

Alchemy 1701

Chapter 1701: The Old Man

The old man grumbled a bit. "How do you know who I am? Not many should recognize me in my current state," he said.

"Your current state?" Alex asked. "Then... is the hair, beard, and mustache on purpose?"

"Kind of," the man said. "I was also too lazy to take care of it all. Now tell me how you recognized me."

"So you are Zhou Linfan," Alex said and noticed the man's lack of patience. "I've heard about you," he quickly added.

"What have you heard about me?" the man asked.

"First, you're a Level 10 cook," Alex said, lifting the bowl in his hands to see that it had been a hint. "One couldn't make something as good as this without being at your level. And I would know as I have tasted some of the finest dishes while I stayed in the Dragon Palace."

The old man gave a slightly angry look at the name.

"And?" he asked. "That is not all, is it?"

"No," Alex said. "There is also the fact you were very strong, which I learned a long time ago."

"That's not enough—"

"And you fought against the Dragon Emperor," Alex continued. "Someone like you wouldn't have had to stay here was it not for the fact that you would be instantly sought out and killed if you went to the continent and lived there."

The old man slowly nodded. "I guess one could make a guess based on all of that," he said.

Alex remained quiet for a moment before speaking, "18 years ago, you stopped my ship to search for something. What were you searching for?" he asked.

"That is none of your concern," the old man said. "Do you want more?"

Alex nodded and put out the bowl. He watched the pure elixir of flavor pour down the downright horrible-looking pot into his bowl that was made by an amateur.

Neither the pot nor the bowl should have ever had the luxury to handle such divine juice. This sort of stuff should have been made in the finest of pots, served in gold.

Alex drank the juice again and felt the same joy as the first time he tried it. It was incredible.

"You saved the Second Prince half a century ago," Alex continued. The old man looked at him with narrowed eyes. "When you saved him, you saved a girl that was with him too."

"I thought the emperor had banned this information," the old man said. "How did you find out?"

"The girl you saved was my cousin I had been looking for the past dozens of years," Alex said. "Thank you for saving her life."

"Your... cousin?" the old man asked.

Alex nodded. "The emperor hasn't made the information public. I barely only found out because I met him and my cousin in the Eastern Continent. They told me everything."

"What?" the old man's eyes widened in shock and horror. "They were caught already? How did they get caught? I have searched every single ship that has passed through here."

Alex gave a satisfied smile. "So I was right," he said. "You were searching those ships to look for whether they had captured the prince and my cousin, weren't you?"

The old man grumbled. "How did they get captured?" he asked.

"They didn't," Alex said. "They returned through the... the Voidgate, which I'm now remembering that it was you who told them where it was."

The old man nodded.

"How did you know it existed?" Alex asked. "Honestly, it is quite hard to find if you're not searching for it."

"None of your business," the old man said.

Alex felt a short burst of laughter incoming at how quickly the man had forgotten all honorifics to use in his presence.

"Why were those idiots back there?" he asked. "They should have known better than to keep out."

"The 2nd prince felt that he had to come back," he said. "He saw no benefit in staying in the Southern Continent."

Alex explained in small detail why the second prince had returned and how everything had come to be in the end.

"The Emperor attacked you?" the man asked.

Alex nodded. "The fact that I'm even alive right now is a miracle given what I've been through," he said. He felt a pang of sadness and regret fill him when he remembered that Yao Ning had not been so lucky.

She had died protecting him, and all he got to show for it in the end was his crippled body.

Was he crippled in every way? He wasn't sure. He had no Qi, that was sure, but there should have been other things he could do, right?

"Can crippled people use Dao?" Alex asked the old man, wondering if he knew the answer.

"They can, from what I know," the man said. "But I suggest you don't try it. You are weak, your spirit is weak. The Intent you would require to use your Dao as you had before could kill you as you are right now."

"Do you mean the wounded me or the crippled me?" Alex asked.

"The wounded you," the man said. "You are still hurt and were only crippled a few days ago. Your spirit should be incredibly weak. You should let your body rest for some time before you dare try to do anything like that."

Alex took in the information and nodded. The man was right.

He looked down at his stomach and only now noticed a small leather wrapping around him. "Can you tell me what my wounds look like? I'm afraid I cannot use my spiritual sense."

"The wound is closing, but it's still there," the man said. "Agitate it too much and it will open. I've put some medicinal paste, so hopefully, it will get better."

"What about pills?" Alex asked the man. "Do you have some healing pills?"

"I haven't carried weak healing pills for generations now," the old man said. "I can't help you."

"Weak? What about Saint healing pills? Those can't be weak, right?" he asked.

"Saint pills?" the man almost looked stunned to hear Alex say those words. "Are you mad? Do you want me to feed Saint Pill to a non-cultivator? Someone that is still wounded from Crippling?"

"Ah!" Alex understood the man's hesitation. "I'll be fine. I have a Saint Soul realm body cultivation. My body can handle those pills. If you could give me one, I would be happy."

The man looked at Alex with another stunned face. "A... Saint Soul physical body?" he asked. "How did you..."

"That's not important," Alex said. "The pill?"

He put out his hand. The man sighed in the end and shook his head. "I don't have any pills," he said. "All I had, I've used up long since, and I don't exactly have a way to restock on them."

Alex sighed. He took off his ring and presented it to the man. "Can you see what is inside?" he asked in a hopeful tone.

The man was surprised to see the storage ring for a second and quickly complied. However, after a minute of trying, he couldn't see anything inside. He would have to refine the ring altogether to see what was inside.

Alex stared feeling dejected. Was there really no way for him to get a healing pill?

Chapter 1702: Thoughts

1702 Thoughts

Zhou Linfan looked at Alex and sighed when he saw his distressed face.

"Don't be so sad," the man said. "I know there are some pills that can even fix your Dantian. You're young. You can get healed and restart your cultivation journey."

Alex looked at the man and nodded. He could get back on his journey, but how quickly could he do that?

"Can you help me get back to the Southern Continent?" Alex asked. "The Second Prince and my cousin should be there too, so you can come along."

"I can't," the old man said. "It is probably because of you and what you guys did, but recently there has been an influx of soldiers searching through the ocean. They keep flying around. We can't leave."

"Soldiers? From the Eastern Continent?" Alex asked worriedly. "They haven't found us?"

"They can't, don't worry," the man replied. "I have a formation constantly running that keeps me from being found. As long as they don't look very carefully, they won't find us."

Alex didn't exactly feel safe, but the man had survived here for the last half a century, so maybe he could trust him.

The old man walked away to place his old pot back on the fire before walking back to Alex. "You should rest now. Once you're up, I'll check to see if I can do something about your wounds again. I'm sorry, but I'm not much of a healer, so I can't really tend to your wounds outside of what I've already done."

"No worries, I am one," Alex said. "Now that I'm up, I can help myself, so long as I have stuff to use."

"Oh, okay," the man said and nodded. "Still, rest for now. I'll search for what I can later on. This island isn't very large, so I might have to go to another one."

Alex nodded and laid back down on the leather that was underneath him. The old man walked outside, leaving Alex alone with his thoughts again.

