

Alchemy 441

Chapter 441 - Traversing The Body

"No, no, no, no, no. I can't do it. I-I don't know how to do it. I'm not so talented like you," Luo Mei said as she walked into her room.

"Sister!" Alex called out, making Luo Mei turn around. "You have True Qi right?"

"Y-Yes," Luo Mei said.

"How much?" he asked.

"Uh... About 30 percent I would say," she said.

"Then you have to do it," Alex said.

"Bu-But why can't you do it?" Luo Mei asked.

"I don't have True Qi," Alex said. "Common Qi won't be able to handle 5 people's True Qi by itself. So it has to be True Qi that shows the way."

"If it could, I wouldn't make you do it," Alex said.

"But... I don't know the human body as you do. Will I be able to know how blood vessels are even placed in the human body? In the first place, are blood vessels the same as Meridians?" Luo Mei asked.

"They overlap in most of the places but there are a few places they vastly differ," Alex said.

"For example, the origin and end of blood vessels is the heart, while the meridians don't have an origin or ending as far as I can tell. Although, there is something weird in the naval area, but I don't know what that is exactly," Alex said.

"So how can I who knows nothing about blood vessels help navigate them then?" Luo Mei asked.

"Don't worry, I will teach you," Alex said.

"Sit down, I will show you by sending some in through your own body. You can use your Qi and spiritual sense to check it out," Alex said.

"O-okay," Luo Mei said and sat down.

"Alright, give me your hand," Alex said.

Luo Mei put forth her hand, but then questioned, "Aren't we doing it from the back for father?"

"For uncle's treatment, the back is the only thing that makes sense. But for now, since you are learning, we will start with the easiest way, the wrist," Alex said.

"To start with, you need a clear idea of where the blood vessel is. You cannot just prick your Qi into anywhere you want. So, places that had more of an exposed blood vessel like the wrist is the easiest one to start with."

"For uncle's back, we will have to spend a few minutes searching for one that is the closest to the parasite," Alex said.

"Alright, do what you want," Luo Mei said.

"Okay, releases your Qi around my fingers with your left hand. I will take them inside," Alex said.

Luo Mei nodded and released an almost cool feeling Qi onto Alex's hand.

Alex nodded too and released his own vibrant yellow Qi. The yellow Qi was definitely influenced by his Yang; there was no question about that. But he sometimes wondered if his Supreme Metal root also influenced its yellow color. After all, Metal Qi was golden in color.

"Phew," Alex softly released his breath and said, "Here I go."

He slowly started grabbing onto the Qi next to his hand with his own Qi and started dragging it. He could suddenly feel a lot of weight on his Qi, but it was nothing his robust Qi couldn't handle.

In fact, he felt like he could carry about 10 of such Qi before his connection with the Qi thread broke. He didn't know how accurate his assumption was though.

"Watch with your spiritual sense," Alex said without looking at her and slowly pierced through the wrist's blood vessel.

The moment it entered, he started sending his Qi up her hand. However...

"AH! AH! Ouch! Stop, Stop, Stop, Stop STOP!!!" Luo Mei started crying out. Alex's attention was broken and he immediately released his Qi which faded into her body.

"What's wrong, sister?" he asked.

"Ouch," Luo Mei cried as she held her hands. "What the hell was that? Why did it burn my hand so much? Is it supposed to hurt like that?"

"Hurt?" Alex was surprised for a moment. "Wait, no, you said burned right? Hmm... is my Qi too hot for your body then?" Alex wondered.

"What was that about?" Luo Mei asked.

"Ah, I think my Qi might be... um, too Yangful for you," Alex said.

"It has too much yang? You have a yang-focused spiritual root?" Luo Mei asked as she massaged her wrist. "Thank god I have a water attribute Qi so I can cool my burnings. Imagine you do it on someone with spiritual roots that could not handle it."

Luo Mei had just said it when she remembered, "Ah! Father. You must've hurt father too."

"Shouldn't be," Alex said. "Uncle is in True Realm, he should be able to handle common yang Qi."

"I see. Well... what do we do now? Our plans flopped though. What do we do now?" Luo Mei asked.

"Hmm... ah right," Alex thought as he brought out a book. "This book has the stuff about blood vessels. Try to read it and just understand a general level of knowledge on it."

"You really just need to remember how they are arranged. Once you do that, I will give myself up as a guinea pig for you to try on. Or, you can test on yourself as well."

"For now, I think I will just go and get some rest. I spent all night thinking about Uncle's problem," Alex lied.

"Oh, okay. I will read it by the time you are rested," Luo Mei said.

Alex said his goodbyes and walked out of her room before making his way into his own room. Finally, he logged out of the game.

The day did not differ from any other day aside from the fact that Hannah took away some of his money to pay rent.

He didn't care about it much though. He had enough retirement funds and could earn some more money from the games if need be.

Besides, his stock in the Deva Corp shares was growing every day, along with the other ones.

He logged back into the game after he returned home and went directly to Luo Mei's room.

Luo Mei had read all she could and was gaining a bit of confidence.

"Come here quick. I think I can do it," Luo Mei said happily.

"Sure," Alex walked up to her. "Do it slowly though, or I might have problems."

"Of course I'm going to take care. I'm not going to ruin my talented junior brother's cultivation. Don't worry, just give me your hands," Luo Mei said.

"Very well. I will also check to see if you are doing it right. I will forcefully stop you if something goes wrong," Alex said and put front his wrist.

Luo Mei took a deep breath to calm herself and started pouring in her Qi. Alex used his spiritual sense to look at where she was going, but she didn't make any mistake at the beginning.

'Oh, she knows a little,' he thought. As it went on for more and more, he realized that she truly had learned a lot.

'She didn't slack off after all. Makes sense given her father's life is on the line,' Alex thought.

Luo Mei carefully navigated through his blood vessels. She looked like she would stumble at some places and Alex was ready to destroy her Qi inside of his body, but she found her footings and fully revolved her Qi before it came back to the wrist once more and left.

"Yes! I did it. Haha, see?" Luo Mei proclaimed loudly.

"Congratulations, sister," Alex said.

"Hehe," Luo Mei was really happy. "Wait, does this mean I can become a medical examiner too?"

"No," Alex said as he shook his head. "Learning how to send in your Qi is to check for the problems. You need to know what you are looking for, what you are not looking for, other forms of diagnosis, as well as general knowledge of alchemy to cure someone's illness."

"Oh... then I won't be able to reach your level even if I have spiritual sense huh? That sucks. Whatever, let's proceed with your back then," Luo Mei said.

"Urghh... sure," Alex said and laid on the bed on his chest.

"Um, you are sleeping?" Luo Mei asked.

"It's better if I don't move, so I laid down. You should have uncle do the same thing when you do it as well," Alex said.

"Alright... I just have to reach the stomach right? How do I know what's the stomach? Do I use spiritual sense?" she asked.

"You don't know what blood vessel is connected to what organ, do you?" Alex asked.

Luo Mei shook her head.

"Sigh, alright. You just start and use your spiritual sense to follow around. Unlike the wrist, you might not be able to immediately tell where you are starting from," Alex said.

"Okay," Luo Mei said and lifted Alex's robes. His pristinely smooth back showed itself to Luo Mei for the first time, and she immediately got to searching for the blood vessel."

"I think this is it," Luo Mei said.

"Can you tell me what you think it is?" Alex asked.

"It's the vessel that immediately goes towards the intestines and from there I take a branch to the stomach," Luo Mei said.

"Um... just try a little bit. I will tell you if you are correct," Alex said.

"Okay, here it goes," Luo Mei said and started using her Qi to enter Alex's body. She had just touched onto Alex's blood vessel when he immediately shouted.

"Stop! Stop!"

Luo Mei stopped pouring in Qi and dispersed what remaining there was. "What? Was I wrong?" she asked.

"Yeah. That's the vessel that goes directly to my heart," Alex said. "Try again."

"Hmm... how about this one?" Luo Mei asked and chose another blood vessel around the same area.

"That one goes to my legs," Alex said.

"This?"

"That one goes to the stomach, but it first goes through the lungs," Alex said.

"What about this one?"

"Legs."

"Damn, why are there so many blood vessels in one small place?" she got angry.

"I told you, sister. That's why we use the wrist," Alex said.

"Sigh, what about this one?" she asked.

"Oh, right that's it," Alex said. "You got it."

"Did I? Okay I will start now," Luo Mei said and sent in her Qi. This time, however, she sent in her spiritual sense as well.

"Woah! Why are your meridians so multicolored? What's this... like 6 colors?" she asked.

"7, the yellow and gold colors are hard to differentiate at a glance, but they are there," Alex said.

"Woah, is this what all meridians look like? Mine is just one single deep blue color," Luo Mei said.

"That's because you have the Superior Water roots, sister," Alex said. "Mine is many, meaning it's not that good of a spiritual root."

"Ah, I see," Luo Mei said.

"Anyway, sister. Focus! I don't want you messing up my innards okay?" he said.

"Stop worrying so much. I can split my attention quite easily," Luo Mei said.

She proceeded to send her Qi to the intestine and from there found a blood vessel she could travel up to the stomach.

"That's it," Alex said. "That's right around where you will find your Qi disappearing."

"So, that's where the parasite is stuck?" Luo Mei asked.

"Yes," Alex said.

She immediately stopped all of her Qi from moving anymore and dispersed it. "Okay, let me try once more," she said.

Alex sighed and nodded. She practiced on him for a little longer before deciding to leave and find her father.

She wanted to practice on his body for a while so she could be comfortable when it was her time to bring the True Qi from the other people up to the parasite.

Alex left too and thought about what he needed to do. "Hmm... I should go find sister Xing.. She might be able to help me understand more about formations."

Chapter 442 - Irrational Hate

Alex found Luo Xing outside near the pond with Xiao Huang.

"Sister Xing, brother Huang" Alex called out.

"Oh, little brother, what are you doing here? Shouldn't you be with sister Mei?" Xiao Huang asked. "She just took away Uncle to practice on him."

"It should be fine. I'm in the same spot as her with what needs to be done next," Alex said.

"Did Mei'er really learn it all in a single day? That just seems unbelievable," Luo Xing said.

"Haha, your sister is quite talented," Alex said.

"So, what did you come here for?" Luo Xing asked.

"Oh, you see. About a month or two ago, I started having interests in formations and even started learning them. I learned how to make base formations on plates and can even make Heaven grade True ranked formations on plates. But I couldn't understand how to proceed with the formation flags."

"What should I do? How do I get them made? How I should carve them? Those sorts of things. So, I was hoping you could teach me a little," Alex asked.

"Oh little brother, you're talented in formations too? Do you have any you've made?" Xiao Huang asked.

