

## Chapter 2631

They could have found a better alchemist from Phoenix Valley had they tried to. However, Elder Rick had deliberately caused a scene and insisted on recommending Fane, evoking everyone's doubt and ridicule.

Master Forrest had a smirk on his face as he walked toward Fane, saying as he turned to look at Elder Maurice, "This guy is obviously an excellent sixth-grade alchemist. I had thought that everyone participating this time would be seventhgrade alchemists." shiver

Elder Maurice steeled himself, refusing to show any unsavory expression. He let out a laugh as he answered, "Fane truly is excellent among sixth-grade alchemists, but this is just a small tournament, so we didn't really put much thought into who we sent here."

Elder Maurice had not dared to be too confident. After all, he was not sure where Fane's skills lay. Even if Fane had assured him earlier, Elder Maurice could not trust Fane wholeheartedly.

The vagueness of the answer intrigued Master Forrest. His gaze moved around as he looked at Fane with an even more curious expression. The three participants behind Master Forrest, too, looked at Fane peculiarly.

Elder Maurice, not willing to continue dwelling on the topic, took a deep breath and raised his voice, saying, "Alright, it's almost time. Let's start the tournament. The rules will remain the same: best two out of three. As for what we're betting on, I won't repeat it. If we lose, we'll be willing to pay up."

There was weight in Elder Maurice's words, and his earlier confidence had seemed to have dissipated. Elder Maurice had always been very confident in the alchemists produced by Phoenix Valley, but Fane's abrupt appearance had shattered his confidence.

Whatever would transpire from that moment onward was obscure, and he was no longer as proud.

Fane, meanwhile, frowned, wondering what it was they had betted on. Even though Elder Maurice did not say anything, Fane guessed that it had something to do with the conflict against the Unbreaking Pavilion.

After all, that was the biggest incident in Middle Province at that moment. The tournament should have something to do with the war, and maybe even some exchange of resources.

As for the exact details of the deal, Fane could not guess it. No matter what, if he lost the tournament, Elder Maurice would not be able to handle the matter easily and would surely exact his anger against Fane.

Master Forrest nodded. "Of course we'll pay up if we lose, but could I ask you a few questions before we start?"

Master Forrest's sudden question caused Elder Maurice to raise an eyebrow. Even though he did not say anything, Elder Maurice knew that Master Forrest was not someone who did things for a reason.

The questions would definitely not be easy to answer.

However, Master Forrest had just afforded them a bit of time to smooth things out before, so it would seem petty of him if he did not let Master Forrest speak.

Elder Maurice was forced to nod. "Go ahead."

Master Forrest's lips curled up into a smile that could only be described as awfully pleased. "Middle Province has descended into utter chaos now. Everyone has their own thoughts, and the main cause is the conflict between the Middle Province Alchemist Alliance and the Unbreaking Pavilion.

"Even though everyone knows that, we don't really know why you started fighting. Ever since the matter started, I've been incredibly curious as to why you started the conflict with the Unbreaking Pavilion and why it escalated to the point a war broke out."

## Chapter 2632

Master Forrest had dug up and questioned something everyone present wanted to know, and even Mr. Zayne did not know the details. All he knew was that war had already occurred, and the higher-ups had no intention of stopping it. It looked like they were willing to fight until they had nothing left.

Upon Master Forrest's question, everyone turned to look at Elder Maurice with questioning gazes.

Elder Maurice pursed his lips helplessly.

He knew the old fox would ask that question. Thus, he let out a slight laugh as he looked up and said, "I thought all of you already knew. Isn't it simple? It's because of the Valley of Enlightenment, of course, a place with incredibly rare resources. The two of us have one key to the place each, and it's because of this key that the conflict has escalated to such a state."

Alas, Elder Maurice's answer failed to satisfy everyone's curiosity. It was a very standard and official answer, yes, but meaningless at the same time.

All of them knew that opening the Valley of Enlightenment required two keys. One of the keys was in the hands of the Middle Province Alchemist Alliance, while the other key was in the hands of the Unbreaking Pavilion.

Only by combining the two keys would the Valley of Enlightenment be opened, but that was not where the problem was. Normally, both sides would sit down to negotiate such a situation.

At the end of the day, one knew what was inside the Valley of Enlightenment before it was opened.

War invoked so many forces, what more with the fact that both the Alliance and the Pavilion were major powers. If they fought to the brink, then it would be a bitter end.

If they end up accidentally wasting too much of their power, the other forces in Middle Province would definitely be staring at them intently. The moment one side could no longer hold on, it was very possible that other forces would jump into the battle.

A fight between two parties made it easier for a third party to win. No one believed that the higher-ups of the two forces did not know such a simple thing. If they knew, they would not have started a war so easily. A war would never start for any small matter.

That should have been a win-win situation. As long as both of them sat down to negotiate, they would run almost no risk of a third party benefiting, even if they did not agree to all terms.

However, over half a month after, the Middle Province Alchemist Alliance and the Unbreaking Pavilion both declared war, shocking all the forces in Middle Province.

None of them could figure out why both sides were fighting.

Master Forrest laughed as he raised an eyebrow. "I know the two of you have a key each, but you could all have just sat down and negotiated for a solution. Why do you have to go to war?"

After saying that, Master Forrest suddenly showed a worried expression, as if he was worried for the Middle Province Alchemist Alliance. "If you start a fight just like that, you might end up being laughed at by other forces. You might just draw attention to yourselves!

"If you use up too much, they'll act at the right moment. Then, the consequences won't be so easily predicted. The Middle Province Alchemist Alliance's tens of thousands of years of tradition could possibly disappear in a flash!"

Elder Maurice frowned slightly before he nodded with a nonchalant expression. "Master Forrest is right. We'll make sure we keep our guard up and not hurt ourselves too much."

Master Forrest continued to speak with concern, "When it comes to war, it's never easy to control. After all, the moment you start fighting, both sides will end up losing resources.

"Unbreaking Pavilion is one of the best clans among the eighth-grade ones. Even though the alliance isn't that weak, you still can't look down on them. The moment your resources are depleted to a certain level, the other forces will all jump in.

"You know how those people in Sable Pavilion are. They're just hiding in the darkness with their eyes on both parties".

## Chapter 2633

Elder Maurice frowned. Even though Master Forrest's words seemed to be driven by concern for the Middle Province Alchemist Alliance, Elder Maurice could see the true nature behind those words.

Sable Pavilion was an existence among eighth-grade clans that was on par with the Unbreaking Pavilion. The Sable Pavilion and the Unbreaking Pavilion were the two strongest eighth-grade clans around.

Master Forrest's words were not wrong; Elder Maurice and the others knew it as well. Ever since the war broke out, Sable Pavilion had been quietly looking into things.

Elder Maurice pursed his lips helplessly as he said, "We know of everything you spoke of. Thank you for your advice."

After that, Elder Maurice fell silent, not willing to speak anymore. However, Master Forrest was fully intent on digging out the truth behind the scenes and showed no signs of stopping. Even the tournament had turned into an afterthought.