So he had managed to teleport away and Pearl had saved him in the end. Then this man had helped hide him from the others.

That was some good news at least. So long as he wasn't dead or captured, that was tremendous news. Still, he was now crippled and wounded, and he didn't know what to do.

'I should forget about dealing with me being crippled for now,' Alex thought. 'I need to heal up first. Once I can stand on my own two feet without worrying about bleeding out, I can start dealing with the other problems.'

He was going to have to tackle the situation with care.

Sitting in the cave with nothing to do, Alex's mind wandered off again. He wondered how Pearl was doing in his beast space. Was he hurt? Was he healing?

As a Saint beast, he only needed Qi to heal back to normal, albeit after a long time. Alex hoped to give Pearl a healing pill too. But he couldn't do so right now.

His spirit was weak, and his Spiritual sea was not something he could access any longer. His Soul Space was the same.

Alex doubted either of those things were destroyed when his dantian was broken through. Nascent Souls and Soul Space survived even worse situations.

When a body was entirely destroyed, a Nascent Soul still lived. When a person died, their Soul Space still survived. So, the chances of his being destroyed were low.

But that was not to say that his Nascent Soul was not on the verge of dying and that his Soul Space wouldn't come to some misfortune if he waited too long either.

Also, with the situation he was currently in, Alex wondered what had happened to Godslayer. Was the Spiritual Sea fine? It was fine when his head was gone, but this was a different situation.

It was his cultivation that had disappeared this time, the thing that powered the spiritual sea in a way.

Alex was also worried if his sister had successfully made it back or not. He tried sensing where Whisker was, but sensing things was no longer a thing he could do. His senses were so very dull.

He tried to fall asleep sometime later, but he was too energetic to sleep anytime soon. So, he sat there thinking about what he would have to do in the future. There were no pills with the old man and he couldn't search for his own pill as he now lacked Spiritual sense.

Could he make some? No, that was impossible too. Even if he gave the old man some instruction, making him any good days within the next month would be impossible. He would have a better chance of asking him to take him to the Southern Continent while fighting off anyone who threatened to block their way.

And then as his thoughts wandered again, he once again remembered Yao Ning's death. Her death was going to haunt him, just like his master's death had all those years ago.

Only this one felt a lot more personal somehow.

He had spent less than half a year with his master, while with Yao Ning, he had spent nearly 30 years. Their relationship might not have been as close as he had with his master, but it was still a strong one.

And for destroying that, he hated the Dragon Emperor.

Rage slumbered inside of Alex right then, like embers in the hearth, but that was only because he knew that he could not do anything about the Dragon Emperor right at that time. It would burn bright when the time was right.

Alex closed his eyes as the evening brought in darkness and let himself grieve for the death of the woman who did what she could to save him. He cried and as such let himself fall asleep.

The next morning, Alex woke to some freshly cooked stew. The old man gave him all of it once it was ready, urging him to eat it all.

"Since you told me about your body cultivation, I assumed there wouldn't be any trouble with you eating solid meals," the man said. "I caught some True Silver pikes and added some herbs to it. The fish meat aids somewhat with healing."

Alex nodded as he heard that. "Thank you," he said and started eating. Once again, the dish made by this old man was so incredible that Alex regretted the old man not having proper dishes to cook these meals in.

He took some time to finish before feeling incredibly energized.

"I'll cultivate for the day and make your next meal later tonight, is that alright?" the old man said.

"That's fine," Alex said and watched the old man go deeper inside the cave. "You said the entire island is hidden, right?"

The old man paused and turned around. "Yes, why?" he asked.

"I'm gonna go around the island and look for herbs," Alex said. "Hopefully, I can find ones that will help me heal quickly so I can do what I must."

The old man's eyes narrowed. "And what is it that you must do?" he asked.

Alex gave a small smile. "Let me start with getting healed first," he said. "We can see to the rest later."

Then, he walked out of the cave and went to the forest to search for everything he would need.

Chapter 1703: Healing Paste

The island Alex was on truly wasn't very large. He couldn't see everything from where he was, but what he could see told him that the island was around 3 or 4 kilometers in diameter at best.

He slowly walked down the mountain, walking into the forest that lay just a few minute's walk below.

Entering the forest, Alex felt a sort of odd feeling that he hadn't felt in a very, very long time.

He felt a sense of emptiness that came from his mind not constantly telling him what all the plants were and what they did. If he didn't focus on anything, he wouldn't know anything.

The Alchemy God's Knowledge was still somewhere in the back of his mind even in his crippled form, telling him what he needed to know. That was good news for Alex at the very least.

He looked around, searching for anything that was good. The old man had remained on this island for a long time, so Alex hoped he had missed a few things, but as he went along, he didn't find anything important enough for him to pick up.

After walking for nearly 15 minutes he found an ingredient strong enough for him to use. It was an ingredient that could be used to heal him if mixed with some other ingredients.

He was going to make a paste using it.

Alex continued walking searching for the ingredients he needed and was surprised how much time it was taking for him to find these things. He quickly realized that it wasn't that there was nothing on the island, but that since his perception had been severely limited, it was taking him time to find things.

Without his spiritual sense, he would have to continue searching for things all over the place.

Alex found a few more ingredients, mostly for healing his physical body. He was also searching for ingredients to heal his spirit, but he was having a hard time finding those.

Still, it would seem that even with an island as small as this one, without his cultivation base and spiritual sense, it was going to take him a long time to go through it all.

Alex searched for the whole day and only stopped around the time twilight came along, and that too because the old man came to find him.

Alex returned to the cave, not even having searched halfway through the entire island. There were still 2 more days of searching he would need to go through to cover the entire island.

"Did you find everything you wanted?" Zhou Linfan asked him while cooking something in the pot.

"Not really," Alex said. "But I found enough for now."

He had been carrying the ingredients wrapped around his robes and let them fall to the ground. "Do you have something I can use to make them into a paste?"

The old man brought out a stone slab and a round stone to crush the ingredients. "I've been using this. You can use it too." He handed Alex some clean water too.

Alex thanked the man and started making the pastes. The paste he was making was not something he had ever made before. However, he knew how the ingredients would react with each other, and knew that they would make a good enough healing paste.

Once the paste was ready, he took off the leather that wrapped around his stomach and looked at the wound on his body.

A long gash ran from his chest, all the way to his navel region. The gash around the chest had just about closed up, but the ones on the lower area still needed some time to fully heal.

Alex tore a piece of his robe and used it to slowly wipe away the medicine that was already on there, put on him by the old man, while also cleaning the wound. Once the wound was cleaned, he applied the new healing paste and wrapped it back around with the leather again.

The old man watched Alex do everything by himself and was pleasantly impressed. "You're quite resourceful, aren't you?" he asked, from where he stood next to the pot. "Only half a day and you made a paste far better than I could."

"I may not look like it right now, but I'm still the greatest alchemist below the Immortal realm in this world right now," Alex said, turning to look at the man.

The old man was more than just impressed at that. "Hah!" he laughed out loud, unclear if he trusted Alex's words or not, but he said nothing.

"Is that going to heal you fine? Will it heal your Dantian too?" the old man asked. "I remember hearing that not every healing pill could heal a Dantian."