"Uh, yeah. I made a few. Here's one of the better ones I've made," Alex said as he brought out his True ranked formation plate.

"It's a—"

"A light barrier formation?" Xiao Huang said in a bit of surprise and took it from Alex's hands.

He carefully looked at the strokes and the angles the strokes were in.

"What Efficiency is this formation at?" he asked.

"56%," Alex said. He had in fact made better ones, but those were formations that he found through the dead man in the Southern Forest, so he couldn't bring it out.

"Hmm... although I can see some errors, it's really not bad for a newbie. The bigger problem is either in the depth of the strokes or the impurity in the metal plates."

"Still, the fact that you made such a high-level formation, even if it's just on a plate is quite amazing. Congratulations brother," Xiao Huang said.

"Haha, it's the product of 2 months worth of effort. Also, I learned a lot about focus and persistence thanks to making pills, so I could make these," Alex said.

"Let me test it," Xiao Huang said and attached two True Spirit stones onto the plate and threw it on the ground just as he filled it all up.

Suddenly, a barrier burst forth from the plate and surrounded the people there. Alex was a little surprised as he wasn't expecting Xiao Huang to suddenly test his formation plates.

He looked around and saw the bright light surrounding him. He walked up to the barrier and placed his hands on it.

Xiao Huang did the same and said, "Hmm... that's not a bad barrier. That should be able to stop at least True Master realm attacks."

"Of course you can destroy the plate as well. Deforming a True ranked metal plate might be hard, but you can surely just remove it from the energy source that is the True Spirit stones," Xiao Huang said and went up to the plate to do just that.

"Let that be a lesson, little brother. Never use a plate formation in a fight. With a formation made through formation rods, you can set the distance from how far away they can activate. That way you can properly fight without worrying about people taking off your formations," Xiao Huang said.

"I see," Alex said. He did remember how the Spirit Disorienting formation was set about 50 meters out of where it actually started.

'Oh, that reminds me,' Alex thought.

"Um, can you tell what this formation flag does?" Alex said as he brought out two formation rods.

"I could only find two of these, so I'm not sure if you can learn anything, but I hope you will at least try."

Xiao Huang nodded and took the rods. "Hmm... it's hard to tell how the formations would go, but I can make some guess," he said and looked further.

"Hmm... the metal alloy itself is not very much used, so the formation should be either some sort of illusory formation, Cloud making formation, or concealment formation," Xiao Huang said.

"Concealment formation?" Alex's eyes perked up.

"Yeah, the kind that stops light, sound, and even aura from escaping," he said.

'That must be it. No wonder master and sister couldn't find me at all,' Alex thought.

The rod he had taken out was the same rod he found when he was stuck in the Southern Forest. If it truly was a concealment formation, then it would have been impossible for them to come to find him.

"Alright, come sit down. We will teach you what we can," Xiao Huang said.

Luo Xing sat right by and taught him too.

For the next 2 hours, they cleared most if not all of his confusions about making formations using formation flags.

Apparently, when making a formation flag, you did not make the full strokes. Instead, you only carved the beginning of it.

If a formation blueprint had 6 corners also known as origins, then there would have to be 6 formation flags.

Each of the rods of the formation flags would have to have one of the origins carved onto them. Since the rods were usually cylindrical, getting a curved carving that was straight was very hard to achieve.

Once one was done with that, there was also the case of the cloth part of the flag itself.

The cloth was just there to hold the spirit stones and transfer the Qi through the air. Apparently, it was made up of beast hides for fluid energy transfer.

The better the cloth was, the further apart the formation flags could be.

Alex was quite happy when he learned that he didn't have to worry about making the cloth and only needed to worry about carving the formation.

'Thank god, I just need the formation blueprint,' Alex thought.

"Nephew Huang, can you come with me for a second," Shi Nangong called Xiao Huang and he left. Alex could guess why that was.

'Uncle must be looking at brother Huang as one of the people to transfer Qi,' Alex thought.

"Do you want to continue?" Luo Xing asked.

"Um... sure, but don't you want to go look if Uncle is fine?" Alex asked.

Luo Xing smiled and shook her head. "Mei'er wouldn't want me there most likely. She still hates me quite a bit," she said.

"Um... can I ask why? if you don't mind," Alex said.

"Uh... sure, it's stupid really. Most would say she's in the wrong here, but I think it's okay for her to be angry at me," Luo Xing said.

"When I was little... I was contracted with a rather fatal illness. It...was horrible, but the illness didn't affect children as fast, so I was still mostly okay."

"Mothers took care of me one after another, day after night, and reared me. They did it so much so that... Mei'er couldn't even see mothers for most of the days."

"Father brought in doctors to check what was wrong, and they found the problem rather easily. Except, the cure wasn't so easy to come by."

"It needed a special ingredient... hah, I don't even remember the name of it anymore," Luo Xing said as she shook her head.

"The ingredient was rather rare and hard to find, so father took some men and went into the Southern forest to search for it."

"He spent days in there looking for the ingredients. He was motivated to save me. Unfortunately, one day... mother, Mei'er's mother contracted the illness too," Luo Xing's eyes were starting to fill with tears.

"When father came back, happy with the single ingredient, after many days, he returned home to see both mother and me on the deathbed."

"The illness..." Luo Xing's tears started dripping down her cheeks. Her lips quivered as she forced herself to speak. "Mother looked so frail back then. I... I wished she had used the pill on herself."

"But she chose..." Luo Xing started crying. "She chose to give the single pill to me."

"I was cured, but mother..."

Luo Xing didn't continue and just sobbed. Alex could feel the sadness in her voice.

Just as Luo Mei loved Shi Nangong, Luo Xing loved Luo Mei's mother too. However, there was no way a child could love a mother more than the mother could love her child.

"I'm sure she was happy when you got the pill," Alex said.

"She was, I don't doubt it. She told it to me herself. But..." Luo Xing said. "But it hurts when I remember back that... that the reason mother died was because of me."

Alex sat quietly while Luo Xing sobbed. "But that doesn't mean that Sister should hate you," he said.

Luo Xing sniffed while wiping her tears. "Since mother and I were kept in the same room, most people stopped visiting us in fear of contracting the illness."

"Mei'er, who was already having little time with mother, stopped getting to meet her after she fell ill."

"Even when... when mother died, even then she couldn't meet her in fear of contracting the illness."

"Really the only time she saw mother after I got ill was... perhaps her covered body in the funeral."

"Even then... Mei'er couldn't go close to her. I got ill, and mother got ill. We both went into a single room for containment and when I came out okay, mother did not."

"To the young Mei'er, when the adults tried explaining what was happening, she started blaming me for taking away mother."

"At least... I got to say goodbye to mother before she died. Mei'er, however, didn't even get that."

"So, while I think the hate is completely irrational and I don't deserve it... I also think that she's not in the wrong with hating me," Luo Xing said.

"Perhaps... one day she might choose to call me sister again. But until then... I will just have to wait," Luo Xing said with a sad smile.

"I'm... sorry for making you remember that," Alex said.

"Don't be," Luo Xing smiled meekly. "It had been a while since I thought of mother again. It's... good to know that I still have memories of her."

"You know what they say, a person is not gone as long as you can remember them," Luo Xing said; her mood getting better. She wiped away whatever remaining tears she had.

"Since you helped me remember mother and are helping father right now, I will leave you with one information about Formations that you likely won't find from any books," Luo Xing said as she looked around.

Alex immediately sent out his spiritual sense to see if anyone was listening.

"It's kind of a secret... so I hope you don't tell it to anyone," Luo Xing said and came close to whisper.

"You don't need a metal base to make a formation."

Chapter 443 - Remuneration And Job

Luo Xing explained that she herself didn't know what it meant and that it was only something she had happened to learn in her sect.

She then proceeded to teach the remainder of what she knew about formations without really giving away any secrets.

The information that Alex already had in his brain finally started to make sense as to what it meant.

'So I was just missing the core that connected it all,' he thought. He would still need to practice a bit, but this alone was enough for him to learn formations on his own now.

Once the training was over, he went to check on Luo Keng. When he reached the room, he found the door open and a few people inside there

There were Luo Keng himself, Shi Nangong, Luo Mei, Old man Jin, Xiao Huang, and another old man he did not recognize.

Luo Mei was apparently doing the task right now 4 people other than herself and Luo Keng gave her their Qi.

'Considering Uncle will cultivate the next 2 weeks, 4 people should be enough,' Alex thought.

Luo Mei put 100 percent of her concentration into sending her Qi to the stomach area and from what Alex could see, her Qi was getting eaten.

Every time the Qi was eaten, she would have to carry the remaining Qi outside with her all the way inside.

Finally, after 20 minutes, she stopped.

'That's... a bit of a problem,' Alex thought. 'I should make some pills for her.'

"I... I can't do it. I just don't have enough True Qi to carry all of yours," she said as she huffed.

"It's okay, Meimei. Take your time," Luo Keng said.

"Uncle is right, sister." Alex walked into the room. "You can cultivate shortly and start again. I will make some pills to help with that, and brother Huang should have some formations for assisting too."

"Ah, Nephew Ming, you are finally back," Luo Keng said while he was on the bed. "You somehow taught my daughter how to navigate the human body's blood vessels. I'm truly amazed. Honestly, I didn't know her brain could hold anything but cultivation."

"Oh, who's this?" the new man in the room said.

"Brother Hong, this is the young man you were looking for," Old Man Jin said.

"Oh, this is the junior Yu Ming?" the old man named Hong asked.

"Uh...yes, I am Yu Ming. Senior is?" Alex asked.

"You can call me old man Hong. I am the city lord's butler and was sent here to reward you for helping all of the different people. If not for you, we don't know how many we would've lost," the city lord said.

"Reward? I don't need any reward, senior. I was happy to help with what I could," Alex said. "Besides, senior Jin helped me gather so many ingredients in such little time. So he should be the one you should be thanking really."

"Ah, I like a humble young man. Still, the Lord sent me with the reward and I can't return without giving it to you," the old man Hong said and took out a small bag. "Here you go, young man."

Alex looked through the bag and realized that there were nearly 500 True spirit stones in there.

"Senior, this is too much. I just made a few dozen pills; they don't cost this much," he said.

"Keep it, young man. You can't put a price on life, and you saved many that day. This is the least we can do," old man Hong said.

Alex didn't know what else to say, so he kept it and thanked the old man Hong.

"Actually, there is something else the Lord wanted me to ask of you, young man," old man Hong said. He pulled out another storage bag and handed it to Alex.

"Here we have a few ingredients and recipes, all for Common rank pills since that's all you can make from what we've heard."

"We were hoping we could employ you to make as many as you can," old man Hong said.