"The Valley of Enlightenment must be an astounding place if it can cause all of you to fight even with the potential consequences. Let me guess... Could there be saint-level treasures within?

"Oh, might there be some treasures left behind by an ancient ancestor instead? Will you be able to dominate Middle Province if you got it?"

Master Forrest's eyes nearly popped out of their sockets as he spoke, and it was evident just how excited he was.

A human's greed had no limits. Even though Master Forrest knew that there was no way for him to participate in it, he refused to give up on that hope. Even if he could not get the best treasure, it was decent enough if he could just get a little and improve himself.

Sky Peak Pavilion and Phoenix Valley shared a decent relationship. Sky Peak Pavilion had spent a long time trying to figure out the true reason for the conflict, but the Phoenix Pavilion's higher-ups had been incredibly tight-lipped.

Though they could not find the truth behind everything, Master Forrest refused to give up.

He wanted to know the sort of treasure that had caused two massive forces in Middle Province to end up in an all-out war before they even sat down to negotiate. Both of these forces had been incredibly quiet toward Sky Peak Pavilion.

They would only be able to get a sliver of information no matter who they asked, or even just the official answer. The other forces were all restless beyond relief.

Everyone wanted to find out the secret behind all of it. If they knew the secret, they would be able to take advantage the

moment there was a chance!

Elder Maurice looked at Master Forrest's excited face. So excited, in fact, that Master Forrest could not contain his expression.

He longed to know the truth.

The more he acted like that, the calmer Elder Maurice was.

"Master Forrest, you're misunderstanding things. Both keys need to be combined if we want to open the valley, but both of our sides are already enemies at this point. How could we work together to open the gate?"

"How could we know what's inside before we open it? Maybe you're right; maybe there's a really valuable treasure inside or something amazing left behind. Until the valley is open, however, this is all just speculation."

## Chapter 2634

"Impossible!" exclaimed Elder Maurice with widened eyes.

He took a deep breath before he said, "A war wouldn't have broken out if you hadn't known what's inside. The two sides are fighting because what's inside is far too valuable.

"You want it for yourselves; that's why you just started a war right away! We're not little children here! Do you think your words will throw me off?"

Elder Maurice frowned, feeling like Master Forrest was borderline obsessed at this point. He seemed insistent on getting to the truth right there, but Elder Maurice did not get angered at all. Instead, he looked at Master Forrest earnestly.

"The Valley of Enlightenment is definitely part of the reason our two forces are fighting, but there are many more complicated reasons as well. As for the actual reason, I can't tell you-it's Phoenix Valley's secret."

Master Forrest's face darkened, not trusting what Elder Maurice said. However, Elder Maurice had no obligation to reveal the secret to Master Forrest. Just sparing him so much time on the matter was already incredibly polite to Master Forrest.

Elder Maurice took a deep breath before he said seriously, "Master Forrest, you've already asked the questions you wanted to, and I've answered everything. As for whether you believe it or not, that's not something I can control.

"It doesn't matter if you believe it or not, for all of this is the truth. Today, I brought our people over not because I wanted to answer your questions. It's late. Should we start the tournament?"

Elder Maurice's words completely stuffed

Master Forrest's questions back into his mouth. Master Forrest's face stiffened, finally realizing that he had gotten a bit too excited.

The most important thing he had to do that day was to hold the tournament for the younger generation. If the Sky Peak Pavilion lost, their future negotiations would involve much higher prices for them to pay.

Master Forrest took a deep breath as he repressed his skittishness. He forced out a smile as he turned to face everyone. "Elder Maurice is right; those questions aren't the main focus of today. The tournament is more important!"

That signaled the end of the questions.

Even Fane let out a regretful look on his face. He wanted to know so badly why the two forces went to war, too.

This question had been in his head for a very long time, and he would often find himself wondering about the truth behind everything. He kept on feeling like the matter involved a lot of things behind the scenes.

There had to be an immense reward awaiting them if the two forces were willing to ignore the inquisitive looks of others as well as potentially damage their foundation. After all, the Unbreaking Pavilion was at the peak of the eighthgrade clans.

Even though the Middle Province Alchemist Alliance had its roots in Middle Province for a very long time, the Unbreaking Pavilion clearly had a very strong foundation to dare to go to war against them.

No one knew how long the war would last and how many people it would involve, and neither did they know if it would end up involving themselves. Fane was both concerned and doubtful as he thought of everything.

Even though he was not as cowardly as Rudy, he was not so carefree that he had no concern. If the two sides continued fighting in such a state, Fane would end up involved eventually.

## Chapter 2635

That was not something Fane wanted to see happening.

He let out a sigh as he looked at Claude and Benedict next to him. The two of them had regretful looks on their faces. It seemed like they did not know the secret behind the truth of the war.

Fane turned to look at Mr. Zayne. Even though Mr. Zayne did his best to compose himself, Fane still managed to see a hint of curiosity in his eyes. It seemed like Mr. Zayne was out of the loop, too.

The higher-ups kept everything tightly under wraps, much like a secretive massive chessboard. If the two forces were really at the stage of being such irreconcilable enemies, the secrets should not have been guarded so strictly.

The only reason left, then, was that the secret involved incredible benefits for either side. Fane became even more confused as he thought about it, feeling like there were far too many things hidden from everyone.

As Fane was deep in his thoughts, Master Forrest had his subordinates bring in the tools required for the tournament. There were a total of six condensation cards, and each card had 2000 pill runes within.

Not a single rune in them was complete. Some lacked 80 percent, while some lacked half.

Fane immediately knew what the first match would entail the moment he saw it. It was like the test that Fane had gone through in the Elder Hall back then. The six of them would all have to fill up 2000 pill

runes.

Just like Fane had thought, Master Forrest, acting as the host of the tournament,

started to read out the rules as he pointed at the six cards, "Everyone should be familiar with the first match today. You should have gone through this test plenty of times back at your respective places.

"The requirements for the match are more or less the same as what you've experienced. The six of you will have a condensation card each. There are two thousand pill runes that are incomplete within them.

"The runes are a lot more lacking than the ones you would've had to fill before. After you fill up the runes, you have to achieve a sixty-percent refinement rate. Any pill runes with a fifty-percent refinement rate will be marked as failures."

Everyone nodded at that. Even though they had all gone through this test before, only a fool would not know that the test they were about to go through would be far harder than anything they had gone through.

Claude glanced at the condensation card and could not help but whisper, "My gosh, so many of these pill runes are incredibly hard to understand! Almost half of them are pill runes that are only used in eighth-grade pills and above. This test can't be underestimated..."

Benedict frowned and said, "The degree of incompleteness isn't uniform either. Some of them are even lacking as much as eighty percent. We only have twenty percent of the pill rune to figure out what it is, and we still need to fill it up. This is a little too hard.

"If it's only half incomplete, I'd be quite confident, but now? I don't even know how I'll perform!"

