

Alchemy 1071

Chapter 1071: Kill It

Alex arrived outside the secret realm and cut a hole in it to walk in. The hole fixed itself behind him and he was free to continue.

"You returned," Scarlet said when she saw him.

"How are you doing? Are yo— Woah!" he was surprised when he got close to her. In the month he had been away, Scarlet was already a realm higher than the last time.

"Did you break through already? That's seriously fast," he said.

"Yes, I wanted to say thank you," she said. "These pills are seriously amazing. I'm already on my way to breaking through to the next realm. If my calculations are correct, I should be able to break through to the Saint Foundation realm in under 5 months.

"That's..." Alex couldn't believe it at all. "That's seriously amazing."

"Isn't it?" She asked. "Anyway, you got any more of the pills? I'm already down 6."

"Down 6? Didn't I give those pills to you just a month ago? You were supposed to take one a week," he said.

"I'm a Vermilion Bird. My body has natural healing properties. The exhaustion in my body wears off far faster than yours does," she said proudly.

Alex frowned slightly. His body was supposed to heal that way as well, but for some reason, the swelling on his meridian from his pill didn't count as injury for some reason.

It was also true that meridians didn't heal as well as the rest of one's body since they were so used to all the different Qi. They needed to be resilient to any type of Qi, and as a result, usually responded slowly to healing Qi as well.

But of course, that also meant they responded quite well against poisons too. This was why there were poisons and toxins that were crafted especially for the meridian.

"Alright, here you go." Alex pulled out a pill bottle and handed it to her. "There are 20 pills in there. Use them sparingly this time around."

"Thank you!" Scarlet said excitedly as he took the pill bottle. The pills suddenly vanished from her wings, giving Alex a surprise.

"Hmm?" he looked at her from top to bottom. "Do you have a storage bag on you? Where did you get it?"

"Huh? Oh... uhh," Scarlet looked around frantically. "Y-yes, yes," she said.

Alex looked at her and it was clear she was lying. "Where did the pill bottle go? Are you wearing some sort of storage artifact? Do you have a ring on you too?" he asked, showing off his own.

Scarlet looked at his fingers confusedly before noticing the ring on them. She had seen it before, but like everyone else, she hadn't given it much thought at all.

"Aah! A storage ring. How do you have one? Where did you get it from?" she asked.

"I found it in a desert," Alex said. "Do you have one as well?"

"I..." Scarlet hesitated to answer.

Alex wanted to urge her to answer when suddenly something very bad that he hadn't anticipated happened.

"THAT'S A GODDAMN PHOENIX!" Godslayer shouted in his head as loudly as he could. "KILL THAT GODDAMN PHOENIX."

"Ugh!" Alex groaned a little as the sound came out of nowhere. "I know that's a Phoenix. Please stop talking."

"Huh? Me? Okay," Scarlet said.

"No not you, I'm—"

"That's a phoenix. Kill it. Kill it now. Give me your body, and I will kill it," Godslayer shouted in his head. "Come on. Give me your body so I can kill it. It's weak right now so we should be able to kill it at once."

Alex tried to ignore Godslayer, but his incessant screams were starting to annoy him a lot. "I need to leave," he said. "I will see you sometime later. Goodbye."

He ran away immediately, letting Scarlet look around in confusion as to what had just happened. She waited for a while, but Alex didn't return at all.

So, she instead decided to continue cultivating. She brought out a pill bottle with only 4 pills in it and ate one. She put back the pill bottle and continued cultivating.

Alex arrived outside the secret realm, away from the Phoenix that was making Godslayer go mad.

"What are we out? Go back so we can kill the Phoenix," he said.

"Stop!" Alex shouted. "We're not killing the phoenix. She's a friend."

"What?" Godslayer asked in shock. He couldn't believe it. "Why would you be friends with a phoenix?" The exasperation in his voice was proof enough.

"Why not?" Alex asked. "What's wrong with being friends with a Phoenix? Or for that matter, what's wrong with being friends with a White Tiger, or a Black Tortoise, or an Azure Dragon?"

"They are all the ones that are blessed by the gods. We need to kill them all," Godslayer said.

"Why?" Alex asked. "What did the beasts do so wrong that they need to be killed?"

"They are bles—"

"Blessed by the gods? That's it?" Alex asked.

Godslayer didn't understand. "What more reason do you need?" he asked.

"Alright, let me ask you then. Why is it bad for them to be blessed by god? Or rather, I should ask why are the gods themselves bad?" he asked.

"They are bad people, obviously," Godslayer said.

"And why is that?" Alex asked.

For some reason, he didn't feel like letting Godslayer get away with his usual answer 'because they are gods.'

Before, he had Pearl who was bonded to him. However, Pearl had no physical features of a White Tiger, so he could get away with not being one.

However, having bonded with Scarlet, it would be hard to not hide the fact that she was a Phoenix. And every time Godslayer did see her, he would have a fit.

That would be incredibly annoying, so he decided to come to some sort of conclusion today.

"Th-they are blessed by the gods. Haven't I told you before how bad the gods are?" Godslayer asked.

"Yes, you have," Alex said. "You have told me how terrible they are that they call themselves god for being some of the strongest humans in the world. You have told me how terrible they are for capturing you when you went around killing them."

"Have you ever stopped to think that maybe, just maybe, it's not the gods that are bad, but rather you who is bad? Maybe that's why they are so against you?" Alex asked.

"No, but... they are gods. They are bad. They are horrible," he said.

"What were you doing when you were captured?" Alex asked.

"What?" Godslayer asked. "Oh, uh... I was on my way to kill the new Formation god."

"Sigh, and what did the Formation god do that was so bad that you had to go kill him?" Alex asked.

"He... he called himself a god," Godslayer said.

Alex sighed. "I really thought you were improving the last 20 years with me, but it seems you have really gone nowhere. You have lost the anger you initially held, but not your irrational hate for the gods," he said.

"But they are bad. They had done terrible things," Godslayer said.

"What terrible things have gods done other than be a god?" Alex asked.

"They kill people," Godslayer said.

"Okay, that is bad under general context," Alex said.

"See?" Godslayer said.

"But so do you," he said.

"N-no, I don't kill anyone that is not a god or didn't deserve it," Godslayer said.

"Oh? And who was it that was ready to kill a young man they just possessed? Care to remind me?" Alex asked.

"Uh..." Godslayer had no answer.

"It is true that some Gods are bad. Maybe most of them are even, I don't know," Alex said. "But you can't just go hating on them just because they call themselves one. You need to find a reason. You need to put away this irrational hate of yours."

"No, but... this is who I am," Godslayer said. "If I don't slay gods, then who am I?"

"You can be anyone," Alex said. "What do you want to be?"

"The Godkiller!" Godslayer said.

Alex sighed. "Alright, this is not working. I might have made a really big jump. Okay, baby steps."

He thought for a bit and asked, "Circling back on topic, why do you want to kill a phoenix?"

"Because they are blessed by the gods," Godslayer said.

"And you want to kill gods because?" Alex asked.

"Because they are bad and they are fake," Godslayer said.

"Oh, but wasn't the god that blessed the phoenix a true god? Was that not what you said to be more? You did say that there are only 2 gods out there that are the true ones. The one who blessed the 4 beasts and the one who blessed the 3 plants. Are you saying you want to kill these gods too?" Alex asked.

"No," Godslayer said. "They are already dead."

"Oh," Alex was surprised. He had expected those gods to be alive still. "Doesn't matter. If they were alive, would you kill them?"

"Of course, they are gods," he said.

"But they are not bad gods, are they? And they are definitely not fake," he said.

"Well... they are still gods, so I must kill them... right?" Godslayer asked.

Alex smiled at the question. Finally, he had gotten through, even if just a tiny bit.

"Just dwell on it for a day or two and answer me. Do the true gods deserve to be killed just as well as the fake ones do?" Alex asked. "After you come to a conclusion, think about whether some beasts and plants deserve to be killed just because they were blessed by some god, even when they were most likely forced."

"I hope you have some good revelations."

Alex arrived back at the Alchemy association. He met up with the leader as soon as he got there.

"Where were you? I thought you were coming much earlier," he said worriedly.

"Oh, sorry about that. I had to stop by somewhere for a bit, and they took some time," he said.

"Anyway, how is it going? Are the slots finalized yet?"

"We're all but done," the man said. "The slots have been sold, so we only need to wait for them to let us know what pill it is that we need to make."

"I see," Alex said. "So it will take a day more at least?"

"Yes," the leader said.