Alex thought for a moment and tried to think of what jobs he had for the next few days. There was only 1 thing he needed to do.

'I just need to make pills for sister and uncle.'

"Yeah, I can do that," Alex said.

"Great, here you go." Old man Hong gave the ingredients. Since Luo Mei was tired, and this was just a test, Luo Keng decided to dismiss everyone.

"I can do with a little more people, father.? Although I don't know if your body can handle it," She said.

"I felt no discomfort. If you can handle it, I will try to find a few more people," Luo Keng said.

Alex checked Luo Keng once more to make absolutely sure that it was in fact the parasite, but that was pretty much proven at this point.

He thought of going back to his room to cultivate but instead decided to go to the Alchemy hall to make some pills.

Before that he needed to find Old man Jin for a small task.

"Senior Jin, here are the books you gave me. I'm done with them," Alex said as he handed them back.

"You're done reading them? Don't you want more?" he asked.

"No, it's fine. There wasn't a lot of new information on it, but just enough to find Uncle's cure," Alex said.

"Oh, that's great then," old man Jin said.

"Also, can you do a small task for me for tomorrow morning?" he asked.

"Sure, young lord. Anything you ask," he said.

"The merchant group that sister came with, it should be leaving in a day or two, can you find out when that is?" Alex asked.

"Uh... sure," old man Jin said. "But, won't you stay a little longer?" he asked.

Alex shook his head. "Sister might have to stay, but I will need to go back. There are still a few things I need to do back in the sect," Alex said.

"Sigh, I will find that information for you then, young lord," he said.

"Thank you. I will be in the Alchemy hall, so... come find me around evening time tomorrow," Alex said.

"As you wish."

Alex left and went towards the alchemy hall. It seemed the people in the hall were let know about his arrival, so he was taken to one of the Alchemy rooms.

"You don't need to wait on me. I will be here for at least 2 days," Alex said.

Afterward, he entered and sat down on the floor next to the fire. He brought out the ingredients bag to check once more.

"Hm... damn, that's close to 100 sets of ingredients. Even when I do 4 an hour... It should take close to...25 hours. If I speed up and exhaust myself, I should be able to do it in around 18 hours."

"That's still quite a lot," he thought as he sighed. He looked at the recipes and realized that he knew all of them.

'Nothing new here either I guess. Although, I don't think I've made this one pill before,' he thought.

It was around 10 pm, so he started making the pills. At first, he started slow with 3 pills an hour, but once he got the hang of it, he started doing 4, or even 5 pills an hour.

However, he never forced himself to make 6 pills an hour.

'Damn, it's hard trying to cram the recipe when I need to do spend the same amount of time per ingredient. It's only the in between time that I can eliminate to make things faster,' he thought.

He slowly made pills, resulting in about 2 pills every 45% of the time. It wasn't 50% like he was promised, but that was just how probability worked.

In the next 10 hours, he did 45 sets of ingredients and got about 65 pills. Since it was 8 am in the morning, he decided to log out. He wanted to bring out Pearl and have him cultivate, but he wasn't sure if that was a good idea since he couldn't control what happened during that time.

He went to get his breakfast and then went to school. Exams were getting close and he hadn't properly studied, so he decided to study in the morning.

After he returned back from school, he went into the game to continue it all over once again.

Fortunately, he didn't have the fatigue from making pills for an entire night and could restart once again.

For the next 3 hours, he made the pills again and stopped.

He stood up and walked out of the room to see old man Jin standing there.

"Senior Jin, I must have made you wait. Apologies," he said.

"Ah, no need to apologize young lord. I have got the information," he said.

"Oh, please tell me. When is it?" he asked.

"The Caravan will start moving tomorrow around 3 pm. It seems they were ready for you, so they have you registered," Old man jin said.

"Hm... I should finish making these pills by the morning. So, I will meet with my sister and Uncle for the day and leave in the afternoon. Thank you, senior Jin. Please let Sister know about this too," Alex said.

"My pleasure, young lord," Old man Jin said and left.

Alex went back inside and made some more pills. Since he had such a long time, he took it slow and did it without gathering much mental fatigue.

When he was done, he had made around 140 pills using the 100 or so ingredients.

Chapter 444 - Goodbye

It was 4 in the morning when Alex was done making the 100+ pills for the city lord.

Finally, he could proceed onto some pills of his own. The first thing he made was some Qi Renewal pills for his sister. She needed a desperate amount of them, so in the next hour, he made as many as he could.

Then he made two sets of common parasite removal pills. It came out to be 3, so he was quite happy with it.

He made other miscellaneous pills that he thought his sister's family would need and was finally done around 8 in the morning.

"Ahhh..." he stretched as he stood up. Sitting down on the same spot for over a day and a half in a row with minimal movement was very hard for him.

'How do people go on months like this? Is closed cultivation that easy?' he wondered. 'Maybe it gets easier the more I get used to this.'

He sorted out the pills and kept 40 for himself. He didn't want to do it, but he also didn't want to reveal that he could make more pills with a single ingredient.

So, he reluctantly hid those pills away.

He walked out of the alchemy hall and walked towards his sister's house. The city was bustling in the morning and was very different from the midnight or noon he walked around.

'People return to daily life so easily, huh?' he thought.

Once he reached his sister's house, he went directly to her room and knocked.

Luo Mei opened the door and beamed. "You're back," she said.

"Yeah, and I brought the pills for you," Alex said.

"Oh, come in," she said and took him inside.

Alex walked in and took out some pill bottles. "Here! These are the pills for fast cultivation. These are for a breakthrough, these are for Uncle after he is done with the parasites, these are normal healing pills for you and your sister, these are for smooth breakthroughs... and these are pills to improve your spiritual sense."

Alex handed out multiple pill bottles and Luo Mei was a little overwhelmed.

"Wait! Wait! Wait! There are so many. Aren't these expensive?" she asked.

"Umm... each one should be about 2-3 True spirit stones in cost," Alex said as he wondered if he was right. He had never really such good pills outside of auctions.

"I can't take that!" Luo Mei said.

"Well, you have to whether you like it or not. Especially this one," he said as he pointed to the one he had created himself.

"It's a recipe I came up with on my own. Well, that might be a little untrue... it's more like I stumbled on it by accident, but it's my own recipe nonetheless. It greatly increases your spiritual sense, so it should help you a bit," Alex said.

"But—"

"Just eat it, sister. Are you going to say no to your brother?" he asked.

"Sigh, okay. But I'm asking father to give you something too. You can't say no to your sister either," Luo Mei said.

"Uh... sure," Alex said.

"So... do I cultivate after eating this?" she asked.

"I don't think you need to," Alex said.

"Alright then, here it goes," she said and took one of the new pills out and ate it.

"Ah, it's so... warm," she said as she shook her head a little.

"Do you feel any changes?" he asked.

"Let me check."

Alex felt a wave of spiritual energy wash over him as Luo Mei sent out her spiritual sense to the extreme without stretching it beyond her normal level.

"Wow!" she cried out.

"It increased by nearly 5 meters. That's amazing," she said. "My spiritual sense is now up to 40 meters."

"Was it 35 only before?" he asked.

"Yeah. I started with what was it... 32 I think? And got to 35 when I broke through to the 6th realm. I think it will increase when I breakthrough more," she said. "Oh, how many should I eat?"

"I don't really know. Just to be safe, don't eat more than 3. Give the rest of sister Xing," Alex said.

Luo Mei's face soured when she heard that. "You give it," she said.

"Sister, there is no bad blood between you two. You should also know how unreasonable you are being towards her. Imagine what she must be feeling like with her only sister hating her for something that was not her fault."

"Just go and make up with her. Say sorry! You are the one in the wrong here from what I understand," Alex said.

"But I..." Luo Mei couldn't come up with any argument so she just crossed her arms. "She told you about it? Or did mother?"

"She did. I asked first though," he said.

"Sigh... I will see what I can do," she said.

"It's okay. Just start slowly. You don't need to make up in a single day. Slowly build back the connections you've lost," Alex said. "As long as you come out of it being closer than when you started,? you will have succeeded."

"I hope to hear news about you two sisters being sisterly again when you return back to Scarlet City," he said.

"Oh right, that reminds me. You are leaving today?" she asked.

"In the afternoon, yes," he said.

"Hmm... this might be troublesome for master now," she said softly.

"Huh? Why?" he asked.

"I won't be returning for another 2 weeks. So by that time, my spot will have changed. Someone else will take that place," she said.

"Um... does master immediately leave his position when someone else takes the Prime Disciple spot? No right?" he asked.

"No, he stays as the sect leader for another 6 months to figure out what is going to happen next."

"When senior brother left his spot, it was only after 5 months that I finally managed to securely make my place on the first spot after defeating Du Yuhan."

"That was about 3 years ago. The stronger disciples just happened to be older than 25, and I got insanely lucky," Luo Mei said.

"Oh, then we have nothing to worry about. Just return back to the sect and you can take back your spot," Alex said.

"No. If Du Yuhan takes my spot, I can't force it back from him," she said.

Alex was surprised. "You can't win against him? You have a 3 realm advantage," he said.

"And he has Sword Qi," Luo Mei said. "I haven't fought him since 3 years ago. All this time, I thought he didn't bother since he was weak, but as we saw in the Annual Competition, he is insanely strong."

"If I'm not wrong, at his best, he can dish out a True Disciple level attack. That's not something the current me can handle," She said.

"That's... shit! That's a problem for sure," Alex said.

"Sigh, I will continuously try and take back the 1st rank, but I'm not sure if I can. We will have to see after I've returned," she said.

"Thanks for the pills."

Alex nodded and walked out to find Senior Jin. "Oh, senior Hong is here?" he said in surprise and went to find the old man.

"Senior, here are the pills," Alex said and handed the 100 pills to them.

The old man's eyes went wide when he saw the 100 pills. "You managed to make 100 pills?" he asked.

"Uh... you did give me 100 sets of ingredients, right?" he asked.

"Yes, that's why I'm surprised. You didn't make a single mistake?" he asked in surprise.

"Ah, I may not look it, but I'm one of the most talented alchemists amongst my sect disciples, senior," Alex said.

"I don't doubt it. Still, I've seen way too many alchemists that require 3 sets of ingredients to make a single decent pill and call themselves talented. Compared to them, you are miles better," he said.

"Haha, you jest me, senior. Please check the pills," Alex said.

Old man Hong checked the pills and was about to thank Alex to end the conversation when he remembered.

"Oh right... uhh, a 100 so... here," Old man Hong handed him a storage bag.

Alex looked inside and saw about 300 spirit stones. 'That's about the right price. Plus I ended up with about 40% more pills so I profit quite a bit here,' Alex thought.