Fane raised an eyebrow as he looked at the condensation cards. He had to say that he did not blame Benedict for losing his confidence. He had gone through the same test in the Elder Hall before, but it had been far easier.

Even though the pill runes were incomplete that time as well, the degree was just half or 60-percent at most. At the very least, they could figure out what the original rune looked like from the parts that remained.

A pill rune that only had 20-percent was only left with a corner. The difficulty was raised several times. Even very skilled seventh-grade alchemists were not necessarily able to figure out what the original rune looked like just from 20 percent of the rune, let alone with limited time.

Due to how young they were, they had not been seventh-grade alchemists for that long. They were very talented but lacked the time put into the craft.



## Chapter 2636

After the six contestants saw the runes that they needed to complete, all of them had concerned expressions except for Fane.

All of them were really worried and scared that they would not perform well. Other than Fane, the other five contestants were considered quite skilled back at their irrelative forces.

They were quite confident in their own skills and were always proud of themselves when they went out. However, this time they looked like they were in trouble.

Conrad from Sky Peak Pavilion frowned and said, "Isn't this test a bit too hard? Two thousand pill runes, it would already be amazing if I managed to complete eighty percent of them.

"If seventy-five percent of those runes I completed were passable, then I would have performed beyond any expectations. This will probably be the worst result I've gotten since I became an alchemist."

Conrad's words resonated with everyone around him. All of them nodded, but Fane was the only one who quietly observed the condensing card.

Fane was constantly searching for those incomplete runes in his memories. He had already shut himself out from whatever anyone else was saying.

At that moment, Master Forrest suddenly said, "This tournament means a lot this time. It would be meaningless if we used only easy questions."

After that, Master Forrest looked over at Bradley. Bradley merely nodded without much emotion on his face. He looked exceptionally calm, which Elder Maurice and Fane both caught.

The two of them frowned at the same time, feeling like that expression must mean something. Master Forrest let out a cough and said, "You'll have fifteen minutes to prepare yourself. After all, the tournament is an important matter this time. All of you have to maintain a calm state."

After saying that, Master Forrest turned around and sat on his chair. He sipped on some tea that was brought over. Master Forrest seemed incredibly calm and collected to any outsider.

He had calmly explained the rules and sat back down. He even continued casually sipping his tea. In Fane's eyes, there was definitely something up. He frowned as he turned to look at Elder Maurice next to him.

Elder Maurice had his eyebrows furrowed and were deep in thought as well. With the two of them behaving like that, Fane immediately knew that something was wrong. Even though there was nothing odd with how Master Forrest was acting, he was being far too composed.

It was as though the tournament did not seem to matter at all to him. Master Forrest had been in Sky Peak Pavilion for so many years. He did not rise to power purely because of his skill, but his scheming ways as well.

It was a tournament that involved many benefits. Even Elder Maurice was nowhere near as calm as Master Forrest. It was as if the results were not that important at all. Thinking about that, Fane raised an eyebrow as he looked over at the three contestants on the other side.

There did not seem to be anything wrong with them. The one called Bradley had left the most profound impression on Fane. It was not only because of the look Master Forrest had shot Bradley.

Ever since he saw Bradley, Fane noticed there was not much emotion on the guy's face. Even when he was introduced to everyone, people were looking at him with a confused gaze, but he maintained a calm expression.

## Chapter 2637

Bradley acted as if everything that was happening around him was not that significant. The more Bradley acted like that, the more suspicious Fane was. Could something be different about Bradley?

Before every test, the contestants would always be given fifteen minutes to calm themselves down. That amount of time was not too long, but it was not that short either.

Claude and Benedict had not found anything wrong with the situation. Ever since Master Forrest announced that the fifteen minutes had started, the two of them had their eyes shut as they started to prepare themselves.

However, Fane was different from the two of them. Fane did not need to prepare as they did. He had always been the most composed one. At the start, five of them were silent, but after a while, Elder Maurice could not hold it in.

He turned to look at Mr. Zayne and lowered his voice, "Actually, I've never thought we would ever lose in this tournament. After all, Sky Peak Pavilion might be an eighthgrade clan, but they still focus on martial arts.

"Phoenix Pavilion doesn't only have martial artists, but large amounts of alchemists as well. I've never thought for a moment that our alchemists would lose to them. That has never changed.

"Even though Fane appeared, I feel like our chances of winning are still very high with Claude and Benedict. Yet, just look at Master Forrest, he looks like he's incredibly confident. I refuse to believe he'd be so idle if he did not prepare anything!"

After saying that, Elder Maurice's lips were pursed into a line. He narrowed his eyes slightly as various thoughts danced in his head. Mr. Zayne frowned slightly, feeling like something was wrong as well.

At that moment, Master Forrest was idly holding his teacup and leisurely sipping his tea. He looked like a customer at a teahouse. However you looked at it, it seemed like he was not concerned about the results at all.

Mr. Zayne took a deep breath and whispered back, "I think they must have made some preparations. After all, this involves a lot of benefits. If they lose, they'll end up paying a greater price.

"Since he represents Sky Peak Pavilion, he would naturally want the best for them. He doesn't need to think about anything else. The fact that he's so calm means he's confident in this tournament. He has definitely come prepared!"

When Elder Maurice heard that, his expression soured. He even clenched his fists slightly as his breathing quickened a little.

Elder Maurice felt incredibly helpless. He felt his composure coming and going in waves. He was the person in charge of the tournament this time. If they lost the tournament and Phoenix Valley ends up having to pay a greater price, he would definitely be berated harshly. He would be given the relevant punishment as well.

Those were actually secondary, he was more afraid that his position would be threatened. Thinking about that, he could not help but curse Elder Rick for being so petty and despicable.

If someone else was there instead of Fane, he might be more confident. Even though Fane had given his guarantee before, Elder Maurice was not someone who just believed the words of others.

He would not believe in Fane before he witnessed Fane's skills for himself.

"This time, defeat is absolutely not allowed! Do you all hear me?!" Elder Maurice said in a low voice.

After noticing that something was wrong, Elder Maurice pulled the four of them aside to an empty space. He was not in the mood to be drinking tea with Master Forrest. His emotions were all over the place at that moment.

"We have to think of a counterplan!" Elder Maurice said indignantly.

Mr. Zayne's lips twitched in mild exasperation as he carefully said, "Things have already advanced to this point, what kind of counterplan could we have? We can't possibly have a change of contestants at this point.

"Actually, I was very curious about this. If this tournament is so important, why didn't we send alchemists from the inner valley?" Mr. Zayne's words caused Elder Maurice to feel even more helpless.

When Fane heard that, he perked up his ears as he looked toward Claude and Benedict. Turns out the two of them did not come from the inner valley.

That was actually incredibly strange to Fane. The two of them had acted so arrogantly that Fane had thought that they were from the inner valley. After all, the inner valley was the core of Phoenix Valley.