"Alright, I will go for now. I have something to do today," Alex said and turned around to leave. "Oh, any news on the searches?"

"No, none of the investigators have found anything. None of them have found any clues to any boat that may have come here without being found by someone," the leader said. "Can I ask? Is his Graham fellow your brother?"

"My father," Alex said. "Please continue searching. Take the pay from my cut for whatever is needed." He left without waiting for the leader to say anything else. He was in a bit of a hurry anyway.

After leaving Scarlet's secret realm and dealing with Godslayer's tantrum, Alex visited the Blindheart city's Insight pavilion to get the end-of-the-month report on everyone that had searched for him.

Because it was the month of his slots opening, the searches had grown a lot more and as such there was more for him to look through.

He would need an entire day and more if he wanted to completely read through it all.

"Hey! Alex, wait up!" someone spoke.

Alex turned around and found Harry not far behind him. "Hey, I haven't seen you in a while," he said.

"Of course you haven't, you are never around anymore," Harry said.

"True," Alex said. "Anyway, how's everything going?"

"Fine, I suppose," Harry said. "Listen, after our lesson so many months ago, I started trying to understand it and improve myself. I used one of the pills you make and have done whatever I can to improve it. But I somehow still can't seem to go over 70% for that pill. Can you check what's going on or if I misunderstood something?"

"Sure, after I'm done with the pills I will have to make this week, I will take a look at it," Alex said.

"Thanks, I can't wait," Harry said and walked away.

Alex himself walked back to his dorm room which he hadn't visited in the last 3 months and settled down.

He lay on his bed and brought out the talisman one by one as he read through them all. It was a mindless task that he had to pay barely any attention to, but it was important as it might hide clues from his father.

So, he read through it with half a mind while the other half wandered on its own to who knew where.

He continued doing this for nearly 6 hours when he read something curious. "Hmm?" he looked at the information. Someone had tried to check how Graham and Alex were related. He had also at the same time checked if Alex had any other family members.

"Hao Mingzhe?" Alex read the name of the person who had checked his name. "How does he... Oh, from the Rising Phoenix sect, no wonder."

He got a little happy knowing that Tan Yang had contacted his sect and had asked them to help find his father as per his request.

As he continued reading, it wasn't just Tan Yang who had done that, everyone had. The Yao family, the Kang family, the Liang family, Dawn's Light sect, the Cloud Fire sect, and the Jade fire sect. Even the Huang family seemed to have received a message from Huang Chen, despite how much he hated the new family leader.

Alex finished looking through the rest of the talismans. While they didn't have any useful information, he was happy knowing that there were many people out there looking for his father.

The next day came and he was handed a list of pills he was to make. He had a day to prepare before he started making the pills.

Alex spent the day improving whatever ingredients he could while he waited for the next day to arrive. When it did, he spent the next whole week just making the pills.

The pills were very simple to make for him at this point. They were so simple that he was starting to make over 4 pills at once.

Since he didn't have to worry about using his Pill Splitting Qi, he could easily form those many pills.

The ingredient improvement was what took the majority of his time. The pill themselves were done in about a day's worth time in total.

Once he was done, Alex sent out the pills and waited for the earnings to come in.

Harry came over a day or two later and sat down with Alex to learn a few things. He showed what he had learned and Alex found a few mistakes along the way which he helped point out.

Harry still wasn't using a good pill-forming technique, and that was something essential. Alex didn't give out his own, but he did tell him to get a good one.

A cultivator could only be so good. They couldn't focus on every detail of the pill when making it. Sometimes, they had to leave some techniques that were there because others had gone through the same thing and found something better.

After he was done teaching, Alex went to the leader to take what he had earned and decided to leave once again.

"You're leaving already?" the leader asked with a curious expression.

"Yeah, well I don't really have anything to do here, do I?" he asked.

"No, but... where will you even go?" the leader asked him.

"Oh, I've been going to the Battle Hall in Spiritsong city to practice. I will be returning there again," he said.

"Spiritsong city? You're fighting there?" the leader asked with a concerned face. "Why are you fighting?"

"I just want to," Alex said. "Don't worry, I'll be fine."

"I'm gonna worry anyway without star alchemist fighting like a ruffian," the leader said. "Didn't you say something about having to work on some pills for the council? What about those? Please don't tell me you are taking things lightly. It's the council, you can't do something like that."

"No, no, I'm not taking things lightly, everything is alright. I'm simply waiting for the secret realm to open so I can find a crucial ingredient before I can start. Right, when do you think that will be?" Alex asked.

"I can't really tell you honestly. Might be a month or 3 months or 6. But, we will know when it is about to happen after it blasts out pollen twice in a single day. You should have 3 days or so to return when that happens," the leader said.

"Great, let me know when that is," Alex said. "I can't miss it."

Chapter 1073: Yusong Muzhou

The next 3 months went by in a flash for Alex. All he did in those 3 months were fight one after another, always finding Saint Core realm cultivators to fight against.

At the same time, he also worked on himself in between his fights, improving his physical body as well as he could while also cultivating as well as he could.

By now, he was on the verge of breaking through to the 2nd realm of the Saint Foundation realm and it had barely been 9 months since he broke through to the Saint Foundation realm itself.

The pills he had been eating were beyond amazing.

"I should stop fighting so much," Alex thought. "I should go out and improve my blood aura too."

While improving his fighting technique, Qi, Sword Aura, and physical body was great for him, it was no lie that his greatest strength lay in his blood aura and his understanding of Dao.

He couldn't stop focusing on them just because he had enough for now. After he was done making the pills for the elders in the Council, Alex decided to take some days off to go and make some more blood beasts while also trying to understand some new Dao with the new pill he would have made by then.

'There are so many pills out there that I don't even know about,' he thought to himself. Over the course of the many fights, he had come to learn about many different Daos that one could use.

Dao of Reflection, Dao of Swiftiness, Dao of Stagnation, Dao of Rust, Dao of Mist, and many more.

He sat down thinking about the many things he had learned and had planned on doing in the future when his storage ring gave a small buzz.

He quickly took out the buzzing talisman from inside it and looked at what was written on it. "Oh, they found my next opponent," he thought. This would be his last opponent before he had to leave back to the Alchemy Association again.

"I wonder if it will be someone I've already fought against, or someone new," he wondered.

He would know that on the day of the match, and he found out when he was there.

"Yusong Muzhou?" Alex looked at the man confusedly when he was given the name. As far as he could remember, he couldn't remember this person in the list of names he frequently learned about to keep up on what sort of opponents the Battle Hall gave him.

If he wasn't wrong, this was likely someone that had recently joined. "He's a newcomer?" Alex asked.

"Freshly joined," the staff said.

"I see," Alex said. "Well, let's see what sort of person gets to go up against me on their first day."

"Please come with me. The battle arena is prepared."

Alex nodded and walked along with him to arrive at the arena. He walked up the stage and watched a person walk up the stage.

"Hm? Oh, it's a girl," he realized. "Sounded like a guy's name though."

As she got closer, Alex saw one thing and couldn't help but be surprised. "Wait... dark skin?" he thought when he saw her. "Someone from the Wasteland?"

He was very confused when he saw that. "How can someone from the Wasteland be here?" he asked himself.

Wastelanders were made to stay on the other side of the barrier at all times. That was why it was so hard to find his father since there was really no one from the Wastelands on this side of the map. And yet, he randomly met someone here today? And that person was a Saint realm cultivator too?

The girl took the talisman given to her and tried to stick it inside the sash of her robes, only to realize that her robes didn't have any sash.

She then put it inside her robe itself and looked at Alex. "Additional rules or Nah?" she asked.

"None for me," he said with many thoughts going through his head. "Would you mind answering a few questions for me?"

"What?" she asked with a rough voice.

"Are you from the Wasteland?" he asked.

"Not your business," the girl said.

Alex was taken aback, but he didn't stop asking. "Can you tell me when you came to this side? You don't have to tell me how if you want to hide that."

"Again, none of your business," the girl said. "Now shut up. I'm here to fight."

With that said, the girl suddenly jumped at him with no weapons but just her open hands.

Alex put up his arms to block and was punched directly on the wrists. A clear crack could be heard as he was sent flying back into the wall at the back.

He crashed on the wall, which was untouched due to the formations on it, and fell to the ground. He tried to push himself up, only to have his arms slip out on the wrist and tumble over.

"Argh!" he grunted slightly and checked his arms to see the broken wrist.

"Of course," he said softly. "A body cultivator. A strong one at that too."

