderly woman's eyes went wide in surprise. She turned to look at Alex who was seriously out of everything be it Qi, stamina, or mental strength.

"You really did the impossible. I... I didn't expect that at all," the elder said. The other elders looked confused as they weren't in the knowhow about what went in between Alex and the elder.

The elder that brought Alex walked up to Elder Xuan and handed her the storage bag to show everything that Alex did.

"You really made 1750 pills in the span on 3 days. That too while having it all be above Heaven grade. That is very commendable," she said. "You did well to make proper use of the opportunity I provided you with, regardless of it being an impossible task."

"Does that mean I can join you on your way to the Dao mountain, elder?" Alex asked.

"Not yet," the elder said. "As you may remember, what I gave you was an opportunity for an opportunity for an opportunity. You did well to seize the first opportunity. Now it's time for you to do the same again."

Alex waited patiently to hear what she was going to say.

"We are only allowed to take 100 disciples over to the Dao mountain. That is the agreement the 5 of our sects landed upon," she said. "So, there must always be 100 disciples."

Alex was trying to use as little spiritual sense as he could as his mind was still in pain, but when the elder said that he had to check.

There were exactly 100 disciples there. Which meant that if he were to go, one of these girls must stay back.

"Choose one of them. If you can defeat her in combat, you may take her spot," the elder said.

He sighed. As expected, he had to fight someone to take away their opportunity for himself.

"Elder, that's a little..." the elder close to Alex felt that this was a little wrong. Alex was not in the shape to be fighting anyone. He had no qi, his mind was in chaos, and his body was fully fatigued as well.

"Her!" Alex spoke without hesitation. The elder had well intentions, but he needed to accept this offer.

He saw anger flash on the pretty face of the girl he chose, and he did feel a little bad about taking away her spot, but his needs came before anyone else's.

"This one? May I ask why you chose her?" the elder Xuan asked.

"No reason, aside from her being the closest to me," Alex said.

The elder smiled. "Very well. Elder Bing, will you please officiate this match between the juniors?" she asked.

"Yes, elder Xuan," the elder next to Alex spoke.

All the other girls, both disciples, and elders moved back to make room for Alex and the girl.

The girl moved forward and brought out a weapon from her storage bag. It was a spear, made up of some sort of wooden shaft and a blade that almost seemed to sparkle.

Alex tried to feel the girl's cultivation base but was unable to do so as he didn't have any Qi in his body right now.

However, given that she was given such an opportunity, she had to be no weaker than True Emperor 9th realm.

With that thought in mind, Alex brought out the thin sword. At the moment, that was the only thing that he could possibly use against this girl.

"You cannot use pills or talismans. Everything else is allowed," the elder said. "Are you ready?"

Both Alex and the girl nodded. "Begin!"

The girl took charge and rushed forward with her spear. Alex saw her coming, but his reflex wasn't very good at the moment, so he only managed to react when she was already next to him.

He barely moved his head to the side as something golden blasted out of the spear's metal blade.

At the same time, fire erupted from it and the girl swung it sideways at Alex's head.

Alex brought up his sword to the side and blocked it in time. Despite his speed and reaction not being very great, and even without having the slightest bit of Qi, his body was still very strong.

The girl moved away and sent out some spear stabs at him, which flew out as a ranged attack.

Alex did nothing and let the attacks hit him. Not only did he have a strong body, but he was also always wearing a saint armor he had acquired over a year ago. As such he was perfectly fine in all regards.



The girls and even the elders looked surprised when they saw that. They could see that he was wearing armor, but he didn't have any Qi, and the attack belonged to someone that was 2 cultivation realms above his.

The girl got angry and dashed at him again. She jumped up this time and swung the spear down.

Alex got ready to parry, but as he did, suddenly the metal blade of the spear enlarged nearly 3 times its original size and was now as long as a normal sword and maybe even stronger than one.

Alex realized that he couldn't parry this easily, so he held his sword above him to block the attack.

The two blades rang out loud in rather violent noise. Alex felt the force of the attack sink his feet deeper into the ground, but he also saw the sparkling blade right next to him, stopped only by his unimaginably strong sword.