Only the best of Phoenix Valley gathered there, but after Mr. Zayne's words, Fane finally realized that he was completely wrong. The two of them were not from the inner valley but were alchemists from the outer valley.

However, Fane had never met the two of them before! Elder Maurice shook his head helplessly and replied, "This is something out of my control. With how complicated the current situation is, we can't use the power of the inner valley. We can't have them reveal themselves, they have to be our last line of defense!"

Mr. Zayne obviously could not tell the meaning behind that explanation was, and only saw that Elder Maurice was filled with a sense of helplessness. After Fane heard those words, he frowned as well.

He thought about those words in his mind over and over again. Why could they not use the power of the inner valley? The inner valley was full of secrets, but seventhgrade alchemists were not some secret that nobody knew.

Why were they unable to leave the inner valley? Why were they the last line of defense? Fane got more confused the more he thought about it. Mr. Zayne's lips twitched, not knowing what to say.

Elder Maurice looked even more worried at that moment. He felt like he was going to start growing gray hair. Initially, Claude and Benedict were still standing by the side as they rested and listened to Elder Maurice.

The more they listened, the more it felt off. Mr. Zayne's words seemed to be questioning their skills and talents. Claude could not accept that.

Claude let out a slight cough as he said, "I doubt those people really amount to anything. Even though we're not from the inner valley, it's only a matter of time before we get in. Mr. Zayne, you don't have to look down on us like that..."

Mr. Zayne's lips twitched when he heard that, almost rolling his eyes at them. Elder Maurice let out a small laugh as he said without any mercy, "Do you think the inner valley is somewhere you can just get into if you want to? Even though you're both seventh-grade alchemists now, the test to get into the inner valley has never been about how good you are as an alchemist, but about your actual talent!

"Even a sixth-grade alchemist can be chosen to enter at any time if they're talented enough. The two of you have been in Phoenix Valley for quite some time, but you've never received the test before. That proves that you have no right to enter the inner valley."

Elder Maurice's words held nothing back as they damaged their pride. Claude widened his eyes in disbelief, while Benedict was so angry his fists were clenched up and shaking.

If Elder Maurice had not been the one speaking, the two of them would definitely have kicked up a fuss. After hearing those words, Mr. Zayne let out a cold smile.

## Chapter 2639

Even though Mr. Zayne did not say a word, Claude could sense the mockery behind his cold smile. At that moment, Claude felt even more unhappy with the situation.

Neither of them knew how to get into the inner valley, and they had never received the test before. The two of them had thought that it was because neither of them had any noticeable breakthroughs as seventh-grade alchemists.

Yet, it seemed that it was purely because they were not talented enough! When Fane heard that, he got even more curious about the inner valley.

Fane had not planned on staying in Phoenix Valley for that long. He felt like Phoenix Valley was an incredibly dangerous place. If he stayed there for too long, it was possible he would end up being pulled in, but Fane was beginning to sway from that decision.

He really wanted to see why the inner valley was so mysterious. Even with so much at stake, the higher-ups of Phoenix Valley were not willing to send them. There had to be a reason for that.

Fane narrowed his eyes as various thoughts swam in his head. While he was occupied with his thoughts, Mr. Zayne suddenly let out a surprised exclamation.

The few of them followed his gaze curiously. Mr. Zayne forward as he looked in the direction of the members of the Sky Peak Pavilion. Fane followed his gaze and noticed that Mr. Zayne was staring at Bradley.

Mr. Zayne frowned as he scanned Bradley up and down a few times. He looked like he had seen something through Bradley. After a while, Mr. Zayne finally said, "I keep feeling like I've seen Bradley before! As for where I met him, I can't really recall. Why do I keep feeling like he looks really familiar?"

After that, Elder Maurice hurriedly asked, "He looks familiar to you? You've seen him somewhere before?"

Mr. Zayne did not answer Elder Maurice immediately and merely continued staring at Bradley. He looked like he wanted to skin Bradley alive.

After a moment, Mr. Zayne finally slapped his head in realization.

"I remember now! It's the test from the inner valley a year ago! Bradley was there! Elder Maurice, weren't you sent off on an errand then? The few of us were left behind to help out.

"The guy had a very good showing that time. I was sure he would be accepted into the inner valley, but his family suddenly changed their mind. They paid a very big price to bring Bradley out!"

Those words caused everyone there to widen their eyes. That piece of news was too shocking. Turns out that Bradley was also part of Phoenix Valley before and had even taken the test.

"He had performed excellently in Phoenix Valley and was just a step away from being accepted into the inner valley before he was brought away by his family. They had paid a large price as well."

Elder Maurice's expression changed immediately to those words. He quickly pulled Mr. Zayne's arm and said, "Keep your voice down! Tell me about it in detail!"

Fane was suddenly speechless at Elder Maurice's words. It was obvious Elder Maurice did not want everyone else to hear it. Mr. Zayne proceeded to whisper into Elder Maurice's ears after that as they talked in private for a long time.

## Chapter 2640

Their expressions turned more serious the more they spoke. Elder Maurice in particular had his brows furrowing tighter and tighter.

Even though it was not clear what they were talking about, a lot could be learned from Elder Maurice's expression. If Bradley really was that talented, then it would be over for them in the tournament.

Elder Maurice had been incredibly confident in their lineup, but there was no way he could keep up his good mood after knowing Bradley's talent.

Claude stood by the side as he whispered, "Even though Bradley is quite talented, it doesn't mean we've lost..."

He was not willing to admit defeat. Even though he had never participated in the inner valley tests, Claude did not feel like he lacked any talent. He had always done very well in Phoenix Valley and had done much better than his peers.

He did not know how one gets qualified to get into Phoenix Valley, but he felt that he was more than qualified to take the test and enter Phoenix Valley.

Fane could not help but let out a cold smile at those words. He had seen many people like Claude. All of them felt like their talents were better than everyone else, and that no one could beat them.

Everything was good and all the honor belonged to them. However, Fane felt like they had that attitude only because they were arrogant.

After entering Phoenix Valley, Fane had asked Lou how could one get into the inner valley. Lou had said assuringly that he did not know how to get into the inner valley because that was a big secret.

The inner valley would constantly observe all the alchemists in the outer valley. The ones they thought were qualified would go through a test to enter. There were times when even excellent, high-ranked alchemists were not accepted by the inner valley.

The inner valley never had any sort of testing standards, nor had anyone ever seen how they were chosen. The more secretive it was, the more curious Fane got about the inner valley.

Elder Maurice said in anger, "No wonder that guy's still in the mood to drink tea. He was already prepared! However, what's wrong with Bradley? He actually didn't want something as amazing as the inner valley!

"He's now suddenly at the Sky Peak Pavilion and one of their alchemists. What sort of place is the Sky Peak Pavilion? They've never produced any notable alchemists before, so why would he choose this place?"

