

Alchemy 971

Chapter 971: Frozen Leg

Alex left Ghostbane city not long after as he flew southeast towards the State of Re again.

He had spent nearly 4 months in this place and hoped that his aunt would be back from her training by now. He didn't really worry, however, as even if she wasn't back, he would simply use the time to focus on other things he wanted to do.

For one, he wanted to help Whisker learn more about Alchemy and even get him started on making True rank pills.

Besides that, he could go back to the Ancient Battlefield and learn more Dao there. So, he wasn't lacking in ideas at all.

The cold wind had warmed up quite a bit as summer was just around the corner. The state of Re was never in the snow in the first place, so the further south Alex went, the hotter it got.

He passed by many villages and cities and even saw the Intercontinental Teleportation formation once more along the way

He didn't stop for it, however, and simply continued on his way. After 3 hours of flying, he arrived at the Blazing Earth sect.

He was quickly escorted in, where he found his aunt waiting for him.

"Alex!" she cried out and waved at him from far away.

Alex quickly walked up to her. "Aunt Liz, you're back!" he gave a happy smile when he saw her.

"I came back a whole month ago. I heard you come back earlier and left," she said. "You should have waited for me."

"Maybe I should have," Alex said. "But I wanted to go visit the wells in the west."

"Oh, that place," Liz said. "I don't like that place. It keeps saying nothing but sweet nonsense."

"Have you been there?" Alex asked curiously. "What prophecy did you hear?"

"It was some nonsense like lightning, storm, madness, anger, loss, crown, etc," Liz said.

"Oh," Alex was a little taken aback. "That's almost the same as what I heard."

'Godslayer was right,' he thought. 'These divinations are a bunch of nonsense.'

"Anyway, you weren't out there all this time just in the wells right? I hear you've been gone for 4 months now. What did you do?" she asked.

"Oh, I was..." Alex paused. "Let's speak later."

He turned around and bowed a little. "Greetings, seniors."

"You're finally back," the old woman that was his aunt's master spoke. She walked along with the sect master and the grand master as well.

"Master, any luck?" Liz asked.

The old woman shook her head. "None yet. The Nether Poison sect wasn't helpful at all. But don't worry, we'll keep trying," she said.

Liz's face drooped a little, and she sighed.

"How was the trip up west, young man?" the sect master asked.

"It was good, sect master," Alex said.

"We asked the Nether Poison sect about you, and none of them seemed to realize that you were in the State of Bing. You must've hidden quite well," he said.

"I merely took off my mask," Alex said.

The 3 elders nodded in understanding. "Well, let us go inside then. We have something to talk to you about."

Alex nodded and walked along with the 3 elders and his aunt.

As they walked, Alex saw his aunt softly floating on her way inside. "What's wrong?" he asked.

"Hmm? Nothing," Liz quickly said.

"Why are you floating then?" Alex asked.

"Oh, I've frozen the time for my right leg, so I can't move it at the moment. I just have to fly," she said.

"Why?" Alex asked.

"Young man, how strong would you say you are?" the sect master said as they arrived by the door of the lounging area.

"Sorry?" Alex turned around to look at the old man.

"Your cultivation strength. How strong would you say you are?" the sect master repeated the question. "I heard from Huang Xinyi that you can fight 4th realm Saint Foundation beasts. Is that true?"

"If I am allowed to use my dao and such, then yes," Alex said. "Otherwise with just cultivation, it will be around the 2nd realm of Saint Foundation."

"Are you serious?" the grand elder asked suspiciously.

"I thought Huang Xinyi was lying. Was he really telling the truth?" the sect master asked.

"He didn't lie. I can indeed produce strength that can be compared to the 2nd realm of saint Foundation," he said.

"How can you..." the sect master wanted to ask something but stopped. "You know what, it doesn't matter. If you can produce such a strong strength with just your cultivation base, then I have a proposition for you."

"What that might be, sect master?" Alex asked curiously.

"The Heaven's Frost sect is planning on hosting a competition for the young generations to find out who is the strongest amongst them, do you think you might be able to take part in it under the Blazing Earth Sect's name?" the sect master asked.

"A competition?" Alex asked. Was there even a point? It wasn't like the last time when he had something to prove. It would just be a spectacle for him.

Still, there wasn't anything for him to do yet, so maybe he could.

"It's a special competition too," the sect master said.

"Special? How?" Alex asked.

"You see, only those that started their cultivation journey in the 20 years or are under 50 years of age can take part in it," the sect master said.

Alex thought for a moment with a curious look on his face. "You're trying to set up a competition between the players, huh? I wouldn't mind taking part in something like that. Maybe we will find some rather strong cultivators too," he said.

"Yes, that's the plan," the sect master said with a big smile on his face. "So you accept?"

"Well... sure, why not?" Alex said.

"Great!" the sect leader said. "Our sect will surely win this competition then."

The 3 seniors stayed behind to discuss some more while Alex and Liz returned. They talked for a bit as they walked, and they told each other what they had been doing for the last few months.

However, even as they talked, Alex's eyes kept moving toward's his aunt's legs which never touched the ground.

"Are you sure you're okay?" he asked. "You don't look okay."

"No, no, I'm fine," she said. "You don't have to worry."

"If I don't worry, then who will?" Alex asked. "Come on, tell me if you're okay or not. Is your leg hurt?"

"As I said, it's just because I'm freezing time for my feet," she said.

"Why though? Why are you stopping time?" Alex asked.

"That's... " Liz couldn't answer.

"You're hurt, aren't you?" Alex asked. "Why are you hiding it?"

"No, I'm not," Liz said.

"Show me your leg then. I'll be the judge," he said.

"I'm... I'm not hurt," Liz continued saying. "But..."

"But?"

She hesitated for a bit and sighed. "It happened while I was fighting a sea snake," she said as she pulled up her trousers slowly.

"I thought I had killed it, but it came for one last attack and... "

She showed her ankles which were swollen to almost twice their size and had turned completely purple.

Alex realized what was happening. "It bit you?"

Chapter 972: Antidote

"Sigh, yes I was poisoned," Liz said. "I didn't want to worry you, so I said nothing. Seriously though, don't worry. Master is doing as much as she can to go around looking for antidotes. With me freezing my leg's time, it won't be long before I'm healed."

Alex looked at the swollen ankle and nodded to himself. "Yep, you were bit by a venomous snake for sure. Good job on containing the venom to just your leg thought," he said and kept on walking.

"You... don't seem worried," Liz asked.

"Didn't you just say not to worry?" he asked.

"Of course, but that's just because I was trying to be the grown-up here. Of course, I want you to worry. I'm worried as hell myself," Liz said. "Master has been asking around for a month, and yet she can't find any antidotes at all. She doesn't even know where to begin."

"Oh, was that what the Nether Poison sect talk was about earlier?" Alex asked.

"Yes, they have the best knowledge in poisons and venoms, and even they couldn't find a cure," Liz said.

"I see," Alex said.

Liz looked at him with a suspicious look. "You still don't seem worried. Don't you worry your aunt might die if she's not healed?" she asked.

"Will you die in 10 minutes?" Alex turned around to ask.

"No? Why would I die in 10 minutes?" Liz asked.

"Because that's how long it will take me to fix up an antidote for you," Alex said with a wide grin on his face.

"Antidote?" Liz's eyes narrowed. "You have an antidote?"

"I will be making one," he said. "Let's go to my room."

Alex quickly took his aunt to his room and started pulling out ingredients left and right along with a measuring formation to measure their weight.

"What are you doing? Are you making a medicinal paste?" she asked. "I don't think it will work. We've already tried it."

"No, it's not a medicinal paste," Alex said as he focused on the ingredients, measuring them to perfection itself.

"Then?" Liz asked.

Alex continued for a few seconds before stopping and turning around to look at her. "I've been lying to you about something," he said.

"Lying? About what?" Liz's face got serious.

"Remember when I said I had knowledge of formations, talismans, and a little bit about artifact forging?" Alex asked.

"Yes," Liz said. "What's the lie there?"

Her eyes dropped towards the ingredients again as she finished her question, and very quickly a thought emerged in her mind, one she couldn't believe.

Her suspicion of the matter was basically confirmed when Alex pulled out the Green and Golden cauldron from his storage bag.

"You're an alchemist!" she shouted in surprise and quickly caught her own mouth so as to not let others hear anything.

Alex smiled back at her. "I am," he said. "Don't tell your masters though. I don't know what they will do to me if they find out."

