

## Chapter 2511

Those words had unmasked mockery within them. Rudy had always been an arrogant person. Being looked at like that made it feel like a boulder was pressing against his heart.

However, he could not say anything at all. That was because the other person was right. In the eyes of a spring solidifying realm expert, their strength was of no significance. They were people who could just be killed with a pinch.

However, he did not expect Malcolm to insult them in such a pleased manner. He abruptly turned to look at Fane as a surprised expression flashed on his face. The two of them might be minnows, but Fane was a true expert.

Even a spring solidifying realm beast was nothing to Fane, let alone these two. Thinking about that, he wanted to show off with Fane, but Fane grabbed his arm.

Fane hatefully glared at Rudy. Rudy was really very dumb. Fane whispered into Rudy's ears, "Shut up right now!"

Rudy was so scared he shuddered at Fane's gaze. He did not dare to speak anymore. Grayson ended up being warned as well.

Earlier, he was just as emotional, wanting to tell the others that Fane was very strong! Hansel glanced at Fane. He calmed down from his emotional state.

He suddenly laughed coldly, "You came to kill me? So you're planning on killing my friends over here?"

Malcolm frowned, feeling like Hansel seemed to mean something behind those words. He could not help but look at Fane and the others, but he could not see anything. The few of them were incredibly mediocre.

Only one of their strengths could not be seen, but it was clear that the person was already injured internally. Furthermore, Fane was standing with Rudy and Grayson, so he should only be at the early stage of the innate level as well.

If that was the case, they should not be much of a threat.

"Do you think we're running a charity that doesn't kill innocents?" Malcolm mocked.

There were not many fighters who showed mercy. In order to achieve their goals, killing a few people was not something they mind.

Hansel took a deep breath as he clutched his sword tightly, "Then come!"

As he said that, Hansel raised his head. slightly as if he was already prepared to die. However, thinking about it, there was something off about Hansel's actions.

Fane frowned. He knew Hansel's plans.

With him standing by Hansel's side, Hansel did have a trump card. Malcolm felt like Hansel's actions were strange, but he could not tell what was strange about them.

He sighed as he shot a look at Jordan, "Since Hansel wants to die so much, we should fulfill his wish as his juniors."

After saying that, Malcolm pulled out his own green sword. The sword had countless runes on it. When he clutched the sword tightly, a breeze started spinning around him.

It was obvious that Malcolm was a windoriented fighter. Fane frowned, turning to shoot Hansel a look. Even though the two of them did not say anything, they immediately understood what the other was thinking after that short exchange.

## Chapter 2512

At that moment, there was nothing else to say. Fane took out the gray sword from Mustard Seed before he launched himself right at Malcolm.

Hansel's body twisted, facing Jordan with all his injuries!

Malcolm saw Fane charging at him, and could not help but frown. He could still not see how strong Fane was, but the two of them had clearly delegated their tasks. Fane was going to fight him while Hansel fought Jordan.

It was easy to see from that, that Fane was stronger than Jordan! With that in mind, Malcolm could not help but be nervous.

However, there was no time for him to think about anything then. Malcolm's sword glinted as he disappeared on the spot. That was an advantage wind-oriented fighters had.

Fane was already prepared the moment he knew that Malcolm was a wind practitioner. The moment Malcolm disappeared, he distorted space. The next second, a gust of wind attacked him.

Malcolm had been fifty meters apart from Fane initially. In the blink of an eye, Malcolm was right in front of Fane.

At that moment, Rudy and Grayson were stunned next to Fane. The two of them had never seen spring solidifying realm experts fighting before, nor had they ever seen such a fast fighter.

It only took a moment for the weapons to clash close to each other. If they were in Fane's position, they would have been scared out of their wits. They would not even have the time to cry out, let alone retaliate.

Malcolm's lips curled up as he let out a pleased smile. The sword in his hand sent out slash after slash, heading right for Fane's forehead.

"Die!" Malcolm shouted in rage.

Even though he still did not know what Fane's strength was, he was still very confident in his speed. Those who did not understand him would often fall after he launched his attacks and closed the distance rapidly.

Even if they could avoid his frontal attacks it would be impossible to avoid everything. They would be damaged by the shockwaves, which was what he wanted!

When Malcolm slashed again, he stared at Fane. He wanted to witness his slashes piercing through Fane.

Yet, before he could even be happy, Fane's image disappeared from the spot.

"An afterimage?" Malcolm said

suspiciously.

As the second disciple of the Seven

Absolutes Pavilion, he was not just strong.

He was full of combat experience as well. The moment he found that Fane had disappeared, he reacted immediately, shifting his position.

What followed was a bang. There was a black-colored slash that appeared where he had disappeared. He turned to look at Fane, who had somehow appeared four meters behind him.

Malcolm frowned as he shouted in shock, "You know how to use the laws of space?"

A place like a third-grade clan would naturally not understand the laws of space much at all. However, Malcolm was from a fifth-grade clan, and wind attributes user at that. He naturally knew about the laws of space.

The laws of space had always been something incredibly hard to grasp. In so many years, he'd only seen some seniors trying to understand the laws of space. Even then, they only managed to understand a small fraction. It was the first time he had seen someone so young using it.

## Chapter 2513

Fane raised an eyebrow. He was not too surprised that Malcolm recognized he was using the laws of space so quickly. After all, they were in Middle Province, not some backwater place like West Cercie State.

He let out a sigh, suddenly having a different plan. Malcolm did not seem like a very good person, but he was still from a fifth-grade clan. He was an excellent chosen disciple, only ranking behind Hansel.

He had plotted against Hansel probably because he wanted to take Hansel's place. He had ambition and skill, he was definitely a good whetstone.

Ever since he broke through to the spring solidifying realm, he had only been through a single battle! Thinking about that, he let out a cold laugh. He held the gray sword in his hand tightly. Malcolm felt that Fane's expression was a bit strange. Fane looked like a cat that was toying around with a mouse.

Just as he was feeling confused, Fane leaped forward again, heading right for him. The gray sword in Fane's hand sent out a few attacks.

Malcolm did not dare to underestimate his opponent. The green sword in his hand started to dance around. With the sound of a few explosions, the green sword and the gray sword's attacks violently clashed together.

Two waves of energies clashed, but Malcolm could only feel pain. The sword in his right hand started to shake. At that moment, he was certain that Fane was like him, a spring solidifying realm fighter as well.

Fane was really hard to handle! No wonder Hansel had looked so confident even if he was letting out an incredibly painful and betrayed expression. He really did have a trump card!

"Who are you? Which clan are you from? Why have I never seen you before, and how did you end up with Hansel? What benefits is he giving you?" Malcolm asked loudly.

As the chosen disciple of the Seven Absolutes Pavilion, he had a bit of fame both in his clan and out of it. He had basically met most of the people who were on even footing with him.

The person in front of him was an unknown. It was his first time meeting the guy, and he was called Fane by his companions! Malcolm was certain that it was his first time hearing such a name. It proved that Fane was probably not a chosen disciple from any of the neighboring clans.