Elder Maurice got angrier the more he thought about it. He was already struggling to even keep his voice down. Mr. Zayne frowned and said in exasperation, "There's definitely something happening behind the scenes that we don't know about. We did not care about it that much that time, since there are already so many geniuses in Phoenix Valley, but I never expected him to be standing on the opposite side of us, helping the Sky Peak Pavilion fight over our resources!"

Elder Maurice's face darkened a little, "The Middle Province Alchemist Alliance has always been the gathering spot for the alchemists of Middle Province. Every single alchemist would fight incredibly hard to enter the alliance.

"Yet this brat is trying to go against the grain! If he ruins things for us today, I'll make sure he pays!" Elder Maurice was incredibly furious.

There were too many variables at this point.

Even though the test has yet to start, Elder Maurice was already worried about the final result. Everything pointed to the tournament that day spiraling out of his control.

After he sighed, he suddenly turned to look at Fane and the others. He reached out and grabbed Fane's arm before exclaiming, "The first test determines the total scores of everyone. You must not drag us down, understand?!"

Chapter 2641

Fane nodded, not saying anything more.

He had thought that the results would be individually scored. He had thought that all he needed to do was to make sure his own results were better than his counterpart. He never expected that the scores would be totaled up.

Claude could not remain calm after hearing that and questioned, "So the results of the test are totaled? Then this guy..."



He did not continue what he said, but there was no need. Everyone naturally knew what Claude was thinking about. In Claude's eyes, Fane would definitely drag them down.

If the tournament had been an individual one, Claude would not have been so emotional, even if he would still be angered that Fane would drag them down. However, if all of their scores were totaled together, then even Claude and Benedict would be dragged down if Fane did not do well!

Elder Maurice would report the total score when he reported to the higher-ups. Then, the two of them would look really bad, so how could Claude calmly accept that fact.

Elder Maurice frowned as he replied to Claude unhappily, "Is there something wrong with your head? Of course, the score will be totaled.

"If it was an individual contest, and one person exceeded everyone's scores by an immense amount, but the other two did not do well, how would it be judged? How would you gauge the scores of the alchemists from both sides?

The others immediately understood after hearing Elder Maurice's explanation. The tournament was not just down to individual skills. The scores had to be totaled up to really show the average strength.

It had always been a battle between two forces, so it was naturally the total score that would be judged. However, Claude suddenly felt like he was being dragged down even harder. He got furious even looking at Fane.

He panted roughly as his face scrunched up in anger, "Fane! No matter what, you have to do your best. If you drag the two of us down and both of us end up in trouble, I absolutely won't let you off!"

Fane frowned speechlessly. There were times when he really wanted to rush toward Claude and give him a slap on the face to wake him up.

He grunted lightly as he said coldly, "Can you act a bit more normal? Can you just listen to what I've said to you before?"

"How do you know I will drag you down? In my eyes, you'll be the one dragging us down. Please look at yourself in the mirror first!"

Claude almost got a stroke with how angry he was at Fane. His entire body even started to shake. Claude had continuously challenged Fane but never seemed to get the upper hand.

Claude was like a stubborn child. No matter how much he suffered from it, he would still confidently mock Fane the next time.

After that, he would be shouted back at by Fane, and end up angering himself greatly. Benedict grabbed Claude's arm helplessly.

"Stop trying to talk to him. This guy's just never been punished before and doesn't know his place. He probably thinks he'll get good results in the tournament, which is why he is so confident. He'll face reality in just a moment!"

Chapter 2642

Benedict's words successfully consoled Claude and calmed him down.

Fane raised an eyebrow after he heard Benedict's words. He retorted, "The two of you are just annoying clowns in my eyes. You're right, the tournament is about to start. The truth will be revealed soon, just don't cry then."

After saying that, Claude and Benedict's eyes widened, unable to believe what they heard. Was that guy crazy? He actually thought they would cry?

Even Benedict, who had a good temper, was almost unable to take it anymore and about to rush forward to fight Fane. However, he was held back by Elder Maurice.

Elder Maurice frowned and started berating the three of them, "All three of you, shut up! Don't you know where you are? Why are you trying to start a fight and embarrass yourselves?"

"You should be focused on yourselves and your thoughts should all be about the tournament. I don't care who's bragging or not. I won't let anyone off if they drag us down!"

Right after he said that Master Forrest's voice was heard on the other side, "Time's up, contestants, prepare to start."

Master Forrest snapped them out of that tense atmosphere. Claude and Benedict glared at Fane before they turned around and headed toward the center.

Sky Peak Pavilion's stewards gave each of them a condensing card. All three of them got the same condensing card.

In order to ensure fairness, the three cards had just been made by Elder Maurice and Master Forrest earlier. After accepting the card, Fane looked it over once.

Elder Maurice announced the last rule,

"You only have six hours! Once the six hours are over, we'll keep your condensing cards even if you haven't finished. Everyone heard me?"

The six of them nodded at the same time. After looking at their nod, Master Forrest suddenly had a glint in his eyes, as if he thought of something.

"That's right, the condensing card in your hands was made with a special array. It has a few additional functions compared to the cards you've gotten before," After saying that, Master Forrest deliberately paused for a moment.

Everyone looked at him strangely. Master Forrest seemed to be trying to bait everyone in. When he saw how everyone was looking at him, Master Forrest let out a smile as he continued, "The condensing card has a very special function. If the runes you completed don't reach sixty percent refinement, the moment you complete them, the runes will crumble by themselves.

"That means that the runes that you can complete will all have a sixty percent refinement. The moment you complete it, the results can be announced!"

The moment they heard that everyone's eyes widened. Why was such an important piece of news left to the last moment to be announced?

Fane frowned as he turned to look at Elder Maurice. Elder Maurice merely looked forward without a change in expression. It was obvious that he already knew about that piece of news. If he already did, then why did he not let them know before?

When Master Forrest saw everyone's curious reactions, he smiled and explained, "We did so deliberately. The reason is simple, we want to test your adaptability.

"Announcing this at the very last moment will allow us to see what your mind is capable of when you're facing unpredicted dangers.

A successful alchemist requires not only talent and ability but composure to face danger as well. There's no need for any more talking, we will start now!"

## Chapter 2643

After Master Forrest said that the others all looked at him with a dumbfounded expression, other than Fane and Bradley. It was obvious they did not understand what Master Forrest meant.

Why would the last point be about testing their composure? What was there to test? The others did not understand, but Fane immediately understood it.

After struggling to condense a rune, an alchemist would definitely be affected mentally if a rune they had so painstakingly formed crumbled because it was not at sixty percent refinement.

The more runes that crumble, the more the alchemist would panic. They would then make more and more mistakes and it would affect their final results. It seemed like it was a test that Elder Maurice and Master Forrest both agreed on.

"Alright, stop with the errant thoughts, it's time for the test to start! The clock has started ticking. You only have six hours, so stop wasting your time on needless thoughts!"

Those words caused everyone to compose themselves and immediately put their full focus on the cards in their hands.

Fane frowned as he looked at the condensing card. To Fane, even if the runes in the card were left with twenty percent, Fane would still immediately know how to complete it.

