

Alchemy 1331

Chapter 1331: Criteria

"The Royal School of Alchemy was created ages ago and is one of the most prestigious institutions in all of the empire," the old man next to the Crown Prince started explaining. "It is one of the 10 Great institutions that is under the Royal Imperial family, and is most certainly one of the most well regarded."

"10 huh?" Alex asked, somewhat interested. "I would like to hear more about them."

"Don't worry, your Majesty," the old man said. "We will take you to each of the institutions later to visit."

Alex smiled and nodded. "I look forward to it," he said. "By the way, I've been wondering something. I had assumed that it would be the Emperor himself that would pick us up. Is that not the case? Is he waiting for us in the Royal School?"

"Ah, no," the Crown Prince answered. "His Majesty miscalculated your time of arrival and is in an alchemy session that should last for another half a day. He was supposed to come to take you all to the Royal School, but due to that, I had come instead of His Majesty."

"Although, since it's only half a day, by the time noon comes around, he should be out," the Crown Prince said.

"I see, I can wait that long," Alex said and started looking outside of the carriage at the capital.

The buildings on either side of the road had a pagoda-like aesthetic that was more prevalent here than anywhere else in the world. The buildings were large, and tall going on for several stories. The buildings were close to each other, with no gap between them in most cases.

And yet, they never appeared crowded or congested because of how big they were and how spacious the roads were. You could have 50 carriages moving side by side at the same time and you would still have enough space for people to walk on the sidelines.

Compared to the Sunborn Sanctuary, which had wide roads, but not as wide as they were more so meant for humans walking through them, this road was definitely made with carriages in mind.

Not only that, it seemed there was an airway in the sky as well, which was meant to be followed anytime one wanted to fly around in their boats.

Alex could see boats of similar sizes in the distance flying around and could tell that there were some regulations as to what was allowed to fly in the city and where.

Alex could see the News Boards in the sky at several intervals, this time not a cube but rather a large spherical body made up of hexagonal shapes, all of which showed the same news all over.

They showed Alex's arrival.

His pictures floated in the sky for everyone to see, which meant that it was also shown to the entire continent. If he wasn't wrong, within the day everyone in the Eastern Continent would be aware of what he looked like.

Alex secretly frowned at the realization that he wouldn't be able to do secretly what he had been wanting to do. Anywhere he went, people would know who he was.

'Would a face change be the answer?' he thought, but then there would still be royals keeping track of him, so maybe it was never going to work in the first place.

As Alex continued to think and look outside at what the various buildings were, the Crown prince spoke up.

"Your Majesty, I heard something that I'm not sure is true or not. Would you mind clearing up my confusion?" the Crown Prince asked.

"What is it about? I am happy to clear any confusion," Alex said.

"When you were crowned King and the news traveled to us sometime later, one of the pieces of information on that piece of news was that you were rather young."

"I can see that the information back then was true, but they were never clear on just how young you are," the Crown Prince asked. "Would you mind clearing it up for me?"

"Sure," Alex said. "I am... let's see..." He had to give it a bit of thought as it had been a while since he had kept track of his own age.

"I believe I am a little over 60 years old, but haven't yet reached 65 years," Alex said. "My age gets a little hard to determine because I've spent so many years cultivating that the months just blend in together in my mind."

He looked at the Crown Prince after answering, wondering why he wasn't talking, only to see the absolutely flabbergasted look on the Crown Prince's face.

It wasn't just him, but even the other people from the Eastern Continent were extremely surprised at his age.

The two elders next to Alex shook their heads as well. They knew the answer, but it was still quite shocking.

"S-surely you are jesting, right your Majesty? 60 years is a bit..." The Crown Prince didn't want to outright call him a liar, but that was also what he wanted to do.

"Did Your Highness not realize that I am also one of the many players by my name?" Alex asked. "Given that info, you should know I'm not lying."

The Crown Prince's smile faded when he realized that it made sense. While not all players were great at cultivating, the number of players that had made a name for themselves in a short period of time was truly something significant.

If Alex truly was a player as they had all guessed, and not someone using a player's name to hide himself, then a Saint Core 6th realm, 60-year-old king was truly something fearsome.

In time, he would surely reach the same level as the Dragon Emperor if not better. The crown prince and the rest easily realized that.

"You are truly great, your Majesty," the Crown Prince spoke. "At your age, I remember I had only just reached the Saint realm. It's taken me over 2 thousand years to reach where I am after that."

"In your case, it will probably just take you 200 years to reach where I am," the Crown Prince said.

"You overestimate my talent," Alex said. "I was only lucky in finding treasures that helped my explosive growth."

"Some say Luck is a talent as well," the Crown Prince spoke and thought of what else he could talk about.

"You aren't married, are you your Majesty?" the Crown Prince asked.

"No, I'm afraid not," Alex said. "Are you married, your Highness?"

"I am not, but I do have a fiancée," the Crown Prince said.

"I see. Congratulations," Alex said to the prince.

The Crown Prince smiled back and said, "Are you not interested in marriage, your Majesty?" he asked.

Alex paused for a moment and said, "I am, but I haven't found one regardless of how hard I've tried. It is so hard to find a Queen that can fit my criteria."

The Crown Prince's eyes widened as he saw an opportunity to form a connection between the two continents. At the same time, the two elders on the side of Alex couldn't help but react to the nonsense.

The Crown Prince was all smiles as he asked, "Just what exactly are these stringent criteria, your majesty?"

Chapter 1332: The Royal School of Alchemy

Alex was adamant about not getting a Queen, even if he had the responsibility to produce an heir that would rule the continent once he was gone.

There were reasons he didn't want a queen, one of which he told the elders very clearly. It was because he would never leave his family behind even if he got an heir.

There were also other reasons that they weren't aware of, but they were very aware that they absolutely could not bring up the topic without him getting angry for some reason.

So, when he said that he just hadn't found a good enough woman to become the Queen, they were immediately confused and somewhat angry even.

How could he find a good enough woman when he didn't even bother to search for one? Still, the two elders kept their composure and watched out things would turn out. After all, they knew Alex wouldn't lie in such a situation for no reason.

"My criteria, huh? I actually haven't made a proper list, but let's see..." Alex gave it a thought.

"First of all, I care very much for the looks, so they have to be pretty. Not very pretty, but enough to make heads turn," Alex said.

The Crown Prince nodded with understanding. "A Queen needs to be able to make heads turn. That's expected," he said.

"Yes, and she needs to have a good personality too, but I can let it aside if it's just good enough and the other criteria are matched," he said.

The Crown Prince nodded again. "True, true. While personality is important, a person can always change. You can teach the Queen to change her behavior if it's problematic," he said.

"Right?" Alex asked. "Your Highness does get me."

The Crown Prince smiled. "What more, Your Majesty? Surely those two aren't the only Criteria," he said.

"Of course not," Alex said. "They also have to be a very strong cultivator. I'm speaking at least the Saint Core realm, if not the Saint Soul realm."