To his surprise, there was a chip on the girl's spear, and some cracks had begun to form around the chip.

The girl noticed this, and so did the others. Together, their shock at the turn of events was massive.

"He... he destroyed the blade?"

"How did it get destroyed so easily?"

The girls couldn't help but speak out loud. Even the girl that was fighting looked at her spear in shock and nearly forgot she was fighting.

Alex took the advantage and jumped up front to attack the girl. The girl realized that he was attacking and activated her movement technique to run away somewhere further away.

Once far enough, she started sending out fire and metal attacks over at Alex. Each of those attacks had Spear intent embedded in them.

Alex's sword was covered in a white outline that gradually turned the entire sword white as he used his Sword Qi as well.

The elders and disciples were quite surprised to see that he was using Sword Qi.

Alex sent out his own Sword Qi attacks toward the flying Spear attacks. The attacks struck each other and created a violent explosion that couldn't beat each other.

Alex was on the weaker end as he was only using Sword Qi, but that was still enough to block the attack.

The girl sent out some more attacks, but Alex didn't pay attention to those attacks.

For him, there was only a single important thing that he had to keep his mind at.

He sent out his attacks as he bid for his time, and after he had passively acquired enough True Qi, he attacked.

The sword disappeared from his hands as he suddenly appeared behind the girl. In the darkness of the night, the entire land was in shadows.

Golden light flared at his right hand as he used the golden fist to punch at the girl.

The girl was surprised at the attack, and still managed to block, but his power was too much.

Not only was his body in the Saint realm, but even his True Qi was comparable to Saint Qi now.

As such when the punch landed and the golden light exploded on her, the girl was sent flying into the snow and was knocked out.

The elder quickly checked the girl and fed her a pill.

Everyone looked at Alex in surprise as there was no need to announce a victor here.

"Good," Elder Xuan said. "You seized another opportunity. Now let us leave."

#### Chapter 887: The Dao Mountain

Alex sat on top of a massive boat that housed all 160 of the Frozen Heart Sect members.

Even though he wore the crystal blue robe that belonged to the sect, being the only guy on deck, he did stand out.

Most girls looked at him curiously. They knew that he was an alchemist, but they didn't understand why he had to be employed in the sect at all when he was a male.

However, if the recent information they learned was true, then he was an invaluable asset to the sect. After all, not just anyone can make 1750 pills in just 3 days.

While some of the girls spoke about him with each other, wondering how an alchemist that wasn't even in the True Emperor realm was so strong, Alex focused his entire time on cultivating.

As he cultivated and gained back the Qi he had lost, the fatigue in his body was also slowly healed due to the Undying physique going into work.

His mind slowly healed from the pain and stress, and bit by bit, he was returning to his peak condition again.

The ship flew in the night for at least 2 hours by the time Alex was anywhere close to being done with his cultivation.

As he still continued it, someone came up to him and sat by his side.

Whisker, who was in his robes looked to his right, and Alex saw who it was.

"Greetings, Elder Xuan," Alex spoke and stopped his cultivation cycle for time being.

"Are you okay?" the elder asked. "Did forcing yourself to make 1800 pills cause you any trouble?"

Alex thought for a moment and shook his head. "None that I haven't already dealt with, Elder Xuan," he said.

"I see," she said. "I suppose I owe you an apology then. I tried to keep you out from going to the Dao mountain."

"But you gave me an opportunity," Alex said.

"You really think of that as an opportunity? I was trying to get you to not go," she said. "I gave you something impossible in hope that you would fail. Hell, I didn't even give you much time to work on it. I was really trying to stop you from going."

"I have nothing against you of course. I'm just trying to look out for our core disciples. Given that they will become the pillars of the sects in the future, even taking away one of their spots would be devastating, to say the least."

Alex stayed silent for a second or two. He could understand what the elder was trying to say.

"Whatever your intention was, elder, you gave me an opportunity and I'm thankful for it," Alex said.

"I'm quite thankful too," the Elder said. "When you eventually failed, I had intended to return you the contribution points, and give you some time off based on how many pills you made. Who would've thought that you could actually do it."