After all, that ancient warrior was a top alchemist in a first-grade world. All of the runes were as easy as ABC in his eyes.

If it were not for the fact that his memories were still not fully in tune with his body, even ninth-grade pills would be incredibly easy to refine for Fane.

Fane did not start condensing the pill runes immediately. Instead, he started by looking at how many pill runes were at the highest difficulty. He did not want to be like the others and start with the easiest runes.

Completing pill runes was quite different from refining pills. When refining pills, not only did one have to maintain the pill, they needed to condense pill runes as well.

The moment one pill rune went wrong, all of their hard work would be wasted. That was why it was so hard to become a highgrade alchemist.

On the condensing card, condensing pill runes were different. The pill runes on the card were independent existences. Even if the pill condensing went wrong, one would be able to start over without affecting the other pill runes.

Fane's biggest problem was not that he did not recognize the pill runes, nor was it that he did not know how to draw them. It was that his body could not keep up with his memories.

His hands would not be able to keep up with his mind, which was why he would make mistakes. However, the tournament was actually a good chance for Fane to practice. After all, even if there were mistakes, he could start over!

With that in mind, a sliver of a smile appeared on Fane's mouth. At that moment, he suddenly heard Elder Maurice's anxious voice.

"What are you looking at over there? Do you think six hours is very long? Why aren't you starting yet?!"

Fane's lips twitched helplessly. He had been focused on finding out which pill runes were the hardest to refine. He had forgotten that everyone else had already started while he was still looking around.

Elder Maurice who was already not very trusting of him in the first place suddenly lost his cool. Fane's lips twitched as he put his gaze on the thousand and twentieth pill rune.

#### Chapter 2644

That rune was the hardest one to refine among the two thousand runes. Fane let out a faint smile as his right hand constantly danced. A golden glow constantly flowed out from his fingers.

As he moved his fingers, a faint golden pill rune slowly appeared in his hand. However, just as he was going to complete his final stroke, his hand slipped again, missing out on a stroke.

The pill rune immediately let out a bang as it suddenly disappeared. Fane's performance caused everyone to widen their eyes. Even if Fane did not turn around, he could still feel the gazes of others.

Elder Maurice's temper boiled over. For Fane to fail on the first rune was way too weak of him.

If that continued on, it would already be quite decent if Fane was even able to complete a hundred pill runes in six hours!

Thinking about that, Elder Maurice suddenly felt ill. Mr. Zayne could not help but frowned as he looked at Fane speechlessly.

Mr. Zayne was somewhat familiar with Fane, but he had never really seen Fane's skills for himself. Yet, what he saw then was Fane failing at the very first rune.

Fane's failure had successfully attracted the attention of the other five contestants. All of them looked over, and Claude could not help but let out a laugh.

Claude had already completed five pill runes at that point. Looking at how Fane had failed on the very first rune, he was incredibly amused.

Fane had been so proud of his skills earlier as if he was the best in the world. No matter what Claude said, Fane would just shoot him down. Yet, when it was time for them to show their skills, Fane was performing so badly.

Elder Maurice frowned as he glared at Claude. Claude was taken aback by that, was it wrong for him to laugh? Fane had said so many horrible words before, did none of them hear them?

Fane had bragged and placed himself on such a high pedestal, but ended up only having that little bit of skill. What was wrong with him laughing? Claude could not help but snort, "I thought this guy was so amazing, so he was just talking up a storm the whole time. He doesn't have a single bit of skill, but managed to brag so much!"

Elder Maurice frowned and scolded him, "Shut your mouth, you're not doing that well either!"

Claude pursed his lips, not really happy about it. He wanted to add a few more words, but he knew that the tournament was more important. He wanted to use his skills to deliver a blow to Fane.

Master Maurice let out a laugh as he said in a warm tone, "There's no need to be so nervous. Even though this tournament is a more formal one, it doesn't mean you'll always be stuck at this level your whole life. You have to compose yourself for this tournament."

They sounded like words of consolation, but they were filled with deep mockery. Everyone present had been able to tell that much. Elder Maurice was so angered that his face was turning red. He really wanted to shoot down those words.

However, Fane was still an alchemist on their side in the end. If Fane was only at that level, there was nothing he could say that would be convincing. All it would do was get him laughed at.

Hence, Elder Maurice was forced to swallow his anger as he glared viciously at Fane. Fane heard all of the mockeries around him, but not a single word affected Fane's mood.

Fane did not care how everyone else looked at him. After the first rune broke down, he tried again immediately. This time, he slowed himself down and allowed his body to follow his memories.

## Chapter 2645

Yet, even after he slowed down, he still failed at the very last stroke. After it crumbled again, Fane could not help but frown.

It really was the hardest pill rune. Even an eighth-grade alchemist might not successfully refine it in his place.

Fane had the help of the memories and knew where he had gone wrong and how to correct it. After a long time, Fane finally condensed the pill rune successfully.

After the pill rune was filled up, the condensing card did not make the pill rune disappear, which meant that the refinement rate was at sixty percent. That pleased Fane quite a bit.

After all, The Way of the Divine Void Pill was at a much higher level than any normal Way of the Pill. The higher the rank, the more stable the pill runes are, and the higher the refinement rate.

A sixty percent refinement rate was actually not that hard for Fane. Fane might have gotten good results in the test the last time, but he still only ended up in fifth place. Yet, that did not mean that it was the extent of his abilities.

He had placed himself at that level because he did not want to attract too much attention. If he did too well, he might end up being noticed by the higher-ups and be used as a lab rat.

He had not planned on entering the inner valley then. After all, Fane felt like Phoenix Valley was an incredibly dangerous place. However, Fane's opinions had changed, and there was less of a reason for him to hide his abilities.

After condensing the pill rune, Fane looked toward the second one. It was also one of the harder ones.

At that moment, Benedict said anxiously,  
"Was that not at sixty percent? I clearly got it to sixty percent!"

After completing a pill rune earlier, Benedict saw it crumble in the condensing card because it was not at sixty percent refinement. It immediately affected Benedict's mental state.

Elder Maurice frowned and shouted, "Calm down! If you keep being so anxious, it will affect your final results! As an alchemist, composure is very important as well!"

As he said that, Elder Maurice's voice was incredibly serious. In truth, even though the contestants were not in a very stable mental state, they were still much more controlled than Elder Maurice.

Elder Maurice was trying his best to look like he did not care about the results that much, but inside, he was on the edge of exploding at any time!

Mr. Zayne clearly felt Elder Maurice's anxious mood. His lips twitched helplessly.

If Phoenix Valley really lost the tournament, Elder Maurice would definitely be scolded when he returns.

Mr. Zayne would not be spared either. Thinking about that, Mr. Zayne started to regret accepting this task back then. No one knew there would be so many variables.

Phoenix Valley was not performing too well, so Master Forrest was naturally incredibly happy. At that moment, his smile almost reached his ears.