He could be from the inner regions, but based on what Malcolm knew, the inner region's disciples would absolutely not be out here at this moment.

Any of those guys with just a bit of skill were all incredibly arrogant. There was no way they would know and help Hansel here.

Fane knew he would ask those questions. Fane let out a cold smile and said, "If you want to kill me, then I naturally would want to kill you back. This is common sense, SO why are you asking questions?"

Malcolm's face turned dark. Only then did he remember that he had said he would kill everyone there, saying he was not merciful.

He had not known that Fane was so skilled back then. If he had known that Fane was already at the spring solidifying realm, he would not have moved so easily.

Malcolm narrowed his hands and said, "Those with skill are naturally treated differently. This is a world where the strongest up the weak. If you had shown your skill earlier, I would not have made a move against you!"

Fane let out a cold smile, he had to say that it did make sense. However, Fane was absolutely not someone who would let things go just with a few words.

The situation was already like that. He would absolutely not help Malcolm get Hansel. From their conversation earlier, he could tell that Malcolm was an incredibly ruthless person.

Hansel was in the state he was in because of a plot by Malcolm and Jordan. Fane would absolutely not work together with someone like that.

## Chapter 2514

"Hansel, can you believe that you'll actually lose to me today?!" Jordan loudly said.

Fane turned around to look and saw that Jordan was in an incredibly close fight with Hansel. At that moment, Hansel might still be able to fight back, but he was already beginning to be at a disadvantage. His injuries were starting to burden him.

It would not take too long for Jordan to defeat Hansel!

Fane took a deep breath. If Hansel lost completely and die in Jordan's hand, then he would end up having to fight against two by himself. He did not want himself to be in such a sticky situation, nor did he want Hansel to die just like that.

With that in mind, he suddenly turned around as he started to form seals in his hands. Sixty Soul Swords floated in the air. With a clap, all of the Soul Swords instantly fused into one, turning into a massive sword.

The massive Soul Sword immediately merged with the gray sword in Fane's hand. After absorbing so much energy, the gray sword started to glow radiantly as it hummed.

At that moment, Fane was already in a must-win mode. He was using Destroying the Void, which was an upper ultimate god technique that he had already trained to the second stage.

When Malcolm looked at Fane, he knew that Fane was already pulling out his full power. Malcolm took a deep breath, no longer wanting to prolong things. He grabbed his sword with both hands, and the green light turned into a tornado of wind circling his sword.

Malcolm roared as he leaped forward, turning into a formless wind as he charged straight at Fane. At that moment, he was completely surrounded by a green light. As the speed constantly rose, he turned into a ray of light.

He charged at Fane at an imperceptible speed, "Killing Wind!"

Fane could not determine what level of technique that was, but he felt that there was no way it was above a middle-earth rank technique. Fane let out a cold laugh, not avoiding it as he slashed Destroying the Void right at Killing Wind.

The gray sword clashed with the green light. With the two of them at the center, shockwave after shockwave shot out.

An intense wind circled everywhere. Rudy and Grayson had already found a safe spot to hide from the moment the battle started.

However, the moment the skills clashed, the winds it caused sent the two of them flying into the air!

There were threes all around them. The two of them flew a few meters before ramming right into a three.

They fell from the tree in a pathetic state. Their clothes were all torn up by the branches. When they fell on the floor they even ended up planting their faces on rotten leaves.

Rudy struggled as he sat up from the ground. After getting the leaves out of his mouth, he started to cough violently. He was not just in a pathetic state at that moment, he was filled with shock as well.

Just from the shockwaves alone, he had been sent flying into the air. If the tree had not been there, he did not know how far he would have flown.

Grayson was planted on the floor not far away from him. He was in just a pathetic state. When the two of them looked up, they noticed Fane still standing there with his sword in hand.

The winds had already stopped then. Other than his disheveled hair, there did not seem to be anything wrong with Fane. It was as if he had not been at the center of those shockwaves.

## Chapter 2515

Malcolm had already disappeared. When Rudy saw that Malcolm had disappeared, he sat up abruptly, "Where is he? Where is Malcolm?"

His loud cry had been heard not only by Grayson next to him but by Jordan and Hansel who were still fighting as well.

The two of them seemed to stop fighting at the same time. They both looked over at Fane. Only Fane stood fixed to the spot as if nothing had happened.

Yet, Malcolm was gone. Jordan panicked, "Malcolm? Where are you?"

He did not get a response. Other than the sounds of birds and bugs around them, there were no other noises. After a long time, the shrubs not too far in front of Fane started to rustle.

Jordan frowned. He no longer cared about Hansel at that moment as he hurried over to where the rustling was. He pulled something out to reveal Malcolm, who was bleeding everywhere.

No wonder Malcolm had disappeared earlier. After falling to the ground, the leaves around him had all been sent flying up. Once the leaves fell again, Malcolm was buried by it.

Malcolm's breathing was incredibly shallow at that moment. There was a lot of blood on his body. He looked to be in an incredibly bad state. Jordan helped Malcolm up, and Malcolm spat out some blood before he looked up at Fane.



At the moment, he had lost all his earlier arrogance as he looked at Fane. All that was left was shock. The power from Fane's attack earlier had been much stronger than his own. When he was fighting against Fane earlier, it was obvious that Fane had shown mercy. Otherwise, he would not still be standing.

"Who are you?! How are you so strong?! You're definitely not at the early stage of the spring solidifying realm!" If Fane was at the early stage, he would not have lost so badly.

He had been beaten up completely. His Killing Wind was a middle stage earth technique. Even if he had not mastered it yet, he was still already at the first stage.

With that skill, he was firmly in second place among the disciples in his clan. Yet, the skill he had been so proud of had been so thoroughly beaten by Fane.

At that moment, Malcolm felt wave after wave of pain deep in his soul. It was like ten thousand ants constantly eating away at his soul. Jordan's eyes were completely fixed on Fane at that moment.

In the past years, he had been completely surprised by Hansel. If he was able to defeat Hansel earlier, it would have greatly boosted his standing. That was why he had not been paying attention to the other battle at all.

The moment he felt like something was wrong, Malcolm had already been heavily injured by Fane. To be able to defeat Malcolm so thoroughly in just a few moves was something not even Hansel could do at his peak.

It was obvious how strong that guy in front of him was!

Grayson's mouth was wide open and he commented, "Oh my god! Fane's way too strong! Malcolm is a spring solidifying realm expert who's at his peak condition, but he still could not beat Fane!"

"He's too strong! This is the strongest person I've ever seen in my generation! Even the eldest disciple of Rosefinch Pavilion wouldn't be able to beat Fane! Why is someone as strong as him putting his attention on alchemy..."

Everyone knew that those who studied alchemy were usually those who did not have any talent for fighting. After all, no matter how many spirit crystals one could get, being strong was much better.