"No, not every healing pill can do that," Alex said. "Especially, not healing pastes."

"Oh," the old man felt bad. "Then... can you not heal while you are here? I suppose you will have to wait until those soldiers leave before I can take you back to your continent."

"No," Alex said quickly. "I can heal my Dantian if I can find something to improve my spirit. So I need to find anything to improve the current state of my Spirit."

"How will that help with healing your Dantian?" the old man asked.

"It will work for me, I think," Alex said.

"You don't sound confident," the old man said.

"Well... I've never been crippled before, so I don't exactly know if what I'm saying is true," Alex said. "But this is the only thing I can trust right now. I cannot trust others, and only myself."

The old man nodded. He brought the pot over and let Alex eat what he had cooked that day. It was once again a stew with some fish that tasted incredible.

"This should improve your blood flow so that those healing pastes you used work more efficiently," the old man said.

Alex thanked the man. He wasn't entirely correct in what he said, but it was close enough. Besides, the food was once again delicious.

"Once you wake up tomorrow, I will help you find these plants you are looking for. Can you give me a list or something?" the man asked.

"I... can't," Alex said. "There are way too many to make a list, so it is better if I come with you. That way, I might get through it all even faster."

"Hmm... I don't have any problem with that," the old man said. "We can go around the island tomorrow. If we don't find what you're looking for, I can take you to the other islands too. Although, that will need some patience since we don't want to get caught."

"You're not afraid of getting beaten by them, right?" Alex asked. "You're stronger than most of them."

"No, I'm not afraid of them," the man said. "I'm afraid they will contact the Emperor and he will come. He's too strong for me right now, so I can't meet him yet."

"Yet?" Alex asked with a curious look on his face. "That makes it sound like you actually do want to meet him sometime in the future."

"Meet him? Of course I do," the old man said. "How else am I supposed to kill the man?"

Chapter 1704: The Old Man's Past

Alex looked at the old man with a start. "You want to kill the Dragon Emperor?" he asked. "Is there a reason?"

The old man looked at Alex seemingly wondering if he wanted to reveal more.

"He murdered my family." The old man's eyes darkened slightly, a look of pain flashing through them as he remembered the past.

"Your family? Why did he do that?" Alex asked. "Did they do something wrong?"

"They did nothing wrong," the man snapped. "They were good people, living a good life. And then, out of nowhere, that bastard accused my father of treason and treachery, using people he planted as proof. He said he was planning a coup."

"They had my father executed, his wives killed, his family slaughtered. None of them were left alive," he said. "And for that, I will kill that bastard, one way or another."

Alex was stunned for a while, partially because of what the old man had to go through, but also because of the words he used. Words like treason, treachery, coup, and execution were no simple words. Together, they told Alex of an event from a long time ago.

"Your father was one of the Kings from the previous 5 kingdoms?" Alex asked.

The old man grumbled a bit before nodding. "My father was Lin Shouzhen, king of the Lin Kingdom," the man said.

"Lin kingdom... that's Ebony kingdom now, isn't it?" Alex asked.

The old man nodded.

Alex took a moment to process all the information. "So that was why you knew about the Voidgate that even the Dragon Emperor didn't know about," he said. "You were a prince of a large kingdom and probably learned it while you were young."

"The Voidgate? It's something secret that has been passed along to our family for a long time. Not many know about it," the man said.

Alex nodded. "Wait, I thought the Emperor had everyone from your family killed. How did you survive?" he asked.

"My mother... she swapped me with one of the servant kids. The poor kid died in my stead," the old man said. "Zhou Linfan was his name that I took up."

"I see... what is your real name?" Alex asked.

"Zhou Linfan is my real name now," the old man said. "Who I was before... I no longer am. So my name does not matter anymore."

Alex did not pry any further, but there was something else that he was curious about. "You seem to have a deep hatred for the Dragon Emperor, and you should hate everyone that was involved with him. Why did you save the 2nd prince?"

"No child should bear the punishment for his father's crime," the old man said. "I won't do what the Emperor did."

"Still, why did you help him?" Alex asked.

"The 2nd Prince... he never liked fighting or cultivation. He was instead interested in simpler things. He would come to the kitchen in the palace quite often to enjoy the food I made. He talked to me and we were close," the old man said. "When I found out he was in trouble, and it had to do with him going against the Emperor's orders, I decided to help him."

"Thanks to your decision, my cousin is alive today," Alex said. "You must really care about the second prince to stay here just in case they get caught."

The old man scoffed a little. "I don't care about the kid so much that I would go so far," he said. "It's not that I want to protect the kid, which I'm not saying I don't. I just don't want the Emperor to get his hands on the thing he wants the most."

"The Ivory sword?" Alex asked.

The old man gave a surprised look. "You know about that?" he asked.

"I learned of it the day I was crippled," Alex said. "The Ivory sword should be safe with the second prince, assuming he safely made their way to the Southern Continent. Their departure had been sudden, so I'm a little worried."

"Don't be worried," the old man said. "There's no point in worrying anyway. Go rest now. Tomorrow will be a long day for you."

Alex nodded and thanked the old man for the food before laying back down to rest.

'He must've made his way up the rank slowly to get close to the Emperor,' Alex thought. 'Did he want to feed the Emperor poison?'

There were many things about the old man's life that Alex didn't think he would be comfortable sharing.

'Still, to think he was a prince,' Alex thought. A prince who took up the name of a servant and now looked no different than a beggar. 'What am I thinking? He's still one of the strongest people I know aside from the Immortal beasts.'

As bad as the old man looked, he was still in the Saint Transformation 7th realm. Or at least, that was what he was nearly 18 years back when Alex saw him for the first time. Although, Alex doubted he could've improved much in the last few years considering he had been alive for many millennia.

'Well, I can't keep thinking about him, can I? I have my own problems to deal with.'

Alex soon dozed off.

He woke up quite early the next day before the sun even rose as nature called. It had been so many years since he had to do something like that, and it felt alien to him.

After another small but delicious breakfast, he and Zhou Linfan went around the island searching for ingredients.

Their method of searching was simple. Alex would look for items in the forest around him while the old man would use his spiritual sense to look around for items far away and describe them back to Alex to see if they were useful.

Alex managed to find a fruit with some spiritual affinity this way and also 3 small herbs that were all but useless. Most herbs that had any sort of effect had unfortunately long since been eaten or taken away by the more intelligent beasts that understood their importance.

Alex finished searching the entire island by the end of the day and didn't find a single thing that he could consider worth the day. Still, what he did find would have to help him for the day.

Every step forward was a step closer to being able to cultivate again.

Once back, Alex ate another short meal. Meanwhile, the old man started meditating and brought out some sort of medallion. It took Alex a moment to realize it was something to control a formation.

"There are still quite a few around," the old man said suddenly. "Around 12 people in 100 kilometers around us. If we are lucky, we won't be seen by them."

"How far do you reckon they can stretch their spiritual sense?" Alex asked.

"The strongest man should be in the Saint Transformation realm. So, I would expect them to cover all the way to us," the old man said. "They won't see anything here, but we'll still have to be careful."