"We really are lucky that you thought our sect was a city and stumbled in," the elder said.

Alex nodded and thought of ways to change the topic. He didn't want her to linger on how good of an alchemist he was and increase his value later on.

"Elder, you said I had 3 opportunities, and now I have seized two of them. What's my third opportunity?" he asked.

"Your third opportunity is the same one all of these girls and the other 400 disciples that will be gathering at the foot of the mountain will have," the elder said.

"Same one?" Alex asked.

"Do you know how many True realm cultivators are allowed this time around in the mountain?" she asked.

"It's 34 right?" Alex asked.

"Yes. This means you need to be one of the 34 people to enter from amongst the 500 different disciples. That's your opportunity," the elder said.

Alex was curious now. "How can I do that?" he asked.

"You'll find out soon enough," the elder said. "We'll arrive in a few more hours. Cultivate and be in your best condition. Given how strong you are, I'm sure you will easily take the place."

"Oh, so it's fighting huh? I can do that," Alex said.

The elder smiled and turned to walk away. However, before she did, she stopped and spoke once more.

"Also, once you are there, do not speak about alchemy or pills. Never reveal that you are an alchemist. You will be in a far larger danger than you could ever imagine," she said.

Alex's heart sank for a second when he heard that. "Why is it so dangerous, elder? Can you tell me?" he asked.

"I'm afraid I cannot," the elder said and left without speaking.

Alex frowned. What the hell was wrong with being an alchemist in these lands?

Alex thought of possibilities, but soon, he forgot about it and returned to cultivating for the time being.

Sometime later, while the moon was still hidden behind the cloud, the group arrived at their destination.

Alex stood up and looked to the far distance where a brilliant mountain in green was located inside a massive dome of barrier, surrounded by nothing but snow and gloom.

The Dao mountain.

It was surprising just how the mountain could remain so green and beautiful in this cold, and harsh. Was it the formation? Or was there some sort of situation that heated the entire place?

Alex looked to the side and saw 2 different massive boats that were sitting on top of the snow, and some people were already down on the ground doing something, but Whisker couldn't tell who they were from this far up.

The boat then slowly moved forward while gently lowering down to the ground.

Only then did Whisker see the boats and the people on them clearly enough to recognize who they belonged to.

The people wearing the Royal Blue robes belonged to the Heaven's Frost sect, while the people wearing the purple and white robes belonged to the Blue Spring sect.

With the Frozen Heart sect here now, three of the five sects had arrived.

A dozen or so elders suddenly moved out from the boat and went up to the many people that were working on the plain land covered in snow.

They were creating some sort of platform. If Alex's guess was correct, then they were creating stages for the disciples to fight in.

"You stay and get read while they work on it. We will start as soon as the rest of the sects arrive," one of the elders said.

Alex nodded and continued cultivating for a while.

As he waited, the next two sects arrived not even a few hours later.

Wearing red and white robes were the disciples and elders of the Blazing Earth sect, and wearing green and black robes were the people from the Nether Poison sect.

Their ships landed next to the other 3 and the elder from there went to work as well.

When the sun rose and the land was illuminated, the elders finished working and had now fully prepared the fighting arenas.

"Get off," one of the elders said to the group, and one by one, all the disciples from all the sects started getting down the boat towards the arena.

Chapter 888: Selection Starts

Alex got off the boat along with the other hundred disciples and grouped up next to the many girls.

The other disciples from the various sects looked at him, mostly with envy, but some understood the situation and pitied him.

After all, it was not like he could steal the hearts of those that were frozen.

To his surprise, Alex felt about 20 different spiritual senses pass through him.

From what he could sense, they belonged to disciples of the Frozen Heart sect and the Nether Poison sect that were next to him.

Alex spread his own spiritual sense out and noticed many more that simply couldn't reach up to him.

Now that he was sensing them, he realized that every 5th person in the group had a spiritual sense.

'Hmm, is Spirit Cleansing Lily that prevalent in the Northern Continent?' he thought. Given that even the Luminance Empire had a few, he wouldn't doubt that to be true.