"Tsk. I told these bastards I wanted someone strong. I knew they wouldn't listen to me," the girl said.

"Hehehe," Alex couldn't help but chuckle at the remark, catching the girl's attention.

"What's so funny?" she asked.

"I was angry for the same reason not long ago," he said. "I had to threaten them with bidding forever to run them dry at the level they were keeping me. It was only then that they assigned me to stronger fighters."

"Stronger?" the girl looked confused. She tried to look at something using her spiritual sense, which came out of her like a tidal wave.

Alex felt the burden of her spiritual sense and pushed it back, a little surprised that she wasn't really controlling it well.

"Huh? How the hell are you only Saint Foundation realm? Are you hiding your cultivation base?" she asked. "I thought you weren't supposed to hide it here."

"None of your business, was it?" Alex asked with a mocking face.

The girl snorted. "Fine, just tear off your talisman so we can leave. You can't fight with your broken limb anyway," she said.

"Oh? What broken limb?" Alex asked, showing his unhurt wrists as he walked back on the stage.

"What?" the girl said slowly. "I clearly saw it break. Did I see wrong?"

"Could be," Alex said. "So, were we not going to fight?"

The girl gave a menacing smile. "You want to fight? I'll give you a fight!" she said and dashed at him again.

This time, Alex had learned his lesson. He knew that he couldn't block her attacks at all.

So, when the slow punch moved through his vision, he used his arms to push it slightly outwards so that her punch missed.

At the same time, he punched back at her in the guts.

"Aah!" the girl cried out in pain as she moved backward. "What's going on? How did you suddenly get so strong?"

"What do you mean?" Alex asked. "I've always been this strong."

His attacks definitely weren't as strong as the girl he was fighting. Her body was stronger than his for sure and with her cultivation base being equivalent to his, her overall power was higher.

However, his punches still hurt her. So, the victor here wouldn't be the one who punched the hardest, but rather the one whose punch actually landed.

Alex was going to give her a hard time with that.

The girl jumped back at him and attacked him, but Alex barely managed to get out of the way.

He moved his head as the punch arrived and punched her left side. While she was distracted, his left hand moved and punched her in the face.

When the punch landed, his expression changed and he moved back, but the girl continued attacking him without stopping.

She wasn't letting up at all. Alex continued dodging and attacking. Somehow, he had fallen into her tempo and was fighting hand-to-hand combat, even though he could fight with a sword all the same.

However, he didn't want to do that right now. It was rare that you got to fight against a weaponless close combat fighter, much less a Body cultivator.

Although, the girl wasn't the best at fighting close combat fights. She had speed and strength at her side, but there was absolutely no skill when it came to fighting.

All she did was throw straightforward punches and kicks which were rather easy to dodge.

She continued attacking for a long time while constantly eating the punches that were thrown at her body without flinching at all.

However, after not landing a single hit on Alex for nearly 10 minutes, she decided not to fight anymore.

Alex punched her out of nowhere in her face, sending her flying away this time around as she had stopped trying to stand her ground.

The girl slid along the floor of the stage and stood up. "You win, hurray!" she said sarcastically as she brought out a talisman and crushed it.

Alex was surprised to see that he had won so easily. 'I should let them know that she is stronger than me,' he thought.

He looked down at his fist and remembered the weird feeling he felt. He pinched his own cheeks to check and was even weirded out.

"Do body cultivators' muscles get so strong normally if they don't Qi cultivate?" he wondered. His was certainly quite soft still.

He shook his head and cleared his mind as he walked out of the arena.

Chapter 1074: Heavenly Silkworm

Alex arrived back in the city of Many Flowers again and couldn't help but be surprised when he saw the massive amount of pollen all over the city.

It seemed that the Orchard had just blasted out pollen once again today. He wondered how frequently it was happening now that it was 3 months since the last time he was here.

Alex walked straight to the Alchemy Association to find out. Before he could even enter, the person that was on guard noticed him and stopped him.

"Alchemist Alex, you're finally back. The leader has asked me to tell you that you need to go see him urgently," the guard said.

"Oh, thank you. I'll go see him right away," Alex said and continued. He was planning on doing that anyway, but now he was curious why he was being called.

"Senior, you wanted to see me?" Alex asked as he walked in.

"Oh, you're finally back. I knew I shouldn't have been worried," the leader said.

"I wouldn't miss any of it," he said. "So, what's so urgent that you wanted to see me just as I came back?"

"It's this." The old man pulled out something from his storage bag and handed it to Alex. "We received it yesterday."

Alex looked at the box he was getting and got curious. When he finally saw it, his eyes went wide.

The box itself was nothing special, but the text on top of it was everything to Alex at the moment.

'To only be opened by Alchemy Alex. This box contains information on Graham Benton.'

"No way!" Alex said as he looked at the leader. "Your investigators actually found something?"

"No," the leader quickly shook his head. "As I said, we received it yesterday. We have no idea who this came from."

"Hmm, could it be the 10 sects and families?" Alex asked. "I've asked the council to help me in the search, so I know their sects and families have begun the searches as well."

"Hmm, maybe," the leader said, slightly surprised that Alex was able to get the 10 council members to do something for them.

"Have you checked inside?" he asked as he started unwrapping the box.

"No, but I did check it to make sure there wasn't anything else in there and found that there is a talisman. As for what's written in the talisman, I did not read," he said.

"Oh, right," Alex said and stopped. He was so excited about learning about his father that he didn't even think to check what was inside. What if this was a nefarious joke by someone? Maybe a rival alchemist hated him and wanted him to stop making the pills every 3 months?

The timing surely made sense.

He slowly sent his spiritual sense into the box and saw the Talisman that the leader was talking about.

However, it was wrapped in some sort of thread that was disturbing his spiritual sense from entering. He could see the talisman itself, but trying to read into it was pretty much impossible.

"What is this?" Alex couldn't help but ask. "I've never seen a thread like this."

"Hmm?" The leader checked as well and gasped. "No way, that's a Heavenly Silkworm's silk thread."

"Heavenly Silkworm? what's that?" Alex asked.

"It's a very rare creature that is supposed to be extinct in this continent. The thread itself also is supposed to be very rare. A Heavenly Silkworm's thread can block one's spiritual sense from passing through it," the leader said.

"Woah," Alex couldn't help but be surprised. "How strong must the creature be to produce a thread that can disturb one's spiritual sense?"

The leader shook his head. "The creature isn't strong at all since it cannot cultivate," he said. "I don't know much about them to tell you everything, but they are supposed to have some sort of food that doesn't exist anymore in this continent, which is why they have gone extinct."

"So... they are just like Seeking Mouse," he said. "No cultivation, but very good at doing one thing."

Alex got even more curious as to what information the talisman was hiding if the sender would use something so precious.

He quickly opened the box and pulled out the talisman. He let the box drop and started pulling out the threads that were wrapped around the talisman.

"Well, this itself is a great find," Alex said as he kept the small loom of thread he had just gathered and put it into his storage ring.

Then, he finally checked what the talisman had for him.

'Hello, Alchemist Alex. I hope this letter finds you quickly. I know you are a great Alchemist, so I would like to ask you to hand over all the different recipes that you have advertised.'

"What the hell?" Alex's happiness went away at once when he read the talisman. He continued reading.

'You might be angry right now and want to destroy this talisman in anger, but I suggest you don't do anything like that. The talisman is laced with a powder which is the only thing that can save you now that you have released the odorless, colorless poison from the box.'

'I'm sorry if there were anyone beside you, as they are most likely going to die.'

THUMP~

The leader fell to the floor with a loud thump as he started fidgeting and frothing at the mouth.

"SHIT!" Alex cried out the minute he realized that he had been poisoned.

He grabbed the old man and pulled him up to check on him. He was frothing so much that he couldn't breathe anymore.

His veins were starting to show and his lip was turning purple as well.

Alex used his Qi to slam the door shut and quickly took the talisman to scrape off whatever powder it had before feeding it to the old man immediately. He himself had no need for it as no poison could affect him at all.

The froth stopped appearing after a few seconds and the old man's breathing got calm and he stopped moving like a fish out of water.

"Phew!"

He quickly had the Yang Qi in his own dantian go through his entire body once to make sure there was no poison in this system anymore. At the same time, he burned the box that came with the talisman so that the poison there was completely gone as well.

"Shit, someone actually tried to poison me," he thought and read the talisman again. He had left off halfway through because of the leader, so he had to continue from there.

'The powder is not an antidote, it will only delay the effects of the poison. There is no antidote for this poison with you, we've tried them all, so don't even bother.'