Hansel stabbed his sword on the ground, using it to support himself to remain standing and said, "Thank you, Fane!"

Hansel was not afraid at all earlier. With Fane around, he did not believe he would fail.

## Chapter 2516

"Who are you?!" bellowed Malcolm, already heavily injured by Fane's hand. The pain coming from his soul had him on the brink of collapse.

Despite his injuries, however, the burning question that haunted him could no longer be held back, and he screamed at Fane for the answer.

Fane turned to look at Malcolm. At that moment, Malcolm was already hanging at his last thread, and at any moment, he could shut his eyes and pass away.

"And what'll happen after you know who I am, hmm? Would it change the results?" Fane's tone was light as if he was talking about something very simple.

Malcolm's body became taut as his bloodshot eyes widened.

"Don't get too riled up, Malcolm!" hissed Jordan.

Malcolm was already on the verge of death. If he died, things would look incredibly grim for Jordan. The consequences needed no further explanation.

Even Malcolm had not been able to defeat the guy, let alone Jordan, who had not even entered the spring solidifying realm.

Alas, Malcolm completely ignored Jordan's words as he stared at Fane in a deranged manner.

"I'll never leave you, even when I'm a ghost!" vowed Malcolm, blood spurting out of his mouth as he did.

Hansel frowned, feeling conflicted about Malcolm.

Malcolm had once been his right-hand man...but never did he think that Malcolm would plot against him, forcing him to his current predicament.

He somewhat pitied Malcolm in his pathetic state, but that feeling was quickly discarded. He would have been the one who would suffer a terrible fate had Fane not been around. Malcolm would absolutely not

"You have to hold on, Malcolm! We'll leave this place alive! If you die, what'll happen to me?!" Jordan anxiously clutched Malcolm's

At that moment, Malcolm was far too emotional. His state was deteriorating, his hands trembling due to the tear that plagued his heart.

"I won't let you go unscathed, m-mark my word....! I won't...let you off even if I die... I'll curse you!" screamed Malcolm with the last ounce of strength he had left.

After his last words, his entire body suddenly straightened. His chest stopped heaving, and Jordan went crazy after seeing that.

He used all his strength to shake Malcolm, trying to bring Malcolm back from the dead. Alas, Malcolm's soul had been shattered by Fane. It could no longer condense again.

Malcolm had breathed his last.

At that moment, Jordan was no longer as arrogant as before, his whole body trembling in the aftermath.

Rudy retreated a few steps, no longer daring to even look at Fane.

He regretted challenging Fane and mocking Fane so incessantly before. He recalled how he tried to suppress and oppress Fane back when they were at the alliance branch. It was only at this moment did he realize how crazy that notion was.

Chapter 2517

If Rudy knew how strong Fane was from the start, he would never have dared to pull those stunts on him. Fane had entered the spring solidifying realm at his current age and even defeated even a fifth-grade clan's chosen disciple.

Rudy was no match against him at all.

Grayson, too, thought the same. At that moment, they were basically in the same boat, full of regret for what they had done.

Fane's expression did not change even as he stared at Jordan, who was crying out to the skies, merely raising his sword slowly.

The sunlight glinted against the sword, coldly reflecting onto Jordan's face. He could feel Fane's murderous intent, and he could not help but shudder.

He suddenly looked up to face Fane and noticed how he stared at him so emotionlessly. Jordan paled in fright, shuddering. He gulped as he pushed away Malcolm's body.

He adjusted himself before kneeling in front of Fane. "Let me go; I was just following him! I didn't do anything... It's just that he gave me a lot of benefits, but I'm just an accomplice at most! P-Please, let me go..."

"I don't stand a fighting chance against you whatsoever nor do I want to kill you. I don't really have much of a grudge against Hansel; I was just blinded by greed! I never expected..."

He cried as he spoke, but no matter what he said, Fane's expression remained cold, fueling Jordan's panic even more. He started to crawl on the ground, attempting to grab Fane's pants.

However, Fane did not give him that chance. With a wave of Fane's sword, the tip pointed right at Jordan's throat. Jordan no longer dared to move around, but he still refused to let go of any chance to survive.

"Please let me go! If you're willing to let me go, I can do anything you want me to do, and I'll even help Hansel reveal the truth! I'll have all the people who've misunderstood Hansel realize that it had nothing to do with him! We were the ones who trapped him-"

Fane's sword stabbed into Jordan's throat before he could finish, and the last glimmer of hope in Jordan's eyes was the only thing left of him.

Fane chuckled coldly; he never planned on letting someone like that get away scotfree.

Hansel's face soured a little. Jordan's last few words sounded very promising for him, but it was already too late for anything. Jordan's throat was already stabbed by Fane's sword, effectively ending his life once and for all.

With a thud, Jordan's corpse collapsed into a pile of leaves, no longer showing any signs of life. Fane then sheathed his sword and turned to look at Hansel. "Let's go," he spoke, saying nothing else.

Fane did not care about what would happen to Hansel after this. Jordan leaving the place alive would, in fact, be the biggest problem. No one knew if he would do anything to affect Fane in the future.

Killing Jordan was the best preventive measure.

Hansel let out a small sigh, not saying anything. The rest of them followed after Fane obediently, heading out of Grand Yorn Mountain

No one dared to doubt Fane anymore. No matter what Fane did, they would obediently follow.

The next afternoon, they finally arrived at the city where the Seven Absolutes Pavilion governed.

The Middle Province Alchemist Alliance's branch was in the skies of the city. Fane had only just learned that all of the alliance's branches were vessels floating above a city.

It gave out a feeling that the alliance was above all conflicts.

When they entered the city, Hansel's expression was a little stiff. Fane and the others were headed toward the vessel, so it was time to say goodbye.

Chapter 2518

Fane wasted no time as he saluted Hansel. "Go and head back to your clan, Hansel. We'll be heading to the airborne vessel."

Rudy glanced at Hansel. "Do you not want to head back?"

On the way, Fane had not asked what happened to Hansel nor did he ask how olm had plotted against Hansel. Hansel did not open his mouth to explain either. They completed the journey quietly.

Hansel took a deep breath as he smiled bitterly. "There will be some trouble after I go back, but it's fine, I have confidence. As long as I tell the truth in its entirety, I'd most likely receive only a punishment or two. There shouldn't be anything too major."

Fane looked at Hansel before saying calmly, "I killed Jordan for my own reasons. It probably wouldn't have been a good thing for him to go back with you alive.

"Someone like him could backstab you at any given moment. Furthermore, I feel like you're a merciful person.

"You might not be ruthless enough against him due to your past relationship. To prevent anything messy from happening, I decided to just get rid of him."

Hansel nodded and said, "You're right, Fane, I was too soft on my juniors. I'd probably have smoother days ahead with them gone now."

Fane nodded. Hansel shot a meaningful look at Fane, still having something to say but swallowing the words.

He turned to look toward Seven Absolutes Pavilion.

The pavilion was the most important building in the whole city. It had all the flair a fifth-grade clan should have, and it was the reason why the city was so prosperous.