He saw the many disciples with his senses, but not many stood out to him. So, he took the senses back and let Whisker look around the land for him.

The Dao mountain stood to their right about a kilometer away, and even this far, Alex could see faint hints of a gate being there.

'Right, where are the nearly 2000 different Saint realm experts? Are they not here yet?' Alex wondered.

"Listen up!" one of the elders wearing a purple and white robe started speaking.

"We will begin the selection process. For you that are doing this for the first time, make sure to listen properly. The process is simple."



"We have 7 different stages set up for you to fight in. Each turn, one of you will go up there on your own and start fighting. If you can fight 5 different people in a row without being defeated or stand on the stage for 5 whole minutes without any challengers, you will be eligible to enter the Dao mountain."

"However, if you lose a single time, you will not get a second chance, so choose wisely," the elder said.

He brought out a stack of paper and suddenly threw it toward everyone. The paper spread out systematically into 5 groups and gently floated down onto the disciples that were bunched up.

"Spread that amongst yourself however you like," the elder said and disciples started spreading the paper.

Alex got one and it was numbered 216. There was nothing else written on it.

"Anyone wants to be the first to start?" the elder asked.

A few hands rose up and the elder picked 7 disciples based on whose hands went up first.

They were all sent up to one of the stages each with an elder already waiting there.

"You may start challenging whoever you want," the elder said and began the competition.

Alex stood by the side and tried to make sense of the rules. He looked at the 7 people on the stage and thought, 'I need to challenge them and beat 4 successive people to pass?'

He realized that one couldn't just challenge just anyone as losing even once was bad for you.

'Who should I challenge then?' Alex looked towards the 7 disciples who were already starting to fight someone else.

Alex couldn't hear the sound, but he could see the space distort around each of the fighter's clashes.

They were all True Emperor 9th realm from what he could see that was a shocking sight to imagine.

There was one other thing that surprised Alex here, that he hadn't expected to see at all. Some of the disciples of these sects were old people.

Unlike back in Western Continent where only disciples under a certain age were allowed to participate in anything, here however they didn't seem to care about age.

Anyone that was capable could take part.

Alex wondered how old some of these people were, and was certain that some of them were surely in their hundreds.

He checked to see how challenging worked exactly. From what he could see, a group of disciples had lined up to fight the person on the stage.

Alex decided to line up as well.

Each of the 7 stages had a different line, so Alex randomly chose one to line up. The line he was on had about 20 different people already, while the rest were either in the other lines or still contemplating which one to choose.

On one of the stages, Alex noticed that the battle was over, and the challenger had won, sending the previous victor out of the stage with a sad look on her face.

The new victor seemed to be someone of power, and that seemed to have deterred a few people that stayed in the line.

As such, a few of them left the line. They either went to the back of the line to wait for someone else to deal with that person or simply joined another line elsewhere.

Alex noticed that the match on his own stage had ended, and about 7 people from the front of the line moved away and they didn't want to fight the person that stood on the stage.

Suddenly, Alex went from being the 21st person in the line to the 14th.

The middle-aged man on the stage defeated 2 more people with his excellent sword skill, deterring a few other people to move away.

Despite having fought 3 battles, the middle-aged-looking man was doing quite great. He didn't seem tired at all.

A few more people were deterred and Alex ended up in the 4th position on the line, as one girl went up the stage to fight a man.

Alex watched the fight from up close and noticed the fight more clearly. The man was using Sword Qi, on top of just being a very good fighter, and was winning the fights rather easily.

On top of that, he seemed to be stronger than the others in general. His True Emperor 9th realm Qi was stronger than the other people's.

The man enjoyed his fight thoroughly, to the point that his opponent was humiliated. Only then did he finally end it.

The loser left the stage with a sad face after realizing that she had lost the opportunity to enter the mountain.

The old man raised his hands in victory and beckoned the next fighter, as this 5th match of his would be what would grant him entry to the Dao mountain.

Unfortunately for him, the 3 disciples in front of Alex left the line after realizing they would lose, and Alex was now at the front and the next in line for battle.