After he looked at Bradley, he let out a smile as he said, "Not bad! You've already completed a hundred. Continue with your hard work."

Those words successfully demoralized the other contestants even more. Everyone had been focused on the condensing cards in their own hands, none of them were focused on the results of the others at that moment.

However, Master Forrest's words successfully announced to everyone that Bradley had already completed a hundred pill runes. Most of them were only at forty or fifty, Bradley' was almost double theirs.

## Chapter 2646

Master Maurice had deliberately said so to cause the others to lose their composure. Those who were not able to calm themselves even started to pale.

Everyone knew that the tournament was incredibly important. If they ended up dragging their side down, they would definitely be punished. At that moment, everyone could not help but stop, except for Fane who was still calmly condensing pill runes.

All of them looked over at Bradley who was in the same state as Fane. No matter what happened around him, and what anyone else said, he remained calm while condensing pill runes.

Even Master Forrest's praise earlier had failed to distract Bradley. It was as if the person being praised was not him.

Master Forrest let out a laugh as he continued, "Of the six contestants, two of them are the most composed. The first is Bradley from the Sky Peak Pavilion, while the other one is Fane from Phoenix Valley."



Master Forrest sounded like he was praising Bradley, and had brought Fane up as well. However, everyone knew that Fane had only managed to condense ten pill runes at that point. There were ninety pill runes between the two of them.

However, Fane remained incredibly composed. Even if Elder Maurice was already so infuriated that he was about to berate and curse at Fane, Fane acted like nothing of the sort was happening.

One of them was at rock bottom, while the other was at the top. Praising them together was actually the same as insulting Fane.

Elder Maurice got so exasperated that he almost lunged over. Elder Maurice had been holding back the whole time so Fane could do his best.

Even though Fane was condensing the pill runes at a snail's pace, Elder Maurice did not say anything too bad. However, he was beginning to lose control.

Elder Maurice frowned and said, "Fane, don't forget what you told me earlier!"

Fane had naturally not forgotten his promise to Elder Maurice, but Elder Maurice was clueless to what Fane had planned. Fane had always been someone who did as he pleased. Others did not need to know what he was thinking, as long as he fulfilled his promises.

Fane frowned as he said somewhat coldly, "I'll naturally not forget what I said before. The tournament's just started. You don't have to be so anxious before the final results are out."

Elder Maurice's temper flared even more at those words. He felt like Fane's actions were a direct challenge to him, and he started to wonder if there was something wrong with Fane's head.

Otherwise, how could Fane remain so calm at such a time?

Elder Maurice narrowed his eyes, "How many pill runes have you condensed so far? Look at how many everyone around you already has. If this continues, don't you think your results will drag everyone down?"

If he was not forced to, Elder Maurice would not have said all of that in front of the Sky Peak Pavilion. After all, it was thought he had no confidence in his own people. Fane pursed his lips helplessly, feeling Elder Maurice's anger from his words

However, Fane was not willing to allow that old man to ruin his plans. He looked up to face Elder Maurice earnestly and said, "I'll say the same thing. The tournament's just started, and the victor

hasn't been decided yet. You don't have to panic so much. I have my own plans, you just have to wait for the results."

## Chapter 2647

Fane's words were like adding oil to the fire. Elder Maurice got so angry that his veins started showing on his head. He clenched his fists tightly, resisting the urge to beat Fane up.

"Don't try to give me any excuses. If you continue with this pace, there's no way you will get good result. You have to remember your promise to me.

"If you drag everyone down, then you better think about what you'll face when you get back.

Fane nodded seriously, feeling helpless about Elder Maurice's temper. "I'm perfectly in control of my own pace. You don't have to worry. It's only going to take six hours. Just calm yourself down first. After six hours, you'll see the results for yourself. There's no need to lose your temper right now."

Claude and Benedict had been fully concentrating on filling up the pill runes. when they heard Fane and Elder Maurice's conversation. The two of them could not stand it at that point. Fane was acting far too arrogantly.

He was so disrespectful to Elder Maurice. His skills were clearly not up to par, but he still tried to act as if he would definitely achieve a good result. Claude frowned as he stopped working on his runes.

He looked up at Fane and said, "Fane, you've gone too far. Don't we know where we are right now?"

"If you're really as skilled as you said, how could you only manage to condense so few pill runes at this point? If you continue at this pace, it would be amazing if you manage to condense a hundred pill runes!"

Fane furrowed his eyebrows. He really did not want to waste his time on them. Fane felt like he was just talking to a brick wall at that point. They would never understand anything he said.

Fane clearly voiced, "You shouldn't be in a hurry to judge me either. You aren't saying any of this for the sake of Phoenix Valley, but for your own satisfaction. You just want to make things worse for me, but I'll still say the same thing. Before the results are out, don't be in such a hurry!"

Mr. Zayne pursed his lips speechlessly. He felt incredibly humiliated at that moment. They were fighting internally in front of Sky Peak Pavilion, and no one was willing to admit defeat.

Elder Maurice felt like Phoenix Valley could not continue going on like that either. It was better if they did not fight on the spot, but he could really not control his own temper.

Fane's performance was far too bad. It was far worse than anything he had anticipated.

However, that brat remained stubborn and unwilling to admit defeat. He insisted on them to wait for the results after six hours.

He maintained his incredibly confident facade. Elder Maurice had never seen an alchemist like Fane in so many years of organizing tests of various sizes.

With Fane's pace, there was no way for him to catch up, but Fane did not seem to think that was the case at all. Master Forrest smirked as he tried to play the part of a mediator, "Elder Maurice, don't be angry. Fane is probably just incredibly confident in his own skills. That's why he's saying this.

"Even since I saw Fane, I've felt like he was an incredibly confident person. I believe he will definitely be able to create a miracle," Those strange words were all heard by Fane, and Fane just felt like Master Forrest was incredibly nosy.

## Chapter 2648

He wanted Phoenix Valley's internal conflict to escalate. Then, he would be able to enjoy the commotion from the side. The more Phoenix Valley embarrassed itself, the happier Sky Peak Pavilion was.

Elder Maurice almost exploded at Master Forrest's words, but he suddenly snapped out of it at that moment. He constantly remembered that Master Forrest did not have any good intentions.

Of course, he would not fall for Master Forrest's trick. He let out a cold snort as he turned his head over and said, "Phoenix Valley knows what our own standards are. Master Forrest, you should focus on yourself."

Master Forrest's mouth stiffened as a sharp look flashed on his face. However, he still shut his mouth up and did not continue to instigate Elder Maurice.

It was not because Master Forrest was afraid of Elder Maurice, but because Master Forrest felt like Phoenix Valley would definitely be humiliated after the six hours were up. The Sky Peak Pavilion would definitely win against Phoenix Valley.

If he mocked them then, Elder Maurice would not be able to be so hard-headed. At that point, Mr. Zayne could not hold back anymore, he pulled at Elder Maurice's sleeve before saying, "The tournament is still going on. Everyone, don't waste your time."