As a disciple of the Seven Absolutes Pavilion, he was one of the most important people in the city. However, after everything that had happened, he had turned into a traitor.

Hansel was no fool; he had to fight for his innocence. The thought circled his mind for a while before Hansel took a deep breath and turned around, saluting Fane.

He had been about exchanging pleasantries when Fane immediately interrupted him, "There's something I want to ask you. I wonder if you could help me."

Hansel looked at Fane curiously before answering, "Please do raise your concern, Fane. You've saved my life, so naturally, I'll answer anything you want to know."

Fane nodded; that was the answer he wanted.

"Malcolm said earlier that you had ties to the alliance. Is this alliance the Middle Province Alchemist Alliance? What kind of ties do you have?"

"What did you do for them, and what did that eighth elder have to do with the alliance? There've been many things happening with the alliance lately. I wonder if you know of them."

The slew of questions had all hit their marks. Each question that came from Fane caused Hansel's expression to sour a little.

Rudy and Grayson looked at Fane respectfully, wanting to shoot Fane a thumbs up.

Fane was too amazing. They had almost forgotten all these, yet Fane still had it in mind. The things he asked were all incredibly important.

The three of them straightened their bodies as they looked at Hansel, waiting for his answer.

## Chapter 2519

Hansel, unable to formulate a response to Fane's question, stiffened as his gaze flitted around everywhere.

He mulled over the situation for a good while before he finally said, "I'm sorry, but I've been sworn to secrecy on this matter, and I've even signed a soul contract. If I talked about it, my soul would be punished."

Fane raised an eyebrow, not saying anything.

Rudy anxiously said, "You just said you'd tell us everything, and now you're saying you've signed a soul contract? How could we know what kind of soul contract it is? Don't try to deter us like this!"

Hansel hurriedly shook his head. "I'm not lying! I did sign a soul contract, I promise. It's the kind that ties itself to heaven and earth. If I say anything, I probably won't be able to survive for a minute before my soul explodes!"

Hansel's words made it incredibly difficult for them to persist, but at the same time, Rudy and Grayson did not think Hansel was speaking the truth.

They just felt like Hansel made up a random reason to shut them up because he did not want to reveal the truth. Hansel saying he had sworn into secrecy would, of course, prevent them from interrogating him further.

Fane sighed as he said calmly, "Since you're not willing to answer, I won't force you. However, you have to answer this question.

"Has the Middle Province Alchemist Alliance encountered many problems lately? Are these problems so severe that they'd threaten the existence of the alliance?"

Hansel looked at Fane with a surprised expression. After thinking about it, he nodded. "I don't know if this matter would actually endanger the alliance. After all, the alliance has been in Middle Province for who knows how many years. They have very deep roots.

"Small matters wouldn't be able to threaten them, but it's true that they've had quite a handful of problems. That's all I can tell you."

Fane nodded, rather satisfied with the answer. Knowing that, he would need to be more careful when doing a lot of things.

After they parted with Hansel, the three of them made their way to the airborne vessel. They showed their sixth-grade alchemist badges to the guard before declaring their reason for being there and who they were. The guard brought Fane and the others to see Elder Simon.

Elder Simon was the head elder of the branch. When he heard about what happened to Fane and the others, he



hurriedly met them.

There were a total of five people in the spacious hall. Elder Simon sat in the main seat, while the steward, Xander, stood next to him. sitting in front were Fane and the others.

Fane and the others had been standing, but the elder had allowed them to sit on the account of their perilous journey.

Before they arrived, Fane had already discussed with Rudy and Grayson not to reveal their battle with the one-eyed frost wolf and the three from the Seven Absolutes Pavilion. They could only say that they safely arrived in the Seven Absolutes Pavilion's territory after the vessel crashed.

That way, Fane could hide his martial talent and save a lot of unnecessary trouble.

Elder Simon's face soured after hearing

their story."Heh, so it's those hooligans, are they! I knew they wouldn't let things rest so easily. How did the news leak out? Is there already a spy in the Rosefinch Pavilion's branch?"

## Chapter 2520

Xander, standing next to the elder, had a frown as well. "It's very likely that a spy has indeed infiltrated them. Otherwise, they wouldn't have gotten our route so easily and set up an ambush on the way. They must've been aiming for that thing..."

Elder Simon was furious, slamming his hand on the table. It caused the tea on the table to fall.

"I'll root out those spies for sure this time! Martin hadn't been smart enough to use the last of his strength to send away these three men, they would've died, and no one would've known about what had happened."

Xander nodded before he suddenly thought of something. He said in a low voice, "That Scarlet Blood Crystal-"

The moment he said that, Elder Simon immediately turned his head to shoot

Xander an expression to stop. Xander gulped, coughing as he swallowed back those words.

The question was obviously not meant for the three of them to hear. The Scarlet Blood Crystal was in Fane's hands at that moment; both Rudy and Grayson knew.

However, Fane had already warned them into secrecy, and they would not dare to reveal the fact that Fane had already absorbed the Scarlet Blood Crystal. Furthermore, Elder Simon and Xander did not seem to think that the Scarlet Blood Crystal was with them all this time.

They had hidden the fact that Martin had sent the stone into the vessel with the last of his strength. They made it seem like it had fallen into enemy hands.

The two of them had dark looks on their faces. The situation had been explained thoroughly and all hints of suspicion were cleared. To begin with, they were not even heavily involved in this matter; they just happened to be dragged into this mess.

Elder Simon and Xander knew very well that Rudy and Grayson would want to head back to their own factions because of what had happened.

Rudy and Grayson stood up together, and the two of them bowed to Elder Simon.

"Elder, what we've experienced... really placed our lives at stake, and it took a terrible toll on us. We no longer want to head to Phoenix Valley and merely want to return to where we-"

Before Rudy could finish, the elder interrupted him, "You can't go back. You've already decided to become students of the alliance, so you should stick to your vow. We've already talked to your factions.

"You've gone through the tests, and everything is already set. You can't quit now!" Rudy and Grayson's eyes widened at those words as anxiety washed over them like tidal waves. They had not expected that their request would be rejected so quickly and without consideration.

Elder Simon was telling them that they could abandon the thought, that it would not be possible for them to head back.

Rudy looked incredibly anxious at that moment as he hurriedly pleaded, "Elder, please! We're genuinely mortified by everything we've been through! The two of us are only at the early stage of the innate level, like mere ants on the side of the road in a fight. We'd die if anyone just blew in our direction. Our lives are incredibly important to us, and we really don't want to go to Phoenix Valley!"

## Chapter 2521

Elder Simon laughed coldly as he turned to look at Rudy. "If you're so cowardly, how will you ever achieve anything great? Regardless of whatever you're thinking, you're going to Phoenix Valley!"

"What happened before is an alliance secret, and it must never be leaked. If the two of you really want to leave, your memories will have to be removed."