"That high?" the Crown Prince was surprised. "That will drop the number of possible choices to a fraction of the original. I doubt there are many that fit your choices in the Southern Continent, your majesty. Even amongst the group you've brought, I can only see a single one that fits the criteria."

Alex nodded. "Yes, but I don't have to just choose my Queen from just the Southern Continent, do I?" he asked.

"True," the Crown Prince said. "The Eastern Continent certainly has a large number of female cultivators that fit your criteria. If your Majesty likes, I can even introduce a few to you. There are Imperial Princesses that fall under your criteria very well."

"Oh, but I'm not done," Alex said, cutting off the Crown Prince. "She also has to be well educated, needs to know a lot of things, needs to be proficient in taking care of oneself and others in case required."

The Crown Prince was taken aback, but he let Alex ramble.

"And finally, and most importantly," Alex said. "She has to be young."

"Of-of course, that's a given," the Crown Prince quickly said. "We have young ladies that fit your description quite well."

Alex's eyes narrowed. "They have to be very young," he said.

The Crown Prince's face went blank as he looked around for a moment before asking, "Do... do you mean they have to be..." he whispered, "a child?"

Alex made an annoyed face. "Of course not. What are you saying, your Highness," he said. "I just meant young in age, like me."

"Oh, right right right," the Crown Prince gave a quick nod as if asking for forgiveness. "Yes, you need a young queen, just like... you."

As the meanings of the words were finally understood by the Crown Prince, his eyes widened in shock.

"Your Majesty," he said. "... I don't think there are many that can fall into your criteria."

"Yeah, that's the problem, isn't it?" Alex said with a sigh. "You can see why I don't have a Queen."

"Yes," the Crown Prince said. "You are truly stringent with the criteria for who you accept as your Queen. With such restrictions, the only ones who can even have a chance to become your Queen are... the female Players."

As the Crown Prince spoke those words, his eyes narrowed slightly. Was that it? Was that what this young King was trying to ask for without asking for it directly?

Did he want to marry a Player from the Eastern Continent? Was that what this whole talk was about?

"Were there no ladies that fell into this category in the Southern Continent?" the Crown Prince asked.

"There were a few, but I didn't like them enough to make them my Queen," Alex said. "I'm hoping I have a better chance here in the Eastern Continent."

"You might," the Crown Prince said. "If you truly are serious about it all, I can help you find some ladies that fit your criteria. It will take some time, but I should be able to do it."

Alex's smile went wide. "Great! I might finally get a Queen then," he said. "I will look forward to it."

The Crown Prince spoke a little and went back to talking about regular questions about Alex. Seeing an opportunity, elder Liang quickly spoke to him with her spiritual sense.

"What's going on, Your Majesty? Why are you asking for a Queen?" she asked. "Are you really looking for one? It will be better to get find one in the Southern Continent if you really are."

"Of course, I'm not," Alex answered back. "Why would I be looking for a wife when I have so many things to deal with right now."

"That's what I thought," the elder said. "But then why did you say all that?"

"Why else?" Alex asked. "I'm obviously trying to find my cousin."

"Ah!" the elder finally realized. "Right, I forgot that was one of the things we were supposed to do. My apologies."

The elder remained silent and Alex made small talk with the Crown Prince the rest of the way through.

A few minutes later, Alex saw a large wall covering a massive building in the distance, on the gate of which he could read the words 'The Royal School of Alchemy'.

They had arrived at the place where many citizens were standing on either side of the gate, making a long pathway for them to walk through. They were all there to see Alex and the rest.

The gates of the school opened and the carriage slowly went through amidst cheers of welcome. The Crown Prince smiled at everyone and waved at them as they were driven into the giant compound of the Royal School.

The road lead straight to the massive building in the distance with pagoda-like features, painted in red and gold, and roofs that curved toward the sky.

On either side of the road were gardens that even without being knowledgeable could tell that it was an important location of the school

Alex saw the many flowers and plants growing in the garden and was immediately aware of the fact that it was an Alchemy garden.

It probably wasn't one of the more important ones as it was kept in the front, but it was still an Alchemy garden nonetheless and was in a way an identity of the school itself.

Past the garden, down the road, the carriage finally stopped outside of the building.

"Let us get off, your Majesty," the Crown Prince said and was the first to get off.

Alex nodded and walked after the Crown Prince, stepping onto the clean red carpet that was laid there for them.

After Alex and the elders got off, the others also got off one by one, standing in a group behind Alex.

The small group of people that were waiting for them walked up to them and bowed. "Welcome to the Royal School of Alchemy, your Majesty King Alex," the woman at the front spoke up. "We would like to thank you for coming all this way to allow us and our disciples to share knowledge and learn from each other."

The woman that spoke was an old woman with fluffy white hair on her head in a bun. She had little to no wrinkles despite her age and wore exquisite red robes with some, black, and gold in them.

She wore 3 golden necklaces as well as a single golden ornament on her forehead.

"Let me introduce her to you, Your Majesty," the Crown Prince said. "This is Elder Hu Manyin, the headmaster of this Royal School."

"Greetings, Elder Hu. Thank you for having us here," Alex said to the older woman. "I hope my alchemists won't trouble you much."

"No, no, your Majesty," the woman quickly spoke. "It is no trouble at all. In fact, it is a pleasure to have you all here. I can guarantee that I speak for everyone else when I say I look forward to the next 2 decades."

Alex smiled.

"Let me introduce you to the rest here," the Crown Prince said and started introducing the rest of the important people.

There weren't many that Alex had to remember aside from the headmaster herself, and maybe the vice headmaster who was a thin, old man with long white hair.

"Please come with us, your Majesty," the old woman said. "Let us show you the various facilities that we have in this school. I promise you that you will not be disappointed."

Alex smiled and spoke. "I look forward to seeing everything."

Chapter 1333: Level System

Alex walked through the massive hallway that led to the inside of the buildings the schooling actually happened.

The area of the entire school was so large that Alex would be surprised if the school didn't stretch for at least a few kilometers in every direction.

They arrived on the other side of the front building that led to a massive open ground where the alchemists sat and cultivated or rested in between their lessons, or even just had fun with their friends.

Alex and the rest behind him saw the open ground and were quite impressed at how much was being given to the disciples here.

Back in the Southern Continent, while the Royal Alchemy guild wasn't necessarily small, it could never compete with how grand this place was.

"There are many elders in the academy who teach students who wish to learn," the old woman said. "We don't assign disciples to any elders, but rather let their reputation gather the students for them."

"We test our disciples for 10 different levels with increasing difficulty in each case, and only after they pass the 9th level can they graduate from our school. If they end up remaining in a single level for a certain period of time, we expel them," the old woman said. "This creates a very competitive atmosphere in the school while also not putting the disciples head to head against each other, and instead lets them help each other."

"That's quite the nice system," Alex said. "Our own Royal Alchemy guild is small with about 500 members right now, so they all learn together and don't have many distinctions as of now."

"With that small number, you can't make many distinctions anyway," the old woman said. "We, on the other hand, have about 70 thousand disciples, so we are forced to do so. Also, it's something that apparently the Immortals do too, so we follow it."