"Thank you, senior," Alex said.

"No, no, no. It's me who should be thanking you. I didn't know you could make so many pills. I thought we would only have around 40 or so pills. I will immediately bring it to my lord," the old man said and left.

Alex went to meet with Luo Keng and talked for a bit. Both him and Shi Nangong were very kind to him and reminded him of his own mother and father.

He met up with Luo Xing and gave her a few mental strength pills to thank her for helping him with the formation studies.

Since she wasn't in the Mind Tempering realm yet, she could thankfully make use of the pills.

Xiao Huang on the other hand couldn't get anything. Alex apologized and promised he would make him any pills he needed for free once he reached the True realms.

Xiao Huang laughed and said there was no need. They conversed for a bit and soon it was noon.

Alex went back to his sister and talked to her for a while longer. This time, Meng Yun was with her too.

She was rarely with Luo Mei inside the house since she was pardoned from serving Luo Mei for the entirety of their stay back home.

She would only resume her work once they left back again. Still, Meng Yun liked spending time with Luo Mei and came to visit her from time to time.

"Meimei, uncle Jin, please go see young nephew Ming to the caravan. I would do so myself, but unfortunately, I am unable to," Luo Keng said when it was time for Alex to leave.

"Take care, Young Man," Shi Nangong said.

"Goodbye little brother," Xiao Huang said.

Luo Xing silently nodded and waved her hand.

Alex said his goodbyes and went to the caravan with Luo Mei and old man Jin. The afternoon city wasn't as loud as the morning's but it was still pretty crowded.

Old man Jin had found a carriage for them, and the three of them rode on it to the outside of the city

It was close to 3, so the sun wasn't as hot and the days were also slightly cold.

"That's the caravan," old man Jin said as he showed them the way.

"hmm, little brother. You are okay?" Zhang Xie was surprised when he saw Alex return.

"Hello, senior Zhang. Yes, I'm okay," Alex said.

"I was told you were okay, but... it's still impossible to believe something like that after seeing those beast hoards," he said.

"The beasts didn't reach the caravan this time, right?" Alex asked. That was what Luo Mei had told him.

"Oh no, I'm talking about last month's. Actually, I also saw the month before that. Weird..." Zhang Xie thought of something. "Why are the attacks exactly a month apart?"

"Anyway, come you two, I have the carriage prepared for you," he said.

"Oh no, senior. I'm not going back. Only junior brother is," Luo Mei said.

"He is? Oh right, my men must-have set for him alone then. Come," he said and took him to a carriage.

Alex walked up to the carriage and looked inside. He could see about 4 different people in there. 2 of them were young men nearing 30 years of age. There was one woman that looked like she was 25, but who really knew.

The three of them were wearing similar clothing and had a cultivation base in the True realms.

And the final man in the carriage was actually an old man that seemed to be in his mid-50s.

Chapter 445 - More Bandits

"These 3 are part of the guards I hired. There are 18 guards for this trip. Usually, it would be around 10, but since the beast attacks, all merchants have increased the guard count," Zhang Xie said.

"There are 5 in the front carriage and 10 in the final 2 carriages. Since this is the 2nd carriage, you should be relatively safe, little brother. Although I hope you will fight when the time comes," he said.

"Don't worry, senior Xie. I won't be a freeloader," Alex said.

"You hear that old man?" Zhang Xie said. "You can't be a freeloader either. You've promised to fight beasts and bandits in case we are attacked, we will leave you behind if you coward out of the fight."

The old man simply glared at Zhang Xie and Alex for a while and nodded in affirmation. The old man had gray hair and a mostly hobo look from what Alex could tell. His clothes were pretty dirty and it looked like he was out of money.

'No wonder needs to ride the caravan like that,' Alex thought. He got up and introduced himself to the group in the caravan.

The men and woman smiled but didn't seem to be in a mood for conversation. The old man glared at Alex and tried to avert his eyes when he was greeted.

Alex understood that he didn't want to talk either. The caravan was ready to move, so Luo Mei came next to the window.

"Have a safe journey, junior brother. Also, don't worry about the Prime disciple problem once you go back. It's my burden to bear, not yours. You just have fun, you'll get there someday," Luo Mei said.

Alex nodded and said his final goodbye before the caravan left for the east. It was going to take about 2 days before he reached Scarlet city, and seeing as though nobody wanted to talk, he felt like it was going to be a very boring time.

The 3 men and women spoke to each other, but Alex didn't get into the conversation. He could tell that they were good friends, so it didn't feel right to butt in.

The old man also kept looking towards him from time to time, and Alex wondered if he wanted to talk or something. But since the old man never said anything, Alex didn't talk either.

Seeing as though he had nothing more to do, he decided to close his eyes and think about the different kinds of stuff.

One of the things he had always wanted to see is if he could make recipes for pills using the ingredients he was familiar with. He was sure he would likely never reach the same level of accuracy as when he did it practically, but he had time to waste, and from the looks of it, he couldn't go anywhere for now.

The sun went down and the night started doing its job. However, it was not at all quiet. The people in the caravan sang and danced along the way as the group moved forward.

"Hey you two, get ready. The bandits will be here any moment," the woman told Alex and the old man.

The old man say anything and simply nodded with an eye that burned with anticipation.

"Do bandits usually attack this area?" Alex asked.

"Yeah, and nighttime is what they like the most. The bandits move all over the southern forest, so we can't tell exactly where they will show up, but given how loud these people are, they will know where we are and will attack us," the lady said.

Alex nodded. "I keep wondering, why do bandits even attack? They should know by now that the merchants hire strong guards. It sort of doesn't make sense," Alex said.

"Not all merchants can afford us. Most can barely get self-tempering realm cultivators, people weaker than you. So, they attack, hoping they got the right one," the woman said.

"It must be terrible for those merchants. I can only imagine how many people die to those horrible people," Alex said.

"Most of the time, the bandits aren't really bad. They are just thieves that want your possessions. As long as you hand it over, they won't hurt you."

"But once in a while when the merchant struggles or a particularly bad character turns into a bandit, there are problems."

"Still, bandits don't attack that many times. Maybe once in a week, some even once in a month. However, recently since the beast attacks, they are terrified of coming out of their caves for while"

"Also given that most merchants have stopped traveling, their supplies must be ending. So... I assume we will meet a lot of bandits this trip," the woman said.

Alex nodded as he thought of something and asked, "how strong are the bandits?"

"Some are weaker than you. No, most are weaker than you. Some are close to you in strength and very few come close to us in strength. However, that doesn't mean that there are people stronger than us."

"Don't worry. The strong ones hate doing the work themselves so even if their groups do come, it's usually the lower-level thugs. We should be fine with those," the woman said.

The group went along without any hitch for a few more hours until it was midnight. Alex wondered if anything was going to even happen, and that was when he heard the shout.

"BANDITS!"

"Let's go!" the woman shouted. But before she could even stand up, the old man had already opened the carriage door on his side and walked out.

Alex quickly opened the door on his side after hearing the woman and walked out as he took out his steel sword too.

'Try not to use Sword Intent,' he told himself. He didn't want to reveal something like that in front of the strangers here.

"Haah!" a bandit shouted as he charged towards him. He held a sword in his hands and swung it directly at Alex.

'So weak,' Alex thought when he saw the man's high Organ Tempering realm cultivation base.

Alex didn't even dodge and directly hit the incoming sword. The bandit's sword bent in half and flew out of the bandit's arms. The bandit himself fell onto the ground with fear creeping up in his eyes.

He tried to get back up, but his hands kept slipping on the dried leaves on the ground. Finally, he got a grip and managed to turn around and run back into the forest.

Alex looked around and saw that the bandits were being beaten up left and right. This was a very weak bandit group and was definitely out of luck.

On the other side of the caravan, Alex could hear shouted of agony as screams rang out from time to time.

Another man jumped at Alex, but he was kicked directly on the ribs and sent flying away.

Alex then looked around and saw that there were no other bandits here.

He looked at the two men who had the bandits with broken limbs, laid sprawling on the ground.

"Do we leave them like this?" Alex asked.

"What? You want to help them?" they asked mockingly.

Alex didn't say anything and looked at the bandits with a little shocked expression.

'The ones from the princess' caravan always killed people no matter what though,' he thought.

The caravan was starting to move so he got onto the carriage. As soon as he entered, he was assaulted with a heavy smell of blood.

He looked at the old man, whose body was mostly covered in blood.

"Damn it old man, You don't need to kill them. You could've just broken their bones and left them. Why did you have to go on a bloody massacre?" the woman asked while incredibly annoyed.

"Hmph," the old man said and minded his own business.

"Dammit," the woman turned around, not wanting to face the bloody old man.

"Sigh, you didn't go psycho on the bandits, right?" she asked Alex.

"No," Alex said as he shook his head. "But I'm quite surprised that you guys leave the bandits alive. The caravan I was in about a month ago didn't do that. Every bandit group they came across, they would kill them all," Alex said.

"Killing all bandits? That must be either the Royal Fu merchant group who don't hire anybody and instead uses national guards as their guard."

"Or it could be the Victorious Snow merchant group. They are known to have ruthless guards all the time," the woman said.

"We on the other hand don't do that. For one, we don't like killing people a lot. Secondly, you don't want to be known as the bandit-killing merchant group."

"That only draws out the worst in every bandit you meet and they end up attacking you with the intention to kill even when you can't fight them," she said.

"I see," Alex said. "The merchant group came from the capital so it must have been the Royal Fu merchant group. Yeah, they killed every single one of the bandits."

"Alright, let me know if you are injured. If you're not, rest up. There will be more of such fights throughout the night," the woman said.

Alex nodded and closed his eyes to wait for the time to pass. He desperately wished that he could log out and go get something to eat, but it didn't seem like he could get any chance now.

He just had to wait until he was back in the city.

A few hours passed, and the people shouted outside once more.

"BANDITS!"

Chapter 446 - Black Venom Bandit Group

Sun had come up and Alex was not the least bit exhausted. The two men next to him were pretty jovial and were talking to each other, while the woman in front of him made a slightly disgusted face from time to time.

The old man next to her was drenched in blood by now and had done nothing about it. Thankfully, he hadn't attacked a single ally during the 3 different bandit attacks last night.

The woman had told Alex that 3 attacks were surprisingly very low for the night.

"After 3 beast attacks in a row, anyone would be scared. Especially if they lived in the forest," the woman had said.

Alex looked around and realized that nobody really cared about his existence, and it didn't look like they were going to get attacked any time soon.

So, he decided to log out real quick and get his breakfast. He closed his eyes and got into a meditative position for a bit to see how they reacted, and after realizing that the people didn't care, he left.