"I'll check again tomorrow, and we can go to an island that is opposite to where most of them are gathered."

Alex nodded. "Let's do that."

Chapter 1705: Spirit Test

Alex and Zhou Linfan had to stay on the island until late in the afternoon before they found the opportunity to leave.

The island they went to was far enough from the people according to the formations that the old man had set up around the ocean that let them have a general idea of where everyone was in the ocean.

The old man had apparently also learned about formations while training to be a cook. Becoming a cook was what he wanted to do the most, but he also needed something else to become good at, and he had apparently learned formations too.

While he had never taken tests to show his formation skills, the old man believed that if he did take the tests, he would easily become a Level 8 formation expert.

"The area around the island I stay in is always under surveillance, but anything too far away can't be kept permanently working, so instead I decided to set up several small warning formations in a network instead. If a human or ship flies over it, it lets me know who and how strong, and I can know where they are based on which formation activates."

That was the explanation Zhou Linfan had given Alex when asked about the formations that helped him monitor the ocean.

It apparently spanned thousands and thousands of kilometers wide and had yet only had a few of the formations discovered or destroyed.

The island they were on now was much larger than the other island, so Alex hoped he could find the ingredients he was looking for. Any fruit or roots, any leaves, flowers, even barks with any sort of spirit healing capacity would be of much aid to Alex.

They searched through the entire island and managed to find 3 things that could be considered of some quality and brought them back to the main island again.

Alex ate those ingredients raw. He didn't want to dilute or otherwise destroy what effect it had by needlessly cooking it. In the first place, aside from managing fire to release energy, he didn't know what random heat would do to an ingredient when cooked.

"Are you sure you won't get a stomach ache by eating that raw?" the old man asked him. "I can understand the fruit, but you're even chewing the root. At least let me cook the root, I'm used to cooking them for the elderly in the palace."

"That's alright," Alex said. "My stomach can handle it."

He did make sure to chew it all up thoroughly before swallowing. As he ate what he had gathered, he felt his mind clear up just a little. Yesterday hadn't been this way, so he must have eaten something right today.

He finished eating everything and then made more healing paste using what new ingredients he had found that day. Once he applied it, he laid back down, ready to sleep again.

'How much has my spirit healed in 2 days?' Alex wondered. How was he supposed to even tell that? He needed some sort of metric to help him.

"Senior, do you know of any way I can measure how strong my spirit is?" Alex asked him. "Maybe a formation of some sort?"

"A spirit measuring formation?" the old man asked, thinking for a bit. "I... think I know a blueprint for one. But to make it, we'll need an appropriate metal or alloy. I don't know where I can find that in this place.

"How about carving it on the cave wall instead," Alex said while pointing to the wall. "You can connect it to the formation that is already working on the island."

"That... can work," the old man said. "But making formations on rock is so difficult. You have so much less freedom than a metal. Still, I'll try tomorrow. You want to check how strong your spirit has grown, don't you? I'll make it happen."

"Thank you, senior," Alex said and went to sleep.

When he woke up the next morning, the old man was already working on it.

At some point, before Alex woke up, he had managed to scrape the wall of the cave smooth without any lumps or uneven surfaces. Alex sat and watched as the old man brought out a small carving pen to carve out a complex formation on the wall.

Alex had to look at the formation for nearly 10 minutes after the completion to figure out which of the 6 base formations were being used to form this Saint formation.

When he finally figured it out, he was more than impressed with the overall formation.

"Stand here," the old man called Alex, pointing him to a location. "I didn't have the resources to set up a proper control to this formation. So when testing your spirit, it will slowly ramp up on the spiritual attack it does."

"I'll have you take this bowl full of water on one hand, and if you spill even a drop of water in it, I'll stop the formation immediately," the old man said.

Alex walked up to where the old man had pointed and looked at the formation. He laid out his hand and the old man put the bowl of water on it.

Alex took a deep breath and relaxed his hand just enough so that if he wavered even the slightest bit, his arm wouldn't hold up. He wasn't going to take any chances on his spirit when his life and cultivation depended on it.

He took a deep breath and nodded. "I'm ready!"

He felt ready. The things he ate last night had helped him a lot after all. His mind felt so much fresher like he had finally had a good night of sleep after a long time.

The old man looked at Alex and nodded, activating the formation.

Instantly, Alex felt a wave of mental pain that he was so familiar with. It made him nearly stagger, but he did drop the bowl or the water in it.

He persevered. He was stronger than this. He had felt pain before and he was used to it. This was nothing compared to all that pain. He could handle it even as it grew.

Alex wasn't wrong and he did handle the pain... for all of 2 more seconds before he fainted.

It was late in the afternoon when he woke up with a headache and the old man explained what had happened to him.

"I... fell unconscious?" he asked.

"You lasted for 3 seconds and fell," the old man explained. "The water bowl didn't even have the time to fall when you fainted."

"How... how strong was the attack? Did you find out?" Alex asked.

"I checked after you fainted to see if I had mistakenly made it too strong," the old man said. "From what I sensed, it was strong enough that anyone under the Organ Tempering realm would have fainted."

Alex stared at the old man for a long second. "What? Organ Tempering realm?" he asked with a look of horror. "But that is so low."

The old man shrugged. "Hey! I'm surprised that you're not weaker, considering you're a mortal now," he said. "I think your spirit is strong."

"No," Alex said. "I need to be stronger. I need to find better ingredients to heal my spirit even more. So, when do we leave next?"

Chapter 1706: The Better Island

In the following week, Alex went to another island besides the first one and searched through the forest on that island to see what he could find. This island was larger than either of the two before, so he managed to find a few more plants to heal his spirit.

By the end of the week, his spirit had grown to be somewhere on par with a starting Mind Tempering realm cultivator. Since it was in this realm where one's spirit truly became strong, Alex would have to work even harder from this point forward to find more spirit-healing plants.

On the opposite end of his struggle, he had no problem finding items to heal his body and had long since healed all of his wounds. Right now, he was only collecting them for the sake of collecting them.

Since these plants were already there, there was no point in letting them rot in the forest. Not all of them were just for healing too.

Then, the search continued.

For the next 2 days, Alex searched the island completely, and there was nothing else there to be found. It was time to move on to another one.

"Are there no better islands to move to?" Alex asked the old man as they flew back toward the main island.

"There is one large and full of wonderful plants on the other side, but we can't go there until those soldiers leave," the old man said. "We might have to even stay hidden for a few days so they pass by."

Alex frowned at the thought of losing days of potential searching for cures. He grumbled inside, wanting to protest, but he knew better. This was for the best.

"Alright, we will do as you say," he said.

5 days later, the old man finally let Alex know that it was safe enough to leave. There were no more soldiers around the area.

"Finally," Alex stood up from where he sat in the cave. "I was going to go mad waiting."

"How can you go mad staying in one place for just 5 days?" the old man asked. "I'm sure you've spent more time just cultivating,"

"But I'm not cultivating," Alex said. "Also, each passing second is important to me. My future depends on it. I can't have time slip by me and not worry right now."

"At least there is one good news," the old man said. "We're going to go to the big island today."

Alex's eyes widened in happiness. "Really?" he asked.