Alex handed over his paper to the elder in front of him and walked up to the stage. As soon as he did, he could finally use his spiritual sense to view everything around him.

Now that he didn't need Whisker at all, he sent him back.

"Get ready," the elder told the two of them.

The old man saw Alex and his cultivation base, and couldn't be any happier to see that his final hurdle was someone that wasn't even at the peak of the True realm yet.

"Hahaha! Come," he shouted as he readied his sparkling sword.

Alex brought out his Saint whip to fight against that.

The elder noticed that they were both ready and started the fight.

The man instantly sent out a slash as Alex, filled with both Saint Qi and Sword Qi.

Alex swung his whip and accurately hit the slash, destroying it. He then pulled back the whip and sent his Qi through it as he swung it again.

The man swung his Saint ranked sword at the Whip to block it, but to his surprise, the whip hit very hard. Flame exploded from the tip, sending the man's sword backward.

His arms pained from the rebound he suffered from his own sword, and his eyes went wide.

"How?" he couldn't help but ask.

Alex sent his whip flying again but hit nothing. This time, instead of facing the attack directly, the man used his movement technique and dodged to come near Alex.

He pulled his sword up and slashed down at Alex. Even as he did, the sword grew nearly 3 times the normal amount, becoming a massive piece of metal that fell onto Alex.

Alex jumped up suddenly and kicked the incoming sword on its side so hard that the sword went flying sideways along with its holder.

The man managed to stop himself in time before he was out of bounds, but Alex was already next to him.

He swung his whip from up close and the whip moved forward while building up fire along the way.

The man feared for his life and sent out a slash toward Alex. However, the whip was already too close, so even as the whip and the slash clashed together, the man felt the force of the clash from close range.

He was sent flying even further and slammed against the barrier that was the boundary for this battle.

The man tried to stand up quickly and fight back, but when the elder appeared before him to stop him, he realized what had happened.

"I... lost?" the man asked, and the elder nodded.

A complicated look appeared in the man's eyes. He was so close to winning, and yet...

He shook his head in frustration and walked away.

Alex went back to the middle of the stage, barely feeling anything for his opponent, and waited for the next person to challenge him.

## Chapter 889: Weird Metal

Alex's next opponent was a lady from the Blazing Earth sect. She wore the red and white robes of that sect and held no weapons in her hand.

Alex was a little confused for a few seconds but then realized that she was an elemental fighter that needed no weapon.

So, as soon as the fight started, the girl used her technique that involved fire and wood energy.

Her fire Qi was Empowered by the Wood Qi. Even as the attack formed, the girl suddenly felt a vibration from the amulet she wore around her neck.

In the time it took for her to send out the attack, the amulet vibrated not once, not twice, but three whole times.

A massive ball of fire flew at Alex with incredible speed. In response, Alex simply stood there and took the attack head-on.

His Saint-ranked armor and his Saint realm body cultivation made it sure that he didn't take a single bit of damage from the attack just now.

Unless someone was using a Saint-ranked weapon themselves, Alex found no need to worry.

The girl was surprised, and even a little scared. She tried to use some other spell, but the amulet on her chest kept vibrating nonstop.

She had no time to worry about that amulet, however, and prepared to launch her next attack.

However, she didn't need to worry about that either.

At the exact time she was about to launch her attack, her amulet broke and the full force of Alex's Heaven's Impact landed on her and immediately made her mind go blank.

The girl fell to the ground, unconscious, as the powers she had been preparing to launch dissipated into the air.

The surrounding people that were watching the fight were very confused as to what had just happened.

That was barely a fight at all, and somehow the girl was down. Not only that, the elder was already moving to send her away from the stage.

"What... just happened?" some of them didn't understand.

"Did he attack? I didn't see anything," another person said.

"It must've been a mental attack then. I noticed that guy had spiritual sense," another person spoke.

"Oh, spiritual sense. That makes sense," the people finally understood what was going on.

"That's one dumb girl to not have brought a defensive item with her. How did she even qualify to come here? Is she some elder's daughter or what?" the people started talking bad about her.