He quickly did his business in the bathroom and went to eat. He gorged down the food while telling the people how precarious of a position he was in and how he could not really leave.

Then, he returned back to the game and found himself perfectly fine. Still, it was quite scary to leave his body alone like that.

The day passed by and Alex was bored with nothing to do. He tried sleeping but even that didn't really work since he wasn't tired at all.

Back when he was with the princess, he at least had a friend to talk with. If not that, he could spend his time learning about the different formations.

Now, he couldn't even do that.

'Making pills in my mind is boring and hard,' he thought. 'And there's really nothing else I can do.'

He was seated on the left side of the carriage, so when he stuck his face out to get fresh air, he couldn't even see any of the southern forests.

Instead, he saw the farmland to the south. The cool breeze of the upcoming winter hit his face and reminded him of the changing seasons.

He started spending the rest of his time doing just that, looking at the different lands to the north, instead of focusing on the south.

'That's where the ocean is right?' he thought. 'I wonder when I will get to see that and just how far it is.'

The day passed by and night fell once more. The bandits would soon attack once more.

Alex could hear the gasps of people from all around him. Even one of the men sitting towards the right window gasped.

At first, he thought it was the bandits again, but there wasn't any shout.

"Just look at that. So much damage," the man mumbled under his breath.

Alex looked over on his side and saw that massive, almost wave of destruction all around him.

Lands were torn to shred, trees missing all around, and even the Souther forest was in a mess.

'Oh, are we back around the place where I left?' he wondered. 'This must be where that saint realm beast showed up through with its entire beast army.'

"This is seriously getting too dangerous. We can't keep risking our lives for this small sum of money," the man said.

"Sigh, we will quit after this job and wait until the beast attacks settle down. No need to die for a little money," the woman said.

"Ssh! Did you hear that?" the other man said.

Everyone got quiet and tried to listen to what was going on. They heard the trees rustling and then someone shouted.

"BANDITS!"

Alex was used to this by now and opened his side of the door before walking out.

The bandits surprisingly didn't charge at them, and instead slowly appeared from what remaining bushes there were and lined up against the caravan.

Alex was surprised why they were not attacking, but then he saw the woman's face.

She was worried. She wasn't scared or horrified, but she was definitely worried. Alex looked at the other members of her team as well, and they seemed worried as well.

'This one is not going to be so easy, is it?' Alex thought. He realized that the only reason the guards could be worried is if they didn't have the ability to protect their employers.

"Damn it, it's the Black Venom bandit group," one of the men said.

Alex didn't know bandit names, but he could see where the name came from. All of the bandits had black robes and had long black hair.

'That explains the black part... so, is the venom part that they use something venomous?' Alex wondered.

"Surrender your items now, and we will let you go along just fine," the man with a thick mustache spoke. From the looks of it, the 20 or so bandits seemed to follow him as if he were the leader.

"Don't worry guys, this is not the Black Venom Bandits. At least... not the real one," the woman said.

"What are you? An off-shoot of the main bandit group? You certainly have to be related to have this much strength, but I know who the leader of Black Venom bandit group is, and you are not it," the woman said confidently.

"Hah, just because I lead the weaker members of our group doesn't mean that we are not part of the group. Anyway, enough talking, will you give us the items or not?" the man asked.

Alex looked at the group of bandits and saw that most of the people, including the leader had a cultivation base in the True Realm. They were very weak in the True realms, but it was the True realms nonetheless.

Only about 3 people were in the self tempering realm, but it was still quite high.

"Sister, let's fight them. We've got the force to beat them to a pulp," one of the men said.

The old man looked at the bandit group with furious eyes. Even when he couldn't fight them, it seemed like he hated the bandits too much to care.

"I'm not worried about them. They couldn't hope to hurt us with how overconfident they are. I'm just worried what will happen if the Black venom himself learned about this."

"He is not someone we can mess with," the woman said.

"Miss Gong, you must protect us," Zhang Xie said from behind them.

"Tsk. It seems you all don't really care. Whatever boys, kill them," the leader of the bandit group shouted.

"It seems we have no choice. Listen up, if they live we will be in trouble. So, make sure to kill them no matter what," the woman shouted.

Alex went for one of the weakest of the bandits, a 4th Mind Tempering realm cultivator.

The bandit seemed to use two axes, so he came running towards him with just that.

The bandit swung the right ax towards Alex which he blocked with his sword.

At the same time, the bandit attacked him on his right shoulders with his left ax.

Alex lifted his right hand so that the target was no longer the shoulder but the chest.

CLANG

The sound of the ax hitting something hard rang loud and Alex smiled. His True Mortal T-shirt armor was working just fine.

Without hesitation, he started attacking the bandit. Left and right, front and dows, he tried the attack everywhere the bandit couldn't block in time and immediately change position if he did.

The bandit had one of the best close combat fighting weapons, so Alex had to be extra careful with how he approached the fight.

Alex slowly started having trouble when the bandit started using techniques of his own. First of all, the movement technique of the bandit was too hard to understand for Alex.

Secondly, there was a weird green glow that shot out from the ax every time he blocked it and hit him. Fortunately, they weren't strong enough to truly hurt him, and only pricked him a bit.

Finally,? the man started using some defensive techniques of his own and Alex had a hard time penetrating through that defense without using something unusual in his arsenal.

He tried to fight it out normally for as long as he could, however. He wanted to take it slow, but then he heard someone shout in pain and anger.

Alex looked to the side and saw the burning flesh of one of the weaker bandits. However, the shout was not coming from one of the bandit's allies.

Alex immediately turned around to block the attack of the bandit and used Heaven's impact on him.

The bandit lost consciousness and Alex hit him with the side of his blade to send him next to the woman who had just finished her opponent.

She cut the incoming bandit without worry and looked at Alex. But Alex no longer cared about it.

Alex was now looking at the person crying in anger and pain near the burning bandit, the old man.

Except, the voice coming from the old man wasn't old... it was young.

The old man looked towards Alex by sheer coincidence and Alex saw the look of pain, anger, and now quickly building shame in his eyes.

Alex's heart started racing when he realized he recognized those eyes. "You..." he said.

"Go away," the old man shouted in a young man's voice. By this time, most the of bandits were dead and the leader of the group was injured in his fight against the people.

He hadn't realized how much of a mistake he had made in underestimating the caravan.

"No!" he shouted and suddenly ran away.

"Stop him. We can't let him report back," the woman said and ran in.

The old man ran behind the leader too.

"Brother Li!" Alex shouted as he ran behind the old man.

The old man stopped for just the tiniest fraction of a second before running behind the running leader

The leader was mostly injured, so he couldn't fly or run at his fastest speed, so everyone followed him. Letting the man return back alive and report who killed him was not a choice.

The leader, however, knew the jungle more than the guards could ever hope to.

Even Alex who had tried to keep track of him using his spiritual sense missed him. However, the old man kept running into the forest.

Ale changed his direction and ran towards the old man, getting closer and closer until he was right next to him.

"Brother Li, stop!" he shouted, and the old man finally stopped.

He looked back at Alex and said, "Please go back, brother Yu. I don't want to involve you with this petty revenge of mine."

Wan Li finally decided to speak up to Alex.

Chapter 447 - Wan Li's Revenge

"What are you doing here, brother? Are you looking to avenge your parents? Please don't risk your lives and come back to the sect," Alex said.

"You... won't understand," Wan Li said softly and ran further in.

'Where is he going? Does he know the way?' Alex wondered as he followed Wan Li.

"Oi kid, leave the old man behind. You don't have to follow him," the woman and 3 other men were following behind but stopped.

"Kid, we are leaving with or without you. The bandit is gone and we need to leave before he informs his boss," the woman said, but Alex didn't listen.

He continued following behind Wan Li as he went deeper into the forest.

"Senior, what do we do now?" one of the men asked.

"Let's go back. We need to move soon or the Black Venom himself will come to find us," the woman said.

"And that kid?" another man asked.

"Forget about that kid or even the old man. If they went in deep, they are sure to die. We need to save our hide for now," the woman said and started running backward.

The men followed her and they soon reached the road again.

"You guys are back," Zhang Xie said and looked around. "Where's the little brother? And that old man?"

"They followed deep after the man; they didn't want to come back," the woman said.

"Oh no, we need to get them," Zhang Xie said.

"No, we can't. We need to leave now before the Black Venom realizes we've killed his people," the woman said.

"But... but the little brother, we need to get him at least," Zhang Xie said.

"Do you want to risk the lives of everyone here for a feisty kid that won't listen to us and goes in looking for danger?" the woman asked.

"But—"

"Mister! If we don't leave now, you will die," the woman said.

Zhang Xie finally came to his sense and softly said, "I'm sorry brother Wen, your disciple brought this on himself."

"Alright people," he then loudly shouted. "Move! We need to leave this area right now," he said.

The caravan started back up and the carriages moved hastily. They left the area as fast as they could and moved along.

* * * * *

The leader ran through the forest at incredible speed while going through thick trees using his movement technique that worked best in the trees.

He used his wood-related movement techniques to quickly lose the guards behind, but he was losing a ton of blood.

'I... I need to find the boss soon,' he thought. 'Those bastards need to die. They dare kill members of our group?'

He huffed and puffed and made his way further in. Finally, after finding a relatively secure place in the forest, he placed his spear on the tree and sat down.

He quietened down and listened to the people, trying to feel the people's aura.

"I should be safe. Ugh... that bastard cut through my waist. Shit!" the man said to himself.

His vision was starting to get hazy and he could feel himself falling unconscious.

He tried to reach his storage bag, but his left arm was hurt too. Still, he looked for his storage bag to take out a pill to heal himself now that he was relatively safe.

"Huh? Where's my storage bag?" he worriedly checked his cloth, but it wasn't there.

'Shit, did it fall out of my robes?' he wondered.

He patted himself left and right with his right hand, but couldn't find the storage bag anywhere.

"Shit! Where the fuck did I drop my storage bag? this wound is so big and I need medication. I hope I don't die not even 2 months into the—"

Suddenly a fireball flew right to his head and smacked him across the face.

"Fuck!" he got scared and stood up to run, but he realized the fireball barely stung.

He looked around and checked the person who just attacked him.

"Mind Tempering realm? Fuck you man, why the fuck are you scaring me for nothing?" he shouted.

Wan Li had made it up to him and had attacked. He took out his sword and started sending out fire slashes towards the man.

"Goddammit! Die," he shouted and tried to jump forward to hit, but his feet just wouldn't move like they needed to.

He still took out his spear and slashed around, sending out attacks. They were very dangerous for Wan Li, but the man was wounded and slow, so he could dodge pretty easily.

The man suddenly placed his hands on the ground and roots started propping out from the ground.