Alex and the rest were taken aback by the statement. "The Immortals?" he asked.

"We're talking about our ruler, the Azure Dragon," the Crown Prince intervened. "They sometimes tell us how it is done in the realms above and we follow it. This system in particular was taught by the Azure Dragon that left 30 millennia ago."

"Oh! The school has been going on for that long, huh?" Alex commented.

"It has actually been going on for much longer. The Royal School itself was established by the first Dragon Emperor and it taught everything in a single school."

"As people started joining in more and more, they had to separate it into individual schools somewhere in between. As for when exactly, we don't have any factual information."

"I see," Alex said. "You mentioned you have 70 thousand disciples just in this school. Do you allow just anyone to join?"

"Yes," the old woman said. "Anyone can join and anyone can leave whenever they want. We don't make any discrimination between who can learn and who can't, or what they do after leaving. As long as they are capable of reaching the first level set in this school, they can join."

"And what does this first level require?" Alex asked.

"The person has to recognize about 1000 of the thousands of different ingredients we have in display at the testing facility and make a common pill with 40% or more harmony in a single try," the old woman said.

"40%? Just to even enter the school?" Alex asked in surprise. "Most people that are just starting to make pills can't do that, can they?"

"No, but that is what we ask of them," the old woman said. "If we allowed everyone to enter just because they wanted to, we would be overrun the moment we open for admission each year."

"Ah, yes. That is true," Alex said. Still, 40% was quite the requirement to even enter. He could only wonder what the rest of them were.

The group carried on looking through the various buildings and the alchemy rooms they were all provided. There was an in-school shop where everything was sold for spirit stones and bought from them as well.

The 20 alchemists behind them made remarks on how good everything looked, and how useful it would be to have these things back home as well.

Alex noted alchemists walking past them with badges on their chests that read their level.

As they went through most of the buildings, Alex realized that most of the levels were below 7. He barely saw anyone at level 7, and there wasn't a single person in level 8 at all.

So, he got a little curious.

"Do you not have level 8 and above people?" he asked.

"We have a few," the headmaster said. "If I'm not wrong, we currently have about 10 people that have reached level 8. As for 9, we have 3 only."

"Oh, so there are, huh?" Alex said. "I don't see any though."

"Most of them are older cultivators, so they spend most of their time cultivating or training in seclusion. The higher their level, the more grace period they have to level up to the next level."

"For someone in level 8, we give them 1000 years to level up, and for someone on level 9, they have 3000 years," the headmaster said.

"A thousand, huh?" Alex asked. "May I ask what the criteria are for reaching level 9 that you have to give them a thousand years to train?"

"Recognize every single ingredient you are asked about, have a perfect knowledge of at least 500 different Saint recipes, and make 100 Saint rank pills that are in the Heaven-grade within a single day, of which at least 1 should be Immortal grade pills," the old woman said. "If you can do that without making a single mistake, you pass."

"That's a difficult set of rules," Alex said. "I can see why only 3 people have made it that far."

In the history of the school, there have never been more than a hundred such alchemists.

"That is to be expected," Alex said. "And all 3 of those alchemists are in seclusion, huh? I hope they will at least come out of seclusion in the next 20 years so the alchemists I brought along with me can learn from them."

"I'm sure they will," the woman said. "Besides, only two of them are in closed cultivation right now. We have one walking around with us right now."

"Hmm?" Alex was a little surprised and looked around to see if he could see someone with a badge that had 9 written on it. "I don't see anyone like that."

"She's talking about me, your Majesty," the Crown Prince spoke.

Alex turned around with a surprised look on his face. "Oh! You're an alchemist too, your Highness?" he asked.

"Haha, yes. It is one of the things I like to brag about myself," the Crown Prince said with a sheepish smile.

"I'm impressed," Alex said.

"It's nothing compared to what I've heard you can do, Your Majesty," the Crown Prince said.

"Even if you compare yourself to me, we can clearly see that you are an amazing alchemist, Your Highness," Alex said. "Although, I must say I'm surprised that someone like you would try to become an Alchemist. Would you mind telling me why?"

Chapter 1334: End of Tour

"The reason why I became an alchemist? It's simple really," the Crown Prince said. "I just wanted to follow in the footsteps of my father."

"Footsteps of your father?" Alex was a bit surprised. "Are you saying the Dragon Emperor dabbles in alchemy too?"

"Dabbles isn't the correct term here, I'm afraid," the old woman said from the side with a face that said she was proud of what she was speaking about. "Not many people know about this, but His Majesty is actually the best Alchemist in all the Empire."

"The best Alchemist?" Alex couldn't help but feel a little skeptical about her words. After all, they were coming from a woman who would obviously talk well about the emperor of the empire she lived in.

"Yes," the Crown Prince responded from the side. "Which is why I'm trying my best to follow in his footsteps."

"But you say he is the best alchemist. Does that mean you haven't reached his level yet?" Alex asked.

"No," the Crown Prince said. "I doubt I can truly ever reach his level. After all, his Majesty is the only person in the past 10 thousand decades to reach the 10th Level in this school and graduate from the school."

Alex was genuinely astonished by this information. "Wait, so no one else has reached Level 10?" he couldn't help but ask. "What about the Headmaster and the rest of the elders?"

"Haha, most of us were expelled after not being able to pass the 7th or 8th level," the woman said with a slight smile. "Of course, while I say expelled, I would like to make it clear that there is no negative connotation to this term when it comes to the Royal Schools."

"If you are expelled, it just means that you were unable to reach the next level that was required. That still made you someone capable of more than what your current level required."

"Most people that enter the 6th level go on to become important alchemy figures in other countries. 7th or 8th and they can join this school to become elders here," the older woman said. "I myself was once a 9th-level alchemist. But I've never managed to reach the 10th level even now as His Majesty has."

"Sounds like it is rather difficult to reach level 10. Would you mind telling me what the requirements for reaching that level are?" Alex asked.

"Of course," the older woman said. "There are two requirements. First, you have to come up with your own Saint rank pill that has never before been seen in this empire."

"And second, you have to make that pill 3 times in a row, each pill ending at 90% harmony or above."

"90% harmony?" Alex asked.

"Yes," the older woman said.

"3 times in a row?" he asked again.

"I know," the woman said. "It's difficult."

Alex struggled to keep a normal face. 'That's it?' he thought. He had been expecting something extravagant like making pills for as long as one could or even making pills without using any formations. What turned out to be the actual requirements felt... very lackluster.

Of course, he understood that it was only him that felt this way. The ones behind him could not compare to the feats that the Dragon Emperor had achieved.

After all, while individually, the two tasks were simple enough under the right circumstances or even through just sheer luck, you needed more than that to be capable of doing them at the same time.

Not only was coming up with a new pill recipe hard, but coming up with one that was efficient enough to make a pill over 90% harmony, while also dealing with problems of ingredients and techniques as such was also almost impossible for most alchemists.

Even if they could, then making that sort of pill 3 times in a row was near impossible as well.