'If you want to live, leave the compounds wearing a blue robe with a red hat on your head. Just walk straight out of the city and we will get you. I pray that you don't die before you eat the antidote.'

"Bastards! They are still in the city, aren't they?" he thought. He looked back at the leader again and saw that he wasn't getting up.

'He's still poisoned,' he thought. He brought out an antidote pill and fed it to the leader, but he did not wake up at all.

"They weren't lying," he thought. "But that's not all the antidote pills I have."

He brought out another antidote pill. Only this time, this pill had 5 lightning scars on it.

He quickly fed it to the old man and waited.

At first, it didn't seem like anything had happened, but slowly, the old man's eyes moved and he woke up.

He slowly got up from the floor in a daze and watched the foam on the floor where he had just been in.

"What happened?" he asked with a confused look.

"You were poisoned," Alex said. "How are you feeling?"

"Uh... great?" he thought. For some reason, he was feeling very good.

"That's a relief," he said. "Someone tried to poison me to get my recipes. Thankfully, I had an antidote on me."

"Really?" the leader asked as he looked around. "I'm going to go ask who it was that gave that box."

"No, wait," Alex shouted. "The room is still full of poison. Don't open it just yet."

The leader was slightly scared and backed off. "What should we do now?" he asked.

"I was hoping you would have some idea," Alex said as he looked around. "I'm sure phoenix fire could burn it all, but there is nowhere we can get that, is there?"

The leader shook his head. "Phoenix fire is dangerous, so any remaining fire had already been isolated and snuffed out by the council members," he said.

Alex nodded. "Well, then... I might have a way."

"What are you going to do?" the leader asked.

"I am not very sure myself," Alex said. "I have never done this since I was healed, so... well, I hope this works."

As soon as he said that, a violent amount of Qi erupted from his body, forcing the leader away from him.

The various formations in the room started lighting up, but Alex didn't notice them.

He kept forcing out as much Qi as he could and in just a few minutes, the entire room was filled with his Qi.

It wasn't just any Qi, however. It was his strongest Qi that could destroy all poison, venom, and toxin in his body. Now, he was using it outside to do the same.

Alex had filled the entire room with his Yang Qi.

Chapter 1075: So Stupid

The leader watched in surprise, not understanding what was happening at all but knowing that whatever it was, was very unconventional.

Alex filled the room with Yang Qi for a while, which inadvertently tried to activate some of the formations in the room. However, they were so scattered and unfocused that none of the formations actually activated at all.

He forced the Qi to stay out while also pumping out more just to be safe for a few more minutes before letting it all go. The Yang Qi remained in the air for a while but slowly dissipated.

It would later come into contact with the Yin energy that was prevalent during the nighttime and turn into normal Qi.

"What did you do exactly?" the leader asked.

"I tried to destroy the poison," Alex said. "I'm not sure if it worked though. How do we find out?"

"I ask someone to bring a pill swine," the leader said and sent a message. A few minutes later, someone was outside the door with a pill swine.

"How do we get it in?" the leader asked since he didn't want to open the door at all.

"Leave that to me," Alex said. He instantly disappeared outside his room and appeared back inside with the pill swine.

"Wh-what the hell was that?" the leader couldn't help but ask.

"Teleportation skill," Alex said. "Now, let's see."

He let the pill swine stay in the room and even let it go around licking the desks and walls before finally confirming that the poison was all gone from the room.

"You can open the door now," he said and let the pill swine walk outside.

The pill swine was taken away and the leader closed the door again.

"We need to find out who would do something like this. Could it be an alchemist?" the leader asked.

"Maybe, but it could be just about anyone now that I think about it," Alex said. "My recipes are very wanted after all. Many think that they would be able to make a fortune just by having it."

"I will go ask the person who brought this," the leader said and turned to leave.

"No, wait," Alex said. "They wouldn't have left any clue. They were smart enough and rich enough to distract us with the silk threads. We cannot underestimate whoever it is."

The leader became quiet because he knew Alex was right. "Then what do we do?" he asked.

Alex took the talisman and handed it over. The leader read it and his eyes narrowed. "No, it's too dangerous. We can't let you do this," he said.

"I can't let anyone get away with trying to kill me," he said. "This person also knows about my father, so I have to get him."

The leader felt conflicted. "But what if this person is too strong? What if their original purpose is to kill you?" he asked.

"Well, maybe, but I still have to go," Alex said.

The leader sighed. "Fine, I'm coming with you," he said.

"No, you cannot," Alex said. "They might have people outside watching us constantly. If you do leave, they will notice and tip off the person. Besides, you're not that strong yourself."

The leader wanted to argue but he couldn't. He was quite weak after all.

"Don't worry, I don't plan on going without any backup," he said.

Half an hour later, Alex wore a blue robe and a red hat and started walking out of the city.

He looked around, trying to find anyone that might be following him, but he didn't see anyone like that.

He continued walking and went outside of the city too, but no one came. 'How far am I supposed to walk?' he thought.

He continued walking until he was in the forest. "Is there no one waiting for me?" he thought. "What's going—"

"I can't believe you really came," A voice spoke from somewhere.

Alex instantly turned around and tried to look using his spiritual sense. It was hard, but he found someone hiding amidst the tree as if they were leaves themselves.

'Such an amazing concealment ability,' Alex thought.

The man jumped down from the tree and looked at him curiously. "You actually came," he said.

"Of course, I need the antidote for the poison," Alex said as he looked at the man.

The man wore a mostly green robe that was perfect for blending in with the trees. His hair was tied in a ponytail and half his face was covered with a golden mask.

The other half of his face was terrifying. It was a decrepit face that seemed to have rotted to the bone, and all of it was just as green as his own robes.

"I know you came here for the antidote, but how did you survive the poison long enough to eat the powder in the talisman?" he asked. "You weren't meant to succeed in that."

Alex looked surprised. 'He wanted to kill me, why?' he thought.

"Why would you want to kill me when you want the recipes?" he asked.

"I didn't," the man said. "But now that you are here, let's have them. I'm sure I will earn a lot once I hand it over."

"Where's the antidote?" Alex asked, looking desperate.

"Hehehe, just wait. I'm starting to enjoy this," the man said.

Alex wanted to attack the guy and incapacitate him, but he seemed to be a Saint Core 4th realm cultivator.

If he wanted to defeat him, he would have to use a blood aura. However, the man would certainly react before he could, so Alex needed to be careful.

"Here are the recipes you wanted," Alex said as he pulled out some talismans and handed them over. "Now give me my antidote."

"Oh?" the man quickly looked at the recipes and nodded to himself. "I will be rich with this."

'So, not an alchemist,' Alex thought. The recipes he had handed were the non-improved versions of the pill, and somehow the man hadn't realized.

"Hehehe, so stupid. So goddamn stupid. That's why you need external experiences too," the man said while almost giggling to himself. "Don't you know that when you give your kidnapper what they want, then they have no reason to keep you alive?"

"What do you me—"

The man pulled a long and thin needle and thrust it at Alex's heart. Alex saw the man move quickly, even to his own eyes. However, he still managed to react and move just slightly enough that the needle instead went a bit away from his heart.

"Huh? Not bad on protecting your heart, but you have to be stupid to think I wouldn't have poison on this needle," the man said.

"I know," Alex said. "And you are definitely stupid to let me do exactly what I have wanted to do this whole time."

Blood burst out of where he was attacked and it wrapped around the needle and the man's hands.

The man tried to let go, but Alex's blood constricted his hand from moving. At the same time, blood poured from all over him as it formed an armor around him, covering not just his chest, but also his face and legs.

"What the hell are you bastard?" the man shouted and tried to pull the needle or even just his hands, but it didn't work.

He then tried to push it instead, but even that didn't work.

His left hand moved as he tried to punch Alex in the head. Alex was slow enough that his punch actually even landed.

However, just because he was slow didn't mean that he was weak. The place where he was struck gave not even a feeling of being hit to Alex as the armor had absorbed all the damage.

At the same time, the blood on his head moved as well. It traveled up the man's left arm, constricting it too in the process.

Then, from his head and his chest, his blood flowed out into the man's body, completely covering him in what looked like a very thin bloody net.

Alex used his blood to straighten the man and keep him steady in the air. He rubbed his chest a little, but the little hole had already been healed.

As for the poison, that was the most useless part of the attack anyway.

"Now that our positions have changed, let me ask some questions," Alex said. "I know you think you're being smart by not giving me what I want, but trust me, that will only make it better for me as I get to enact my revenge one finger at a time."