They were very fast and were closing in on Wan Li.

Wan Li too dropped down and touched the ground to quickly turn it into lava and sent it forward to stop the roots.

The roots were mostly elemental with little Qi, so no matter how strong they were, they couldn't survive the lava.

"Shit! man, just go back or I will kill you," he said.

"15 months ago, a caravan ride passed through here. It was the caravan of the merchant group Night Soul. You were the ones that killed them, weren't you?" Wan Li demanded.

"Fuck you, kid. Just die," the man slashed the spear with both of his hands and grunted at the pain from his right hand.

Wan Li pulled up the part of the earth in front of him and blocked the attack. But mere rocks couldn't stop the attack of a True realm cultivator.

The impact tore apart the rocks and threw Wan Li flying back as well.

"Ughh..." Wan Li said as he felt the pain.

"You think a mere Mind Tempering realm cultivator can beat me? I'm already at True Disciple 3rd realm. I can beat you with half my body dead," the man said.

'Fuck those bastards who said this was a good way to earn money. There's nothing easy about this. I really hope I don't die. Let me kill this kid first and see if he has any loot,' he thought.

The man walked forward towards Wan Li and was about to slash when he suddenly lost his consciousness.

The spear he had propped up to attack nearly dropped out of his hands as he too fell along with it.

"Brother Li, what are you doing? Come on! He'll wake up soon, we need to leave. We can't fight a True realm cultivator right now," Alex said.

"Ugh, my chest," Wan Li said.

Alex quickly took out a healing pill and shoved it into Wan Li's mouth. Wan Li immediately felt better and stood up.

Then, he saw the unconscious body of the man. "I can kill him," he thought with red eyes and propped up his sword to swing.

Just then, the man woke up and dodged the sword just as the swing was coming down.

"Shit! What happened? Why was I out?" he asked. "Oh shit! Mental attacks."

The man suddenly started using a cultivation technique. White light appeared around his body as his whole body started glowing slightly.

He then tightly held his spear and stabbed it towards Wan Li. The attack was fast and Wan Li couldn't dodge it in time.

Suddenly, Alex appeared between the two and took the attack to the chest. His armor blocked the damage, but the force still sent him flying backward with Wan Li.

Alex quickly got his footing and looked up only to see the man right about to stab him with the spear.

Just then, Alex disappeared once again and appeared a little behind. His spiritual sense churned as he let out another Heaven's impact while the man hit empty land.

The man lost consciousness for a second but immediately woke up.

"What? Why is he not affected like the last time?" Alex thought.

The man turned around and looked towards Alex's silhouette. With most of his vision running hazy due to his lack of blood, he couldn't see Wan Li who was hidden a little further away from him.

"Damn you!" he shouted and ran towards Alex and swung his spear around. The spear was fast, but as long as Alex teleported someplace else, he couldn't touch him.

Alex tried luring the man away from Wan Li, while Wan Li healed and ran away. At least, he was hoping that was the case.

However, just after Wan Li stood up, he came back charging.

Alex could probably play around with this weak True Realm cultivator, but not if Wan Li kept intruding.

The man heard Wan Li approaching and turned around to slash towards him. The sword and the spear clashed, making a rather loud ringing sound.

The man suddenly sprouted roots from the ground and caught Wan Li. However, Wan Li too started creating lava under his feet. Since the Lava was made up of mostly Earth energy that was empowered using Fire energy, it was particularly powerful.

The roots started crushing Wan Li's legs but they were also getting destroyed. But since Wan Li wasn't resistant to heat, he was starting to take damage from the lava too.

Alex teleported right next to him and hacked away the roots before pulling him out. He pulled out another pill to feed Wan Li, but the man hit his arm and the pill flew into the forest.

"Ouch!" Alex cried out. There was a long gash from the bottom of his thumb to his little finger. Alex teleported away and took out another pill before eating it.

He then took out another pill and saw Wan Li rolling around to dodge the attack.

Alex teleported right next to the man and used Heaven's impact to harm him before swinging right at him.

However, he didn't feel the same force as he had imagined. 'Shit, his glow also stops physical attacks,' he thought.

He teleported out and dragged Wan Li back before giving him the pill. "Stop being so stubborn, Brother Li. We need to leave," Alex said.

Wan Li however looked at the man with nothing but anger and hatred in his eyes. "My parents were killed by the Black Venom bandits. I've been searching for them ever since they died. Now that I have finally found them, I can't leave, brother Yu. I must avenge my parents," he said.

"What? He was responsible for your parent's death?" Alex asked in surprise.

"Yes, that's why I want to kill him," Wan Li said. "Don't try to stop me. Either he dies today and I get my revenge. Or I die today and the circle of violence ends with me."

Alex tried to stop him but he couldn't.

"I have met True Disciple bandits that were stronger than you, you weakling!" Wan Li taunted. Alex got ready behind him, if Wan Li wasn't going to leave, then he would have to help him.

Alex took a deep breath.. If he was to fight, he would fight with his full strength.

Chapter 448 - Thank You

The man clutched his stomach and tried to stop the bleeding, but the blood just kept flowing out.

'I will die anytime now if I don't find any medication,' he thought. 'How are these kids not hurt after taking so much damage. Did I not hit them? I'm sure I did. Then... do they have medicine?'

The man started to get greedy. "Yes, that must be it," he said. "I will kill you and find medicine for myself."

"Get ready," Wan Li shouted.

The man suddenly leaped forward and swung down the spear. However, midway through, he lost his consciousness once more.

However, the very next second, it was back once more. He was getting used to this happening and immediately focused back on heating.

Wan Li had thankfully stepped out of the way and hit the man to the face with his sword.

The man grunted at the pain, but there was not even a cut. The damage was akin to being hit on the wrist with a ruler.

It hurt just enough to make him make a sound. "Dammit, which one of you keeps attacking my mind, I can't even see you move," the man said.

"Come here and give me your storage bags. I need the pills," he shouted and ran towards Wan Li once again.

Alex needed to keep his spiritual sea at least mostly full, so he could check for danger.

He ran forward and teleported in at the right time to block one of the attacks and was thrown away.

Wan Li attacked the man with rocks and also sent out slashes. The man took everything head-on, but grunted in pain.

Alex quickly got up and teleported in to take another attack with his sword this time.

"Urghh!" he grunted at the force. It was quite a strong force, but—

'It's nowhere near the level of what a True Realm cultivator should be. This feels more like he's in the upper realm of Mind Tempering realm,' Alex thought.

'I can do this!'

He fought against the man for a little longer and was steadily realizing that his strength really wasn't very high.

'Is it because he's injured?' he thought, but he couldn't get any answers.

The man was slowly starting to lose it. "No! I don't want to die. Give me a pill! I don't want to lose my talent!" he shouted.

"What?" Alex was surprised. 'A player?' he thought.

"AAARGGH! Give me a pill!" he shouted and started waving around the spear with no rhyme or reason. Alex teleported out, but Wan Li was hell-bent on fighting, so he didn't leave.

The two clashes weapons, but it was very clear who was going to win here.

"Goddammit! Brother Li, why aren't you leaving? You will only die," Alex shouted.

"No, I will kill him, and then I will leave," Wan Li said.

Alex wanted to leave, but not while Wan Li's stubborn ass was still fighting.

"Shit!" he screamed and teleported back in to fight. Neither of their hits was dealing much damage.

Alex used different slashes, Penta Sword techniques, Iron Fist punch, Palm of the sun, and even tried using his fire to attack, but they didn't work.

His damage was high, but not high enough to penetrate through that white film of light covering the man's body.

They both got into close combat and started hitting the man who was just wildly swinging around his spear.

Alex was about to go in for another attack when he noticed something behind him.

Suddenly, massive roots sprung out from the ground and attacked both Alex and Wan Li. Alex could see the attack through his spiritual sense, so he dodged, but Wan Li was struck on the back of his head.

The roots were massive, and they suddenly started constricting Wan Li's body like they were snakes wrapping around their prey.

Wan Li tried to use fire to burn the roots, but they just didn't take any damage. He was about to try and use lava, but he lost consciousness.

Wan Li was out, but the roots did not stop moving. Alex could start hearing Wan Li's body getting wrapped tighter and tighter.

"Die! You goddamn NPC. Give me your loot," the man shouted maniacally.

"Stop!" Alex shouted and went in to attack, but the man didn't stop.

"You die too!" he shouted and roots started wrapping around Alex as well.

"Dammit," Alex shouted and teleported out.

"Fuck! How do you keep teleporting? Do you have a skill? Give it to me," he shouted and started swinging at Alex.

At the same time, Wan Li was getting crushed slowly. 'Shit! I will have to make him stop,' Alex thought and launched another Heaven's impact but it did no damage basically aside from giving him a headache.

"Damn you! So you were the one with the mental skill. I will kill you and get that too," he shouted.

Alex felt like he was trapped. His opponent wasn't going easy on him, and he couldn't leave either due to his friend's life being in danger.

"Fuck!" he said. Suddenly, his dull sword started to glow slightly white and Alex attacked.

TING

The man felt a far greater force from his opponent now. "What?" he was surprised.

Alex calmed his mind as much as he could with only a single thought being there.

'CUT'

He dashed and slashed at the man and nearly ripped the sword out of his hands.

He kept attacking and the man could feel more and more pain as the attacks landed on him.

"What's going on? How are you so strong suddenly? Fuck! Did you break through? Screw it, I will do it too," he said and pressed something in midair.

Suddenly, Alex felt his opponents' cultivation elevate a realm higher and frowned. 'Did he breakthrough just now?'

He was horrified. He had never come across a fight where his opponent broke through in his cultivation mid-fight.

'This is going to be annoying,' he thought and started attacking once more.

The man too started attacking once more to quickly kill Alex and find some pills. He couldn't even leave without the pill even if he wanted to now.

The attacks were hard and Alex was having a hard time damaging the man. He could wait it out and the man would surely die due to the blood loss, but Wan Li would die sooner if he waited.

His sword was glowing bright yellow by now with a hue of white light around it as he weaved through the man's attacks and hit him all over.

Still, he wasn't hurting the man enough to even make him scream out. 'That untimely breakthrough made him stronger, shit!' he thought.

He needed to up his power too, but unfortunately, he didn't have enough Qi to breakthrough right now.

He continued fighting but he was slowly losing the fight now.

Just then, he heard soft cracks from the side. He looked towards Wan Li and realized his bones were starting to crack.

'No, I need to hurry. I can't just fight him; I need to beat him. I need to...' Alex's heart started beating when he realized what he had to do.

'I... I need to kill him,' he thought. He was horrified that he even came to the conclusion, but he had to do it.