'Although even with all that said, it's still impressive how far the Dragon Emperor has reached. I wonder if he had help from the Azure Dragon,' Alex wondered.

He spoke a few words of compliment for formalities sake and then continued going through the school to look at the rest of the stuff.

There were more faculties, more gardens, and more alchemy rooms. There were libraries with books of all kinds and a training ground to train while you were there. They finally arrived in the dorm room that on the eastern side of the school, an entire wing of which was emptied to make rooms for the alchemists from the Eastern Continent.

"We have prepared guests for all 20 of the alchemists that have come today. They have been through a long journey, so it might be better to let them rest for today," the old woman said.

Alex nodded and told the others to go rest. Elder Liang was made to stay here for today and Alex would come visit tomorrow to get her back.

For now, he was going to leave.

"How strict is the school actually?" Alex asked. "Can they leave to go around the city if they want?"

"Oh, of course," the old woman said. "Most of our disciples don't even come to the classes anymore and instead learn on their own in their place. Anyone can go in and out at any time they want as long as they have a nameplate belonging to the school."

"I see," Alex said. "I didn't sense any such formations. Were they closed for today?"

"Yes, your Majesty," the woman said. "Making the nameplate is a rather difficult job right at the moment without the person, so we had to shut it down for today."

"Now that you are here, we can prepare one from every one of you," the woman said.

"Great!" Alex smiled. "As long as my alchemists don't have to be holed up in the school, I am happy."

He turned to leave, not before giving Hao Ya a simple nod. With this, she could go around the city without any worry.

As they walked away from the dorm, the Crown Prince spoke. "Your Majesty, I must say I was surprised when I heard Royal Father mention the Alchemy Exchange program he was planning with you."

"I wasn't aware of anything about you at that point, so I didn't understand why he wanted to do it. However, after hearing what you were rumored to be capable of, I looked forward to the day you arrived, and now you have."

"So, if it isn't so much to ask, would you mind showing off your skills a bit?" the prince asked.

"My skills huh?" Alex thought for a moment. "Sure, why not. Let's head to an alchemy room then."

"Oh, you are okay with this?" the Crown Prince asked. "Haha, let's head on over to the north. There are better alchemy rooms there."

"No," Alex said. "It's fine if we do it here. Wasn't that building full of empty rooms earlier? Let's go there."

Alex pointed to a nearby building and started walking. The rest followed and a minute later they arrived.

"What pills should I make?" Alex asked as he walked into the room and looked around. "Bring me anything you wish for me to make. I will do my best with that."

Chapter 1335: Tiankong

Alex sat in front of the fire and brought out Memory. As memory started heating, he looked at the prince who was waiting with the storage bag full of ingredients.

"Here you go, your Majesty," the man said and handed it over to Alex. "We have provided a recipe in case you are not familiar with the pill you will be making."

Alex looked through the ingredients with a slight surprise on his face. "Oh, a Saint Body Regeneration Pill, huh? That takes me back," he spoke softly.

It was the same pill Alex had to downgrade so many years ago when one of his arms was missing. Finding the Blood Spirit Ginseng had been such a difficult task for him back then, and yet somehow here it was. Two at that.

"It's alright, I know this recipe. I can start," Alex said. "Would you all mind leaving the room?"

"Yes, your Majesty," they all said and left, despite some wanting to watch it all happen.

Alex started preparing the pill. The fire heat up the cauldron in front of him and soon enough it was ready for the first ingredient.

The group stayed outside, with nothing better to do than wait for Alex to finish making the pill.

The old lady Yao was alone with the others, who had started speaking amongst themselves with their spiritual sense. She couldn't tell what they were saying of course, but she could guess.

It was either a talk about how they wished to see what was happening inside or wonder how they could even tell if what he was going to do was real or not. She expected a lot of distrust from these people.

"Elder Yao," the Crown Prince spoke to her.

"Yes, your Highness," the elder spoke in a respectful tone.

"Would you mind telling us how good His Majesty's pills are?" the Crown Prince asked. "We simply can't contain our anticipation."

"How good?" the old woman thought for a moment. "I believe that His Majesty stands at the pinnacle of pill-making in this world. There should be no one capable of making pills as good as his."

"Oh!" the group was surprised at the old woman's wild claims. They didn't outright call her crazy, but they certainly thought as much. "You have quite a lot of faith in His Majesty, don't you?"

"It's not about faith, your Highness," she said. "It's about witnessing miracles and learning to live with them as a commonplace occurrence. Please sit tight, your Highness. You'll bear witness to a miracle soon as well."

The clouds rumbled as the sunny day soon became overcast. The group frowned, wondering what was happening. However, as the day got darker and darker with the storm clouds, they were fearing something was happening.

"Your miracle is here, your Highness," Yao Nigh said.

A single bolt of lightning fell from the sky, hitting the building. However. To the group's surprise, the building wasn't destroyed at all. It was as if the lightning never touched the building despite so very clearly striking it.

"What... what's going on?" the others couldn't help but freak out. The Prince on the other hand simply looked at the satisfied smile of the old woman and couldn't help but gulp and turn around toward the door, waiting for it to open.

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Somewhere in the distance, a middle-aged man was in a room, making pills. His long blue hair drooped around his blue robes.

He had a flower in his hand, ready to drop into the cauldron. However, when he sensed what he did, his concentration broke and the ingredients inside got lightly burnt.

It was damaged a little, but such little damage could barely reduce the harmony by 2% at most. However, that 2% made it clear that the pill wasn't going to be the best. So, he destroyed the ingredients inside and let the formation clean up his cauldron.

"What is happening?" he thought, focusing on the events outside. "Why is there a pill cloud here? Did they... arrive already?"

The middle-aged man opened the door and left.

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Alex walked out of the room to the scene he had been expecting to see. Yao Ning was calm and collected, but the rest could barely hide their surprise and slight fear of him.

"Here you go," he said, tossing the pill bottle in the Crown Prince's direction.

The prince caught the pill bottle, not yet aware of its importance. "Did you do it, your Majesty?" he asked, opening the pill bottle. The sweet scent of the pill drifted on around the group, making everyone curious.

"You have the pill in your hand. Why don't you see?" Alex asked.

The prince nodded and took out the pill. Just by the color of the pill, he could tell that he was looking at a Saint Body Regeneration pill. However, something was wrong with it.

Was the pill damaged?

"Did the pill crack?" he asked, looking closely at the lightning-like scar on the side of the pill.

"Your Highness," the headmaster to his side called for him with a pill tester in her hand.

"Oh right," the Prince remembered and placed the pill inside the pill tester and waited for the number to appear on it.

Within a second, the result was ready for everyone to see. "Wh-what?" the Prince couldn't help but look at the number with a blank look on his face.

100%.

As always, a pill with pill veins showed 100% harmony in the pill tester. The prince simply couldn't believe it.

Even the people behind him couldn't believe it. After all, how could someone possibly be able to make a pill that was this good?