"Of course not. I won't tell anyone," she said. "Are you... really going to make a pill?"

"Of course," Alex said. "That's the antidote I was telling you about. Now, please be quiet I need to focus."

"Okay, okay," Liz said and walked away to the corner of the room. "I won't trouble you. Do what you need to do."

Alex nodded and looked back at his own task. He brought out a fire formation to ask as his source of fire and placed his cauldron above it.

As it heated, Alex focused on the ingredient. He had already refined this recipe, so he wanted to follow it to make the best pill he could.

Since he was trying to do his best for his aunt, he had to use his best techniques at making the pills. Which meant he couldn't use the Profound Revolutions of Myriad combinations and had to instead resort to the Pill-splitting Qi.

Which instead meant that he had to double the number of ingredients he needed to make. He was okay with that if it meant the best result instead.

Also, he had the ingredients for the pill, some of which would be incredibly hard to come by in a continent that snowed almost all the time.

Alex weighed them, measured them, poured his energy into them, and kept them aside as the cauldron heated up for a while. Liz watched it all from the side with curious eyes.

Once it was all ready, Alex started.

The cauldron lay on top of the fire with its lid closing it fully, and Alex didn't want to change that. So, to put the ingredients in instead, he used the Dao of Teleportation to send them directly into the cauldron.

This was something he had come up with towards the end of his 4-month long Alchemy training session in Ghostbane City.

He put the first ingredients into the cauldron by directly sending them inside the cauldron. There were two of them, and he kept them on opposite sides of the cauldron as he moved them around at the same speed.

With them being the same ingredients, under the same temperature and motion, they resulted in the same powder and energy.

Once the first ingredient was done, Alex moved on to the second one. He sent the two ingredients using his teleportation skill too.

Not having to open up the lid meant that even by mistake, he would no longer lose any of the energy in the cauldron anymore.

Alex was getting excited right now. If he didn't make a single mistake, he wondered how far he could push the harmony of the pills.

Once the 2nd ingredient was done, Alex moved on to the third.

Liz's spiritual sense was constantly on Alex and the cauldron, watching him do the work from afar. She was surprised at how much concentration Alex was putting into his work to make it work.

Since he was making the pill for her, she too tried her best to not make a single sound to disturb him.

Alex continued his task of putting in ingredients, releasing their energy, and turning them to powder 9 more times before it was time for him to put in the last ingredient.

He did so without hesitation and turned the last set of ingredients into powder as well.

The energy from all of the 12 different types of ingredients had all mixed together in perfect harmony, and Alex couldn't help but be excited at the fact that nothing of it had escaped even in the slightest bit yet.

With him not making a single error in the recipe as of yet, Alex was super excited about the result he would gain from this batch of pills.

With how perfectly everything was going on, if he didn't get 98% harmony at the very least, he would be severely disappointed.

Alex felt a slight throbbing in his head from making two Saint rank pills at once, but he ignored it to finish the task.

Once all the powder and energy were separate, it was time to mix them back up to form two different pills.

To do that, it was very simple. Alex used his intent and suddenly, a pill-splitting Qi came out of his body, following the normal spiritual root from the meridian that was part of Qi that controlled things.

He felt the pill-splitting Qi land on the powder and suddenly they split up into two different sections of powder as they clumped up together they form two different pills.

The Pill-splitting Qi automatically forced the powder to combine in the best way possible, meaning the combinations of these powders were always the best, regardless of the powders he had presented.

"I have made no mistakes," Alex softly spoke to himself as he watched the pill-splitting Qi quickly form a pill and pull in energy from the cauldron to make the best pill Alex could've seen.

He was super excited to see how well he had done, so the moment all the energy was back in the pill and not the tiniest amount was left, he decided to finally open the cauldron.

However, before he could, a loud noise broke off his peace, forcing him to stop. Even Liz was surprised.

"What's going on?" he thought as he heard more lightning and thunder, so he looked up.

There, inside the room, a storm was brewing.

Chapter 973: Storm, Shards, and ...

"What do you think? We will win, right?" the sect master asked the grand elder and the female ancestor.

"We can't just ignore the possibilities that the other sects to have disciples that have reached a very high cultivation base," the female said. "You know how it is, these new folks are very good at cultivating."

"That is true, but still, with young Yu Ming by our side, we should do good," the grand elder said.

"Whatever, we have a more pressing problem. I still can't find an antidote for the young girl. Sigh, I was too lax when I should have been very careful," the female ancestor said.

"Even the Nether Poison sect didn't have anything?" the sect master asked.

"No, they do have a recipe for the antidote, but not the antidote itself. As for the recipe, they're lacking ingredients," the old woman said.

"Sigh, if only we hadn't ignored alchemy as much, we could have—"

"No," the grand elder said. "We cannot let Alchemy flourish. That's how we bring our own downfall."

"But how, grand elder? None of you ever explain why and simply keep on telling me to continue the tradition," the sect master said. "At least tell me why I am doing what I'm doing."

The grand elder sighed and the old woman shook her head as well. "I pray you never have to learn why," she said.

"Anyway, I should go ask the Heaven's Frost sect if they have any—"

The woman paused midway as the aura in the air changed a bit. Not only her, the other two realized something was happening as well.

The three of them suddenly walked outside and saw a storm brewing in the sky that was otherwise open all around it.

The dark clouds flashed with lightning as if the heavens were angry at something. The three of them simply couldn't figure out what.

Unknown to Alex, there was a storm brewing outside that was mimicking what was happening in his room as well.

The clouds floated at the ceiling, crackling with lightning while Alex sat there confused.

'What is happening?' he thought. The pills were ready, but for some reason, Alex knew he couldn't interfere with them just yet.

At least. That was the vibes he got from looking at the miniature storm inside of his room.

"Alex, get—"

"Don't come near me." Alex put his hands to the side to stop Liz from approaching. "You will get caught up in the storm."

"What?" Liz looked up at the storm too and a familiar feeling came to her as her eyes went wide. "That's... that's the storm that brings the lightning tribulation, isn't it?"

Liz herself had to go through lightning tribulation when breaking through to the Saint realm, so she was very familiar with the storm.

"How is there a tribulation going on in here?" she asked.

"I don't know," Alex said with some fear and curiosity in his voice. "I've never come across such a thing in the 15 years I've been doing Alchemy."

However, he did have a guess.

The heavens didn't act for no reason. He had either done something that he shouldn't have, like use Immortal Qi in a world where there wasn't any Immortal Qi.

Or, the more possible one, he had reached perfection and the heavens were putting forth an obstacle in his path.

Since he was making a pill at the moment, Alex couldn't help but be happier with the result. If his assumption was correct, then the pill inside the cauldron was surely a 100% harmony pill.

Just as he was getting happy about it, the lightning crackled once more, grabbing his attention. Alex looked up just in time to see the lightning fall.

At the same time, the lightning stuck in his room, and the same lightning struck down from the storm outside as well.

Alex watched as the bolt of lightning zigged and zagged its way until it reached his cauldron. He watched as the massive bolt struck it hard, lighting up the gold and green on the cauldron.

As he watched, Alex saw the lightning branch its way around the cauldron and his cauldron cracked.

"No..."

Alex suddenly felt horrified as the explosion sent out the shards of his broken cauldron all over the room, hitting him in multiple places, and even cutting him at some.

Liz quickly slowed down time around her and used the opportunity to dodge the shards that would have otherwise hit her.

Alex struck the wall due to the shockwave and fell to the ground. His wounds healed immediately and he got back up.

"No," he thought as he watched the many pieces of his cauldron that were spread throughout the room.

"Master..." he couldn't help but feel hollow as he watched the one thing that was given to him by his master break into a hundred pieces.

"No..." he said as he quickly scanned the room to see a hundred pieces. He pulled them all together and piled them in front of him.

"Alex honey, are you okay?" Liz quickly walked up to him and searched him for wounds.

"No, I'm fine," Alex said in a daze as he looked at the pile of his broken cauldron.

The storm above him was dissipating, but he couldn't give it any thought at all. All he could think about was the cauldron and his master.

"What happened to the pill?" Liz asked all of a sudden.

"Pill?" Alex got back from his shock. "Right, the antidote."

He quickly searched and found a pill in the pile of metal. Fortunately, it was intact, so he quickly brought it out and looked at it.

"98%?" he was a little confused. But, now was not the time.

"Eat this, aunt Liz. This should heal your leg," Alex said and gave it to her.