'If I want to save Wan Li, I can't just beat him, I need to kill him.' His resolve got stronger and his intention towards the battle got clearer to him.

'KILL'

His sword shined brighter as it flew towards the man.

'No, I can't kill people. I can't be a murderer,' he thought. The sword slammed at the man's spear, but couldn't do much damage.

Alex's resolve had faltered at the last second.

CRACK

However, the bones of his friend behind him reminded him of what he was fighting for.

'No, this is different. I'm in a different place. I'm at a place where he isn't hesitating to kill me or my friend for his own gain. So, I shouldn't be hesitating either.'

'If I need to be a murderer to protect me and my friends, then I should gladly become one,' he thought.

'I will gladly become one. I will gladly kill him.'

'KILL'

His clear resolve brought back the shine his sword has lost and attacked the man once more.

The sword clashed with the spear, but the spear wasn't able to stop the sword and was pushed aside.

"WHAT?!" the man was surprised. Then he saw something bright golden swing towards his waist again.

Alex felt the hardness of the white light he had just hit and the sword didn't go in much further. But, it had gone in just enough to cut the man's skin and harm him.

'I can do it. I can kill him.'

'KILL'

He swung once more. The man's confidence was faltering and he tried to block with his hands now that his spear was gone.

However, that was a really bad idea for him as the sword cut halfway into both of his arms.

Even though he was cut, his blood didn't escape from his arms. All of the blood had already left his body. The man was solely surviving on Qi alone now.

If Alex hit him enough, then that too would end and Wan Li would become free.

'KILL'

Alex brought back his sword and slashed it once more. The man tried to dodge but moving aside only made Alex's strike land on his arm.

In a single slash, his arm was cleanly cut off.

"ARGGHH" the man shouted in a hoarse voice. He started shouting "Log out! Log out!"

But he didn't leave immediately. The system didn't let him log out while he was in danger and gave him a warning instead so he knew what was at risk if he did.

However, before he could agree to the condition, a golden blade slid past the warning notification and drilled into his heart.

The man's eyes lost color and he fell to the ground. His body started convulsing before a hoarse voice escaped from his body.

"T-Thank you."

Then, the man died.

<Congratulations. You have killed 'Honey_Truth29'>

No more notification arrived after that. No rewards, no punishment. The game only told him what he had done.

He had killed the person. He had killed people before, but never had it been this directly. Never had it been intentionally.

Seeing the bloody body on the ground with white eyes and a blank look, Alex felt like vomiting. Thankfully, he contained himself and forced himself to come to terms with what he had done.

Alex felt horrible for killing the man, but what was more horrible was hearing the last words of the man.

'Thank... you? Why did he thank me?' Alex thought.

"Urghh" he heard? Wan Li take a deep breath. He immediately forgot about killing the person and turned around to go see Wan Li.

Wan Li's body was pale and he could see blood dripping from all over his body from the bones that stuck out.

"Oh no no no-no. Hang on for a second, brother Li," Alex said and searched amongst the few True pills he had.

"Ah, here it is. The Bone Restructuring pill. This will help you," he said and slowly put it onto Wan Li's mouth.

The pill slid down his throat and soon Alex could see the effects of the pill.

Within seconds, Wan Li's bones returned back to how they needed to be, and he was all but fully healed.

"Brother Yu... you saved me?" he asked as his consciousness returned back to him.

"Yes. Are you fine?" Alex asked.

"Is he dead?" Wan Li asked.

Alex sighed and said, "Yes. Yes, he's dead."

"Good. One of my parent's killers is dead," Wan Li said. "But... the rest of the Black Venom group is still alive, especially Black Venom himself. He must be the main person who killed my parents."

"I will make sure that he and the rest of them find salvation for my parent's dead through their death as well. I won't stop until the lot of them are dead."

"But... I'm too weak right now. I will need to get stronger," Wan Li said as he gritted his teeth. "I couldn't even kill a weakling of the group and needed your help, Brother Yu."

"Let's go back to the sect, brother Li," Alex said.

"No," Wan Li said. "Not until I have found my revenge." Suddenly Wan Li punched Alex.

Alex blocked the punch but was still sent flying back. When he got back up, Wan Li was gone.

Wan Li was nowhere to be seen even with Alex's Spiritual sense. "He's... gone," Alex said in surprise. 'Did he use an escaping technique, or did he... fully learn the invisibility and Concealment techniques?'

Alex stretched his spiritual sense to the fullest and looked around, but no matter what he couldn't find Wan Li at all.

"Sigh, I guess I should leave," he thought and reached into his storage bag to pull out the boat.

But suddenly, a massive pressure landed on him and dropped him onto the ground.

Someone strong had arrived in the forest.

Chapter 449 - Black Venom

Alex was down on the ground as pressure crashed all over him. This pressure was way stronger than the person he had just fought before.

In fact, it was stronger than that time Zexi had him pinned on the ground in the alleyway too.

'No way! Someone in True Lord realm? Or maybe even higher,' he thought. The aura was less than his masters', but he wasn't sure by how much.

He tried to use his Qi to escape but no matter what he did, his Qi just wouldn't move. The pressure was too much for him to use any technique.

Warm energy rushed from within him that lowered the pressure on the inside, but he was still unable to use his techniques.

"So, someone is indeed here," A voice came from behind Alex. He quickly sent out his spiritual sense and noticed a lot of people around him.

'Shit!' he thought.

"What's that?"

"It's a corpse. Hey isn't this that new guy Phillip or whatever his name was?"

"I think so. Boss, someone killed your arrogant new star."

"Wait, didn't he have a small group of his own cause he wanted to act like a leader? Where are they?"

"Probably dead like him, right? Hahaha"

People started laughing all around Alex. Finally, a person landed in front of him.

"Is he alive, boss?" someone asked.

Alex could see a fully black-robed person with a black mask that had a single design that made it look like a snake's tongue was coming out of it.

Other than that, there were 2 holes through which amber-colored eyes were staring at him.

"You look young. Did you kill my person?" A hoarse voice escaped from behind the mask that made the boss sound like he had lost his voice after speaking for hours.

Alex didn't answer. He was too busy checking how much trouble he was in.

His spiritual sense could now clearly see the nearly 3 dozen people surrounding him.

Each and every single one of them was wearing a black robe and a rather tight-fitting black mask on just on their mouth and nose.

"Are you conscious kid? The boss is asking you a question," a man said. However, he didn't come close to Alex and stayed far away.

"He's conscious; just look at him fidgeting," the boss said.

Suddenly a force pulled Alex off of the ground and he was face to face with the boss. The pressure crashing on him lowered and he could finally move his body around.

He could also use techniques with the pressure mostly gone, but now that he was away from the ground, he had lost his chance to escape too.

He wanted to turn invisible, but just a single burst of aura would make him unable to stay that way. He wanted to conceal his aura, but it wouldn't work against someone at a higher Major realm than his.

He wanted to simply teleport away, but everywhere was surrounded by the goons. Teleporting would still leave him within the encirclement, in range of the boss' intense pressure.

So, he really only had one choice, and he did it.

His Spiritual sea churned as a massive vortex appeared that quickly turned into mist and flew to the sky. They gathered there to form the shape of a fist and it escaped away from that place.

Heaven's impact flew directly at the boss, but just before it hit the boss, the mask glowed a shiny white and his spiritual attack was stopped.

"Oh, you just used a mental skill on me? How? I didn't see you use any techniques," the boss said with a chuckle in his voice.

Alex was horrified. His one plan that should have worked, didn't.

'How?' he thought. 'Mental protection items are so rare. How does the boss of a bandit group have those?'

'It's the mask. I need to get rid of it,' he thought. His sword was still on the side of his hand, dangling beside him.

From what he could see, the boss still believed him to be unable to move. He didn't know that thanks to his inner warmth, he could now move.

'I need to take this opportunity carefully,' he thought.

"Yeah, I'm sure he killed him. That is truly a surprise. A Mind Tempering realm kid killing a True realm cultivator. Hmm..." the boss looked around.

"He must've gotten help from what I can see. Someone else was here and they ditched him."

"Were you betrayed? Do you want to take revenge on the person that left you behind?" the boss asked.

"I... I want to," Alex said. "I want to kill him. He ruined my life."

"Hehehe, do you hate society like every one of us here?" the boss asked.

"Yes!..." 'I need to fight.' "... I do." 'Soon.'

"Hehe, but then you will have to—"

Alex suddenly swung his golden-white sword across the boss's face and cut the mask in half.

Alex was still hanging in the air, but he saw the boss's mask drop from his face.

"A woman?" he asked in surprise.

"You!" the boss's normal, female voice was revealed once the mask disappeared.

Alex was about to use his Heaven's Impact, but he suddenly felt that he was in a state of euphoria. He almost couldn't do anything.

It felt like his mind, body and spirit became one. However, just then he felt his mind get hot and that woke him up.

He woke up just in time to see the notifications about the toxins being destroyed from his body.

He looked up front and saw the woman's face anger up. He then saw her taking out another mask from her storage bag and was about to put it on.

"Oh no!" he thought and immediately sent out another Heaven's impact. This one managed to barely slip through and hit the boss just before she put on the mask again.

Just as she put on the mask, she lost consciousness too. Her control over Alex dropped and he fell to the ground. He immediately started his Earth Devour techniques.

His Qi traveled across his body at incredible speed and came out from under him to open the ground. But, even as that happened, he could see the boss's eyes coming back to life.

He didn't know if Heaven's impact wasn't as strong due to her putting on the mask, or if the mask had mental healing properties, but she had recovered from her unconsciousness and he was in trouble.

The ground below him had barely opened when the boss stopped herself from falling and immediately sent a palm attack towards him.

Alex felt like he had lost his control over the Focus mode and time was back to moving slow.

He could see the slow opening of the ground and the palm attack flying towards him at incredible speed.

He knew for sure if the palm hit him, he was dead. And... it seemed it would reach him before he escaped.

He was doomed.

He started worrying about what to do. Whether to teleport or to use an attack of his own, but that was impossible.

His body was still sending out Qi for the ground below him, and he couldn't use it right now. Even if he could, it wouldn't be fast enough to dodge the palm attack that was right in front of his face.

'Am I dead?' he thought.

Suddenly, something flew out of his robe and stood between him and the palm attack.

Bright yellow light shined from it and a golden barrier appeared in front of him just in time to block the attack.

Alex looked at what it was and was thoroughly surprised. "Master's talisman!" he shouted.

The talisman managed to stop the attack and both of them disappeared.

The ground opened up fully and swallowed Alex while the rest of the people there couldn't see what had happened at the last moment.

"That... That bastard saw my face!" the Boss's hoarse sound appeared once more. "Find out where he went! I want him dead."