"Surely the pill tester is not broken, right?" the Crown Prince asked before pulling out one of his own and testing the pill. Of course, the result was the same.

Only then was the Prince forced to accept the truth. There truly was a pill with perfect harmony on his palm right now.

"I... I remember hearing the news that you were a great alchemist, your Majesty," he said. "I believe I also heard that you were capable of this exact thing, but I doubted the news."

"Now I see that I had no reason to doubt you at all."

"No, it makes sense you would doubt me," Alex said. "After all, I know how hard it is to create a pill that can reach this level. The amount of things that have to go perfectly is almost too much for a normal alchemist."

"Still, you are capable of it, your Majesty," the old woman said. "Thank you for showing us that one can indeed create a pill with 100% harmony."

"You guys are mistaken."

Someone spoke from right next to them.

Alex's eyes widened as he quickly looked to the side and saw the new man that had arrived next to them.

It was a tall man that was nearly a head taller than Alex. His stark blue hair and robe were almost too distracting, and within his face that looked old and young at the same time, one could see the passage of time.

This man had been alive for a long time.

'How?' Alex wondered. 'I couldn't sense his arrival at all.'

"Your Majesty!" the rest of the group bowed down immediately at the presence of the man.

'Your... Majesty?' Alex couldn't believe it. The man in front of him, the man that had arrived just now was the Dragon Emperor.

"You guys are wrong," the Dragon Emperor explained before taking the pill for himself. He pulled open the stopper and poured the pill out before looking at it.

"I was correct," he said, looking at the lightning scar on the pill. "You truly are capable of creating pills with pill veins."

"Ah! King Alex," the Crown prince quickly spoke up. "This is my father, his Royal Majesty, the Dragon Emperor, Long Tiankong."

Alex cupped his hands in greetings. "It's a pleasure to finally meet you, your Majesty," he said.

"You do not have to refer to me as that," the Dragon Emperor said. "We are both monarchs here. You can refer to me as you please."

"Oh, very well then, Dragon Emperor," Alex said. "You can just call me Alex as well. You do not need to add a King to my name."

"King?" the Emperor looked at him. "Not an Emperor?"

"I'm afraid so," Alex said.

"But you rule over an entire continent," the Dragon Emperor said. "Her Majesty decided I would be a King, so I am a King. There is nothing I can do about it."

The Dragon Emperor nodded. "A king huh... that's..."

"Your Majesty... what did you mean by we were wrong?" the Crown Prince asked the question everyone wanted to ask.

"I've taught you before, haven't I?" the Dragon Emperor said. "That when you make a perfect pill, you call the Pill cloud. This is the result of reaching that point. This is not a 100% pill as those do not exist on their own."

"This is a 1-veined pill, which you stopped at even if you could've gone for much longer. With your cultivation base, I'm sure you could've at least reached 5 pill veins. At least, that's what the information I have on Pill veins says."

"You are correct," Alex said. "I simply stopped as I didn't want to scare your subjects. The citizens might have thought that something terrible was happening here."

"I see," the Dragon Emperor said. "Since I have seen you make pills with pill veins, I will cut to the chase, Alex."

Alex's eyes perked up. "Go ahead."

"I would like you to teach me how I too can make pills with pill veins."

Chapter 1336: The Dragon Palace

"That is the main reason why I called you here in the first place. It was so that I too could learn how one can call the pill clouds, how one can make a pill that can reach the realm beyond just the Harmony," the Dragon Emperor said.

Alex gave a small smile while thinking what his next words should be. Should he accept the request? Should he reject it?

As he thought, he realized that any choices he made here would always make him think it was the wrong one.

"You put me in quite a tight spot," he said. "While I do not wish to refuse your request, I'm afraid I also cannot accept it so handily. After all, it is not one thing that allows me to reach this level of Alchemy, but many."

"I cannot give away so many of my secrets now, can I?" he asked.

The Dragon Emperor frowned for a few seconds and sighed. "I suppose I did put you in a difficult spot," he said as he pushed back on his blue hair. "I apologize."

"My apologies I could not give you what you wanted as well," Alex said.

The Dragon Emperor closed the pill bottle and handed it back to Alex. Then, he looked toward Yao Ning and said, "It has been a while since we last met, hasn't it?"

"Nearly 5 millennias, your Majesty," Yao Ning said.

"I hope you and the others in Southern Continent are doing well. Congratulations on your ruler's return," the Dragon Emperor said.

"Thank you, your Majesty," old Yao responded.

From what Yao Ning and the others had told Alex, the Dragon Emperor was aware of the fact that the Phoenix was no longer active in the Southern Continent when he had first arrived to suggest attacking the Western Continent.

What he had mistakenly thought, however, was that like the other rulers, she too had hidden herself after the traumatic battle and was in hiding so she could heal.

The thought never even crossed his head that she could've died, and given how the 10 elders were actively telling everyone that the Phoenixes had gone into seclusion, he had no reason to believe otherwise.

Alex was to keep up this lie as well so that no one would figure out that Scarlet had in fact been reborn.

"I'm sorry I couldn't come to welcome you all. I didn't realize you would be coming so early. Please come with me so we can go to the palace; you guys must be tired," the Dragon Emperor said.

Alex nodded. "Let us do that," he said.

"Fangyu, remain here and see if our guests require anything else. Make sure to provide them with anything they require. You can return to the palace tonight," the Dragon Emperor ordered his son.

"Yes, Father. I will handle everything."

Alex and Yao Ning then walked away with the Dragon Emperor, leaving the small group of people there.

The old woman that was the headmaster of the Royal School of Alchemy still couldn't believe what was happening. The Dragon Emperor, the person that was the biggest authority of alchemy itself in the Eastern Continent was asking for help from someone else.

Someone else was surprisingly the greatest Alchemist they had ever seen.

"Headmaster," the vice headmaster called out to her softly. "Does this not mean that the King of the Southern Continent is also a Level 10 Alchemist?"

"Maybe," the woman said. "If we are only focusing on what he just did, then he is certainly even greater than that. However... we do not know for sure if he is capable of making new pills. That is an entirely different topic on its own, you see."

"That is true," the vice headmaster responded.

The Crown Prince was also in much daze over what had just happened and frowned slightly. "They refused Father's request," he said softly.

"That they did, your Highness," the old man that was his bodyguard said.

"I am sure Father is not happy right now," he said.

"Unfortunately, I don't think His Majesty can do anything in this instance even if he is unhappy," the old man said. "He is against the sovereign of another continent after all."

"Yeah," the Crown Prince said. "Still... he can be quite impulsive."

They then walked away from outside of the alchemy room to deal with whatever new problems may arise.

* * * * *

Very soon, Alex and the others were flying through the skies of the Dragon Capital, looking at the scenery of the city from above it.

Alex could see how the capital was set up finally. He saw massive grounds of open land to his left, like that of the school he was just at.

To his right was a compact city, with buildings that were large and close together, roads that were wide, and skies that were equally as much road as anything else.

There were news boards at every corner of the street, and flying boats flew around without anyone's intervention.