Those who didn't know the girl assumed that she lost because of her lack of foresight. However, those who knew her, or even just sensed her as she was walking out, noticed the amulet on her and realized that the mental attack must've been quite strong for her to just pass out like that.

Of course, in the last 14 months, since he had been here, Alex was constantly improving his spiritual sense using the mask on his face.

His 600-meter radius spiritual sense that he had when he came to the Northern Continent, was now nearly 750 meters in radius.

That wasn't as good as simply swallowing the mind of someone strong like Fu Tao, but it was still not bad nonetheless.

Being three-fourths as strong as a Saint realm, Alex was now capable of bypassing True ranked mental defensive artifact in just a few attacks.

Which was what he did for the next person that came up as well. The young man that was looking forward to winning against Alex immediately regretted being up there when the barrage of mental attacks fell on him.

In just half a minute after the battle started, the young man had lost as well.

Alex stood on the stage, looking at the group of people that were moving away from the line they had set up in. They were starting to understand that Alex was not someone they could just hope to win.

Alex was starting to understand something too. He knew this beforehand, but the fight just now only solidified the feeling in his heart.

True realm cultivators were no longer his opponents or rivals. He could no longer be compared to them in any way or fashion.

In every other sense, but the most important one, he was a Saint-ranked cultivator. His Qi didn't show it, but he was one.

It was only now that Alex truly came to understand that fact. He couldn't help but chuckle a bit at the realization.

'I could've just asked for a spot at the mountain, couldn't I? I didn't have to go through such trouble,' he thought. It was a shame he realized this too late.

'If only my cultivation base could follow along with everything of mine,' he thought to himself.



He waited for the next person to walk up, but was surprised when no one came up. If that went on for 5 more minutes, he could just pass without having to fight.

Alex waited and watched the people contemplate whether to fight him or not. A few outsiders noticed him alone on the stage and tried to go up on stage, but a few good souls explained the situation, and they were forced to sit aside.

'So am I going to win just like that?' Alex thought when another person quickly arrived at the stage before the entire 5 minutes were over.

The young man looked quite confident, and when he did get up on the stage and noticed that Alex's cultivation base wasn't even that strong, a wide smile appeared on his face.

"Hahaha! Time for you to lose," the young man proclaimed.

Alex was amused, to say the least. The young man should have been in his mid-30s at best. With a high cultivation base, he didn't look older than he should be.

Alex wondered why he was so confident when the young man answered it himself.

"So you've been winning with your mental strength huh? Let's see what you can do against my Saint-ranked defensive artifact," he said.

"Oh," Alex understood where his confidence came from. If it was him, he would most likely be confident as well.

Alex smiled and waited for the elder to start the match. The young man opposite him didn't bring out anything either for some reason.

Seeing that neither of them was going to bring out any weapons, the elder started the match.

Alex waited for the young man to make a move when the young man threw out something from his storage bag.

Even as the thing flew out, it turned into something big and landed not far away from Alex.

'A puppet?' Alex looked at what had come out. It was a puppet that held a staff in its hands.

Immediately, the puppet attacked.

The puppet was surprisingly agile as it swung the metal staff that sparkled all the way through.

Alex jumped to the side and dashed next to the puppet, but the staff in its hand suddenly shrunk to a third of its original size before expanding at the same time and hitting Alex in the chest.

Alex was tossed back, but he quickly stopped himself. 'What the hell is up with these weapons?' he wondered. 'How are they all shrinking and growing?'

He flew back to the puppet at an incredible speed and struck it on the chest this time without being caught off guard.

The puppet broke into a thousand different pieces, while the weapon in its hands fell next to Alex.

Alex picked up the weapon and looked at it curiously. The staff was entirely made up of a metal that sparkled as if it was made from a piece of the sky and stars glittered all over it.

Also, for some reason, it was incredibly heavy.

That was not the impression he had gotten when he saw the other cultivators use such a weapon. But then, they were probably using their entire cultivation base to carry it.

'It really is quite heavy,' he thought. The weapon weighed close to 5 tons at least and was definitely a vicious weapon in anyone's hands.

'Stars,' he thought as he saw the glitter in the metal even through his spiritual sense.