"First question," Alex said. "Why are you trying to kill me?"

"Go to hell, bastard!" the man said in between grunts.

"Oh, that's not what I wanted to hear."

Instantly, Alex's blood moved and the index finger on the man's left hand came out as easily as a twig on a branch.

The man tried to shout, but Alex used his blood to grasp his throat to keep him from screaming. "I want you to answer me using your spiritual sense now. Why did you come here to kill me?"

The man didn't speak at all. "Okay, I see you love losing fingers then. There goes another one."

The man grunted internally, but he couldn't produce any loud sounds at all. His screams had all been internal.

"Alright, if you don't want to answer that, I have another question," Alex said. "How do you know the Graham Benton?"

The man looked at Alex with anger and fear as he knew that he was going to lose all of his fingers today, and then his life.

Chapter 1076: Jade-Faced

Another finger came off the man and he tried to cry in pain. However, Alex's blood kept his mouth shut by crushing his throat with it.

Alex had the thought of collecting his blood for himself, but after seeing the blood that flowed out of the man, he decided not to.

It had a tinge of green in it after all.

"Tsk, what the hell did you actually do to have such blood? Not to mention your face is so ruined too," Alex said.

The man didn't speak at all, so Alex cut off another one of his fingers. "Do you like pain?" he asked. "Is that why you are remaining silent? Why don't you just answer me so we can be done with this?"

"You won't have an easy death!" the man finally spoke through his spiritual sense.

"Is that what you want to say to me right now?" Alex asked, cutting off another finger. "Just answer the damn question."

"Hehe, you want an answer?" the man asked. "Here is your answer. I was here to kill you because I was s-- se--"

The man's face turned strained. His blood vessels popped and green blood glowed out of the left side of his face that had already rotted to the bone.

"What are you saying?" Alex asked. "Speak clearly."

"S-- se-- se--"

The man's eyes became green with bloodshot, shocking Alex. Alex slowly backed away, not knowing what exactly was happening, but he wanted to stay away from it.

"Se-- se-- sent..."

The man stopped struggling. His eyes looked wide as green blood dripped out of them, and his blood vessel started to soften into his skin.

His entire body stopped moving and even his chest stopped moving. The man had died, just like that.

"He... he's dead?" he questioned. He wasn't sure. He couldn't be, as he had never seen someone die in this fashion. "But how?"

He walked towards the body and touched it. There wasn't a single shred of death aura in his body. This man was nowhere near a dying state and somehow he had died at once.

Alex feared what had caused it and backed away even further. He took back his blood as well and stayed the hell away from the man's body in fear.

"What did he say? Sent?" Alex thought. "He wasn't the one that wanted to kill me? Was he working for someone else?"

Suddenly, he sensed a spiritual sense going over him and turned around in fear. However, a moment later, he sighed in relief as the help he had planned on bringing was here finally.

The Flowerhall Sect's leader, Qiu Hanyu had come by herself, led here by Whisker who was with her. Whisker jumped from her hands and onto Alex after seeing him.

"Thank you for coming here," Alex said with a grateful look.

"You don't have to thank me. I would've wanted to come here on my own anyway," she said. She was naturally worried about Alex after hearing that he had been poisoned.

If she let him die, it would be a massive loss to the entire continent after all. Even her granduncle was relying on him.

"Are you okay? Are you hurt? I see blood on you," she said worriedly.

"It's alright," Alex said. "I've already eaten a healing pill, and I've killed the one that was trying to poison me."

"You killed him?" she asked while turning her head to look at the dead man. Up until now, she was focused on Alex as that had been her main source of concern.

However, now that she could see that he was fine, she turned over to look at the dead man on the ground.

Her eyes went to the green blood around the man before even looking at him. She was surprised and disgusted, but no other reactions came from her.

However, when she looked at the face, her eyes went wide in fear.

She backed off immediately and sent a mound of earth at the body to immediately drag it into the ground. At the same time, she used fire attacks to burn the mound as it heat up and started to solidify, and then melt.

She only took a sigh of relief after she was certain that the dead man's body had burned to nothing.

Alex looked at her curiously due to her reaction. "Do you know that per--"

"Stay away from me!" she shouted. "Eat an antidote pill right now."

Alex was surprised and quickly took out an antidote pill to eat. He didn't know what was going on but understood that the sect leader was worried about being poisoned.

After eating one, he handed another one to her. "Here, you should eat one too if you're so afraid," he said.

The sect leader nodded and ate it without hesitation.

"So you know who that is?" he asked.

"The Jade-Faced Assassin they call him," she said. "He's a master of poison, each of which is so dangerous that it can kill saints and mortals all the same. He is said to be so passionate about poison arts so much that he even tries it on himself."

"He makes sure to eat their antidotes, but the side effects usually remain. His green blood and messed up face are a sign of it," she said. "If you were to remove his golden mask, you would've seen a green face, hence his name, the Jade-Faced assassin."

"He's an assassin of much fame then," Alex said.

"He's very infamous amongst the people with high status as he only goes after people that could be considered high profile, like you," she said.

"He wanted to kill me?" Alex asked. "No wait, he's an assassin. So he took up a job?"

"Yes," she said. "How did you kill him? He should have been strong."

"He was," Alex said. "But he overestimated his poison. I had already taken in antidotes after the last event so his poisons didn't work on me. While he thought his poison was working on me, I managed to get him by surprise and beat him."

"I tried to ask him some questions, but he just died," Alex said.

"Just died? How?" the sect leader asked.

"I'm still confused," Alex said. "He was trying to answer my question saying that he was sent here by someone, but before he could get halfway through it... he... died."

Even as Alex explained what had happened, he realized what must have happened.

"He tried to tell you who sent him? Impossible. People like him are always made to speak oaths so they never tell the truth. The employers never like to be known and the assassins are fine that way too," she said.

"But if he did try to..."

The sect leader's face went blank. "He would die. He would die halfway through while trying to tell you," She said.

"Which is what happened," Alex said blankly. "So his answering me meant his death. That bastard, he answered me just so he could die. I shouldn't have asked him that question at all."

Alex regretted that he didn't ask about his father instead. How the hell would an assassin ever know about his father at all?

'This is hurting my brain,' he thought.

The Heavenly Silkworm's silk thread, the assassin that was infamous even amongst the Saint realms, and the knowledge about his father.

Whoever employed him had to be so rich and powerful that they could have access to all three of those.

'And he wasn't after my pill recipes either, that was just a ruse,' he thought. 'His main objective was to kill me. Why would anyone that powerful would want to kill me?'

Up until now, Alex hadn't done anything that would make it worth killing him. Unless they were an assassin with great jealousy, Alex didn't see anyone employing an assassin just to kill him.

Besides, a normal alchemist didn't even fit the criteria.

The assassin's employer had to be rich and they needed to have connections. However, most of all, they needed to know about him and his father.

'The Alchemy Association's leader doesn't give out my information while having people search for him, and I never search about my own father when I'm at the Insight Pavilion,' he thought.

Then, the only other ones that knew about him and his father, and fit the other criteria were the 10 Council members and their sects and families.

'Someone from that group wants to kill me,' he thought. 'And I need to know why.'

Alex looked at the unsettled Qiu Hanyu and started to get suspicious. 'Is she acting right now? Is she the one who sent him? Is that why she burned the body so quickly so that I don't find any evidence?' he thought.

Both reasonable and unreasonable suspicions grew in his head as he understood the implications of what it meant to be a target of an assassination attempt.

'I will have to be careful at every moment now. I do not know where my enemies are anymore.'

"We should return now," he said and turned around to leave. He knew now that he needed to stay away from anyone, even the 10 elders of the Council, as anyone from there could be his enemy.

'Maybe it's the Huang family,' Alex thought as he walked. 'That makes perfect sense, considering our grudge.'

His oath against that family would have definitely created a grudge that couldn't be quelled so easily, so it was highly likely that they were the ones behind this event.

However, Alex couldn't stop doubting the others. Unless he had concrete evidence as to who it was, he would have to be suspicious of everyone.

'This is going to be annoying now.'

Chapter 1077: The Dark Room

Alex returned to the Alchemy association and went to talk to the leader. He told him what had happened and asked a few questions as to who else knew about his father.

It didn't take long for the leader to come to the same conclusion as Alex that one of the 10 sects and families were trying to have him killed, maybe even multiple ones.

"Go and rest for now. I will let you know when the slots are all filled in. Also, I will increase the security around here," he said.

Alex nodded. He wondered if it was time to let 'Alex' die and live as 'Yu Ming'.