Rudy and Grayson looked like they had just been viciously slapped, unable to formulate any plea nor resistance. Removing memories sounded simple, but it involved direct damage to the soul.

The two of them were not that powerful, to begin with. If their memories were forcefully cleared, they might be reduced to mere brainless fools!

That was when Rudy and Grayson truly understood that they could not worm their way out of this situation anymore. Elder Simon would not let the two of them leave to protect the secret.

With that in mind, they had no reason to struggle anymore, and hopelessness haunted them dauntingly.

Elder Simon let out a cold smile as he continued, "Stop acting like you'll die if you go to Phoenix Valley. Phoenix Valley is an important existence for the alliance, and no one would dare to enter Phoenix Valley. You'll never be hurt."

All three of them heard Elder Simon's words and agreed; Phoenix Valley would naturally be safe, seeing its importance to the alliance. Danger would not find them so easily.

They would be incredibly safe if they were in Phoenix Valley, but it was a different question during the journey there itself.

Regardless, Rudy and Grayson were already prepared to retreat and not go to Phoenix Valley before.

Even if that place was the safest place in the world, they would not want to go there. They felt like Phoenix Valley was the center of all their troubles, that even though it looked safe on the surface, there was no telling what could happen in the future.

Fane let out a light cough as he stood up, saluting Elder Simon. "Since the two of them have been convinced, when will we be heading to Phoenix Valley?"

That was what Fane cared about the most. Before, two strong deacons had been arranged to protect them, yet they were still intercepted by an ambush.

They did not know if the journey to Phoenix Valley would be the same as the last one, riddled with problem after problem.

Elder Simon could see Fane's concerns. He raised an eyebrow as he looked at Fane in appreciation. He felt like that kid was much stronger than the other two. At the very least, he was not a coward.

He answered, "Don't worry; there are no spies here. This time, I'll arrange for Xander to go with the two of you.

"Xander isn't a steward from this branch. He's from Phoenix Valley, so he's the best person to accompany you."

Fane raised an eyebrow as Xander nodded to him. No other words were said. Fane was still worried, but it would do nothing other than cause annoyance if he voiced out his questions then.

Elder Simon arranged for Xander to bring them to Phoenix Valley immediately after everything was settled, probably because getting them sent as soon as possible was the best idea.

The journey was quite peaceful, and nothing terribly uneventful happened.

After two days, they arrived at a maple tree grove. The red leaves made the place look like it was burning brightly. Fane, Rudy, and Grayson looked up, attracted by the scenery.

## Chapter 2522

"Phoenix Valley is right ahead. With your status, you'll be temporarily restricted to being in the outer valley. Wait for a moment once we get there. I'll go get your identity badges and set up your living spaces before bringing you in."

All three men nodded obediently at Xander's words. After the small vessel arrived at its destination, it started to descend from the air. Phoenix Valley might be called a valley, but it was, in fact, not located within the mountains.

It was in a wide flat plain, surrounded by countless maple trees. Red was the primary color in Phoenix Valley.

They arrived at the main entrance, and Xander casually showed his identity badge to the guards before bringing the three of them into Phoenix Valley.

It was not too luxurious inside, but it looked more impressive than a palace. Xander brought the three of them behind a grand hall. After they arranged everything, he helped the three of them to get their identity badges.

Next, he brought them to the back of Phoenix Valley. They went to two of the cleaner courtyards while Xander arranged for two runners to come over. Fane shared a courtyard with Rudy.

Grayson was arranged to be at another courtyard, sharing it with another sixthgrade alchemist. Since each courtyard had two rooms, Rudy stayed in the eastern room while Fane stayed in the one to the west.

After Xander arranged everything, he left after a few words, leaving behind the two runners. The conditions of the lodgings were better than where he had stayed before.

Being able to have a room to himself saved a lot of trouble, and Rudy was relatively quiet the entire time as well. The runner disciple assigned to them was called Lou Grouse.

He had been a runner disciple at Phoenix Valley for two years. He was in the same realm as Rudy in terms of fighting ability, but he was not as lucky as Rudy to be talented in alchemy.

Before he left, Xander had told them that they could ask the runner anything they did not know. After all, the runner disciples knew all the rules in Phoenix Valley.

Grayson did not seem willing to separate from Fane and Rudy. After all, he was not familiar with the area. However, his relationship with Fane and Rudy was not the best, anyway. Even if he did not want to leave, he could not strike any feasible conversations.

After arranging everything, he headed to his courtyard. Fane did not waste time getting to his courtyard. Notably, there was a small pavilion in the middle of the courtyard.

All Fane could think of at that moment were making spirit crystals, and also training.

However, Rudy had other thoughts in mind. After all, he had not planned on going to Phoenix Valley and was forced to be there. After all the arrangements were made, his more calculative thoughts started to surface.

"Go over there and wait for now. Come over if we ask for you!" Rudy said to Lou as he frowned.

Lou nodded obediently before he found an empty corner to wait quietly.

Fane immediately knew that Rudy had something to say the moment he saw how Rudy was acting, but Fane could not be bothered to listen to Rudy's nonsense. The moment he thought about interrupting Rudy's words, Rudy spoke up first.

"Fane! You're very smart. Why don't you try figuring out what happened to the alliance?" came Rudy's remark, which sounded oddly genial at that, one that made Fane shudder.

This guy was incredibly shameless. A long while ago, Rudy was pompous and ridiculed Fane without relief. At this moment, however, he was trying his best to suck up to Fane.

Fane was not the type of person that would ignore the past, but he was still stuck in the same yard as that guy. He was still in an unknown place, so he was not willing to make their relationship too tense.

"You know everything I know, and there's nothing much to figure out with so little information. Even if the sky falls, you have a roof above you to hold it back. There's no need to be so worried."

Contrary to his own words, however, Fane was in more internal conflict than Rudy was. There were some things that he needed some peace and quiet to think about before understanding the inner mechanisms.

Fane waved at Lou. "Come. Tell us the most basic rules of Phoenix Valley, as well as things we should never do."

After being called by Fane, Lou immediately walked over from the corner. He respectfully arrived next to Fane, and Fane called him into the pavilion. As he drank some tea, he listened to Lou talk about the rules in Phoenix Valley. Lou was incredibly quick with his words, and in just a short moment, he had finished telling Fane everything. Fane memorized the various rules within Phoenix Valley and could not help but lament after that.

Phoenix Valley truly was the center of the Middle Province Alchemist Alliance.

Just the outer valley alone had 200 alchemists. Any alchemist that could enter Phoenix Valley was at least a sixth-grade alchemist.

After listening to Lou's explanation, Fane frowned and said, "So Phoenix Valley is basically an incredibly large clan?"

Lou nodded, saying respectfully, "That is one way to look at it, but Phoenix Valley is different from a regular clan.

"Phoenix Valley raises two factions, one for alchemists and the other for warriors. The alchemists and the warriors are separated from each other, and they, for the majority of the time, will not cross paths."