The old man nodded. "The soldiers moved to the other side, so we can go to that one now," he said. "Hopefully, we'll find what you need, so we can improve your spirit to become as strong as True Realm as soon as possible. Will that be enough for you to do whatever you are planning?"

"I... don't know," Alex said. "I'll have to test when we get there, but I fear that I must restore at least Saint realm level of spirit before I can get anywhere."

"Saint realm... is that even possible as a mortal?" the old man asked.

Alex could only shrug. "I don't really know," he said. "But I'm betting on it. If not... well, I'll have a long path ahead of me."

"Let us pray you don't then." The old man took out his medallion to check one last time and nodded. "Time to leave."

After half an hour of flight above the ocean, Alex arrived on the other island.

"I haven't seen many ocean beasts coming out to attack in this area. Aren't they supposed to be active?" Alex asked the old man.

"It's these soldiers that are forcing them to stay low," the old man said. "The strong ones naturally stay away from land, and those that live nearby are not strong enough to come out when the humans are around."

"Is that so?" Alex asked, nodding to himself. "It's a good thing then. We wouldn't want strong beasts to attack us randomly."

The old man nodded as well.

The new island was mostly flat with a vast land full of forests, both thick and sparse, as well as a grassland that spread far and wide. Even at the fastest, it would still take Alex over 2 weeks to search the entire island.

A satisfied smile formed on his face after seeing it all. "This place looks a lot more promising than any of the other ones. We should be able to find something here."

"I'll look for the things that I know are important or the ones that you collected before," the old man said and began searching the island with his spiritual sense.

Alex found more items in 3 hours in this place than he did in the other islands in entire days. 3 flowers, 2 fruits, one stalk, and 2 sets of roots.

After an hour, he found a plant that grew a select few leaves with some spiritual energy in it. Eating those would give good results.

The old man was making steady progress and was in fact better than Alex at finding everything. Since he could cover such a large area with his spiritual sense, he could see much more area than Alex could.

Even if he wasn't as perceptive of the plants as Alex was, he was still much better at finding them all. So, in the time it took Alex to gather what he did, the old man had already located items nearly 10 times as many.

Alex continued, picking what he could find, but still mostly searching for just the ones that healed his spirit. He also tried to find new plants so the old man could know what to look for next.

Some items were naturally very hard to find, and Alex could only find them either through experience or through the Alchemy God's Intent that still remained in his mind.

They continued searching while the old man brought Alex to the locations where he had found the items. There were some that he needed Alex to pick unless he made a mistake and ruined them somehow.

"These should be enough to help heal your spirit a lot," the old man said. "Should we continue searching?"

"Do you recommend doing otherwise?" Alex asked. "If it is dangerous, we can leave and come back."

"It's not dangerous," the old man said. "It is just going to get dark is all. And you're still a mortal with a wounded spirit, so you'll need much more rest."

Alex thought for a moment and nodded. "I'll do what you say."

"We still have time," the old man said with a smile. "Let us continue searching for an hour longer. We can return afterward."

He spread his spiritual sense through the island again, searching for items that were in there. Since he was further on the island, he could cover more area effectively.

"Oh, there's a spirit—"

The old man frowned all of a sudden and turned around with a dark look on his face.

"What?" Alex asked, confused. "What's wrong?"

"Spiritual sense," the old man said. "Two. They noticed me, but they should be far enough away that they can't sense us properly. What should we do?"

Chapter 1707: A Sudden Trouble

"I'm assuming what sensed you are not beasts?" Alex asked.

The old man frowned, pulling up his medallion. "I don't want to risk spreading my spirit sense to see if they're beasts and humans," he said. "None of my formations returned warned me of any human or ships flying over us, so it couldn't be..."

He slowed down a bit, his face darkening even further. "Dammit!" he cried out all of a sudden.

"W-what?" Alex asked. He was slightly scared by the old man's outburst.

"Two of my warning formations are down on the other side," the old man said.

"You don't get notified when they're down?" Alex asked the old man.

"I'm supposed to, but I didn't receive any. It happens from time to time." The old man sighed and turned toward Alex. "What do we do now? Fight?"

"Are you sure they're coming this way?" Alex asked.

The old man checked the medallion again.

"Yes, they're coming this way," he said. "In fact, they're close enough that they won't have to strain their spiritual sense too. And if we run away, they'll alert the others, I fear. We can't be chased."

Alex nodded. He thought for a bit, worried. "I need to do something about my face," he said softly. "They'll recognize me."

"But I have nothing for that," the old man said.

"The blue flower with the red dots I got a few days ago," Alex said quickly. "I called it the Redspot Tiger Daisy. Bring it out."

The old man nodded, bringing out the flower as said. Alex took the flower, and immediately chewed on it, eating it.

He felt a heat bubble up in his stomach once he swallowed it, a burning sensation from the toxins that were in the poison. It would soon show its effects.

"What did you eat?" the old man asked.

"A mild poison. It messes with your face, turning it purple and swollen. I think it can hide my—"

Alex's face paled, but not because of the poison. The poison in his body was suddenly broken down and converted to its most basic essence, Qi. That Qi then went through his blood vessels directly into his meridians, and before he knew it, it entered his Dantian.

And since Alex's Dandian was still broken, it very quickly flowed out of his Dantian, leaving nothing behind.

Alex felt hollow all of a sudden. It was good news that his body was still fighting against poison, protecting him when he could not. Healing plants and other such plants were allowed to affect his body, but poisons were blocked.

But the timing couldn't be anymore unfortunate.

Alex could only grimace in the end. "It didn't work," he said softly. "I don't know what else to do."

"This is bad," the old man said and turned toward the ocean. He could sense the two figures coming closer even from far away. Their aura was easy to distinguish as they were making a show of it flying there quickly.

"Screw it! There's no need to panic. I'll do something. I'll fight them if it comes to that. In the meantime, you should—"

The old man turned toward Alex and paused as shock filled him. Alex was no longer there at all. He wanted to shout out for Alex, but the two human's spiritual senses covered him.

He couldn't speak and instead returned to looking toward the people who approached. As they got closer, the old man released his spiritual sense and saw the two people as well.

The two people, one man, and one woman were both in the late Saint Soul realm, with the man being in the 9th realm and the woman in the 8th.

They were both typically good-looking, but nothing extraordinary, except maybe for the woman's outlandishly bright green hair. It was a rather rare color for a hair, and probably meant she had more to her bloodline than regular humans.

The old man stood where he was until the two arrived in front of him.

"Who are you and why have you made a show of your arrival?" the old man asked.

"We are legionnaires of the Scale Legion of the Eastern Continent," the man said. "Who are you, old man?"

Zhou Linfan hid a look of pleasant surprise from his face. 'If they are not being hostile... then they don't know about me,' he thought.

During his time in the oceans, he had come to learn that there were 2 types of soldiers he would meet. One that would immediately recognize him and one that wouldn't.

Since he so very rarely went out to cause trouble, his infamy hadn't spread just yet. However, he would've still assumed them to know about him, but they didn't. That meant that someone, most likely the Dragon Emperor, was suppressing his presence here.

