

The Alchemy Overlord

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Chapter 1 Netherbloom Spirit Mushroom

Dark clouds gathered densely in the sky, and occasional flashes of lightning lit up the horizon, each one followed by the rumble of distant thunder. A heavy rain was about to fall.

In the city of Tiberia, Sebastian Stone looked up at the sky and muttered to himself, "I can't waste any more time. I need to find quality spiritual herbs soon, or my chances of a comeback will slip away."

Sebastian was 16, with a sturdy, athletic build that set him apart from his peers. His physique contrasted sharply with his youthful, handsome face, though his deep-set eyes carried a maturity far beyond his years.

Today, he was off to gather herbs. Despite being the grandson of the Stone family patriarch, Sebastian had no Soul Vein, which meant he couldn't become a powerful warrior. Determined to overcome his limitations, he had spent years training his body with relentless discipline. He often ventured out alone for secret training sessions, even facing off against wild tiger beasts. He'd already had a few brushes with death, giving him resilience and mental toughness that few his age could match.

"Sebastian, is that you? It's about to pour, and you're still going out to train?" Josh Mooney, an older family steward, walked over and spoke with a mix of admiration and pity in his eyes.

For six years, Sebastian had trained diligently, but he was still stuck in the Earthly Third Realm. Most of his Stone family peers were already in the Earthly Fourth Realm, and the most gifted had even reached the Fifth. Without a Soul Vein, he was undervalued by his family, making him just an ordinary figure among the Stones.

Yet Sebastian had never been discouraged by his lack of a Soul Vein. He worked tirelessly, knowing that the effort itself brought him a sense of fulfillment.

"Josh, I'm just heading out for herbs," Sebastian replied, laughing as he reached over and tugged on the single braid on Josh's bald head.

"It's pointless. Without a Soul Vein, all the effort in the world won't change anything!" Josh sighed, shaking his head.

Sebastian had heard such remarks countless times, but he kept pressing on. No matter what, he would not give up.

"Seb, the weather's terrible. Maybe skip it today!" A middle-aged man approached.

Sebastian shrugged and said, "Dad, rainy days are the perfect time for herb gathering—fewer people to compete with."

The man, Ronan Stone, was Sebastian's father, a renowned warrior and the most promising candidate for the next Stone patriarch. Although his son lacked a Soul Vein, Ronan always encouraged Sebastian, occasionally giving him rare elixirs, though they had done little to bridge the gap.

"Here, take this." Ronan tossed Sebastian a small box with a resigned smile.

Sebastian caught the box without even looking inside. He knew it held elixirs. Grinning, he said, "Thanks, Dad. Now I don't have to sneak any of Josh's chickens to keep up my strength."

Josh's face twisted with dismay, realizing he'd nearly become a target.

Watching his son disappear into the distance, Ronan could only sigh. Although he held a prominent position within the Stones, the family elders strictly controlled resources like elixirs, so he had to set aside his share to help Sebastian. But it was never enough; rare elixirs were simply too scarce.

As a father, he longed for his son to have his day. But Ronan could only do what he could, fighting to secure resources for Sebastian in any way possible.

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Voidbound Cliff was a desolate place. A lone, shirtless boy was now scaling the cliff's rugged surface.

Torrential rain was pouring down, but there was Sebastian, climbing down Voidbound Cliff. It was an incredibly dangerous endeavor—after all, the base of the cliff descended into an unfathomable abyss, shrouded in a dark, deathly mist that lingered year-round. Most people wouldn't dare come close to such a foreboding place.

But Sebastian was there, scaling the cliff to search for herbs, inching downward along the jagged rock face. If anyone else knew, they'd think he was a madman with a death wish. Everyone knew that places like this—remote, brimming with death mist—were the last places one would find any decent spiritual herbs.

Sebastian wasn't foolish, though; he was clever. Voidbound Cliff had been here for ages, with its death mist at the bottom existing longer than anyone could remember.

Most people assumed that lifeless areas like this wouldn't produce any kind of spiritual herb, but Sebastian thought differently. He was convinced there was a rare herb clinging to this cliffside—a legendary plant known as the Netherbloom Spirit Mushroom.

The Netherbloom Spirit Mushroom sounded fearsome, but it was a powerful herb with almost miraculous healing properties, said to revive even the gravely injured. Typically found in battlefields or ancient graveyards thick with death mist, it was an invaluable remedy.

On rainy days, the mist sank lower, making it easier for Sebastian to see farther down the cliff face. It was the perfect opportunity for him to descend deeper, searching for the Netherbloom Spirit Mushroom.

Though he didn't need the herb for himself, he knew that if he could get his hands on one, it would be worth a fortune. He could trade it for rare elixirs to escape his struggles and finally gain some real power.

Raindrops pelted him, making his climb all the more uncomfortable, while the cliffside rocks grew dangerously slick. He moved with the utmost caution, his every step calculated to avoid a fatal slip.