He was heading towards the east, to a place he could already see from the distance. If Alex was not wrong, that was the Imperial Palace.

The palace looked like a bunch of different pagoda-like buildings mixed together to make up a massive building. It was tall with multiple stories, and wide with many buildings attached to it on the outside.

It sat in the middle of a lake, with a bit of water surrounding it on all sides and a single bridge connecting it to the rest of the city.

As they arrived, Alex also noticed something else in the vicinity. Just outside of the palace, there was a massive stone slab with intricate details carved onto it.

'So the Teleportation formation was this close, huh?' he thought.

They landed outside the palace but beyond the bridge. There seemed to be no formation guarding the palace at all, just thousands of soldiers that were all in the Saint realm.

That was a little surprising to Alex.

"Your Majesty," an old man in a blue robe came out and bowed.

"Guqing, these are our guests from the Southern Continent," the Dragon Emperor said. "Prepare the Swan courtyard for our guests."

"Yes, your Majesty," the man said before turning towards the two.

"Come, let's go in," the Dragon Emperor said, taking the two of them with him into the palace.

Alex walked through the main door and was immediately met with a hallway that was more detailed and exquisite than anything he had ever seen. There were patterns on the pillars and ceilings, furniture on either side, and even lanterns that were all amazing.

They all looked extremely archaic, for something that was so well maintained. The Dragon Emperor walked through the main hallway, arriving at a hall in the distance.

"Your Majesty," a woman bowed a little as soon as the Dragon Emperor walked into the hallway.

Alex looked at the woman in her light blue robe and was surprised at how young she was compared to everyone else that he had seen around the Dragon Emperor. She had the face of a commoner, even though her cultivation base was in the Saint realm. She also looked quite shy and had the attitude of someone that was well below the standing of anyone here.

"Yuxie, these two are our guests from the Southern Continent," the Dragon Emperor told the woman.

"Greetings, honored guests, and welcome to the Eastern Continent," she spoke.

"Thank you," Alex said with a slight bow.

"This is Xiang Yuxie," the Dragon Emperor introduced her. "She is the current empress of the Empire."

Alex's eyes widened in surprise as he quickly looked at the woman again. Her attitude did not hold what needed to be there for an Empress. She didn't look confident in herself and instead seemed more like a servant than anything.

"My apologies," Alex quickly said. "I didn't recognize you at all. It's a pleasure to have met you, your Majesty."

"It is fine if you don't recognize her," the Dragon Emperor said. "You don't need to give mind to it. Yuxie, leave us alone."

"Yes, your Majesty," the woman said and left.

The Dragon Emperor sat on a couch next to him and offered Alex and Yao Nng to do the same as well.

"I was surprised how young you looked, but I'm surprised the Empress looks even younger," Alex said. "She looks almost as young as the Crown Prince himself."

"That is because she is in fact younger than Fangyu himself," the Dragon Emperor said.

"I'm sorry?" Alex said. "She's younger than her son?"

"Stepson," the Emperor said. "Yuxie is not my first wife, but rather my second wife. My first wife, the previous Empress died a few decades ago of a disease that I couldn't cure."

"I had never thought of remarrying, but the court officials forced me into marrying someone so the empire could at least have an empress."

"I don't take concubines, so I had to find someone to marry. Since I didn't care who it was, I simply chose one of the first women I saw and married her. She's only been an empress for a couple of decades, so you can see it in her mannerisms."

"I see," Alex said. "My condolences for her Majesty's death. It must have been hard on you."

"I handled it alright," the Emperor said.

"And your son? I hope the Crown Prince handled it well too," Alex said.

"He did," the Emperor said. "But... never mind. Let us move away from this topic. I do not wish to talk about this anymore."

"I'm sorry. I must have made you remember some difficult memories."

Chapter 1337: Trade

The Dragon Emperor started some small talk asking about how Alex got to be the king, about his family, and what he wanted to do.

Alex replied back, answering as openly about everything that was public knowledge already. He asked a few questions as well, none too intruding, and got some answers back.

He could tell that the Dragon Emperor was very much uninterested in this conversation but was keeping up the act so that he could please him. Well, Alex was doing the same as well, so he didn't mind.

The conversation went through different topics, allowing Alex to understand a little more about what was going on through this continent. Although, it seemed that the Dragon Emperor wasn't interested in his own empire either, and rather left it to the others to take care of.

He was only interested in being the emperor and having the power that came with being the emperor. Alex could understand that somewhat. Being alive for that long, one would be uninterested in a lot of things after a while.

"Is it really true that you've been alive for nearly 10 thousand years," Alex asked the man.

"Hmm, has it been?" the Emperor thought. "I don't remember if I'm 10 thousand years old or not, but it has certainly been over 9 thousand years, so you can't be considered wrong."

"I'm curious about something. Why have you not broken through to the Immortal realms?" Alex asked. "Do you have a complication with your cultivation base?"

"No," the man said. "I have no problem. I can break through any time I want to."

"Oh! Then... there must be a reason why you still stay here," Alex said. "Is it for your children?"

"No," the Dragon Emperor said, looking toward the ceiling as if he were looking at the stars themselves. "It's because once I leave, I will be back to being the same weak person I was so many years ago."

Alex's eyes narrowed.

"You're afraid of there being others that are stronger than you?" Alex asked.

"Aren't you?" the Dragon Emperor asked. "Imagine you spent the majority of your life being the strongest person, only to end up as someone weak again. Don't you fear that?"

"No," Alex said, almost out of instinct before giving it a little thought. "Actually, yes. I do fear being weak. But... that doesn't necessarily mean that I will be weak forever."

"It will be a new land with new opportunities, wouldn't it?" Alex asked. "Surely with your capabilities, it wouldn't take you too long to at the very least not be a bottom feeder."

"Maybe, maybe not," the Emperor said. "The reason I became so strong so quickly was because I had opportunities. Born as the first prince of an empire helps you a lot, you know."

"All of which I won't have when I leave. When I leave, I will be all alone as well. Weak and alone, and there will hardly be a way to improve from that point," he said.

Alex didn't know what to say. Should he even say anything? Was there even a point in trying to convince this man?

"Of course," the Emperor continued. "If I had other ways of my own to improve myself once I went up there, or treasures that would aid me, I could certainly leave, can't I?"

"What do you mean?" Alex asked.

"Pill veins," the Emperor said. "If I was capable of making pill veins, I could be considered an important person. I could make my way into big sects, and be considered one of their talents. That way, I wouldn't have to search for opportunities myself. The others would provide it for me."

Yao Ning stared blindly from the side while Alex fell into a contemplation over the emperor's words.

"Certainly," he said. "That could be possible. Even so, I cannot simply hand over my secrets, Dragon Emperor. I hope you know that much at least."

The Dragon Emperor stared at Alex for a good while before shaking his head. "While I hoped for it, I never expected you to hand over your things on your own," he said. "I will make a proper trade with you."

"Trade what exactly, Emperor?" Alex asked. "As I mentioned before, I have multiple techniques and talents that help me with this. I'm not even sure I can even guarantee that you can form the pill clouds."