Liz nodded and without hesitation ate the pill. She let go of the frozen time around her leg and the intense pain assaulted her again. However, this time around, the purple ankle slowly lost its color as it return to becoming her normal skin.

In the meantime, Alex searched for the other pill that should have been in the cauldron. However, he couldn't find it.

What he did find were powders on the ground and a whole lot of elemental aura in the air that should have been in the pill.

'It was destroyed?' Alex thought.

Suddenly, the door burst open as the sect master, grand elder, and the female ancestor arrived to see what was happening.

As soon as they entered, they saw the broken shards of metal, the elemental aura in the air, and Liz with her healed legs.

"What happened here?" the old woman asked.

"Master, please don't get angry," Liz spoke up before Alex could. "He only did it to make an antidote for me."

The old woman only then realized that her disciple's wounds were gone. "What did he do?" she asked.

"He made me a pill, an antidote master. Can you forgive him, please?" Liz asked.

The old woman's eyes went wide as she turned toward Alex. "You are an alchemist?" she asked.

Alex sighed as there was no more reason to hide. He took the metal shards from the ground into his storage ring, and answered, "Yes, I am."

"That storm just now, you manifested it?" the grand elder asked.

"That was me too," Alex said.

The moment he answered them, both of the two elder's faces darkened. Surprisingly, they were not angry but rather horrified.

"You... You are an alchemist..." the old woman muttered, almost unbelieving of the words she herself spoke.

"TAI GUAN!" the grand elder shouted at the old woman and brought her out of her shock. "We need to move quickly."

"Yes, yes," the old woman said.

Before anyone could do anything, her hands moved and pulled Alex next to her. Then, she quickly walked out of the room along with the grand elder.

"Master? What are you—"

"Stay back," the old woman shouted. "Don't follow."

"I'll go gather up a few spirit veins," the grand elder said and left.

"Senior, what is happening?" the sect master asked. He himself was very confused about the situation.

"Senior, please let go of me," Alex said and struggled, but the hold the woman had on him was on that he simply couldn't walk out of. Not even with his teleportation skill. Her Qi had properly wrapped around him and they were so strong that even the space around her was being affected.

"Shut up," the old woman said. "We don't have much time to save you."

"What?" Alex asked, but before he got an answer, the lady moved. The sect master followed behind her, very curious as to what she was intending to do.

She left the sect and moved west as fast as she could, but the sect master kept up with her.

"Senior, where are you taking me?" Alex asked. "Please let go of me."

"Don't struggle, boy," the woman said. "I'm trying to save your life here."

"Save my life? From what?" Alex asked.

"Not what, who," the woman said. "If we don't hurry..." She couldn't speak anymore.

"Who?" Alex asked.

The woman kept quiet. "I am taking you to the Teleportation formation. The grand elder will bring some spirit veins and we will send you to the Eastern Continent. You will be safe there."

"Eastern continent?" Alex was surprised.

Someone quickly caught up to them.

"How many spirit veins did you br—"

The old woman's voice froze when she realized that the person that had caught up to them was not the Grand Elder.

Alex sent his spiritual sense behind him and caught a glimpse of the man.

What he saw in that glimpse... was madness.

Chapter 974: Xue Kuangren

The sect master stopped to turn around and by that time the man had already approached them.

The old woman stopped as well with a huge frown on her face. "We're too late," she said softly so that only Alex could hear it.

Alex could only feel fear at the words she just spoke.

His eyes moved toward the newly arrived figure as he tried to figure out who he was exactly. However, he had never seen a person like this.

It was a mad man with white hair that was so unkempt that it looked like he had just recently been shocked with electricity. His eyes were rabid and pained and angry and mad, making every single person in front of him feel unease.

Alex could see a small section of his neck that looked as if it had been burned, but other than that he could see nothing from the yellow robe he wore that also seemed to have been burnt in many places.

"Did you try to take him away from me, little girl?" the man asked.

The old woman didn't say anything. Her only thought at the moment was to save Alex somehow. But no matter what she thought, she didn't see a way out of it.

Even if she somehow arrived at the Intercontinental Teleportation formation with Alex and had the spirit veins readied to teleport him, the man would still arrive and take Alex away.

He was strong enough and mad enough to do that.

"Who are you, senior?" the sect master asked apprehensively.

"Hm? Who are you?" the mad man asked.

"I am Bai Qiyi," the man said. "The sec--"

"He's a young man who recently entered the Saint Soul realm," the old woman spoke before the sect master could introduce himself properly.

"A young blood, huh? Hehe, no wonder you don't know me. Still, I would've thought she would've told you by now," the mad man said.

The sect master turned to look towards the old woman, looking for answers, but all he saw was a frown on her face.

"How the hell am I supposed to tell him anything? You made sure to shut our mouths with the oath," the old woman said.

"I did?" the mad man asked. "Right, I did. I'm getting forgetful. Well, I free you from that oath then." The man shook his head and turned toward the old woman again.

"Now, I must ask where you were thinking of going with the young man there," the man asked. "Surely, you were not trying to send him away, right?"

"N-no," the old woman said.

"Good, now hand him over so that I may leave," the man said.

Alex watched in horror as the old woman handed him over without putting up a single fight. Even the sect master was horrified at how easily she was letting go of the young man that she previously said would become their savior.

The mad man caught Alex and looked at him with a feral face. "You brought out the Pill cloud, didn't you?" the man asked. "What happened to the pill you made?"

"My pill? It... it was destroyed," Alex said.

"Hmm... no worry, you will have a lot of time to succeed now. I will teach you exactly how to succeed. Let's go."

The mad man then moved at an incredible speed away from there, going back east where he had come from.

The speed was so fast that Alex started feeling dizzy. The man had no qualms about putting Alex in danger with the speed he was moving in.

The State of Re became a blue as in just a minute, they crossed over half the Northern continent, arriving at the bay that was at the south of the Dong and Shuang Border.

Alex saw the blue water zipped past him as a sharp ringing sound entered his ears. He looked up front and saw a million different lightning strikes fall from the clouds.

Alex realized where he was going.

The Lightning Peninsula.

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The old woman hovered in the sky with a look that was hard to judge.

The sect master looked at her with an angry look on his face. "Why did you give him up so easily? The least you could do was try and fight," he said.

"We can't," the woman said. "There is no way for us to win against him."

"You could've at least tried," the sect master said angrily.

The woman suddenly got angry as well. "You think we haven't tried? Do you think we haven't spent the last thousands of years trying to find a solution to kill him? We've tried and we've failed. Dozens of us have died in the process. We can't beat him at all."

"Fighting him means dying. Do you want to die?" the woman asked.

The sect master's anger softened a bit when he heard that. "You've fought him many times?" he asked.

"Yes, not just us. All the other ancestors from the different sects too," she said. "We've been trying to kill him all this time, but it is just impossible."

The sect master frowned. "How strong is he?" he asked. "Is he at the Peak of Saint Transformation realm?"

The woman shook her head. "No," she said. "He's stronger than that. He's a False Immortal."

"A False Immortal?" the sect master's eyes went wide in shock. "Does he live in the Northern Continent? How come I do not know about him?"

"You do know about him," the old woman said. "You only think he's dead."

The sect master's eyes narrowed when he heard that. "Who is he?" he asked.

The answer the woman gave to that question sent the sect master's mind reeling with a million thoughts.

"Xue Kuangren."

* * * * *

The madman somehow dodged through all the lightning bolts and arrived at an underground palace that was massive.

He let go of Alex there and only then did Alex could try and hold in his dizziness. It took a few seconds, but the fact that he could get dizzy as a Saint realm cultivator went to show just how fast the old man was.

Alex stepped a little back and thought of teleporting away when he sensed something. 'Something's wrong with space here,' he thought. Teleporting away would be harder, not to mention useless with the man in front of him.

Alex was about to ask something when the old man shouted. "Everyone! Come out!"

Alex wondered what was happening when one by one, men and women all walked out from inside various rooms in the underground palace.

Alex looked surprised when he saw nearly 120 different people, all of whom were of various different ages, from young to old.

"H-How can we help you, senior?" one of the old men asked.

"How many of you here can consistently make Immortal Grade pills?" the mad man asked.

The people looked around, but none of them said anything. Alex realized that the 120 different people here were all alchemists. 'So many,' he thought.

"Can none of you consistently make Immortal grade pills yet?" the man asked.

The men and women could only shake their heads in response.

"Very well," the man said. "I don't need any of you anymore."