Fane raised an eyebrow. Phoenix Valley was incredibly ambitious. Not only did they have their own alchemists, but they had warriors as well. They had the protection of warriors and the resources of alchemists.

Fane just did not know how many warriors were in Phoenix Valley.

Fane looked up and asked, "What grade would you think Phoenix Valley would be if it was a clan?"

This was the most important question. Phoenix Valley would no doubt be higher than a clan like Rosefinch Pavilion, but it was still a question if it would be a sixth, seventh, or even an eighth-grade clan.

Lou thought about it for a moment before he shook his head. "We're not the same as other places. I only know about the outer valley, and I don't know anything about the inner valley.

"The outer valley is separated from the inner valley. You'll only be able to enter the inner valley if you have a certain level of talent and skill."

Before coming to Phoenix Valley, Xander had mentioned the inner and outer valleys before. Fane had merely listened and not paid it much attention before, but with Lou's words, Fane understood that there was a big difference between the two.

Fane continued asking, "Why can't you enter the inner valley? Is it because those in the inner valley are all core members of the alliance that receive special benefits?"

Lou nodded, answering sternly, "Precisely. Only those in the inner valley can be considered core members. As for how you can enter the inner valley, I don't know.

"You must possess a certain amount of talent before you're notified. As for what the level of talent needed is, I have not a clue of it."

## Chapter 2524

Rudy frowned, saying unhappily, "How could you not even know this?"

Fane looked at Rudy wordlessly.

Lou fell into an awkward situation, not knowing what to say. Rudy did not mind how nasty he sounded at all.

He frowned and continued, "Are all of the 'Way of the Pill' manuals in Phoenix Valley open to everyone? Can you study any of them whenever you want to?"



Lou nodded.

Rudy straightened himself. "Phoenix Valley is too dangerous. A Way of the Pill is the basis to establish a clan. It's not something clans would normally allow anyone to see.

"I can't believe they let just anyone who wants to look at them. It looks like I'm not here for nothing. At the very least, I'll be able to learn an even better Way of the

Pill."

Fane had not wanted to pour cold water on Rudy's thoughts, but he could not help but say, "Don't get ahead of yourself. Even though there are no restrictions, everyone can learn a Way of the Pill. Don't forget that it's not something so easy to learn.

"The difficulty is there. No matter how good of a manual you end up reading, will it matter if your talent is not up to par?"

Fane felt like Rudy was too optimistic. He knew why Phoenix Valley would be so generous. Everyone who was in Phoenix Valley was a disciple of the valley and would eventually contribute to the valley.

It was especially true for alchemists. Phoenix Valley allowed everyone to access everything because everything at Phoenix Valley was not something an ordinary person would be able to understand.

The more talented a person was, the more room they had to improve. Phoenix Valley would stand to gain even greater benefits.

Even if Rudy learned the best Way of the Pill, his talent would not amount to much.

Fane sipped some tea. "I'm going to the Hall of Wishes. Take me there."

Lou bowed and obeyed. However, Rudy could not remain calm.

Baffled, he widened his eyes as he blurted, "Why are you so anxious? Can't you just go after we've rested?"

Fane's only thought was to earn more spirit crystals at that moment, so he naturally did not want to waste any time.

After figuring out Phoenix Valley's rules, he would want to do everything he could to improve himself and make even more spirit crystals.

He did not bother with Rudy. After placing the teacup on the table, he then stood up and shot a look at Lou. Lou obediently turned around and left.

Rudy had lost his calm completely, feeling like Fane in far too much of a rush. He had just asked about the rules when he decided to rush to the Hall of Wishes, and Rudy was divided on whether he should tag along.

He had planned on resting for a day or two to familiarize himself with his surroundings. It would not be too late to start then. However, when he saw that Fane was going further and further and further away, he got impatient.

He ran after Fane and shouted, "Wait for me! I want to go too!"

The Hall of Wishes was at the easternmost end of Phoenix Valley. Fane could not help but lament that Phoenix Valley truly was different from everywhere else when they arrived at the Hall of Wishes.

Even though the outside did not look that majestic, it was still an incredibly big place. Compared to the other halls that Fane had been to before, Hall of Wishes was massive.

There were 12 floors, and alchemists. flocked to every floor.

"Do I need to queue up after I enter?" Fane turned to ask Lou.

Lou nodded. "Hall of Wishes is incredibly vast, and there are two hundred alchemists in the outer valley. Even if all two hundred were here, it'll fit everyone comfortably."

## Chapter 2525

Fane nodded before and walked into the hall. Rudy, with furrowed brows, followed Fane.

"I don't know why you're in such a rush. Condensing pill runes is something that requires a long time to improve on, and there's no reason to be in such a hurry."

The Hall of Wishes was a place built to allow the alchemists to condense pill runes. Filled with pill aura, the hall was split into many small, isolated rooms. After entering a room, an alchemist could use the dense pill aura to form pill runes.

It served a similar function to the pill aura room that Fane had used before. Anyone could enter the place without any need for permission or spirit crystals. It was a place that was free for all alchemists to use.

Fane was not in a rush to start completing tasks and earning spirit crystals. He was more anxious to know what his limits were.

Even though he absorbed the memories of that senior, he still did not know how much his body had caught up with the memories. He wanted to know how many pill runes he could condense.

Fane saw innumerable rooms the moment he walked into the Hall of Wishes. There were at least 300 small rooms there that could fit every alchemist in the outer valley.

No one would ever need to wait to be able to use a room here.

After having Lou head back, he and Rudy picked out a room each. When Fane shut the door, the pill aura in the room got even denser.

Fane took a deep breath and cleared his thoughts as his hands started to form seal after seal. The tiny runes looked like fairies in the night, dancing around Fane's hands.

One by one, the pill runes formed and danced in front of Fane as the gold-colored runes illuminated the area before him. Seconds passed, and Fane's attention was completely on forming the pill runes.

Fane had lost all sense of time. He was slowly chanting in his head, "One thousand four hundred and ninety-seven, one thousand four hundred and ninetyeight..."

The moment he condensed 1500 pill runes, Fane felt a sharp pain that assaulted his soul. In turn, his right hand slipped as he made a mistake.

A crack was heard next to him. Fane looked up to see all the runes in front of him collapse due to his mistake as they then turned into dots of golden light. After that, they turned back into pure pill aura and merged into the surroundings.

"I failed!" remarked Fane despondently.

Fane had thought he would be able to get himself to condense 3000 pill runes; he never expected that he would lose control after condensing just the first 1500 ones. His memories clashed with his body, and the pill runes he had formed collapsed.

"Three thousand pill runes are the most basic standard of seventh-grade pills...so I'm actually very far from that standard..." Fane said helplessly.

In the end, he had overestimated himself.

He had thought that he would at least be able to refine a seventh-grade pill.

Alas, it looked like he still needed to train longer before he could have his body move in line to his memories enough for 3000 pill runes.

He had at least accomplished his goal of being there.