The Emperor feared about what Zhou Linfan might end up revealing

This meant, against these 2 soldiers, he didn't immediately have to fight.

"Fellow Daoists, I am called Hao Fangling," the old man said. "I am an elder of the Desolate Mountain sect in the Northern Continent."

"An elder from the Northern Continent? What is an old man like you doing here?" the man demanded. The old man had managed to present himself as someone weaker than the two and thus made the two more arrogant here.

"That's exactly the thing, fellow Daoist," the old man said. "I am not old. I am merely 2 thousand years old."

"What?" the man asked.

"That's right," Zhou Linfan answered. "I'm only 2 thousand years old, but as you can see, my body has somehow aged many more times than it should have. So, I'm here to find a cure for my problem. An alchemist told me to find a flower called the Dawn Fade Camelia, which would help me get rid of this old age."

"Okay, but why are you here on this island?" the woman asked. "Did nobody tell you to get away from this place right now?"

"Leave this place? But I only just arrived," the old man said. "I used a teleportation talisman to try and make my way to the Eastern Continent, but it must have been weak. I arrived about 2 islands that way. I wanted to go to the Eastern Continent directly, but I instead found this wonderful island and am trying to find the plant here."

The two frowned and conversed with each other in secret. After a brief moment, they seemed to come to a decision. "The Eastern Continent is off-limit to any outsiders. We shall allow you to search for what you want on this island for a single day. By tomorrow, when we come to search here again, you must be gone. Understood?"

"The Eastern Continent is off-limit?" the old man asked. "Why is that—"

"You don't need to know," the woman snapped back. "Do as we tell you to or we'll capture you and take you there as a prisoner."

"No, no, I'll do as you say," the old man said. "I'll search this place right away and leave for the north."

"Good," the man said. "You better stick to your word. We'll come check tomorrow."

"Of course," the old man's aid quickly. "You don't have to worry."

The two soldiers nodded and flew away, leaving the old man alone on the island, wondering where Alex had disappeared to.

Chapter 1708: Something Incredible

Zhou Linfan waited for the two cultivators to fly far away and take away their spiritual sense before he showed any sort of concern on his face. He quickly looked around, searching for Alex, even going so far as to open his spiritual sense throughout the island to try and find him.

He panicked when he couldn't find any sign of Alex at all, but just then he sensed something that made him pause.

Right next to him, something rippled. He turned around and was left with a wide jaw as Alex appeared from a fold in space and fell to the ground in front of him, unconscious.

"Young man? Are you okay?"

Zhou Linfan tried to wake Alex up, but he was entirely unconscious. 'What happened to you?' the old man thought as he checked to see if Alex was even alive.

Then he stared at the space where Alex had appeared from. "Space Dao?" he wondered. "Does this kid have the dragon's blood too?"

As far as he was aware, the only way to learn Space Dao was to be able to sense Space Aura first. One could sense Space aura if they spent time around it for a while, but that time would have to be in the centuries if not millennia.

How could a kid who was not a century old learn it to the extent that he could hide himself from the Saint realm cultivators?

"Curious," he said softly. "I wonder how he did it."

He took Alex back to the cave safe and sound and remained hidden there for as long as it would take for the soldiers to leave the area. And as long as it would take for Alex to come back to consciousness.

The soldiers didn't leave in the next 5 days, but at the end of it, Alex did wake up.

He woke up in a daze, unsure of where he was at first. His headache was particularly painful, and standing up made the world seem to spin a little. He looked around at the cave, and then at the old man at the end.

Finally, some of his memories returned. "I fainted?" he asked.

"You did," the old man explained. "After expending your spirit by using the Space Dao, I assume. I was surprised when you came out of nowhere."

"Space Dao?" Alex asked and tried to remember what had happened. "Ah right. I remember. I panicked and decided to hide using the space around me."

"Yes, you did. That surprised me very much," the old man said. "I might have been distracted, but it was surprised because I couldn't sense you use your Dao at all."

"I was either too weak for you to sense anything worth your attention maybe," Alex said. "Or maybe you just can't sense Space aura."

The old man nodded. "I don't doubt that I'm bad at sensing Space aura. But once you had folded space and continued using the Dao, I should have been notified. Even if not that, you are still a mortal with some aura to yourself. When I searched for you, I should have found you, but I didn't."

"It was like you didn't exist at all."

Alex shook his head. "I separated the space immediately around me from the space beyond it," he said. "Essentially, I made a very tiny secret realm where I alone could fit. So you couldn't sense anything that happened inside of it."

Zhou Linfan's eyes were opened wide in surprise when he heard that. "That's... actually incredible," he said. "You made actual secret realms to hide yourself. I wonder if I could've found it if I was searching for it."

"You probably would have," Alex said. "Secret realms aren't that hard to find after all."

The old man nodded. "Still, I must commend you for thinking so quickly and making such a great decision under stress. That was incredible of you."

"Yes," Alex said. "But now I'm back to where I was when I started. Actually, my spirit might be weaker now."

The old man nodded. "Maybe," he said and then produced the items they had gathered that they. "But you have more to work with now, so you can catch up quickly."

Alex nodded.

"Besides, there is nothing for you to do besides stay and eat these anyway. Those soldiers are still around and will likely stay around until they end up concluding that you really did die," the old man said. "Only then can we go out and search for whatever you want more easily."

"You are right," Alex said, reaching for one of the plants the old man produced. His head still throbbed and his stomach cried in hunger, so he decided to deal with both problems at once.

He would have more than loved to eat what the old man could cook, but this was the better thing to do right now.

He ate the items, one by one, letting his body accept the healing spiritual energy that lifted his headache. He ate slowly, and a lot of it. Soon enough, he was feeling much better than before.

"Do you have to eat it all at once?" the old man asked. "You should let your stomach settle first."

"No need," Alex said, slapping his stomach. "My body can handle it."

A few more days passed and Alex finally finished all of it. Then, he tested his spirit's strength using the formation on the wall and was more than happy to realize that he had successfully lifted his spirits to the True Master realm.

That was a lot further up than he had expected to reach when he first started eating the items.

The old man went out of the island twice during the past few days, going out for no longer than 3 hours at most and returning with more items for Alex to devour.

Alex happily ate every one of them, getting closer and closer to the True Lord realm in terms of his spirit. However, the problem that he had assumed was going to show anytime soon was starting to surface.

He was starting to slow down in his progress.

Was it because the items he found were not good enough? Or was a mortal's spirit just that slow to grow?

Alex didn't know which one of the two was the answer, but whichever it was, the result was the same. His spirit was growing slowly, and he needed something incredible to push it up further.

He needed to find an incredible treasure of some sort. "Should I enter the ocean and see if there are some things there?" he wondered out loud. That was a good idea, wasn't it?

The ocean, discounting the beasts that lived there, was an untouched field of incredible resources. So long as the beasts weren't aware of the incredible abilities of many of the ingredients found down there, they would have left it aside.

If he went into the ocean, he would certainly find things that could help him.

"You want to go to the ocean?" the old man asked as he flew down from the air. "That's a bad idea."

Alex turned to look at the man with a start. It was annoying to now know when someone was approaching you or was looking at you with a spiritual sense.