His hands moved, and the 10 dozen alchemists were shredded to many pieces. Alex fell back in shock as the blood and guts of the different cultivators fell to the ground in front of him.

His fear reached its peak as the madman turned toward him. And the mad man smiled. "Don't worry, I won't hurt you. You are the only one that can help me. You are the only one that can make me pills to heal my wounds."

Alex heard him, but the words barely reached him. His fear made sure his primary thought was regarding his own survival.

As he thought that, his eyes fell on something he had seen before.

On the old man's yellow robe, there was an insignia he had seen somewhere before. It was a snowflake.

He remembered where he had seen that insignia. He had seen it back in the Silvermoon city, on the chest of the disciples that wore golden robes.

"You're from the Snow Immortal sect?" Alex asked in surprise.

"From? Haha, I am Xue Kuangren, the sect leader of the Snow Immortal sect," the man said.

"Xue Kuangren..." Alex had heard of that famous name before.

After all, this was the sect leader that had brought forth the destruction of the Snow Immortal sect nearly 8 thousand years ago.

Before the 5 major sects of the current northern continent existed, they were but a part of a super sect known as the Snow Immortal sect.

The Snow Immortal sect ruled over the Northern Continent for thousands and thousands of years, producing dozens of Immortals in the process.

And it all came crumbling down when Xue Kuangren, the sect leader of the Snow Immortal sect of 8 thousand years ago failed in his lightning tribulation to become an Immortal.

In doing so, he was said to have died, and along with him died the Snow Immortal sect.

And yet, here he was, in front of Alex. He wasn't in his best state, but he was alive, and he was very strong.

'Godslayer!' Alex shouted in his head to try and call for help. 'I need your help.'

Godslayer heard his calls and shifted into Alex's body. But when he sensed the man that stood in front of him, he quickly went back.

"I'm sorry, kid. I can't help you on this one," he said. "The man in front of you is the closest thing to an Immortal. The only one that can hurt him is an Immortal, and I, unfortunately, don't have that sort of power in me."

Alex was terrified when he realized the severity of the situation. There was no getting out of here.

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"Xue Kuangren? He is supposed to have died 8 thousand years ago," the sect master of the Blazing Earth sect said.

"He didn't," the old woman said. "We speculate that the coward realized that he was going to fail and most likely die during his ascension, and thus ran away from his own tribulation."

"In doing so, he implicated the many elders of the Snow Immortal sect at the time, all of whom died there. He himself got out of it with half of his body damaged," the old woman said.

"Had we realized at the time this was the matter, we would've killed him before he had some time to recuperate. Alas, he had gone off to the southern Shuang where he established the massive formation that brought down lightning that he then used to hide."

The sect master's eyes went wide. "Xue Kuangren created the Lightning Peninsula?" he asked in surprise.

"Did it never seem too coincidental to you that exactly 8 thousand years ago when he was supposed to have died was the same time the Lightning Peninsula was first created?" the old woman asked.

"I... see, that makes sense," the sect master said. "So he's been hiding this whole time? Why hasn't he come to reclaim his sect? Why did he just watch and let his sect be destroyed?"

"He can't come," the old woman said. "His wounds are too severe for him to do anything."

"Then... why couldn't you kill him?" the sect master asked.

"His physical body is too strong for us to do anything," the woman said. "The only one who can hurt him is he himself."

The sect master was confused. "I don't understand," he said.

"He's a False Immortal, meaning that he has the attributes of an Immortal but not their power. His Body and Soul have combined together as it always does when one enters Immortality. His physical body was reborn to become as strong as his cultivation base. As such, we simply cannot hurt him as we are."

"However, he is wounded. From what we know, part of his meridians are destroyed and thus he can't use his Qi properly. Every time he does, it only aggravates his wound. And since his meridians are wounded so badly, he can not even cultivate anymore."

"Then... what can he do?" the sect master asked.

"All he can do, and all he has been doing for the past thousands of years. Kidnapping Alchemists and forcing them to make pills for him to heal," the old woman said. Since her oath to keep quiet had been lifted, she told the sect master everything she knew.

The sect master finally understood what was happening. "That is why everyone is so against alchemy," he said. "Because if Alchemy grows then..."

"Then he comes back," the old woman said. "And if he comes back, the Snow Immortal sect is reborn, and we will be forced to live our lives under the hands of the madman."

"We wanted the young man to grow and become strong enough to kill the madman, but... dammit, he got to him before he could grow," the old woman said. "If he somehow is able to make pills to heal the madman then... we can be certain that most of us will die."

* * * * *

The madman took Alex to a room full of working cauldrons that were left behind by the alchemists that had just been killed.

It didn't take him that long to realize that these were the alchemists that had gone missing many times in the past dozens of years.

It was never the 5 sects that did anything to the Alchemists, it was this madman. The 5 sects were only trying to help the alchemists, but they couldn't outright do anything because of their oath.

As such, they had to seem underhanded to make the alchemists think being one was a bad idea.

'Dammit, if only I hadn't reached 100%,' Alex thought.

"Sit somewhere, you will start making healing pills for me," he said.

Alex looked around and frowned. "Senior, I'm only a Saint realm cultivator. I cannot make a pill that can help you," he said.

"Oh, but you can," the man said. "You brought the pill clouds. That means you can definitely help me."

Alex couldn't help but be confused. "Senior, you need Immortal Qi to heal you. I cannot make Immortal pills while I'm in the Saint realms," he said.

"I know that, but you can still help me," the madman said. "Do you not know about pill clouds?"

Alex frowned and shook his head. "That was the first time I ever saw something like that happen. It was pure coincidence," he said.

"Haha, then pray that there are more coincidences like this," the man said. "When you make a 100% harmony pill, the heavens put it on a trail, calling forth a storm that we call Pill Clouds."

"It will send down 9 different lightning bolts, of which you have to go through at least one before you can hope to stop. Each lightning bolt the pill survives improves the pill to a point that it has some chance at affecting a cultivator of a higher cultivation base."

"So, if you a Saint realm cultivator make a Saint ranked healing pill that can survive through enough of the lightning strikes, I will have a high chance of restoring my body and then I can finally go back and make the Snow Immortal sect great again."

The man started laughing like the mad man he was.

Alex frowned when he realized what a troublesome situation he had gotten himself into. "What if I did heal you? What will you do?" he asked.

"What will I do?" the man thought. "If you heal me, I will make you my heir as the next leader of the Great Snow Immortal sect that will once more rule over all of the Northern Continent."

"Hehe, you may think I'm lying, but here's an incentive for you. Every time you make a pill that is over 98% in harmony, I will give you whatever you want," the madman said. "Except knowledge on talismans. I had someone make a talisman to escape previously, so you can't have that."

"Anything?" Alex asked, making a face that said he was willing.

"Yes, anything," the old man said. "You will do it right?"

Alex had no choice. "Yes," he said.

"Good, I will go and gather some ingredients for you to start. Rest for now," the man said and left.

After the man left, Alex sat there thinking of what had just happened. He had been kidnapped by a False Immortal, forced to make a pill for him.

As he thought of what he was going to do in the future, a few words from the past, of the future, came to his mind.

He remembered the divinations he had seen back in the Nine Wells of Time.

One of the divination was a glimpse of his future where he saw Storms, Shards of metal, and Madness.

Alex had been through the storm that was the pill cloud. He had seen the shards of metal that had been the broken pieces of his cauldron that were the last physical reminder of his master.

And now he had seen madness.

Alex felt stunned once more, even after everything that had already happened today. He was stunned when he realized that the visions of the future he had seen 4 months ago were all coming true.

At least, the vision from one of the wells had come true. This meant, more than likely, the other wells had also shown his visions that were true as well.

That was when he remembered the first prophecy he had heard in there, and a deep fear couldn't help but grow in his heart.

"I hold the key to a fallen power," he thought. He was the only one in the entire continent that could heal the fallen power that was the sect leader of the Snow Immortal sect after all.

He realized that another one of the divinations, this time a prophecy, was coming true right in front of him.

However, if it was coming true, then he was in grave danger.

"I hold the key to a fallen power," he remembered and slowly continued. "I shall help restore that power... and that shall bring my death."

Chapter 976: No Way Out

"If I help him, there's a likelihood that I die. Is that it?" Alex thought. Surely the only way to get out of this alive was not to help the man.

But who in their right mind would refuse to do anything for the madman that had just killed 120 alchemists because they didn't give him what he wanted?

'I need to escape somehow,' Alex thought. 'But how?'