After Fane understood his own strength, he no longer wished to linger in the room. He pushed open the door and saw Rudy standing outside.

When Rudy saw Fane head out, he immediately walked up to him. "I thought that you'd be in there for a few more hours at least. I was planning on leaving if you didn't leave in two hours!"

Fane pursed his lips in exasperation. He had not expected Rudy to be waiting for him outside.

## Chapter 2526

"I thought you'd gone back. Why are you waiting for me?" asked Fane, genuinely puzzled.

After all, he and Rudy did not have the best of comradeship, and every conflict they had before never truly left their minds.

All that, and Rudy acted like nothing had happened between them and waited for Fane outside.

Rudy let out a slight cough as he said with an obstinate tone, "We just moved in here, you know. We'll be bullied if we walk on our own, don't you think?"

Fane let out a light grunt. He could not help but feel the urge to roll his eyes, but he stopped himself in the end.

He already grasped Rudy's temperament a while ago, so it was nothing too surprising.

He would just be wasting his time if he continued to be calculative with him.

Fane thus nodded and decided to just play along. He could do whatever he wanted to.

"I'm going to the task hall, are you coming?"

Rudy's eyes widened in exasperation when he heard that. "Fane, you've just arrived in Phoenix Valley for a few hours. Why are you in such a hurry to go everywhere?"

"You've only been in that room for six hours! How much could you have learned? Now, you're going to the task hall. Don't forget: Lou had mentioned that all tasks that have been claimed need to be finished."

Fane nodded. He had not rested ever since he entered Phoenix Valley, and to Rudy and everyone else, it would look like he was in a hurry. However, Fane knew all too well that he would be wasting his life if he did not value his time.

With not a second to lose, he turned and looked at Rudy seriously. "I'll say it again: I'm going to the task hall. Do you want to follow me? You can come along if you want to, but otherwise, head back on your own."

He could not be bothered wasting time exchanging words with Rudy nor did he want to reveal his plans to Rudy. With that, he turned around and left the Hall of Wishes.

Rudy frowned as he watched Fane walk away. He did not understand why Fane seemed to be in such a hurry. He had only rested for barely a moment before he resumed whatever he was thinking of!

After hesitating for a while, Rudy decided to follow Fane in the end; he refused to be left alone in a place he barely knew.

The two of them walked forward, and Fane even asked around for directions to the task hall. After a few twists and turns, they finally arrived at the task hall.

The task hall was the most majestic building in the whole outer valley of Phoenix Valley, and it took up even more space than the Hall of Wishes.

There were 99 flights of steps, and just a glance would show how magnificent that palace built on the side of the hill was.

Fane took a deep breath. Just from the design alone, the task hall looked like the most important place in Phoenix Valley, with all the people moving out and about in the task hall.

Compared to the places Fane had been before, there were much fewer people there. After all, there were only about 200 alchemists in the outer valley, and all of them were split up into various places in the outer valley.

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Fane did not pause for much longer before he started to walk right into the task hall.

Rudy followed closely behind Fane, somewhat speechless as he looked at Fane's back.

There were some things he had not wanted to say, but looking at how Fane walked so confidently and calmly, he could not help but say, "You look very dead-set, Fane."

Rudy's meaningless remark baffled Fane.

He had never been someone who enjoyed talking a lot, but Rudy seemed like a curious child whose questions-ones he did not even wish to entertain-never ceased.

## Chapter 2527

Fane glanced at Rudy. "Why are you talking so much? Have you only found out now that I can make my decisions? You don't have to keep rephrasing these things so often."

Rudy coughed slightly as he scratched his nose, saying awkwardly, "To be honest, I just wanted to know why someone as talented in combat as you would choose to be an alchemist. Even though alchemists are regarded very highly, strength is still the most important thing.

"If you decide to put all your focus on martial arts, you'll no doubt have many great accomplishments. All that, and you decided to put so much time on alchemy. Aren't you afraid you'll regret it in the future?"

Fane cleared his throat in his bewilderment.

He knew that Rudy would not have had anything good to say in the first place.

He turned around on the steps and looked down at Rudy.

"When did I tell you that I gave up on martial arts to pursue alchemy?"

Rudy shook his head somewhat stiffly.

Fane coldly snorted and said, "I've never said it before, so don't jump to conclusions. Just focus on your issues and don't waste your thoughts on this."

Fane then turned to face forward once more, not giving Rudy another chance to speak.

The task hall was so vast that the ends could not be seen.

Compared to the vast space, there were not many people around.

There were no doubt more people there compared to everywhere else in Phoenix Valley.

The task hall's walls were filled with various boards-all of them half a meter wide, and a meter long-with jobs listed on them.

Tasks were shown on these boards, and to each were its details.

To claim those tasks, alchemists only needed to place their badges on the bottom right area, and a contract would then be formed with the task board's runes.

After the two reacted, the task would belong to the owner of the badge.

Every task in the hall, from easier tasks to the most difficult ones, was meant for alchemists.

There were tasks like identifying spiritual medicines and assisting in looking for spirit grasses. Of course, there were also tasks for refining pills.

Most of the tasks on the boards were meant for sixth-grade pills. Seventh-grade pills were needed as well, but they were fewer in number than sixth-grade pills.

The tasks meant for eighth-grade pills were hung up on the higher parts.

The ones able to claim the eighth-grade pills were rare, even in Phoenix Valley.

Just as Fane studied the task boards looking for the suitable tasks, he suddenly heard some discussion from behind him which piqued his interest.



"Sure enough, there are way more tasks than before; this matter is no small affair. Only, we don't know how long this will last. After the matter has passed, we won't be able to benefit so much from it anymore."

Rudy was standing beside Fane, and he too could not help but turn around to look. The white-robed people talking about the tasks had sixth-grade alchemist badges on them, just like Fane.

## Chapter 2528

He and the green-robed man were looking up tasks just like Fane was. Only, they were conversing as they did.

The green-robed man let out a slight grunt before he said, "How could that thing be settled quickly? I heard it shocked the whole inner valley, and they're already preparing for war. Otherwise, why would so many tasks suddenly pop up?"

"Before this, half of the task boards would be empty, but now the whole thing is full. This means that this matter won't be resolved so easily. The alliance has already made preparations for a long-term war!"

After the green-robed man said that, the white-robed man nodded in agreement. "I just don't know if we'll be sucked into things or not."

The green-robed man let out a deep sigh.

After thinking about it a long time, he answered, "I don't know, either. With the way things seem now, it looks like it shouldn't involve lesser-significant figures like us too much, but I don't know if that'll remain the same in the future. All we can do is pray."

Fane more and more like something was wrong as he listened in. He could not help but turn to look at Rudy next to him, who also looked at the other two with a confused expression.

What the two of them were talking about should have something to do with the recent incident. Something had indeed happened to the alliance, and it was no small matter. It could even end up involving insignificant people like them.

Thinking about it, Rudy took a deep breath.