'No, I have way too much going on as Alex to disappear right now,' he thought. 'Father won't find me if I'm gone.'

Alex went to his room with the thoughts still in his head. He couldn't get it out of his head that there was someone out there that wanted him dead.

Once he reached the room, he remembered something and brought out a storage bag from his clothes. He wiped the little blood that was on it and pulled out a talisman from inside of it.

This was the talisman from the Insight Pavilion he was supposed to get monthly. He hadn't checked the one for the previous month, so this was it.

He started reading them one by one and overnight, he was done with it all. He didn't find anything important once again, but reading this gave him another sense of security.

"You people from the big sects and families love asking about me," he thought. "Sooner or later, you will slip up and ask something you weren't supposed to. I will just have to wait for that moment."

He put the talismans back into the bag and went out to get the list of pills.

Within a week, he was once again done making all the pills and got his portion of the sales income as well.

The leader handed him his money and asked, "Do you plan on leaving again? You will have to do it in secret."

"No, I don't think I'll leave now," Alex said. "Not only is it dangerous, but the Orchard is also going to open up soon. I will need to stick around for that."

"I do believe that's a good idea," the leader said. "But are you sure you still want to make pills for the council members? Even while knowing that they might..."

"What else can I do?" Alex asked. "I can't ignore the biggest players in this continent just because one of them might be against me. I can't antagonize them any further, can I?"

"No, you're right. You will have to do this," the leader said. "But you'll have to be very careful. This is much more than just jealousy at play here in my eyes."

"Yes, someone is angry at me for some reason, and I will have to figure out why."

The leader heard that and hesitated a little. "There's another thing you might want to learn about," he said.

"Hmm? What's that?" Alex asked.

"It's been over a month since I've received messages from the investigators I've put on the task of finding your father. None of them had tried to contact me since," he said. "In all likelihood... they may have died as well."

* * * * *

In a dull room devoid of the most light, a woman walked in with a fearsome gait. She looked around the room and at the table in front of her and slammed on fist on the table lightly.

Even so, the table cracked and the room shook with the sound of the slam.

"What did the table do to you?" a voice spoke from the other side of the room as a figure walked in.

"Nothing," the girl said. "I was just slightly annoyed. I thought I was holding back, but apparently, I was not."

"Hehe, is this the last one?" the man asked.

"I have another from 2 thousand years ago, but it will take some time to reach a level where it can be of use to me," the girl said. "I should try and get more though. The other ones are not working as well anymore. It took a while to kill those people."

"You really are a sly, old bastard," the man said jokingly. "Anyway, what is making you so annoyed?"

The man's hands moved and the table slowly fixed itself, the cracks in the wood slowly disappearing.

"Damn Jade isn't communicating at all," the girl said. "It's been a while since he left to gather information on the target, so he should have returned by now. Instead, he's nowhere to be found."

"Hm? Jade went to gather information?" the man asked with a surprised look. "I wasn't aware of this."

"Well, you were busy cultivating, so the 6 of us decided on our own," the girl said. "You were outnumbered anyway."

"And you sent Jade?" the man asked.

"Of course," the girl replied. "His concealment technique is the best amongst all of us. He's the best at the task."

"That he is, but... he's also unhinged. Do you think he will wait after he sees a target? One that is supposed to be this weak too," the man said.

"It's not like he was attacked," the girl said. "I just read about how the pills were made for the event of this month. The alchemist is fine. Besides, he knows that it is better to have the alchemist say the oath rather than kill him. We just have to force him to stop this search, right?"

"Hmm... call Jade back. We still have enough time before the day when we actually attack him," he said.
"If Jade attacks now and the council is alerted, we are doomed."

"Goddammit, I just told you I'm annoyed because he's not contacting us at all," the girl said as she slammed the table, breaking it again. "What the hell do you want us to do?"

The man gave a soft smile and walked forward, dragging his hand along the table whose wood slowly regrew to fix itself.

"If you can't contact Jade, then go and find him. That's a better idea than staying here, don't you think?" the man asked with his gentle voice, but the sound brought terror to the girl's face.

"Fine, fine, stop it," she said and stood up. "I'll go find him, you don't have to get angry."

"Good," the man said. "At the same time, call back the other 4 as well. We can't waste our time going around for random targets. We have a high-profile target with connections to the council. We will have to do this very carefully."

"Got it," the girl nodded and turned around to leave.

"And old man, I need your all on this job," the man said.

"All?" the girl asked with a bit of surprise on her face.

"Yes, all," the man said. "It's the Sundering Sanctum we will be facing. Who knows what sort of obstacle we will be facing there? The more there are of us, the better."

"Fine," the girl said and continued walking.

The man nodded to himself and turned around to go to the room where he had come from.

Chapter 1078: The Orchard Opens

Tiny waves crashed alongside the shore of the lake as pulses of energy flowed out from the center of the lake.

Alex and many others stood by the shoreline, looking at the flower petals and leaves being pushed toward them.

It had been 2 months since he had been a target of assassination. Since then, no one had come to assassinate him, but Alex still stayed in the Alchemy Association the entire time in fear.

He mostly stayed in his room, working on the spiritual root or dao pills, but just as before he was still stuck on a wall, unable to move forward.

Hopefully, that was going to change in the next week.

Today was the day the Forbidden Orchard was going to open, and he was ready to enter.

He was standing by the shore of the Floral lake in the Flowerhall sect.

Next to him were about 24 different people. All of them either belonged to the Flowerhall sect or did at one point in time. If they weren't in the Flowerhall sect, then they were in the Alchemy Association for sure.

About 6 of those 25 were from the Alchemy association and surprisingly, or maybe not that surprisingly, Harry was going to be entering too.

"I swear, Alex, if not for you, I wouldn't have been able to come here at all," he said softly while standing next to him.

Alex smiled and didn't say anything.

After his lessons, Harry practiced for the last year to continuously improve his pill-making skills. As such, he had become one of the fastest up-and-coming alchemists in the association.

Harry was always good as an alchemist, and the only thing he was missing was a fundamental concept of pill-making. Once he got that from Alex, his growth was unstoppable.

Aside from the two, the others weren't as good an alchemist. Instead, they were gardeners that were adept at raising plants as well as recognizing them.

If Alex didn't have the knowledge base in him planted by the Alchemy god's book, these would have been the most exceptional people to enter the orchard today.

On the Flowerhall Sect's side, there were many of their own disciples and a few elders going in. From what Alex could see, all of them were in the True realm, aside from the elders.

'15 and 4,' Alex thought. 'I suppose that's enough elders for a group of disciples.'

From what he had heard, there were a few species of insects inside the Orchard, most of which were butterflies and bees.

They were left alone due to how helpful they were to the ecosystem inside the Orchard.

Aside from them, there were no animals that could threaten any of them at all. All they had to be careful of then were the plants.

Just earlier, the sect leader had given a speech talking about how they had to stay away from the carnivorous plants, plants with lots of vines, and poisonous plants.

"By the way, are you taking part in the competition?" Harry asked. "I feel like I should test myself."

"I don't think I will," Alex said. "Especially against juniors."

It was the first time Alex didn't feel weird calling True realm cultivators juniors. After all, most of these disciples were about 40 years of age, while he was already hitting 50.

"I remember being in their place long ago when the orchard opened. I did get to enter at that time, but I wasn't that interested in learning about ingredients so I could never win the competition," Harry said. "However, now that I have learned a bit, I want to do it."

"You want to compete against these juniors?" Alex asked.

"No, that's why I'm asking you," Harry said. "I want to compete with you."

Alex chuckled a bit. "As long as you won't cry after losing," he said.

"Haha! You've spent so much time learning how to make pills, I doubt you are that good with ingredients," Harry said.

The competition was simple. Once inside, the disciples had to find as many species of plants and identify them and an ingredient that came from them. After identifying, you had to bring back the ingredient as well for proof.

Whoever could record the most and bring back evidence won.

Since the Forbidden Orchard was different from other secret realms, the Flowerhall sect had created a small competition to make the task of gathering ingredients more fun for the disciples.

At the same time, they would be careful about what they were finding and how they would acquire them by having to either look up the information in their books or ask their elders what was assigned to them.

That way, they wouldn't accidentally touch or remove something they weren't supposed to.

The orchard suddenly blasted another round of pollen, sending it flying all around it. The wave of pollen hit Alex and the others as well, but it was blocked by an illusory barrier right before it could touch them.

"Just a few more minutes, and then I can open it," Qiu Hanyu said from the front and turned around.