He knew there was no way he could beat someone that was once at the cusp of immortality, so he needed to think of some other way.

Unless his sword skills improved to the point where it was on the next stage, it was unlikely he was going to be able to beat him.

Even if he did, how was he supposed to wield such power with his tiny cultivation base and body strength? He was sure to struggle to wield such strength.

Godslayer couldn't help him and he had nothing on him that could help him either.

'Dammit, why is the space here so weird? It feels like I'm stuck in a secret realm or something,' Alex thought as he felt around.

He wondered if an escape talisman could help him get out of here, but then, what was he going to do after leaving? Given how fast the madman was, he was sure to catch up to him in just a few minutes.

'Can I feed him poison?' Alex wondered, but how was he going to make poison in the first place? Saint-ranked ingredients wouldn't work on him and Immortal rank ingredients were impossible to find.

'Besides, it looks like he knows a lot about alchemy to know what Pill Cloud is while I don't,' Alex thought. 'It will be impossible to dupe him.'

"Godslayer, do you have any ideas?" Alex asked.

Godslayer moved his attention towards Alex's words but remained quiet for a while. "I need to know more about the situation to even understand what is going on. However, what I can tell you is that there is no way you can beat him in direct combat. You will have to use some underhanded means."

"I can't think of any," Alex said.

"Neither can I," Godslayer said. "I might need some more time to think of something. Try and get as much information out of him as you can, I will try to see what I can come up with in the meantime."

Godslayer went back to ignoring the outside, and Alex was once again left alone. He thought of calling out Pearl and Whisker, but in this situation, it just didn't feel right.

He didn't want to give any way for the madman to find leverage over him. After all, Pearl and Whisker being hostage would be the last thing he would want.

Not long after, the old man walked into the room and went up to Alex with a face full of smiles.

"Hehe, I'm back with the ingredients. This is what I've gathered for the last thousands of years, so it will be enough for you to make pills out of them," he said.

The old man had many storage bags, but he only handed over one to Alex. "There is a recipe and a few ingredients in there. Try and make a pill in front of me," he said.

Alex took the bag and looked inside it. The healing pill recipe in there was one he had already improved, so it wouldn't take much time for him to get 100% again.

But should he do that?

'No,' Alex thought. Still, he had to do better than what the people that had died already had done, so he brought out one of the many True rank cauldrons he owned and started.

The False Immortal sat a bit far away and watched Alex start making the pill.

Alex started putting in the ingredients and refining them as he made the pill. He used the best recipe, the best control, and the best single pill-forming skill out there.

The cauldron he was using wasn't the best. It was finding a very hard time retaining heat without melting. Alex had to use his Dao of melting to stop it from doing so, and it was quite annoying.

Still, he ended up with a pill that had 92% Harmony.

Before he could even do anything, the madman pulled the hot cauldron and opened it to pull out the pill. He placed it on a formation, which showed that the pill had 92% harmony in it.

"That's far better than what all of these idiots made before," the man said. "But it is still not enough. You have got to do better."

"I don't know how I did what I did before," Alex said.

"Doesn't matter. I will be keeping this pill. I can use it to heal you later," the man said.

Alex's eyes widened. "Heal me?" he asked.

"You have 1 month to bring back the Pill cloud again. If you don't, then I will beat you until you are half dead," the man said and left before Alex could say anything else.

A formation appeared all around the room as soon as the old man left. Now, Alex couldn't even leave just this room anymore.

Alex sat in the room, stunned at what he had just heard.

'Fuck!' he thought. 'I'm going to get beat up if I don't create a pill cloud?'

Alex couldn't help but frown at the situation. What was he going to do now?

'I don't have a choice,' he thought. 'I'm going to have to make that pill cloud.'

Alex couldn't sense any spiritual sense in him, but he doubted he could sense the Spiritual sense of an Immortal level figure, so he could only work under the assumption that he was under his supervision at all times.

He would have to be very careful regarding what he did.

Alex took a few minutes of rest and started making the pills once again. For a while, he was going to have to make pills that weren't so good. Still, with his skill, every pill would be over 90%.

After making about 10 pills in a row over the next 10 hours, Alex stopped to cultivate. He used the time to think of how he was going to escape, but there was simply no way in his mind.

Unless he got help from the outside, he was stuck in this room for the foreseeable future.

Aside from cultivation, Alex had no choice but to continue making pills. For the first 2 weeks, he did what he could to get just over 90%, but after that, he needed to think of a way to bring forth the cloud.

He was going to be beaten up if he didn't, so Alex prepared for it.

To not arise suspicion at the fact that he could make some of the best pills on demand simply by using the best ingredients, he spent improving the ingredients two ingredients a day.

The 12 different ingredients for the pill needed 12 days before he was ready.

On the 13th day, with only 3 more days to go before the month ended, Alex began making the pills.

He had perfected two of each ingredient, so it was going to be two pills that he was making. Unfortunately for him, there was no other way but to show off his Pill Splitting Qi if he wanted to bring the Pill Clouds.

Alex tried his best once again. He had everything perfect, bar the cauldron, but he could work with that.

He sent the ingredients into the cauldron directly using his Dao of Teleportation and started refining it.

Halfway through the process, Alex started worrying that he might end up not doing a very good job as he might've miscalculated on the ingredients.

However, when he sent the Pill-Splitting Qi into the cauldron, and it split the pill into two, he heard the storm clouds ringing loud on top of him.

With that, he knew he had done it right.

He looked up to see the cloud floating indoors once more, reading to strike down with a strong lightning bolt.

Seeing that, Alex couldn't help but wonder. "Now what?"

The False Immortal had told him to make a pill cloud, but he had never told him what he should do once he did make it.

"Do I move away and hope for the best?" he wondered. He knew he couldn't interfere in the tribulation of the others, so he thought it was the same in this case as well.

Just then, the formations around Alex's room suddenly disappeared as the old man walked in with a stunned look.

"You really did it," he spoke softly as he looked to the sky. Then, he looked down at Alex and saw that he was standing further away from the cauldron.

"What are you doing?" he shouted. "Stay by the cauldron."

Alex's eyes narrowed when he heard that. "What do you mean?" he asked.

"Quick! You need to protect your pill from the lightning," the man said. "Sit by your cauldron."

Alex didn't know what he meant exactly, but he was the only one he could believe at the moment.

"How do I protect it?" he asked. "Do I fight off the lightning?"

"No, use the full power of your cultivation base to cover up your pill so it doesn't take damage from the lightning strike," the old man said.

"Oh," Alex said and quickly sat by his cauldron.

'Full power of my cultivation base, huh?' he thought. 'I will definitely use the full power of my Saint Condensation 2nd realm cultivation base then.'

Chapter 977: Heal or Kill

Alex covered his pill with the Qi that could only come from a Saint Condensation 2nd realm cultivator that was trying his hardest.

He had yet to realize which of the two pills that were inside the cauldron at the moment was the actual pill that was going through the lightning trial, so he had to cover them both.

"Good," the old man said with a maniacal look on his face. "Keep it steady, and—"

Before he could finish his sentence, the lightning fell from the heavens and struck the cauldron. Once more, the cauldron Alex was using broke into a hundred different pieces, cutting him in various different places at the same time.

As for the pills, since he was covering both at once, when the lightning fell, both of the pills were destroyed at once.

Alex halted his healing and made grunting noises as if he was in pain. Then he brought out a pill which he quickly ate. He let the pill turn into Qi, and resumed his Undying physique which healed him immediately.

He had done it all to hide his physique from the old man, but the old man wasn't even looking at him.

Instead, the old man stared at the vanishing cloud and the black smudge on the ground where the lightning broke the cauldron to pieces. On the floor there lay the powder that would otherwise have been a pill that survived the lightning bolt and become one that would help heal his wound.

Alas.

"Weak," the old man muttered. "Extremely weak!"

His head snapped in Alex's direction as he quickly walked towards him. Alex was immediately scared and tried to move away, but the old man was too quick and grabbed him by his robes.

Alex couldn't do anything as he was pulled close to the old man's face.

As the old man looked at Alex, Alex looked at him. He saw the wounds from up close. The burned skin with a lightning scar on it of which only the tip could be seen outside of his robes.

The wound crept up from his right shoulder, and Alex could feel the old man's hands trembling slightly as he hold onto him.

He could see some whiteness in the eyes that stared back at him.

"Saint Condensation 2nd realm. You're too weak," the old man said. "You need a stronger cultivation base to survive the lightning strike."