He walked nearer to Fane as he whispered, "Could it have something to do with the ambush on us? What happened, exactly? Why don't we know anything despite how major the incident seems? Do you think we should try and find things out?"

Fane shook his head decisively. "Don't overreact for now. If you run around asking about it now, you might not get any answers. You should let things fizzle out for the time being.

"Since people are talking about this thing everywhere, then it's not some secret that can't be revealed. We should be able to find out about it in not too long."

Rudy listened to Fane's words and frowned. "Why are you so much calmer when you're facing such an urgent matter?"

Fane turned to him. "There are some things you can't find out if you're anxious. This doesn't seem so simple, so we shouldn't treat it so casually."

After saying that, Fane turned his gaze to the task boards again, and Rudy only had a vague sense of what Fane meant in the end.

The more Fane acted like that, the more Rudy panicked. It was as if the whole world knew about what was happening except him.

"Fane, if you know about it, can't you tell me? I don't know anything at all! What did what happened to us before have to do with this? More importantly, I don't know what's happening at all!" Rudy started to sweat.

Fane turned to look at Rudy. "I only have a guess, but there's no proof for now. My guess seems quite accurate, so let's wait to talk about it."

Fane lowered his volume for a while.

The discussions on the other end got louder as the green-robed man said, "I refuse to believe that all the good tasks have been claimed by those guys! It's not like we're worse than them, so why do they get all the good stuff?!"

The white-robed man hurriedly placed his finger to his lips as he heard that, motioning for the other man to keep quiet.

"Could you please keep your volume down? Don't you know those guys are very good at listening in?"

"If your words reach them, you won't be able to get away easily. Why are you trying to offend them for no reason?"

The green-robed man let out a cold snort as he reluctantly reasoned, "We're all sixth grade alchemists, anyway, and no one is better than anyone else. He's just a bit more talented. What's the point of talent? Are we supposed to just let them do what they want?"

The white-robed man shook his head helplessly. "He really is talented. I heard that he managed to get a high rank during the last test. He managed to get three sets of materials to refine golden pills!

"I also heard that he got a thousand and five hundred spirit crystals. Even though those spirit crystals aren't much to us, it's still something he managed to get with his talent and skill. He's already much better than us in that regard."

The green-robed man grunted coldly but was unable to retort. The white-robed man, on the other hand, did not seem willing to dwell on the topic. He walked around before pointing at a task board.

"This task has been here for at least five days. No one has claimed it so far, which means no one thinks much of it. Why haven't they taken it down? Even if they don't want to, they should put it in a corner. What's the point of them leaving it in the middle?"

Fane looked at where the white-robed man was pointing and spotted a special task displayed on the centermost task boards of the hall.

The task seemed very simple: one just had to refine a sixth-grade pill. The pill was called the Thousand Flower Antidote, and after refining it, one could get eight hundred spirit crystals.

Rudy had also been paying attention to the white-robed man earlier. He glanced at where the man was pointing and saw the task.

"It's only eight hundred spirit crystals," whispered Rudy with a frown. "I recall that the materials needed to refine a Thousand Flower Antidote will cost at least five hundred spirit crystals.

"All that hard work to refine the pill will only reward you with three hundred spirit crystals. That's way too cheap! No wonder no one wanted the task."

Refining a sixth-grade pill needed both time and effort, and to add to the mix, a certain amount of risk would be involved as well.

To prevent wastage, as well as to stop Phoenix Valley from spending more than they needed to, the alchemists in the valley all needed to prepare their own materials after claiming a task.

If Fane took the task to refine the Thousand Flower Antidote, he would need to use his own spirit crystals to buy the materials needed to refine the pill. After refinement, he would then use the pill to exchange for spirit crystals.

Most alchemists were not too good in combat but were very good at planning. Expensing so much effort to earn 300 spirit crystals was not something anyone wanted to do. That was why the task had stayed there for five days without being claimed.

Rudy took a deep sigh as he said with a conflicted expression, "Do you think I should claim this task? After all, I had just become a sixth-grade alchemist. Refining the Thousand Flower Antidote only needs nine hundred pill runes. I can do it right now, though I'd probably struggle a little. Even though I can only earn three hundred spirit crystals, it's still some income for me."

## Chapter 2530

Fane let out an exasperated laugh as he turned to look at Rudy. "You seem quite confident in yourself."

To Rudy, Fane's words were like a slap to his face, and the old Rudy would have snapped back at Fane. However, he no longer had that courage when facing Fane.

No matter if it was alchemy or combat, Fane was much better than him.

Rudy's lips twitched as he reluctantly reasoned, "I do have the confidence. I'm quite sure I can condense nine hundred pill runes. After refining it, three hundred spirit crystals isn't too bad for me."

Fane let out a slight laugh as he said calmly, "How many alchemists like you do you think they are in the whole outer valley?"

Rudy looked at Fane warily. When he noticed how serious Fane was, he thought about it for a moment before answering, "There should be about ten or twenty of them."

Fane nodded; Rudy's estimate was about the same as his.

Fane then said to Rudy, "If there are ten or twenty of them, why is the task still put up there? Aren't you curious?"

Fane's question made Rudy assess the situation in a different light, and he then thought it was rather peculiar as well. The task hall was bustling with activity, and alchemists in the valley would walk around the place at any given time.

After all, they needed to accumulate wealth and accumulate experience in alchemy. It meant that the task hall was necessary.

The task had been there for five days already, and those who were at around the same level of talent and skill as them should have taken up the task already if they thought it was suitable.

Oddly, no one took up the task for the whole five days.

There had to be a reason, but Rudy was too stumped, unable to find a plausible reason for it. After thinking about it for a long time, he felt like his brain had turned to mush.

He decided to just look up at Fane sincerely. "My mind is a mess right now, Fane. I don't understand. Stop beating around the bush and just tell me what it is."

Fane let out a sigh. "The reason is simple: those who are stronger than you won't care about three hundred spirit crystals. Those who are at around the same level as you won't easily accept the task."

"Don't forget, the materials needed for the Thousand Flower Antidote cost five hundred spirit crystals. Five hundred spirit crystals can only get you one portion, which means you can't fail.

"The moment you fail and have to buy another batch of materials, you'd be making a loss. Those around your level can't guarantee success, which is why they won't easily accept this task. That's why the task has been here for so long."

Fane's explanation was so detailed that even a wild boar by the side of the road would be able to understand him.

Rudy slapped his forehead at that.

"That explains why the task has been here for so long. I thought that I'd finally snagged an easy profit, but I stood corrected in the end... I'm actually not that confident that I'll be able to successfully refine it in one go."

Fane nodded. He felt like Rudy was only barely a sixth-grade alchemist. After all, all he could do was refine an Energy Breaking Pill and condense 800 pill runes.

He might be able to try and potentially succeed with 900 pill runes, but there was no guarantee that the pill would have a 50 percent refinement after he condensed the runes.

A pill without a 50-percent refinement was a failure.

With that in mind, Rudy let out a bitter laugh.