The old man tossed a few more ingredients toward Alex, and Alex immediately started munching at him.

"Why is it such a bad idea?" Alex asked the old man as he chewed on the ingredients. "Aside from the fact that I can't breathe there for a long time, of course."

The old man chuckled a bit. "There are many bad things about the ocean, the least of which would be you drowning. The beasts are certainly the biggest problem, but problems such as toxic weeds and other similar things could kill you instantly."

"The ocean is undocumented for the most part, so you never know what is trouble and what is not," the old man said. "Besides. Whatever you would want could only be found on the ocean floor, and I don't know how deep you can go without Qi. I certainly don't plan on going down there."

Alex sighed a little. "You're not wrong," he said. "I suppose I shouldn't think about leaving for the ocean just yet. Let's see if we can find something good on the islands first."

"Ah, that reminds me," the old man said. "I did find something. Actually, I found it the day we were there, but the soldiers came suddenly and I had to stop. Still, I did find something that can be considered good, but I don't know how good it would be."

"What did you find?" Alex asked curiously. "Some treasure plant?"

"In a way," the old man said. "It's a flower that is known for its spiritual ability. You should have heard of it even if you weren't an alchemist to begin with. It's called the Spirit—"

"The Spirit Cleansing Lily?" Alex burst out suddenly.

The old man took a moment to acknowledge Alex's burst and slowly nodded. "Yes, Spirit Cleansing Lily. It's the flower that you can use 3 times to improve your spiritual sense."

"I know," Alex said and slowly sighed as the excitement dwindled from his eyes. "I've already used it 3 times. It won't affect me now."

"Oh... I see," the old man said. "It is more incredible than anything you have eaten the past week, isn't it?"

"It is indeed more..." Alex paused as a curious thought floated in his head.

"Now that I think about it, maybe I do indeed have a use for it still," Alex said. "I wonder what will happen if instead of using it normally, I eat the Spirit Cleansing Lily."

Chapter 1709: Consuming the Lily

Alex and Zhou Linfan arrived on the old island a day later when most of the soldiers had gone far away. They quickly made their way to the location where Zhou Linfan had found the Spirit Cleansing Lily.

When Alex did arrive, he couldn't help but show a small glimpse of shock on his face. The place where the Spirit Cleansing Lily grew was a massive flower field with dozens of Spirit Cleansing Lilies at the least.

Counting the flowers alone, there were thousands that were clumped together at about 20 to 40 flowers in a single clump.

Alex slowly landed next to the flower field and looked up close at one of the clumps in front of him.

"You don't have a spiritual sense, so I'll help you," the old man said. "I don't really know how one picks the right lily though, so you will have to help me. I'm expecting you know ho—"

Alex reached for one of the flowers and picked it. The red lily was easily torn away from the batch of lilies it was in, the flower and stalk lying simply on Alex's hand.

The batch of flowers below him did not wilt immediately. They would in a few days of time, but the lack of it right now proved that Alex had picked the right one.

Alex couldn't help but smile.

"You picked the correct one?" the old man asked from behind with a look of confusion. "Was I wrong? Do you not need a spiritual sense for this?"

"You do... normally," Alex said, failing to hide his grin.

"What was abnormal about this one?" the old man asked.

Alex shook his head. "I'm making use of a body cultivation technique that changed part of my physique," he said. The Demon Eyes were still working perfectly fine.

He could see the slight difference in the energy that was in the flowers and knew which one to pick. He didn't even need to get help from the Intent hidden in his mind.

He stood up and looked at the other with his glowing purple eyes. It was annoying that there was a layer of haze in front of him that was formed from the simple energies that were ever present in the air.

If he could somehow train himself to ignore them, then his Demon Eyes' usefulness would skyrocket immediately.

As it was right now, he had to walk over to the individual clumps of flowers and crouch down to see them clearly enough to see which one it was that he needed to pick.

He picked the correct one and moved on.

Along the way, he also taught the old man the way to pick Spirit Cleansing Lily. All one really needed was a strong spiritual sense and a bit of practice.

The old man had to look into the group of flowers and find the flower from amongst it that was different enough that only it could be the real one of the bunch.

Once he figured out which one it was, the job was all but done.

In just a matter of a few minutes, they managed to gather all the Spirit Cleansing lilies in the area and left back to the main island.

There were warning formations that were still broken on the other side, so they had to be careful each time they left.

Returning to the island, the old man gave all of the flowers to Alex and sat down beside him to watch. "I'm curious how it is going to work," he said. "How can eating a plant like this help when it is definitely supposed to be used in an entirely different way."

There was no way there weren't people before Alex who had tried to eat the plant. If it did anything wonderful, people would've known already. The fact that it was unheard of meant that it was most likely not very useful.

"As I said, I've never tried eating these before," Alex said. "So it will be my first time too. I'm not expecting it to improve my spiritual strength past what it was at my peak. I just hope it will help me get back there quickly. I most definitely need that."

The old man nodded. "Go on then, eat it. I can't imagine anything bad happening from this flower," he said.

Alex didn't either. Still, he was nervous. He took a deep breath and gobbled up the first flower. He chewed the flower maybe 3 times before immediately swallowing it, not wanting it to lose any of its precious energy.

His body, almost feeling the incoming plant, worked to consume it. And consume it did.

Alex immediately felt a wave of energy pass through his mind like cool spring water. He felt as though he was jolted awake and the energy kept on flowing through the flower.

That continued for about 3 minutes before it finally stopped and it left Alex breathing ragged breath as he had forgotten to take in a breath for most of that duration.

"This... this is incredible," he thought to himself. He looked around, his eyes focusing on multiple objects at once, something he couldn't do before. His mental strength had definitely improved a lot because of this.

Alex quickly stepped up and walked up to the Spirit measuring formation and urged the old man to start it.

Zhou Linfan hadn't expected Alex to be this much in a hurry and did as he was asked. He activated the formation, ready to close it within a few seconds, at most 10.

However, when the spiritual energy assaulted Alex, Alex remained upright, the bowl of water he was made to hold not even rippling the slightest amount.

In fact, Alex smiled at the mental assault. This was a pitiful amount of damage. The damage continued to build up of course. In 9 seconds. It reached the True Lord realm, where he had last failed.

And then it crossed through to 10 seconds and continued.

And Alex barely showed any signs of frustration at all. He could go on for much longer now.

The old man wondered just how good the flower was. Should he try and eat one as well?

The strength of the formation reached the True King realm, and then to the True Emperor realm. Around this time, Alex finally started showing some struggle. He was starting to feel the burden but could continue for a bit longer.

Second by second, the burden increased until it finally reached the Saint Condensation realm. It was then that Alex truly felt the pain and dropped the water.

Zhou Linfan took no time to shut down the formation and grabbed Alex just in case he fell down.

"I'm fine," Alex said as he held his head. "What did I reach?"

"Saint Condensation realm," the old man said. "Maybe the 2nd or 3rd realm. It's not very accurate."

Alex slowly nodded as he understood something. "I see," he said. "So a Spirit Cleansing Lily has enough energy in it to send a person's spiritual strength directly to a Saint level."