"You don't have to worry about much. Just give me exactly what I need. Give me as many things as there are, and I'll trade you for each of them for the value that each of them is worth," the Dragon emperor said.

Alex frowned a bit and looked toward Yao Ning who seemed troubled more than him.

"I... cannot make this decision right now. Would you mind if I discuss it with my elder?" he asked.

"No, no, please go on ahead. After all, your alchemy skills can be considered one of your continent's top secrets. I do not wish to have you make the decision without any thought," the Dragon Emperor said.

Alex nodded. "I'll do that," he said and stood up to leave.

"Guqing, is the Swan courtyard ready?" the Dragon Emperor called for the old man that Alex had met outside.

"Yes, your majesty," the old man walked in from outside.

"Good," he said and turned toward Alex. "You have had a long journey, so please rest."

"Thank you," Alex said.

"But..." the Dragon Emperor continued. "Please do come up with an answer by the end of the show match that our alchemists will be having in 3 days."

Alex paused for a second. A deadline? He wanted to refuse just one principal to stick it up to someone who was giving him a deadline for something he should be happy to even get.

However, this wasn't the sort of man he could act that way against.

"I will try my best to come to a conclusion by that time," he said and walked away.

He walked away from the room while Yao Ning remained for a second longer, bowing toward the Dragon Emperor before she left as well.

The old man with a head full of white hair that went by the name of Guqing showed them through the palace.

Alex was a bit surprised that given how large the palace was, and given how much upkeep it needed, he hadn't seen anyone at all.

"Senior Guqing," Alex called out to him as they walked.

The old man seemed to freak out when he heard that. "Your majesty! Please do not call this humble servant a 'senior'. I do not deserve that level of respect from a monarch."

"Oh..." Alex was taken aback at his reaction. "It's alright. You are a senior in age. Can you tell me why I haven't seen any servants in this palace? There should be many here, shouldn't there?"

"The servants are here, your Majesty. They simply leave when they are made aware of our presence," the old man said. "They will return back as soon as we are gone from these corridors."

"I see." Alex nodded to himself.

They walked past a small open ground and arrived at a small courtyard that had big words written at the front gate.

Swan Courtyard.

Chapter 1338: Swan Courtyard

Two beautiful sculptures of a swan were placed on either side of the gate, making an archway with their long necks that acted as the gate into the Swan courtyard.

The walls surrounding the courtyard were entirely white, like the feathers of a swan and the building beyond the walls was the same design of buildings as he had seen everywhere. Slanted roofs with arched tips, all in the color of black and red.

All in all, the building looked exquisite.

Alex and Yao Ning walked into the courtyard with a few servants already waiting for them, the main of which seemed to be a young woman seemingly in her mid-20s wearing a higher grade of blue robe than the other female servants around her.

"This is one of our head servants, Huang Bingyue. You may request of her anything you need in the palace, your Majesty," Guqing said.

"I will," Alex said.

Guqing nodded. "I'll leave you two guests then. Bingyue, take care of their needs," the old man said.

"As you say, your Imperial Highness," the woman bowed as the old man left.

Alex looked back at the man and then turned around toward the woman that stood in front of him, still bowing.

"Highness?" he asked. "He's part of the royal family too?"

"Lord Long Guqing has the royal blood in him, but is not part of the direct royal line," the woman explained.

"Ah, I see," Alex said. "Show us to our quarters."

"As you wish, your Majesty," the woman said. She walked in, Alex and Yao Ning following her closely.

The courtyard was in a square shape, with the buildings around the outside and an open yard on the inside. There was a tree growing in the middle with no leaves on it, next to a small pond surrounded by decently sized rocks.

The house itself was mostly made out of wood from what Alex could tell, with even the floor beneath them being wood. However, given how it made absolutely no sound while they walked, Alex could tell that it was not normal wood at all.

If he got to examine it, he could probably even find its name right now.

There was some swan imagery, whether it be carved onto the pillars, or drawn onto the wall, which made Alex quite curious why they were going so heavy on the swan stuff.

"Is there a reason why this courtyard is called the Swan Courtyard?" he asked. "It seems quite important from what I can see."

"The Dragon Palace has a total of 7 major courtyards, all named and designed after 7 different beasts that were said to have come from the heavens along with the first Azure Dragon himself as his subordinates," the woman explained.

"7 beasts, huh?" Alex thought. That was a low number in his mind, but given that the Vermillion Birds and Black Turtles didn't even come with any, that was at least something.

"Can you name the 7 beasts?" he asked.

"Yes, of course," the woman said. "As you know, there was a Swan. There was also an Elephant, a Lizard, an Eagle, a Deer, a Lion, and an Ox. There were many other beasts that came with them, but these 7 were the strong ones and had left an impact on the first Dragon Emperor who built this palace."

Alex paused for a second when he heard the list of beasts. "Did these beasts live in the Beast Paradise by any chance?" he asked.

"I do not have knowledge of whether they did or not, but I am certain their descendants did," the woman said. "One of the reasons why the Beast Paradise was made in the first place was so that the Azure Dragon's subordinates' descendants could have an easy life away from the humans."

Alex nodded when he heard that. He didn't say anything else, but the woman continued explaining a few things that she thought needed explanations.

She explained how the Swan courtyard was the best of the 7 courtyards despite being one of the 7 subordinates. She also explained how the only person to ever live here was one of the previous kings that ruled part of the Eastern Continent while under the Dragon Empire.

A King of the Lin Kingdom that was now destroyed and turned into the Ebony Kingdom.

The woman finally took Alex to her room, wherein he let her return to her duties and told her to leave them alone for some time.

After the woman left, Alex did a thorough search of the room to see if they were spying on him before finally speaking what he was thinking.

"So the Lion that Pearl's grandmother was married to must have been a descendant of the Lion that came with the Azure Dragon," he said. "No wonder they were from a big family and could afford to marry someone like her."

"Your Majesty, you are concerned about the wrong thing here, aren't you?" Yao Ning asked with a slightly frowning face. "We have a bigger problem to deal with."

Alex sighed. "We do, don't we?" he said. "What do you suggest, elder Yao? Should we do as he says and hand him what I have?"

"No, we cannot, your Majesty," the woman said immediately. There was no doubt in her mind that there was no way they could do that.

However, Alex didn't trust her words right now. She was too heavily biased to give any sound suggestions. She needed to think about this a little, and so did he.

"The main problem we have right now is the consequence that would come if we don't do what he says," Alex said. "I do not know if the Emperor knows or not about whether Scarlet and the others cannot come here."

"If he does, he would have no worry attacking us," Alex said.

"But we can't just hand it away," the old woman said.

"That we cannot," Alex said. "But he did say a trade, so maybe I can get something in return for giving him what he wants. Ugh, I still don't want to give him anything though."

Alex was certain that this man had a hand in killing Pearl's mother. Even if he wasn't, and the sword just happened to belong to someone from this massive empire, the man was still a threat.

This was the man that had attacked the Western Continent while they were down after all.