That successfully served as a reminder to Claude and Benedict that what they were doing was the most important. Since that kid was stubborn, then they would wait until the official results were out before they berate him.

Fane let out a helpless sigh as he suddenly did something that shocked everyone. He took his condensing card, turned around and headed toward the corner of the hall.

Everyone's eyes widened as they looked at Fane in confusion. Elder Maurice shouted, "What are you doing?"

Fane stopped at Elder Maurice's yell, not really caring about what Elder Maurice was saying. Instead, he stopped to look around before he decided the distance was far enough. Then he turned to face everyone, "I need to do this in silence. This spot is suitable for that."

Everyone was speechless when he said that, feeling like Fane was acting stranger by the minute. Elder Maurice's temper flared up again, his calm demeanor that he had just regained was gone again.

He felt like Fane's every action was mocking him. Master Forrest could not help but laugh, Fane was far too hilarious.

Could he really think that he would get a good result? He was just insulted a bit earlier, but he actually chose to leave the center to find a corner to continue.

It was like he wanted to show everyone that his results were very important and that he was incredibly confident in himself. Even Conrad could not help but say, "What's this guy doing? Does he think he's a genius?"

Fane had naturally done that for his own reasons. After Elder Maurice compared his results to everyone else, he forgot about his position as an elder and the pride of the valley as he started to berate Fane. Fane could not completely ignore it.

However, answering Elder Maurice would just waste his time. He also needed to constantly listen to the mockery around him. Fane had actually treated the tournament as an incredibly good chance to train. It was not worth it for him to waste any time on that at all.

That was why he had decisively chosen to stay way from those people. They could talk as much as they wanted, as long as it did not affect him.

Even Master Forrest was speechless, feeling like Fane was far too strange. He let out a laugh as he shook his head.

Elder Maurice was already so furious that he did not know what to say. The time was still ticking, and eventually, Elder Maurice and Master Forrest composed themselves.

## Chapter 2649

At that moment, Elder Maurice had already pinned all his hopes on Claude and Benedict. He prayed in his heart for the two of them to perform better.

Since he was no longer at the center, Fane managed to get the peace he wanted. Of the two thousand pill runes he needed to complete, the harder ones took up a quarter of them.

Fane put all his focus into those incredibly hard pill runes. Even if he failed, again and again, it did nothing to diminish Fane's confidence.

He would immediately try again after he failed. After all, he had the support of the ancient warrior's memories. The memories were his best teachers. He immediately knew where he went wrong and knew where he should focus on for the next attempt.

After two hours, Fane had managed to complete a hundred pill runes. Of those hundred pill runes, not a single one was easy. Even though he had constantly been completing the runes, Fane still took care to constantly keep track of the time.

There were only four hours left. If Fane kept on focusing on the harder pill runes, his final results would probably actually end up really bad.

He needed to pick up the pace so he could show some good results in the end. Fane put all his thoughts into refining the pill runes, completely ignoring everything that was happening around him.

Compared to Fane's focus and composure, it was a completely different atmosphere at the center of the hall. That was because Master Forrest started to proudly praise Bradley's results again.

"Not bad! You managed to get four hundred and fifty pill runes in just an hour. It's the best result here. As long as you keep at it, you'll be the best performer!"

Those words were honest praise from Master Forrest. After all, Bradley's results actually were the best of everyone present. As long as Bradley kept it up, Sky Peak Pavilion would win.

Phoenix Valley was the core of the Middle Province Alchemist Alliance. As long as they defeat Phoenix Valley, Sky Peak Pavilion's name would soar, and they would be able to attract even more talented alchemists.

He would also be bolstered by this and gain an even higher position in Sky Peak Pavilion. Compared to Master Forrest's excitement, the faces of the contestants were even more interesting.

Even the two from Sky Peak Pavilion could not resist stopping what they were doing as they looked up at Bradley. Claude got so anxious that his hands started to shake, and his expression turned into one of panic as well.

He looked at his own condensing card. He had only completed two hundred and ninety pill runes. They were over a hundred runes apart. Even though only two hours had passed, the distance between the two of them had grown.

Claude was starting to feel disheartened. Could he catch up to Bradley? Would he be able to catch up to Bradley if he did his best for the next four hours?

At that moment, Claude no longer hoped he could do better than Bradley, but only that he could catch up to Bradley. However, the more he thought about it, the less possible it felt.

Benedict's right hand clenched tightly. The pill rune he had just completed suddenly exploded in the air. He was not in a much better mood than Claude.

## Chapter 2650

Two of them knew very well that they had encountered an opponent that they could not defeat! On top of that, they had someone dragging them down. It seemed like Phoenix Valley's hopes of winning were getting murkier and murkier.

Elder Maurice took a deep breath. He looked like his own father had just died. Mr. Zayne frowned as his mood sank as well.

Even though only two hours had passed, there was more and more of a gulf in the results. Of the five in the center of the hall, the four who were not Bradley had more or less even results.

They were all at less than three hundred

runes completed. They were at least a hundred runes behind Bradley. Furthermore, Bradley showed no signs of slowing down. At that moment, he had ignored all the noise around him just like Fane.

His hands constantly moved with a faint blue glow. His fingers constantly danced around as the pill runes he condensed floated around like spirits.

Elder Maurice looked at Bradley and whispered, "We're done for this time. We don't even have to wait four hours to know the results."

After that, he could not help but turn to look at Fane in the distance. At that moment, Fane looked more or less like he did before. Fane's emotionless expression caused Elder Maurice to clench his teeth.

He had already resigned himself to his fate, he did not even have the heart to berate Fane anymore.

Mr. Zayne sighed in exasperation. He did not know what else to do. When he first met Fane, he had thought that Fane had a bright future. Fane did everything with an incredibly calm demeanor.

Those sorts of people would usually always end up being very successful. Yet, he felt like his earlier judgments had all been wrong. Fane's various actions were all incredibly confusing to him.

Even Mr. Zayne started to suspect if something was wrong with Fane mentally. Otherwise, Fane would not have done something so nonsensical. Fane clearly knew his skills were limited, so why did he brag so much, as if he would definitely deliver the results.

Elder Maurice had already lost all hope. After a sigh, he started to plan how he would explain himself when he was being judged by the other elders. He tried to think of ways to reduce his punishments.

After all, the tournament was incredibly important this time.

Phoenix Valley might not have been pulled into the war on the surface, but they were still the core of the alliance in the end. The stability they had was just a facade. If they paid a heavy price this time, the following days would be even harder.

The elders would definitely not let this matter rest. Thinking about that, Elder Maurice got so angry that he whispered to Mr. Zayne, "I won't let that Rick off. It's not the first time he's done this. I can forget about what he did before, but this is such an important matter, and he actually used it to settle a personal grudge by recommending this mindless brat!"

"He's mostly responsible for this, I'll definitely make him pay!"

Mr. Zayne nodded. With Mr. Zayne's personality, he would not add anything even if Elder Maurice was criticizing another elder like that.