"I'm sorry, senior, but this is my cultivation base. I cannot improve it very quickly," Alex said.

The old man grunted in response and threw Alex back on the ground. His madness was slowly creeping up to him.

"Grrr... I've waited so long, I can wait a few more years," the old man said. "But not many."

The old man thought for a bit and spoke. "You have 10 years of time in which you have to reach a cultivation base where your pills can at least survive a single strike from the pill clouds. If you can't, you will be of no use to me, in which case I will kill you."

Alex took a deep breath and nodded. "I will do it," he said.

"You better," the old man said and turned to leave. "I will come back when you call the pill clouds again."

"Senior," Alex stopped him.

"What?" the old man asked.

"You said you would give me anything I want if I made a 98% harmony pill, right?" he asked. "I made one with 100% Harmony today. Do I get something?"

The old man turned around with an obviously annoyed face, but he didn't voice his annoyance. "What do you want?" he asked.

Alex had a thought in mind. "30 tons of Ice Iron," he said. "Can you find it for me?"

The old man thought for a bit and said, "fine, I will get it for you."

"Thank you," Alex said. "I will do my best to make a pill to heal you."

"Hmm," the old man walked back towards Alex and said, "just in case... I need to make sure." He stared down at Alex who was starting to feel worried.

"What is it, senior?" Alex asked.

"Make an oath that you will either heal me in 10 years or you will kill yourself," the old man said.

"What? I—" Alex didn't know what to say. This was an obviously bad oath for him to say, but then there was an obviously bad man sitting standing right in front of him.

"Make the oath," the man's eyes sharpened as he stared at Alex.

Alex took a deep breath and said, "Senior, as long as you're alive, I will continue making pills to heal you."

The old man suddenly snickered and kicked Alex in the chest before sending him back into the wall.

"Don't try to be a smart ass in front of me," the old man said. "Do you think I will let you speak such blatant oaths with loopholes where my death releases you?"

Alex coughed up blood from the attack and wheezed a little as he tried to catch his breath.

"Say the Oath I make you say, or I will kill you," the man continued.

"Senior, please—"

"Speak the oath," the old man continued. "Say that you will either heal me in the next 10 years or you will kill yourself. If you try and change a single word in that oath, I will will you right now."

Alex frowned and thought of a way to get out of this, but not a single idea came to his mind. In the end, he could only try and survive.

"I make an Oath to the heavens," Alex spoke out loud. "Within the next 10 years, I will heal you, senior. If I am unable to do that, I will... kill myself."

The heavens accepted his Oath, and Alex felt something settle onto his mental space as if something had imprinted itself onto him.

He could feel the oath bind him in a heavenly intent that if tried to break willingly would kill him.

Alex couldn't help but frown as the oath was accepted. Such a terrible oath was forced upon him and he now had no way of getting out of it.

The only way would be to help the man and help him heal within the next 10 years. But then... there was a high chance of the prophecy coming true, which said that he would die.

Alex felt himself fall into a dilemma, one which he saw no way out of.

'What do I do now?' he thought.

The old man was laughing in the meanwhile. "Good, good. You've now put yourself on the path where either you die or I don't get healed. I will get you all the resources you need to improve as well as whatever you want. You just focus on improving and making the pills."

The old man left happy leaving a troubled Alex behind to think of what to do.

Alex stayed there, thinking for a while, but it all led to the same conclusion.

'I have to heal him,' he thought. It wasn't even him wanting to do it. It was more so that he couldn't do anything else.

Simply thinking of not helping the old man heal made him feel suffocated. The oath prevented him from even having thoughts of going against it.

"I have to heal him, or I have to kill myself," he thought. "So... if I want to ignore the first section, I will have to look deeply into the second one."

He wondered if there was a way for him to kill himself without actually killing himself.

Alex could only think of the situation when he reaches the third stage of Undying Physique where he could be reborn with just a soul remaining.

Unfortunately, he was barely at the peak of the first stage, and the 2nd stage is supposed to last a very long time as well. Reaching the 3rd stage was pretty much impossible.

"Goddammit!" Alex felt like pulling out his own hair. "What the hell am I supposed to do?"

He thought for a while with no answer. He thought of what his aunt must be thinking about right now. Was she looking for a way to help him? He hoped she wasn't.

He hoped the old woman and the sect master were smart enough to not let her do anything impulsive. He felt sad at the thought of his aunt being alone again, but then it was more likely that she was worried about him more than herself being alone.

'I miss mother,' he thought as he realized that he was feeling empty at the moment with no one to help him and no one to talk to.

Godslayer barely talked, and Alex couldn't bring either of the beasts out of safety concerns. But then, he had spoken an oath, so maybe he could do so now.

One thing that annoyed Alex more than anything was the fact that he had been captured and was being kept imprisoned for the next 10 years. The annoying part here was the fact that there were less than 5 years for the Demon realm's teleportation script to be active.

If he missed that, he was going to have to give up on returning back to the Western Continent using any conventional means available to him.

"I'm going to miss it, aren't I?" he thought. That made him feel sadder than he already was, but then he picked himself up.

"Screw this," he thought. "I will think of the future in the future. Right now, I can only use the opportunity provided to me to grow."

Chapter 978: Fear

The first 3 months after speaking the oath, Alex spent his days thinking about what he should and shouldn't do. He kept wanting to think of ways to get out of this place, but his oath forced him to stay.

The moment he even thought of leaving without healing the old man, a feeling of suffocation would fall onto him, trying to choke him out of breath and kill him.

Fortunately, his oath had nothing about him having to try his best to heal the old man, or he would be forced to use his real cultivation base when fighting the pill clouds.

Just for his own survival, 2 times in the 3 months, he had already brought forth another 2 pill clouds. However, the weak cultivation base he was portraying could not stop the lightning, resulting in both the pill and cauldron being destroyed each time.

The old man always got mad when he saw Alex fail, but there was nothing he could really do about it as Alex was still weak, so he let it be.

Alex, however, never let it be and asked the old man for something both times.

After asking for the 30 tons of Ice Iron, the next 2 times, he asked for 10 tons of Pale Onyx, and 20 tons of Violet Obsidian.

The old man didn't understand what exactly he was asking the various things for, but it was barely any inconvenience for him to provide the things.

The only thing he needed to do was go and steal it from places he knew it existed, or just go ask the ancestors of the various sects that he knew existed.

It didn't take him more than a couple of days to get the items. He was curious about what Alex wanted to do with them, but when he did spy on him, Alex didn't use them at all.

'Is he hoarding them?' the old man thought. But then, he really didn't care, so he stopped checking on him and went back.

Alex continued his days normally with nothing much happening. He continued making pills, but he was starting to slow down significantly these days.

The cauldrons he owned just weren't as good. There were other cauldrons there, all of which belonged to the alchemists that were here before him, and they would serve him well once he refined them.

But for a few reasons, he simply didn't want to. One of the reasons was that the cauldrons didn't seem to be made with the lightning strike in mind, so making pill clouds while using these cauldrons wouldn't help him much.

However, the main reason was really the fact that there simply wasn't enough room in those cauldrons if he ever decided to make multiple pills at once.

Anything above 4 would be too crowded, so he needed a rather massive cauldron. Unfortunately, he had no choice at the moment.

Which meant... he had to create an opportunity for just that. So, Alex created another pill cloud.

The old man arrived just in time to see the start of the lightning bolt that struck the cauldron and destroyed it. The pills inside them were destroyed as well.

'Still weak,' he muttered to himself. "Get stronger faster," he shouted at Alex in annoyance. Usually, at this point, he would leave. However, he had already learned how Alex was, so he just waited.

"What do you want this time around?" he asked. He crossed his arms and tapped his feet in impatience.

Alex had called the Pill Cloud for exactly this moment, so he knew what he wanted out of this conversation. There was really only one thing.

"A forge," he said.

The old man's eyes narrowed in confusion. "A forge?" he asked, just to make sure.

Alex nodded. "Yes," he said. "But not just any forge. A forge that is strong enough to handle molten Starforged Tungsten."

"What the hell is a Starforged Tungsten?" the old man grunted.

Alex was taken aback a bit, but then he remembered that the massive vein of Starforged Tungsten that had later become the Endless Tunnel was actually found just 2500 years ago.

The old man would have been in hiding at the time and was most likely unaware of the stuff.

"It's a metal that takes a very high amount of heat to melt. It's a good metal for making items that can work with a lot of heat," Alex said.