"So, I assume you all know what you should do and what you shouldn't do, right?" she asked.

Everyone nodded in understanding.

She turned to Alex and said, "I know you have been given full freedom to do whatever you want inside, but please try to leave the plants and trees alone if they are the only species inside. We wouldn't want to lose something that's rare."

"Of course," Alex said. "I will try to be careful about what I take and what I don't."

"No, please take as much as you want. My Granduncle will scold me if I put any more restrictions on you other than that," she said.

After saying that, she reiterated the rules again to the rest of them just in case.

The orchard pulsed for one last time before it started buzzing unnaturally. "It's ready," Harry said softly from next to Alex.

"Let's go, we can open it now," the sect leader said.

Alex flew along with the other 25 people and flew up to the platform at the center of the lake. The platform looked small from afar, but up close, it could fit about 50 people on it without enough room for everyone to do jumping jacks.

The sect leader brought out a sort of medallion and raised it towards the small, silver slit in space that continued to buzz.

Then, the medallion shined and the formation below them activated amplifying the slit in the space, opening it fully.

"Go," the sect leader said. "I will close it after you enter. Be sure to be here in the next 7 days when I will open it again. Don't get lost inside, it will just cost us resources to open it out of time if we have to go in and find you."

The group nodded and one by one, everyone started walking in. Alex's group was the last to walk in.

As soon as he entered, Alex was hit by a wave of fragrance that he would not be able to find anywhere but here. The sweet smell of flowers and fruits was something that threatened to overwhelm his senses.

It was only a moment later that he could focus and ignore the smells.

The slit in space behind him closed, but Alex could feel it still behind him. Not only that, he could feel air slowly being pulled out of the portal as well.

Pollen flew in with the wind, but they were too large to enter the slit that was basically nonexistent at this point.

Slowly, the pollen would gather there for a long time before so much was gathered that it burst through a weakened slit and spread around the lake and city outside.

Alex ignored the slit behind him and looked ahead at the massive hill that was completely filled with flowers, herbs, and shrubs.

He could see a few trees here and there, but mostly the plants didn't grow higher than his waist in height in this location at least.

"Well, good luck to you. I will go work on my list," Harry said and left his side to immediately go further away from the group of juniors that had started gathering and recording ingredients right from in front of them.

Alex looked further away and thought of where to go.

"Brother Alex, do you need some help?" one of the four gardeners asked him.

Alex turned around to look at the gardener and shook his head. "It's alright, I am fine on my own. Please don't let my presence disturb you," he said.

"There is no disturbance here," another one said. "Please just let us know and we will help you in finding what you want. We have been here many times before after all."

"Oh, right," Alex said. He needed to take into account that most of these were from the Flowerhall sect after all.

Alex thought for a second and asked the gardeners, "Then, do you happen to know where the poisonous plants are?"

"Uhh, it should be in that direction beyond a mountain," one of them said.

"Why don't I take you there?" another one of them said.

"No, it's alright. Please focus on your work, I can go there myself," Alex said and left. He didn't want anyone by his side to see how good he was with the plants.

After reaching a little further away, Alex brought out Whisker and had him pick the ingredients for him.

This was a perfect time to teach Whisker, so he wasn't going to miss it.

Chapter 1079: How To Pick Your Lily

"Just collect what you know, I will tell you what you missed," Alex said. That was the only way he could think of teaching Whisker at all.

There were simply too many plants here to sit down and start explaining it all one by one. All he could do was give a name and explain about it once they had left the secret realm.

While Whisker collected the ingredients, Alex looked around at the secret realm. He had learned it was large before, but he wasn't aware of just how large it was. He was using his spiritual sense and he couldn't even see the poison plants that were supposed to be beyond the mountain.

Hell, even the mountain was barely in his range, which was beyond the hill he was walking on.

'So big,' he thought. He always knew that the secret realms were large, but the space inside was rarely ever a thing for concern.

However, since this was a space filled with nothing but rare plants, all of which could be an ingredient for some sort of pill.

Alex stopped for a second and looked to his left to find a plant that was a moderately rare ingredient in a healing pill. Since it wasn't that hard to find, Alex didn't have to worry about making it extinct.

The ingredient of the plant that was useful was the roots. The plant outside of the ground itself wasn't that useful at all.

So, with a simple chop of his hand, he cut the plant from the stem. Then, he pushed his straightened hand into the earth and pulled out the clump of roots and dirt that were entangled together.

It would take some time if he were to sit and clean it, so Alex just placed it all into his storage bag without any care. He would rather gather more right now than waste time trying to store it perfectly.

In any case, it wasn't like the loss of energy in the plants was going to affect his pills in any way.

He continued walking through the pathway, gathering only the Saint-ranked ingredients. Whisker was gathering everything he could find as in a way this was a test to see how he could do.

Alex told him the names of various plants that he wasn't aware of before. It took him nearly 15 minutes before he was up the hill. When he finally reached it, he couldn't help but be awed by what he was seeing.

Beyond the hill was a wide array of ecosystems. There was another patch of plants just like the ones he had crossed before. At the feet of the hill was a flowing river, and beyond the river was a forest that was full of flowers and fruits.

Beyond that, Alex could see a giant mountain that was one of many that staggered around the secret realm. Some of those mountains even had some ice on the top.

Alex turned around and looked at where he had come from. He had asked about the poison area and had been pointed in this direction. So, he hadn't given much thought to the other directions.

However, now that he was looking at it, the secret realm went as far on the other side as it did on this side.

And each and every single patch of land he could see was filled with trees or flowers.

Alex turned around and walked down the hill. His first course of action was obviously to find the Corrosive Willow tree. Once he had found that, he could take his time going anywhere.

He was only making it down the hill for half a minute before his eyes fell on something. "Woah!" he shouted in surprise. "Spirit Cleansing Lily!"

He had been told that there was Spirit Cleansing Lily available in this city before buying Harry, but for some reason, he hadn't been expecting to find it.

He looked around him more carefully and he found dozens of these flowers that were simply there, waiting to be plucked.

Whisker walked up to the flower and looked around. "How do I pick this flower?" he asked. He remembered using these flowers 2 times after his intelligence had increased by a certain amount.

"I don't know," Alex said. He could exactly which flower he was supposed to pick, but he could not help Whisker pick it by himself as Alex didn't know how he did it.

Alex had always just done it based on a feeling. Was there even a real way?

'Is there any information in my head?' Alex wondered. He had never actually checked for the Spirit Cleansing Lily once the knowledge base in his head was unlocked for him after entering the Saint realm.

"Let's see..." he read through the information before landing up on the answer that he so desperately wanted.

"Oh, you use your spiritual sense?" Alex couldn't help but be surprised. He was taken aback by the revelation of how one could pick Spirit Cleansing Lily.

"Spiritual sense?" Whisker asked.

"Yes," Alex said. "Apparently you scan the flowers with your spiritual sense as deep as you can. On one of the flowers, you will notice an abnormality because of the existence of an energy that the others don't. If you're good enough, you will notice it and be able to find out exactly what you need to pick."

"Oh," Whisker said and started looking through the flowers. At the same time, Alex tried to understand how he was doing it back when he didn't have spiritual sense the first time he had gathered these.

'No, I'm looking at it wrongly,' Alex thought. 'The important part here isn't that you can sense the energy with your spiritual sense, but rather there is energy in there. It's likely that the Intent hidden in me was searching for that.'

Energy... Alex wondered if that worked as well.

Suddenly, his purple pupils widened as the focus in his eyes changed. At the same time, his vision was filled with a multitude of colors that became hard to distinguish immediately.

There were just too many plants around him and their energy were mixed together quite well. Alex got closer to the flower and ignored everything but the flowers.

After a bit of luck, he could see the flowers without much obstruction from the other energies in which case he saw what he had wanted.

Most of the flowers had a very dim and vague white color to them. It was the color of energy that had no elements in it. However, one of the flowers had a very bright white color that threatened to outshine every other flower in the group.

"Is this the flower?" Whisker asked, pointing at the one Alex was looking at right now.

Alex smiled. "Yep, that's the one," he said.

Whisker got happy and noted down the flower before taking it for himself. The rest of the flowers on the flower bed did not wilt immediately. That meant that Alex and Whisker had gotten it correct and were thus able to pick the Spirit Cleansing Lily without anyone else's help.

"Do you want to keep it?" Alex asked Whisker who was putting the flower into the storage bag that was tied to his chest.

Whisker nodded and put it in.

"Do you know who you will give it to?" Alex asked.