A certain metal came to his mind, one that could only be found on this continent.

'Starforged Tungsten?' Alex thought. 'Is that why it is so strong?'

An attack flew from the side, and Alex casually swung the staff to knock it aside. He had for a moment forgotten that he was still in a battle as even though the puppet had lost, the owner was still there.

Alex looked at the weapon and wondered, 'how do I expand it?'. He poured in some Qi and suddenly he felt the staff struggle to keep itself together.

He thought of expanding the rod, and suddenly it did. The staff enlarged to become 3 times its normal length and hit the young man in the chest who was trying to come close to attack him.

The young man dropped to the ground far away and was unconscious.

"Oh, I won?" Alex asked with a surprised tone in his voice.

The elder checked on the young man and asked back his staff. Unfortunately, Alex couldn't keep it at all.

After giving the staff back, Alex waited for the next person to come up and challenge him.

However, after seeing how easily he broke the puppet in the last match, no one dared come up to him.

As such, no one came up to the stage for 5 whole minutes, and Alex won himself a spot in the Dao mountain.

## Chapter 890: Rules

Alex walked over to a group of 5 different individuals who had passed the selection process as well. 3 of them were girls, and two were men.

Surprisingly, 2 of the girls were from the Frozen Heart sect as well.

'Not bad,' Alex thought to himself and sat down on the snow to look towards the stages. Whisker had to come out to help him with that.

The 5 of them, even the 2 girls, were beyond surprised how a person that wasn't even in the Saint realm could have possibly gone through the selection process and won when literally every single other person in here was stronger than him.

Alex could sense their senses on him, but he ignored them and looked ahead at the stages where the fight was happening.

It was still a few hours away from noon, so they had a lot of time.

As Alex waited, he saw quite a few Saint realm cultivators come to the area either by flying on their own, or in a ship.

By the time it was noon, there were over a hundred different cultivators that didn't even belong to the 5 ancient sects.

From what Alex could see from the distance, they were all very respectful of the Saints that were still staying in the boat.

Alex continued watching the True Emperors fight, and saw quite a few weapons that were made up of the same material as the staff he had seen before. He couldn't help but wonder how good the material was exactly.

He only knew it was good from the information he had bought, but it seemed it was the best material out there.

Their group of 6 was now up to 22 and as more fights took place on the stage, the number of spots left was starting to dwindle more and more.

5 hours later, the selection process had ended. All 34 True realm cultivators that were to enter had been chosen.

Of the 34 different people, 8 of them were from the Frozen Heart sect, 5 were from the Nether Poison sect, 7 from the Blazing Earth sect, 7 from the Blue Spring sect, and 7 from Heaven's Frost sect.

Not being allowed to use poison above True rank, as that would easily kill anyone in the True realms, made it so that the Nether Poison sect didn't perform as well as they should have.

Some of them even complained, but this was a group decision made by the five ancient sects, so there was nothing they could do about it.

"Congratulations," one of the elders in charge of the process spoke. "We have recorded your names, so you may go back to your boats and wait there until tomorrow morning when the mountain is opened by the ancestors."

Everyone nodded and moved back to their sect's boat.

Alex sat somewhere in the corner and started cultivating. However, he kept Whisker outside so he could see what went around him.

Every time a Saint realm flew close, Whisker would sense a slight fluctuation of energy in the air through one of his whiskers and turn towards the direction where the saint was flying from before some of the Saint realms even realized someone was coming.

Hundreds of Saint realm cultivators were present by the time night fell and even more were coming.

All of them flew past the 5 ships, greeting the people there in the process. Then, they went on to stages that were now empty where they sat and waited.

As more and more Saint realm cultivators arrived, the elders of the Frozen Heart sect that were going to enter also came out to socialize.

Alex remained in utter shock when he saw more Saint realm cultivators gather in one place than there were True realm cultivators.

A thousand different Saint realm cultivators from the far reaches of the world were here and this wasn't even everyone. Half of them had yet to come, and more than those who were here weren't. They were back in their own place, protecting their sects, clans, and organization in the absence of these people.