A few things started to make sense and a few more questions emerged in Alex's mind.

It was likely that a cultivator could unlock their spiritual sea with this because of the amount of energy it held within it. As for why they didn't reach that level of strength when opening it, or after their second and third consumption, it may have something to do with their cultivation base being low.

'They don't open their dantian until they are in the Saint realm,' Alex thought. 'Maybe that is what is blocking their improvement through the flower. But at the same time, when you do end up opening the dantian, you're already strong enough to open a Spiritual sea on your own.'

That did bring up the question of why only 3 were allowed. Was there some sort of limit to how many a body could handle before it rejected the lily?

'Or maybe the Heavens just don't want it to happen,' Alex thought. A lot of things could be attributed to the Heavens. 'And this one is descended from the plant that the Moon Goddess blessed.'

Alex wondered what the original plant was and could do.

"I'll eat another one," he told the old man and proceeded to do so. The feeling he got from this one was not as liberating as the last one, but it was still fun.

The old man reached down and grabbed one of the lilies and ate it as well. There was no flavor to the flower, so he chewed down on it with a dull expression and swallowed it.

And then... nothing happened.

"Should I be feeling something?" the old man asked.

"I... have a somewhat special body," Alex told the man. "Maybe only I can do it."

"Huh? You should've told me before," the old man said with a grunt as he spit out the bits of flower petals in his mouth.

Alex ignored the man and waited until he didn't get the feeling of his mental strength improving. Once it stopped, he waited for a few minutes just in case and ate another one.

One after another, Alex ate a total of 42 Spirit Cleansing Lily and by the end of it, he felt almost as good as he did when he was a cultivator.

He made Zhou Linfan run the formation again and tested his strength. He had reached the late Saint Core realm in terms of strength.

That was still quite far from where his spiritual strength had been, but this would have to do.

"This will be enough," Alex said with a look of expectation on his face. "It's time I got my cultivation back."

Chapter 1710: Saint Qi

Zhou Linfan was very much looking forward to what was going to happen, even though he could not perceive what could possibly be happening next.

For the past few weeks that Alex had been here, he had focused his time on getting ingredients to heal his spirit. So, Zhou Linfan could only wonder what was happening next.

"So, what's next? Do we go to find some special plant?" he asked.

Alex looked at the man and didn't immediately answer. Instead, he asked a question. "May I ask why you are helping me?" He had been curious for some time now and wanted to know. "Healing me at first cost you nothing, but you are going well beyond your way to help me now, so I'm curious what is making you help me."

Zhou Linfan showed a somewhat stunned expression as if he had not considered the question himself. "I..." he fell into a thought. "I guess it has to do with the fact that you and I have a common enemy. Maybe, or the fact that you are a King and I don't want the Emperor to kill another king. He has some deep-seated hatred against kings."

"Maybe those are not it either, and I just want the world's best alchemist to return to his former grace. Honestly, I don't know at this point. All I know is that what I have been doing here for the past few decades is no longer necessary and I feel... liberated somehow."

"All in all, I think the best explanation here is that I'm helping you because I have nothing better to do. So, are you going to tell me what you're doing next? Or is it a surprise?"

Alex stared at the old man for a while before giving him a gentle smile. "It's no secret," he said. "It's... not even a good plan actually. I can't tell if it will work or not. I just hope it will work."

The old man was only getting more and more curious now. "What are you going to do?" he asked.

If it was yesterday, the old man would say that Alex had been planning to use his Spiritual sense to pull out a pill from his storage ring to heal his dantian and return to cultivating once again.

However, he hadn't gained his spiritual sense back, and yet somehow he was still confident, so the old man could only wonder.

"How many years have you been here again? 60? 70?" Alex asked.

"About," the old man said slowly. "Why?"

"You've not remained in hiding all the time, have you?" Alex asked. "You must have fought many beasts both on land and sea and got into some serious fights during your time here."

The old man narrowed his eyes. "Why are you asking that?"

Alex put forth his hand. "Can I get one of those beasts' core?" he asked.

"A beast core?" That was the last thing the old man had been expecting.

"Yes, one from a beast that was in the Saint Foundation realm or Saint Core realm," Alex said while gesturing to the old man to hand one over.

The old man was pretty confused and didn't know what one could use the cores for, but seeing Alex ask him for it made him think Alex knew what he was doing. So, he quickly searched for a few cores in his storage bag and brought out one.

A small thumb-sized orb lay clutched in the old man's three fingers, the purple and blue swirl making intricate patterns on its surface. "This is the beast core of a White lion shark that I killed a long time ago. The White Lion shark was in the Saint Core 2nd realm at the time, but that was ages ago. I don't know what you want with this, but I hope this can—"

Alex grabbed the core from the old man's fingers and ate it.

"Wait!" the old man screeched in panic. "What are you doing?"

Alex swallowed the core and took a deep breath. Either something incredible was going to happen next... or he was going to die. He did not want to die.

"Spit it out! Quickly!" the old man said, but Alex had already begun ignoring all outside sound. He quickly closed his eyes and sat down to concentrate on what was going to happen next in his body.

Eating all of those meals and plants had let him know that his body was still capable of converting anything he ate into energy. He didn't need a cultivation for that, only his body constitution.

Alex had wanted to do this using the plants he found on the islands, but eating them didn't give him much energy at all. All healing pills would try to heal him as he was wounded, and he had little control over that energy.

It was only when Alex ate poison that his body converted the poison into Qi. He had realized after eating a few poisons that regular poisons were not going to work for him. He needed Saint-rank poisons.

But he didn't dare find a Saint rank poison to eat. He didn't want to take the risk at all.

That didn't matter, however, as his plan had been from the start to eat a beast core. Poison was just a fun little diversion that didn't pan out.

Alex felt the core lay in his stomach, getting ready to be consumed by his body. Pure energy was ready to flow in his veins, but something was still stopping it.

The Beast Core's spirit.

It was less of a spirit and more of an impression of a spirit, like an Intent of the beast left behind after it died. And that spirit was now starting its clash against Alex's spirit.

This was the entire reason Alex had spent weeks consuming Spirit-healing ingredients. The main thing he needed in his current state was Qi. The easiest way to get Qi, aside from pills, was using a Beast core. And when he ate a Beast Core, he had to battle the spirit hidden within.

Alex could feel the pain in his mind. He didn't know if the beast had shown up in his spiritual sea or not. He didn't know if it was even open or not yet, but he could feel the mental pain.

But he was strong now. He was much stronger than the beast had been when it died. The White Lion Shark's beast core could not possibly compare against Alex's current spirit.

It was annoying that Alex couldn't fight back at all, so all he could do was let the spirit waste all of its attacks on him while bearing through the pain.

He continued sitting with his eyes closed, his clothes drenched in his sweat as he persevered against the endless assault in his mind.

Then it stopped, and as if a floodgate had been opened in his stomach, Qi released through his veins, pumping to not just his dantian, but all across his body.

Alex didn't even have to do anything next. With so much Qi for his body to use, his Undying Physique kicked in immediately and his Dantian began to heal on its own.

All of Alex's effort for the past few days had led to this point, and it had been a success.