"Grrr... fine, you'll get it in a few days," the old man said and left.

Alex smiled wide knowing that in just a few days, he would have gathered enough material to make the cauldron of his dreams.

* * * * *

The old man wasn't sure where exactly he could find the said forge, so he decided to ask the people that would know.

So, he went to the place he had been visiting a few times in the past few months. The Blazing Earth sect.

Without any invitation, he barged into the depths of the sect and arrived in the sect master's office.

The sect master was surprised when he saw someone in the room, but calmed down when he saw that it was the mad immortal.

"Senior," he greeted the old man out of fear and kept quiet afterward to let the old man speak first.

"He keeps asking for different stuff. It's annoying," he said. "How did you deal with him?"

"He asked for something again, senior?" the sect master asked with hopeful eyes. If Alex had asked something, then that meant that he was still alive.

As long as he was alive, they were hopeful.

"He wants some sort of forge this time around. Uhh... something that can be used to melt... uhh, something tungsten," he said.

"Ah! it shall be done, senior," the sect master said.

"Good. Go do it," the old man said and stayed in the room as if he owned the place. Which in his eyes was the truth.

Given that the 5 ancient sects were nothing but branches of the Snow Immortal sect during his time of leadership, he still believed that he owned everything.

The sect master wasn't about to tell the strong mad immortal that he was wrong. He simply bowed and walked away from the place.

He himself flew over to the State of Xue near the Heaven's Frost sect and brought back a forge that was used there.

Once back, he found a few of the ancestors in the room, looking at the mad immortal with fear in their eyes.

The sect master didn't understand what was going on, but he could do so later. He walked up front and handed over the forge he had just brought back.

The mad immortal took the storage bag and started walking back out. However, he stopped by the door once just to say something. "Just wait for my return. I will be back within the decade," he said and left.

The room became gloomy after the mad immortal left. The sect master asked what had happened when he had left. When he found out, his face too turned gloomy.

The old woman left the room and went over to her disciple's room

Liz had become depressed after losing a family member after finally finding one in the last 18 years. She was barely cultivating and spent most of her time asking her master to find a way to help her nephew.

The old woman walked into the room to see the same Liz she had seen for the last 5 months.

"How are you doing?" she asked.

Liz barely managed to put out an 'I'm fine' as she didn't care much for how she felt at the moment.

The old woman understood and sighed. "I have news about your nephew," she said.

Liz's eyes suddenly shot up towards the old woman, looking at her in hope and fear. She was expecting both good and bad news, and she did not know which one she was going to receive first.

"To start with, your nephew is alive and alright. Well, he's physically alright at least," the old woman said.

"He's okay?" Liz asked.

"For now," the old woman said. "Apparently, he was forced to speak an oath to the madman. Bastard loves making people say oaths to him."

"What... what sort of oaths?" Liz asked nervously.

"He has to make a healing pill for the madman in the next 9 and half years, or he will have to kill himself," the old woman said.

"What?" Liz's eyes darkened in anger.

"Yes," the old woman continued. "However, he did say that not only would he let the young man go free after he's done making the pill, he will also make him his heir."

"So... he has a chance at survival?" Liz asked.

The old woman nodded.

Liz calmed down. "Then it's fine," she said. "I believe in him. If anyone can do it, he can."

"I..." the old woman paused. "I fear the same thing as well."

Liz looked at the old woman with a confused look. "Fear?" she asked.

"When the mad immortal regains his strength, the first thing he will do is reform the broken Snow Immortal sect. At that point, he will seek to bring back the 5 sects under his control," The old woman said. "Even if we go under his wings willingly, he will seek to make an example out of us and kill all the ancestors from the 5 sects that have defied him before."

"It will be a genocide," the old woman said. "And I fear... that your nephew will make that future come true."

Chapter 979: Tungsten Sword

"Here you go," the mad immortal handed Alex the storage bag with the forge in it. Alex took the bag and looked inside before thanking the old man.

"What are you going to do with this?" he asked.

"Make a cauldron," Alex said.

"What's wrong with the rest of the cauldrons?' the old man asked curiously.

"They're quite weak to be useful for when the Pill Cloud forms. Every single one I use is destroyed by the lightning," Alex said.

"And this one will help you? The Pill cloud's lightning bolt transcends space and time. No matter how strong your cauldron is, the lightning bolt will strike the pill," the old man said.

"I see," Alex said. "Still, the cauldron I will be making should remain intact even after it is struck by lightning."

"Ughh... do what you want. As long as you make me the pill in 10 years time, I am fine with what you do," the old man said.

Despite being mad and not right in the head, the old man still knew that he couldn't hurt Alex. Killing his golden goose was not the right way to go at the moment.

So, he left him alone.

Alex was happy being left alone. He still didn't call out his beasts, but he didn't feel lonely at all. Cultivating by themselves for years was what cultivators did anyway after all.

In the corner of the room, he set up the forge that he was going to be using. It was going to get very hot, so he made sure to keep anything that could be damaged easily very far away.

Once ready, Alex took out about 2 tons of the Tungsten ore that he was going to have to use.

In the last few days of waiting, he had already done every single preparation required to remove the obvious non-metal part of the ore such as minerals and dirt and had already pulverized it all as well as he could in this place.

So, now he could smelt it directly in the forge.

Alex put the 2 tons of tungsten into the forge and used his True Fire Dao to quickly and easily melt it down. Since there was no other source of fire, it had to all come from him and him alone.

He couldn't help but be surprised by just how easy it was with his Dao.

It was so much better than when he simply had the Dao of Heat, as this time he had the Dao of Melting and the Dao of Metal to help him.

As the ore inside began to melt and the different materials in the ore separated themselves, Alex took out a few volcanic ashes and put them into the forge.

The volcanic ashes would react with the various minerals and even a few metals in the molten ore inside, leaving behind pure tungsten that sank to the bottom.

He continued in the heat for a while before it was time to pull out the tungsten. Alex opened the bottom of the forge and let the tungsten flow out.

He quickly use his Qi to pull it away and placed it on top of his anvil. The refined ore resulted in Alex having 800 Kilograms of pure Starforged Tungsten, which to his surprise was large enough for 2 swords.

He had lost 60% of the weight from the ore, and nearly 90% of the volume. But what remained was the best it could be. As the metal started cooling and turning semi-solid, Alex called for help.

"Godslayer, can you help me in making a sword?" he asked. He had asked for the forge to make a cauldron, but since he had never worked with the Starforged Tungsten before, he wanted to learn it.

For that, he decided to start with a sword as it was the easiest of all that he could make.

Godslayer had noticed Alex working with the forge even before he called for him, so he immediately answered. "What do you need help with?" he asked.

"I just want to see if you have any other insights into making a sword. This time around, I have the Dao of Metal, so maybe you got some idea on how I could use it," Alex said.

"Hmm... start with a general shape of the metal first. Turn it into a long rectangular shape, like a ruler," Godslayer said.

Alex nodded and did as he was told. The molten metal transformed into his Dao of Metal until it was the shape he wanted it to be.

"Now, hammer it until it is tempered," Godslayer said.

Alex didn't need any more explanation as he started doing exactly what he was told. He enforced both the hammer and anvil with his Qi, made sure to never let heat permeate into them, and started whacking away.

Slow and Steady, that was the way to temper metal, and that was exactly what Alex did. He hit the thin strip of metal with a rhythmic blow and continued for a while.

Godslayer watched his every move to make sure he didn't do anything wrong.

After a while, Alex stopped when he heard a ringing sound come from the metal, letting him know it was fully tempered.

"Good," Godslayer spoke. "Now, are you making a longsword? There's not enough for a greatsword."

Alex thought of what he wanted and there was only a single choice in his heart. "I know the shape I want to go with, and there's double the metal required here."

"Good, then you can just compound the metal," Godslayer said. "Heat up the metal again, and start shaping the sword. Use your Dao of metal."

Alex nodded and began. With the constant supply of his heat, it wasn't hard to quickly bring the softened metal into shape. At the same time, he was compounding the metal too, compressing the metal until it had a volume half it's current size.

After the volume of the metal was half, Alex finally began putting in Qi lines.

He was still shaping up the metal so there was enough time for him to do so. He formed normal Qi lines as there was not much else he could make.

"Use your Dao of Metal to continue from here," Godslayer said. "You don't have any other metal dao, do you?"

"Uhh... Dao of Cutting doesn't count right?" Alex asked.

"No, but Sharpness does," Godslayer said. "If you don't have anything else, then you will have a slightly tougher time with putting the finishing touches."