Suddenly, Alex heard gasps and murmurs from all around him. To his surprise, it was coming from the saint realm cultivators.

He spread out his senses to listen to what they were saying, and from what he understood they were talking about some woman that had come here.

She apparently belonged to the Blazing Earth sect, but aside from that, Alex got no other information.

Most Saint realm cultivators were too used to using spiritual sense to speak with each other. If only he could listen to those conversations.

"Congratulations," a voice floated next to him from the side. Alex sent his senses back to see that Elder Xuan had come up to him at some point.

'I didn't even realize,' he thought.

"Thank you, elder," Alex turned toward her to bow.

"You have cultivated your body too right?" the elder asked.

Alex didn't see any reason to lie since she had already seen through it. "Yes, Elder," he said.

"You must have suffered quite a bit for that. I hear most people in the Blazing Earth sect are refusing to body cultivate because of how much pain is involved. I commend you for sticking through with whatever process you went through," the elder said.

Alex raised an eyebrow, but that couldn't be seen behind the mask. "The Blazing Earth sect is a body cultivation sect?" he asked.

"Somewhat," the elder said. "They used to have about 5% of their cultivators go through body cultivation, but it has now slowly gone down to the point that not even 200 people want to body cultivate because of how little impact it has on someone's cultivation life."

"After all, there is nothing you can't get with a Qi cultivation that you can with a body cultivation," she said.

Alex nodded. Body cultivation was good, but it wasn't necessary.

"Anyway, you've surprised me today quite a bit," the elder said. "I wonder what new surprises you will bring tomorrow. I hope you reach quite high," the elder said and left.

"Reach... high?" Alex didn't understand what she meant by those words.

However, it wasn't even a few hours later that Alex got the information.

About 2 hours before the Dao mountain was to be opened up, everyone including the True realm cultivators and the Saint realm cultivators that were new here was informed about the rules inside the mountain.

An old man with a thin build, a bald head, and a long mustache and beard walked back and forth in front of the grouped-up cultivators as he explained what to do once inside the mountain.

"Inside the mountain, you will find many Soul Elucidating Tulips. Those are what make the Dao mountain what it is," he said.

The old man was Huang Xinyi, the sect master of the Blue Spring sect, so everyone listened carefully when he spoke up.

"If anyone of you is found to have destroyed a single one of that flower, even if it is by mistake, you will be forever forbidden from entering and will be made to pay a massive fine."

"If you can't pay the fine, we will make you work in the mine until you can," the sect leader said.

"Those flowers produce a special kind of scent that is trapped in that mountain for 11 whole months. That scent is what makes you drowsy and forces you into a sleep-like state where you are one with the world and start to understand more of what you already understood a lot, and helps you form a dao," the sect leader said.

"Since the scent was trapped there for 11 months it has formed a sort of layer on the mountain that only gets thicker as you go up. The higher you go, the denser you will find the scent which will help you in getting closer to the state where you will learn dao," he said.

"Now, that means that the higher you go, the better chance you have of learning a dao. But that doesn't necessarily mean you should go higher than you can. The scent affects one's soul, so unless your body can handle it, don't go too high up," the old man said.

"Once you reach a certain height and find yourself trying to fall asleep, find yourself an empty spot away from the flowers and start cultivating. That will somewhat counteract the scent and help you fall into the trance where you will learn Dao."

"Any questions?" he asked.



Alex raised his hands, along with many others. The old man picked some people to ask their questions and Alex waited for his.

Through these questions, Alex learned that there weren't many places in the mountain to sit far away from people and that was why only 2000 people were allowed to enter every year.

As the old man chose through the people, one of the people asked the same question that he was intending to ask as well.

"Can we take out our beasts in there?" he asked.

"You can as long as you find a spot where you can cultivate with your beasts," the sect leader said. "You will be responsible for everything they do as well."

"But, beasts usually don't have the same talent as us, so they will only keep you back if you decide to help them too. So, if you ever find your beast getting sleepy early on, I suggest you take them back and go as far as you can," the sect leader said.

That was all Alex needed to hear. So he put his hands down and waited for the mountain to open up.