The boss spread out her aura all around her and suffocated her followers, but couldn't find any sign of Alex.

The other bandits were shocked to see their boss rage like that and didn't dare make another peep.

"Go find him, you bastards!" the boss shouted.

"Yes, boss." Immediately, everyone jumped out of their place and went around the forest to search.

* * * * *

Alex was released from the ground and he quickly stood and immediately went invisible and hid all of his aura.

He then cleaned himself of all dirt and looked around.

'Am I far away? I hope I? didn't go closer into towards the inner forest,' he thought. He slowly flew up above the forest and looked around.

'Where do I go now?' he wondered. He flew up even higher, but all he could see was the forest. He had come in way too deep.

'Do I leave or do I stay around until the morning arrives?' he thought.

He looked around more to make sense of anything, but his eyes could see nothing for the forests and trees. There was not a single thing around him to tell him of his location.

"Sigh, I guess I will wait until the morning then," he thought and went down to the ground.

Instead of staying in one place, however, he decided to keep moving and find some alchemy ingredients throughout the night.

So, he chose a route he thought was correct and started moving. The night had just started and there was a lot of time still remaining for the sun to come up.

So, he did all he could and moved forward.

Chapter 450 - Sect Leader Position In Trouble

Alex started contemplating what had happened tonight. He had met his sect's top disciple that was supposed to have disappeared and lost him.

Also for the first time, he had intentionally killed a person.

He didn't know how to feel about that. He certainly felt bad about killing someone, even going as far as to call it horrible. but there was also a sense of freedom to it as well.

He always knew that it was inevitable for him to kill someone himself. But, he didn't want to do it— for he knew that killing one person would lead to killing many.

However, he also knew that it was impossible to survive in this world without the resolve to do what was required, even if it meant killing someone.

He felt absolutely horrible about killing someone, but he also felt a sense of relief. Now that he was over this hurdle, it wouldn't be hard to gather his resolve to do what needed to be done.

Throughout the night, Alex walked around and found many ingredients that had grown all over the Southern Forest.

He was scared that he might come across more bandits or stronger beasts, but thankfully, the strongest beasts he came across were only at the Meridian realm.

The night felt slow, but even so, it passed by, and right before dawn, Alex could see the sky start to light up.

"So that's East," he thought and brought out his boat before flying in that direction.

Along the way, he drifted more and more to the left to come out of the forest. Finally, after an hour or so of flying, the boat came out of the forest and Alex finally saw the road.

'The caravan must've gone way further ahead,' Alex thought and sped up. He didn't plan on going back to the caravan, however. That was just something he had to do for the sect.

He could later lie to the caravan people that he was saved by someone. For now, he just flew.

'Did they take a detour to escape the bandit's way?' Alex thought when he couldn't find the caravan even after hours.

'Or maybe I missed them?' he thought when he saw the number of caravans start to be more and more.

'I'm getting closer,' Alex thought. Soon enough, he saw a figure of a wall very far away.

"I'm here," Alex said excitedly. He was finally back to the Scarlet City. Once he was close, he dropped somewhere in the forest and walked out of it.

He walked over to the gate and entered after showing his Tiger sect's badge.

He walked through the crowd of the noon and made his way to the sect. He entered through the front gate and met with his elder brother.

After talking with him for a few minutes, he made his way towards his master's manor.

Wen Cheng had already been informed of his arrival, so he was waiting for him at the manor.

"You guys are back quite early. I didn't think you would've returned until tomorrow morning," Wen Cheng said. "Where's your sister though? Did she go to her house first?."

"Sister did not return, master," Alex said. He went on to explain what had happened in the Rubyroad city, followed by what happened on the way back.

"You met the Black Venom bandit group?" Wen Cheng was truly surprised.

"Yes, master. I was in quite a lot of danger too, but I was able to escape thanks to the talisman you gave," Alex said.

"Oh, that talisman came in handy huh? Thank god. I'm surprised it didn't come in handy during your encounter with Zexi. Although, he was too weak to activate it, or your life was never in danger when he got you," Wen Cheng said.

"That was really dangerous. I was correct in being scolded so badly."

"Anyway, let's forget about that. So, your sister won't be back for another 2 weeks huh? That's... going to be a slight problem," Wen Cheng thought.

"Sister says she will take care of it all when she comes back," Alex said.

"Sigh, I don't know if she can. Little Yuhan really is very strong. I might just have to give up my spot as the Sect Leader now," Wen Cheng said.

"Don't worry about that, Master. You have 6 months. I will surely help you get back the spot for you," Alex said.

"It's fine, the sect master's spot was meant to be ever-changing in the Tiger sect. That's why only the disciples under True realm and less than 25 years of age count," Wen Cheng said.

"Forget about it, for now, you have something else to worry about," Wen Cheng said.

"Huh? What?" Alex asked.

"I... may or may not have gotten scolded for letting you go to a different city during these dangerous times without consulting Ma Rong," Wen Cheng said.

"Oh, uhh.... I think I will return back to the Hong Wu sect then. Damn, I really wanted to go a few ranks higher. I managed to enter the Mind Tempering realm too," Alex said.

"Oh, you did? Congrats! It was only a matter of time I guess," Wen Cheng said. "Alright, go get your return registered in the Disciple hall and go back to Ma Rong.

"Yes, master. Goodbye," Alex said and left. He walked across the right side of the crater and entered the city crater before he lined up for the disciple hall.

Since it was Sunday, there weren't that many students, and he wasn't recognized as much.

He let the elder working there know that he was back and left. He walked back under the gazing eyes of many and went directly to the gate at the front.

After saying goodbye to his elder brother, he left.

The afternoon sun was hot, and it was much hotter than what should have been really. Alex looked around and realized that the people weren't really wearing anything thick.

'How come it's not cold here?' he wondered.

The busy marketplace slowed down his speed quite a lot as people walked past him multiple times, but he still reached the sect in under half an hour.

He was initially stopped at the gate, but once he showed his nameplate, he was let in.

"Master, I'm back," Alex left a message on his talisman and walked ahead.

Alex looked at the outer sect disciples that had joined the sect. He wondered how many, if any, of these were players.

While he wasn't sure about it, he was confident that there would be other Alchemy-related skills similar to the Alchemy God's Knowledge that would help the people join the alchemy sect.

Whether or not they were lucky enough to join the western continent in the first place was a different question altogether.

All throughout the outer sect mountain, Alex was the center of attention thanks to his yellow robes.

These disciples knew nothing about him, so they were curious why a Tiger Sect disciple was here in the first place.

Alex smiled and walked past them down to the sect market. Even there he was looked upon by many people. Some even went ahead to tell the elders.

An elder soon came to see what was happening and smiled when he saw it was Alex.

"Martial nephew, you're back," the elder said.

Alex looked at the elder and his eyes went wide in surprise. "Martial Uncle, you are back too," he said.

Alex was quite happy to see Lang Shun back in the sect. "When did you return?" Alex asked.

"Uhh, a few days ago," Lang Shun said disappointedly. "My mission was a failure, so I was quite sad. At least I got happy when I heard you were still alive. That was a relief."

"Mission?" Alex thought for a second and went, "Ah, brother Li? I found him," Alex said.

Lang Shun didn't comprehend what Alex said at first and was going to say "oh, good for you."

But once his thinking mind took control and he finally realized what was just said, he immediately ran forward and grabbed Alex's shoulders.

"You found Wan Li?" Lang Shun asked.

"Yeah, I was coincidentally on the same caravan as him and happened to meet him," Alex said.

Lang Shun looked around and put his arms around Alex before dragging him ahead. "Let's go talk somewhere quieter," he said.

"Ah, then let's go to master's place. I can give you two the information at once," Alex said.

"Uhh, that might be a bad idea," Lang Shun said.

"Huh? Why?" Alex asked.

"Things in the sect are... delicate right now. Sister is in closed cultivation currently and isn't coming out for anybody. Not even the sect's matters. So the elders are a little concerned and angry towards Sister's actions. Some are even going as far as to say that she needs to be removed from the Sect leader position," Lang Shun said.

"Master isn't responding? But I thought she talked with Master Wen Cheng a week before," Alex asked.

"That's the thing. I don't actually think she's in closed cultivation and is actually just faking it. However, that isn't proven yet. So, while the elders are angry, they can't do anything."

"However, if you were to go meet her and she came out, they will start calling her selfish and might lose their trust in her," Lang Shun.

"I see, then where should we go?" Alex asked.

"Um, let's just go to the—"

BUZZ BUZZ

Alex's storage bags buzzed and he took out the talisman from inside.

<Come to my place>

That was all that was written in the talisman.

"Master is calling me," Alex said.

Lang Shun looked a little annoyed. "Dammit, I knew it. She's not in closed cultivation. So why is she not coming to handle sect matters?" he asked.

Alex thought for a second and asked, "Umm, have you seen her after she awakened her constitution?"

"Awaken her constitution? Oh right, master said something about that. But what does that have to do with sister not leaving her home?" Lang Shun asked.

"Umm, you should come with me and see," Alex said.

Lang Shun shrugged his shoulders and agreed. Both him and Alex walked up the mountain and soon came before Ma Rong's house.

"Sister, I've brought nephew with me," Lang Shun shouted as he walked in. "God, why is this place so cold? Did she start making ice sculptures or what?" Lang Shun asked.

Alex could feel the tiniest hint of a fear building inside of him when he felt this coldness. 'Did master's body get stronger again?' he asked in surprise.

It was quite easy to find where Ma Rong was. They just had to follow the coldest place in the house and they would reach her.

"What the hell?" Lang Shun shouted when he finally saw Ma Rong. "Sister, why the hell is there so much ice around you?"

"Oh, you came as well?" Ma Rong said. "Shut up for a little, I'm trying to concentrate."

Ma Rong's body was constantly leaking mist that flew down to the ground like what one would see happen on a frozen bottle of liquid.

Lang Shun couldn't comprehend what was happening and looked at Ma Rong with her jaws dropped, while Alex tried to make sure he didn't let the fear get to him.

The mist leaking off of Ma Rong's body started to settle down and stopped forming around her. Soon enough, they completely stopped.

When they did, Alex noticed that his fear had also subsided.

"Sigh, it takes me quite a while to rein in my body's aura. Otherwise, everything around me gets frozen," Ma Rong said and slowly stood up.

Crackling sounds appeared from all around her as her frozen clothes started snapping as she stood up.

"Sigh, even the clothes freeze. I will need to do something about it all soon," she said softly.

"So, what's going on? I only called my disciple here. Why did you come along?" Ma Rong asked.

"Oh, that's right," Lang Shun said as he remembered.. "Apparently, martial nephew has some information on Wan Li."