"To brother's father," Whisker said. "After we find him."

Alex unintentionally let out a wide smile. "Thank you, Whisker."

They then went around the hill trying to find other Spirit Cleansing Lilies. It would be best to have 3 or more of them at all times.

After half an hour of collecting what they could, Alex and Whisker got down from the hill and flew across the river, arriving in front of the forest.

There were flowers and fruits that covered the trees in the forest, so both he and Whisker got to collecting everything they could.

He slowly made his way toward the mountain on the other side, but in the process, he stripped the trees clean of anything worth stripping.

He found fruits, leaves, bark, sap, seeds, wood, root, and other various things that could help him with his alchemy.

Whisker ran about the trees, collecting as many things as he could as well, while Alex explained to him when he didn't recognize something.

Butterflies flew with the wind while bees buzzed all around him. He could see beehives all over the place and knew that some of this honey was definitely going to be useful.

He found some easy-to-harvest honey that was made by the bees directly on the inside of a tree. The ones that hung by the tree were not something he could harvest as they would include him having to destroy them due to his lack of idea on how to harvest them exactly.

At least they still had a place to go back to in the trees even if he did take away most of the honey.

Alex spent so much time in the forest gathering the various stuff that it was dark by the time he was ready to go out of it.

The sun had set below the mountains so he was walking in shadows right now. He walked up the mountain that was also full of trees, but not as much as the forest below it.

He took what he could from there and arrived at the peak of the mountain a while later. Then, he looked down from it and saw an expanse of flatlands.

And just as he had been told, the Poisonous plants were in the flatlands, below the mountain.

Chapter 1080: Finding Willow

Alex flew down the mountain, letting Whisker gather whatever he could on the mountain itself. Whisker didn't have Alex's poison resistance, so he would most likely die just entering the field around the plants.

He could have waited for Whisker to finish before taking him in as well, but he was here for one thing and he wanted to complete it as soon as he could.

He arrived next to the field of poisonous plants and immediately sent his spiritual sense out all around him to search for the one thing he was here for.

A moment later, he smiled as he saw it.

The Corrosive Willow.

"Well, that was easy," Alex thought. He stepped into the stale, pungent air that was full of poisons and toxins and made his way toward the plant that was far away. He picked what he could from around him, but he didn't stop on his path toward the willow.

Rather, he didn't stop on his path toward the willows. There were multiple of them scattered around the field, and Alex was going to go through at least a third of them and strip it clean.

He could imagine the money he would be making if he sold the Earth's spiritual root-improving pill to the world. It wouldn't sell as well as a Saint rank pill likely would, but for what it would cost him, it would sell phenomenally.

Alex finally arrived in front of the dead-looking tree with no flowers at all. Its bark was corrosive, and the sap it produced was even more poisonous.

So, he took out Midnight and started carving the tree to collect the very same bark.

Midnight had an amazing edge. It wasn't as good as the strongest sword he had previously, but it was definitely better than everything else. Not only had his Dao of sharpness and cutting helped improve its edge, but also the tiny soul inside of it was helping it be even sharper.

Alex stripped the tree clean and placed everything into his storage ring. Once done, he went for another one that was not far away.

He only stopped collecting it after going through 5 of such trees.

He held a piece of the bark in his hand and closed his eyes. He sensed the energy in it and especially its internal structure to see how it was.

"I see," he thought. "So it was that type of ingredient. Hmm, it should be much easier to make the Saint rank pill now."

At the very least, Alex was certain that within the next year, he would have completely made the Saint rank earth pill. Maybe he would even be halfway done with the Water pill as well.

He happily put the last fragment of the bark into his storage and started gathering the other ingredients. The poisonous section of the secret realm was something no one really wanted to come to, so it was overflowing with ingredients that he could take back with him.

After spending no less than 6 hours in there, he finally left the field. He walked back towards Whisker, while constantly sending pulses of Yang Qi throughout his body to make sure the poisons around him were no longer there.

Whisker had already gone somewhere a little further away in the last 6 hours, so Alex had to fly for a little longer to reach him.

Just as he was flying, he heard a cry from down below him.

Alex looked down to see an elder from the sect being attacked by some sort of plant that was full of vines.

It was grabbing the elder, dragging him, lashing at him, and even going as far as to rip him in two.

Alex swooped down from the sky and slashed the vines before turning towards the plant. The plant withdrew all of its vines after being attacked and no longer tried to fight.

"Are you okay?" Alex asked the elder.

"Y-yes, I'm fine," the elder said with heavy breaths. "Thank you for saving me, brother Alex."

"Leave now, don't stand around here," he said. "Also, focus on where you are and what you are doing. Use your spiritual sense before going anywhere just in case. You never know what sort of plants you might come across."

"Yes," the elder said before looking through his storage bag. "Brother Alex, do you have any poison-removing pills?"

"Poison?" Alex asked and looked back at the vine plant. Was that plant a poison plant too? He learned what it was and then learned more about it.

'Ah, it has a slight toxin,' he thought. 'It should only numb his legs for a while, but I suppose he had disciples to look after.'

Alex brought out a simple antidote pill and handed it to the elder. "Eat it, and leave from here," he said.

"Thank you," the elder said and ate his pill.

Alex flew away to go meet up with Whisker, leaving the elder behind. The elder slowly stood up and dusted himself off before looking in Alex's direction.

A small smirk appeared on his face and he took out a talisman to write something.

"Target is either used to dealing with poison or has been recently conditioned to. It is possible that Jade had gone out of his way to contact the target, maybe even kill him. It is possible that he was dealt with, which is why he's been missing for the last 2 months."

Once the elder wrote that down, he put away the talisman and started walking away from the place he had purposefully come to.

Alex met up with Whisker a bit further away and started gathering the ingredients himself. Since he had found the thing he had come looking for, all he needed to do was wait for the portal to open so he could go back.

Of course, he wasn't going to just wait around. He was thrown into a gold mine, and the last thing he was going to do was try and get out immediately.

Alex and Whisker, together, went around gathering so many ingredients in such little time, that Alex wondered if he ever had this many ingredients with him, ever.

Just a day's harvest here outshined a month's work back in the Beast's realm when he was trying to find the other demon realm.

Alex's days were filled with satisfaction, with the occasional dashes of disappointment.

He would be extremely happy gathering the many ingredients from one place and moving on to the other to do the same. But, from time to time, he would come across places that people had been through already.

While they would still have left ingredients behind just because they didn't know they were ingredients, it wasted quite a bit of his time.

As the days passed by, this would continue to increase, and that frustrated Alex.

It had been 3 days since they had entered the secret realm and he was still continuing to collect the ingredient. Whisker went in and out of his beast space to rest, but Alex hadn't gotten the chance to.

"I should rest too," he thought to himself. He decided on settling down at the next location and cultivating for a while. It had been some days since he had cultivated, so that was a good idea.

He saw an opening in the forest he was in, beyond which it was all a patch of grassland. He made his way in that direction, but suddenly, he stopped.

His eyes moved slowly to the right of where he was and he couldn't help but be shocked.

"No way!" he thought.

He quickly ran towards what he saw and stood in front of it with wide eyes. In front of him were two plants that were entwined into a single one.

There was a tree made of wood; thick, robust, and sturdy. It was not very big, but it was strong and that was all it needed to be.

Then there was a climber; thin, flimsy, and weak. The climber plant was too weak to grow without any support, but that was why there was a sturdy tree.

Surprisingly, the two plants grew from the same root, and most likely the same seed.

The two plants mixed with each other, and both of their leaves were the same as well. At the end of a branch where a climber ended as well, there grew a creamy white fruit with a lot of white dots all over it.

Alex looked in awe at the plant and the fruit. He remembered seeing this plant long ago, but that wasn't his main thought at the moment.

His main source of awe and focus was the fruit he was looking at.

"The Divine Devil's Fruit," he thought. He would have never guessed that he would ever be able to see something like this. He would have expected that he could only see it after he went to the hegemonies where Shen Jing grew it.

'A Divine Devil's fruit,' Alex thought in awe. 'Another Demonic Plant's descendant.' He had never personally eaten the fruit himself, but he had seen both pearl and his mother eat it.

The Mortal Cleansing once went through after eating this was very much worth it in his eyes.

"I should take it for everyone else," Alex thought to himself. There were nearly 20 different fruits on the tree, but Alex knew that just as there was a trick to picking a Spirit Cleansing Lily, there was a trick to picking the Divine Devil's fruit as well.

If he ignored it and picked the fruit regardless, he would end up destroying it.