No one knew what lay at the bottom of Voidbound Cliff. Many had ventured down, but none had ever returned. Falling meant certain death.

Two hours passed, the rain still falling steadily as Sebastian made his way down the cliff, his strong, well-trained body allowing him to descend several dozen meters.

He finally found a decent ledge to stand on, and he paused, scanning the cliffside below. Suddenly, something caught his eye, and his heart pounded with excitement.

"The Netherbloom Spirit Mushroom!" he cried out, eyes locked on a pale patch a little over ten meters below him, clinging to the rock face. He was sure it was the legendary herb.

The cliffside was perpetually covered in death mist, and the Netherbloom Spirit Mushroom's color blended well with the rocks, making it difficult to spot.

He steadied himself, allowing the thrill to subside. After a brief rest, he carefully resumed his descent.

Before long, he reached the Netherbloom Spirit Mushroom. He swallowed hard, staring at the massive, pale mushroom—almost as wide as a basin—exuding a strong, life-giving energy even in this desolate place.

With one hand, Sebastian carefully harvested the Netherbloom Spirit Mushroom. He estimated this one was at least a thousand years old; selling it would fetch an astronomical price.

After great effort, he finally secured the mushroom in his precious storage bag, grinning widely. "This is it—my time to rise has finally come!"

With this mushroom, he'd be able to buy enough high-grade elixirs to boost his strength in leaps and bounds.

As the rain began to let up, Sebastian decided he was satisfied with his find. Rather than continue searching the vast cliffside, he chose to climb back up—he was running low on stamina, and the return journey would be grueling and treacherous.

But as he climbed, nearly an hour into his ascent, he suddenly felt the cliff start to tremble.

A chill ran down his spine as his excitement turned to dread. Looking up, he saw small rocks breaking loose from the cliff, tumbling into the depths below. The faint tremor-giving energy a fierce, unsettling shudder along the cliffside.

"D*mn it! I just managed to get my hands on the Netherbloom Spirit Mushroom. Oh God, please don't mess with me now!" Sebastian cursed as the cliff shook violently beneath him.

He had to keep calm and cling tightly to the uneven cliff face. If he lost his grip, the tremors would send him plummeting down.

But as the shaking intensified, a sense of dread crept over him. He looked up to see larger rocks tumbling from above and then noticed cracks spreading across the stone he held.

"Oh my God! I just found the Netherbloom Spirit Mushroom, and now you're sending me straight to hell? Are you kidding me?" Sebastian shouted, furious. Just then, the thick black mist began to rise from below, and the rock in his grasp suddenly gave way.

"Aah!" Sebastian's body plunged into the dark depths of the abyss, his voice echoing as he fell.

He had no idea how much time passed, but when he finally opened his eyes, he could see light. To his astonishment, he was somehow underwater at the bottom of the chasm—and, more incredibly, he could breathe!

Sebastian floated to the water's surface and found himself in a pool that radiated a soft, holy glow.

What stunned him even more was the sight nearby: two breathtakingly beautiful women, sitting cross-legged with long, untamed hair cascading over their shoulders. But the most shocking part? Neither woman was wearing any clothing. Their flawless, porcelain-like bodies were completely exposed before him.

These two women looked like they'd been sculpted by a master's hand, every feature perfect and unmarred. They shared slender waists and an ethereal beauty that left Sebastian breathless. He'd never seen anyone this stunning.

The alluring scene had him frozen on the spot, blushing deeply. His heartbeat and breath seemingly stalled.

The women sat facing each other, entirely oblivious to Sebastian's presence. This indifference sparked a strange feeling within him—how could these two striking beauties ignore him completely?

As his shock wore off, Sebastian took in the surroundings at the bottom of the abyss. The ground was scarred and cracked, littered with boulders and pieces of shredded white silk, hinting at a fierce battle. He guessed these two women were the cause. Their clash was so powerful it must have torn apart their clothes and shaken the entire cliffside.

Sebastian didn't know why these two mysterious women would be fighting down here, but he could tell they were immensely powerful—far beyond anything he'd ever encountered, able to wield earth-shaking force.

"You two nearly got me killed with all that shaking! Lucky for me, I didn't break my neck," he muttered, a mix of frustration and curiosity filling him as he continued to watch the women.

Sebastian's eyes were locked on the flawless forms before him, and he began to walk toward them, unable to resist his curiosity.

The Voidbound Cliff's abyss was infamous, often referred to as hell itself, yet here he was in what felt like a heavenly paradise, standing by a pool bathed in a sacred white glow, with two exquisite, unclothed women right before him.

At that moment, the two women finally became aware of his gaze, and deep, embarrassed anger flared across their faces.

Although they didn't move, their delicate features were etched with fierce killing intent, and their beautiful eyes glared daggers at Sebastian, though it seemed they couldn't turn their heads.

"Um ... aren't you cold? Why aren't you wearing any clothes? I'm freezing over here," Sebastian blurted, unsure what else to say.