Alex nodded. He continued with the finer details of the shaping of the sword and added as sharp an edge as he could without the Dao of Sharpness.

Thankfully, Alex had the Dao of Cutting, so he wouldn't have to worry about the sword is not to sharp. Besides, it wasn't like this was going to be the sword he was going to use forever.

After a few more minutes of working on it, Alex finally finished. He immediately took away the heat from the blade and looked at it with a surprised look on his face.

"That's quite good," he said when he saw the blade.

"It's alright," Godslayer said. "You can make better ones with more metals. It will be easier if you have more dao too, and a better facility to work under."

"I'm a hostage at the moment. Having this much freedom is already heaven-sent for me," Alex said as he looked at the blade in his hand.

The dark-gray metal with a glittering surface made it look like it was embedded with tiny gems all over it. It looked beautiful, but what made Alex happier about the sword was its shape.

It was the exact same sword that he had lost when killing his master's murderer. The steel sword had been something he had refined a lot and liked using, and now he had the same shape again.

"How's the sharpness?" Godslayer asked.

Alex tried to cut his own skin to try. "Eh, it's good, I guess. Could be better, but I can't complain," he said. "So, do you think I can make a cauldron now? Am I good enough?"

"Hmm... no," Godslayer said. "You need to learn a lot more before you can make something like a Cauldron with the tools you have."

"Since you seem to have enough metal, the first thing you are going to have to make next are a large hammer and anvil for easier tempering."

Chapter 980: Stars

Alex played around with the new sword he had created. The sword had no handle, so he created a makeshift handle with bones from the monster he had created.

It was an acceptable handle if just for show or practice, but if he intended to use the sword in a real battle, the handle would be destroyed in no time.

Alex tried expanding the sword to how large it could get after it had been compounded to become smaller. The sword enlarged to become twice its size, but then it enlarged even more, which surprised Alex.

He tried shrinking it back, and he could force it to become stronger way past its actual size.

It took Alex a while to realize that he could enlarge and shrink the sword as he wished because that was the property of the Starforged tungsten, and not of Metal compounded.

Metal Compounding game had a similar result as well, but it could only expand to the volume of the metal used in compounding. It could also not shrink any further either.

Alex felt excited after learning the information and proceeded to do what Godslayer had told him to do. He made a hammer and an anvil.

He made the anvil out of 30 tons of ore, which ended up as 12 tons of pure tungsten. He refined it and compounded it twice to create the anvil.

He also put Qi lines in the anvil which made it exceptionally resilient to force and heat when it was filled with Qi. That would end up being very helpful when he made artifacts on top of it.

Normally, the anvil was about a meter long, half a meter wide, and half a meter tall. But Alex could expand it to work with larger pieces of metal.

As an anvil, he couldn't make it too small or it would lose its purpose, and he couldn't make it too big as it would end up being too soft to handle a metal being tempered.

The way he had made it was perfect.

He made the hammer out of 10 tons of metal, compounded to become nearly 5 times smaller in general. Even then, it looked bulky and unnaturally strong.

He asked Godslayer for any other bit of advice he could give during this process, but Godslayer was quite useless when not making a sword.

In the end, Alex ended up with a hammer that had regular Qi lines in it, but nothing special.

It had taken him quite a while to make the two, so to not bring the mad immortal's wrath, Alex immediately went back to making pills.

After a week or so, he even managed to call forth the Pill cloud again, which he failed for not trying too hard.

The old man frowned, but he said nothing. "What do you want this time?" he asked with an annoyed look.

Alex thought for a moment but he couldn't think of anything he wanted right then. Then, he remembered something Godslayer had said about gathering more information, so he decided to ask.

"Can you tell me about the Snow Immortal sect?" Alex asked. "How it was formed, and how it became a super sect?"

Alex's intent was to learn more about the old man to find out if there was something wrong with him that they could exploit. He didn't know much about what could be exploited, but certainly, Godslayer did.

"Oh," the old man was surprised to hear Alex's interest in the fallen sect. "You are interested now that you know you will become my heir if you succeed? Very well, where do I start?"

Seeing that the old man was in fact going to speak up, Alex called Godslayer to listen with him.

"I cannot say for certain for everything that happened in the past. Even as old as I am, I was only born 11 thousand years ago, while the Snow Immortal sect was formed over 30 thousand years ago, so some of the records are missing."

"It was but a small sect before that, but our founder, Xue Yu'er managed to reign supreme over the entirety of the northern Continent and became regarded as one of the strongest figures in a generation."

"Even without her wanting to, the Snow Immortal sect gathered so much influence thanks to her that it became a defacto leader of the entire continent."

The old man remembered the glory days of the sect when he was but an outer disciple. He remembered the excited child from back then, that wanted to bring glory to his family.

"Our founder was worried that she had overstepped her boundary in the continent, as she could not rule the continent for there was a ruler already. So, she quickly broke through to the Immortal realm and ascended away from this world."

"However, she did so not before finding herself an heir that could look after the sect in her absence, who would then become the sect leader."

"After a few thousand years, that sect leader ascended to the heavens as well. Before he did, he had left another talented individual as the sect leader."

"One after another, they kept ascending," the old man said. "All the way until I was the sect leader, and then..."

"I failed," he said quietly. "Everyone before me ascended to become an immortal, and yet... I failed. And with me ended the Snow Immortal sect as well."

The old man's left eye teared up a little, while his right eye didn't even get the least bit moist.

Alex saw that the old man was starting to quiet down and wanted him to keep speaking. "Did the ancestors leave behind information about pill cloud, senior?" he asked. "Did the people from thousands of years ago successfully make pills that could clear pill clouds?"

The old man's thoughts snapped back to reality as he looked at Alex. "Pill clouds? No, we had no idea what Pill Clouds were until about 9 thousand years ago."

"Oh," Alex was surprised. "Did someone manage to make pill clouds on their own like me?"

"No, we--" the old man paused for a second to think of whether he should be speaking about this or not. However, after a moment, he didn't see why he couldn't say it.

"We told her we would never tell anyone that wasn't a sect leader or ancestor of the sect, but since you are my heir and the next sect leader, I think it is fine to tell you," the old man said.

Alex leaned forward in anticipation to hear what the old man had to think so much about.

The old man remembered back to the day and said, "we know so much because our founder told us... 9 thousand years ago."

Alex nodded once before stopping as the two pieces of information didn't match. "Wait... your founder told you 9 thousand years ago? Wasn't she supposed to have ascended already?" he asked.

"She did, nearly 30 thousand years ago," the old man said. "But... she came back 9 thousand years ago to see the world that she had left behind."

"Woah!" Alex let escape a voice of shock without even meaning to. "She came back? Have the other sect leaders come back too?"

The old man shook his head. "No, she said she only came back because she got the opportunity after winning some sort of competition she had taken part in."

"Her arrival was a matter of great secrecy that only a few people in the sect knew about. The things she said when she had come, I still remember my shock when I heard about it."

"She told us that when she first ascended, she tried to find herself a sect to join. But apparently, she could only join weak sects, as the stronger sects didn't even take in newly ascended individuals as outer sect disciples."

"What?" Alex was surprised as well.

"That was my reaction too. She told us about the pill clouds, about how immortals can't break through without going through lightning tribulation, and just how abundant immortals were in the place she had ascended to," the old man said.

"However, perhaps the thing that surprised me most of all was one thing she had said," the old man remembered. "She said... that the sky had no stars."

"No stars?" Alex was confused. "She said the sky had no star?"

"Yes. She said that this world has no stars. What we see in the night aren't stars at all," he said.

"Everything that glitters in the sky is actually just another floating piece of rock just like our own. Some are big, and some are small."

"The big ones are big enough that they are visible in the night sky, which we mistake for stars," the old man said while shaking his head. "You should have seen the faces of the ancestors who learned that for the first time. It was as if their whole world had shattered in front of them."

Alex could imagine what they were feeling, as he was feeling the same thing right now.

"Every single mortal makes the same mistake," Godslayer said from inside his head, confirming the old man's words.

"What shocked me the most was to learn that of those floating pieces of rocks that we mistook as stars, some of them are actually filled with life, with people just like us," he said.

"Well, maybe better than us, for it turns out that of the worlds with life, there are a few that are capable of inhabiting humans that can reach immortality and higher realms without leaving that world."

"That is to say that the mysterious and fabled immortal worlds that we had all been dreaming about had been right above us in the sky all along."