"Then, what do you suggest, your Majesty?" Yao Ning asked.

"Well... I don't know. I can't decide anything right now," he sighed. "Well, I got us 3 days to think about this, so let's take our time. There is no hurry."

Yao Ning had no response to that. She knew how dangerous the Dragon Emperor was and thus found it hard to defy him as well.

"Let us rest for now then, your Majesty," she said. "We can discuss this tomorrow or even the day after that once little sister Liang is back from the Royal School of Alchemy."

Alex nodded. "You should rest too, elder Yao. We have only just arrived on the Eastern Continent with 20 years to spend here. We have a long stay here ahead of us."

Chapter 1339: Planning

Alex sat in his room, with Whisker and Pearl by his side.

Pearl had black fur on him at the moment, and his body was leaner, looking more like a black cat than anything.

If anyone did see him, Alex made sure that they mistake him for something else than a White Cat or a White Tiger.

"What can you give him if you really have to?" Pearl asked. He looked at Alex curiously now that he had explained the situation to the two beasts.

"Let's see," Alex thought for a bit. "There are 5 things important when it comes to improving your pills. Can you tell me what those are, Whisker?"

Whisker nodded. "Ingredients, recipe, temperature and control, cauldron, and finally the pill-forming technique itself," he said out loud.

Now that Whisker was a Saint beast himself, he could easily speak out loud as any other Saint beast would once they reached the same realm.

"Correct," Alex said. "Those are the 5 things we need. Of that, I cannot help the Emperor with controlling the ingredients or the flames, not that he would need any with all the formations and scripts helping him. He might himself even have a Dao of Heat."

"Given the level of pill he normally makes, I don't think controlling energy is much of a problem either. Not to mention that there's no way his cauldron is any worse than mine. Which means I should be able to aid him on the other 3 parts," Alex said.

"First is ingredients. I cannot give him good ingredients, but I can tell him about the World Defying Mushrooms," Alex said. "That should immediately help improve the energy level of the average pills he makes."

"Do we really have to give him information about the World Defying mushrooms?" Pearl asked. "Given how good his pills already are, shouldn't he have other methods of acquiring perfect ingredients?"

"You're not wrong, but this is important," Alex said. "The more levels we add to why my alchemy is so good, the longer we can delay giving him everything. Even if I agree to give him that information, I don't have to give it to him immediately and can delay for as long as I like."

Pearl nodded when he heard the answer. This method was the one that would help them the most, even if this wasn't what they wanted to do.

"For the second part, the recipe, we might be able to give him some," Alex said. "But I'm not sure how much we can give him. Actually, I'm not sure how much he even needs."

"Even if he needs nothing, we can still try to sell some to him. He would definitely like a thing or two for sure. Worst comes to worst, I'll tell him about Composition and Structure."

"Brother, you can't do that. That will mean you'll give away one of the most important knowledge you have of Alchemy," Whisker said.

"I have a suspicion that he already knows that," Alex said. "Even if he doesn't, it won't matter much if he already has the recipes."

"Then... there is the final pill-making task itself," Alex said. "I can give him the Profound Revolution of Myriad Combination technique first, before giving him the single pill version of the Pill-splitting technique. If I can delay it long enough, I can even split the technique into two and give him two versions."

"That's..." Pearl sighed. He couldn't come up with a better idea himself, so he didn't say anything about what Alex had come up with.

If that was what was needed for them to survive in this foreign continent, then so be it.

"When do we find out about Mother then?" Pearl asked.

"It will take some time," Alex said. "I can't just pull out the sword and ask, you know."

Pearl nodded.

Alex smiled and rubbed his back. "Don't worry, we'll find your mother's killer for sure," he said. "They shouldn't be far away."

Pearl nodded.

Someone knocked on the door, and immediately both Pearl and Whisker disappeared into Alex's body. Alex looked outside, peering through the wall to see Yao Ning bowing outside.

"What is it, elder Yao?" he asked.

"His Royal Highness, the Crown Prince is here to see you. Will you be accepting him?" the old woman asked.

"Oh, Prince Fangyu?" Alex asked. "Yeah, I'll meet him."

The door opened and the old woman walked in while waiting for the prince to come as well. The prince came in a minute later with a wide smile on his face.

"Your majesty," the prince said as he walked in. "I hope you're finding the Swan Courtyard to your liking."

"It's quite good, I must say," Alex said with a smile. "And your family's hospitality had been unmatched."

"Haha, I love to hear that," the prince said. "I came to notify to you that your alchemists have settled in quite nicely into the school."

"Ah, I see. Thank you," Alex said.

"It's a pleasure to be of assistance, your Majesty," the prince said. "I had asked Elder Shufen to come with me as well, but she said that she had to stay there for today."

Alex nodded. "I gave her that order, so she had chosen to fulfill it," he said.

"Then she should be coming tomorrow," the prince said. "Speaking of tomorrow, your Alchemists should be getting their nameplates tomorrow, but they won't be enrolled into the school right away."

"Oh?" Alex was a little surprised. "Why is that, if you don't mind me asking?"

"Well, enrolling into the school mostly needs one to pass through the level 1 test, which I'm sure your alchemists would have passed without question. However, they would then have to walk around with Level 1 badges, unless they decided to take a test of the higher levels."

Alex was confused. "What's wrong with that?" he asked.

"Nothing," the Crown Prince said quickly. "Only we wanted to keep their talent a secret until the day of the show match where they will reveal their knowledge and talent."

"I see," Alex said. "That makes sense. The match is the day after tomorrow, isn't it?"

"Yes," the Prince said.

'The last day until when I'm supposed to give my answer,' he thought, remembering the Dragon Emperor's words.

"Thank you for notifying me of these things," Alex said.

"It was no problem, your Majesty," the prince said. "By the way, have the people provided you with refreshments or some snacks?"

"Snacks? No, it's not needed," Alex said.

"What?" the crown prince seemed surprised. "You must try the delicacies our chefs make, your majesty. They make some of the best food in the entire world."

"Oh..." Alex got a little curious now.

"If that is the case then... sure. Why not?" Alex said. "Have your head chef make the best snack for me. Let's try what it's all about."

"Oh, we don't have a head chef, but I'll ask the others to make the food for you. They are equally as talented," the prince said.

"Did your head chef quit?" Alex asked.

"Haha, no," the prince said. "He's just away, roaming around the continent right now."

"Oh, he must be trying to come up with new recipes then," Alex said.

"No," the prince said. "He is actually out there looking after my brother, the second prince."

Chapter 1340: The Next Day

"The second prince?" Alex asked. "He's not around?"

"No," the Crown Prince said. "He's not the Crown Prince so he doesn't have any responsibility. He's a free spirit and is currently traveling around the continent along with our head chef."

"I see," Alex said. "Why the head chef though? Wouldn't it be better to have a guard or some other strong people go with him?"

"Oh, the head chef is strong," the prince said. "He is one of the strongest people we have, so we let him go along with my brother."

"A chef, huh?" Alex asked, quite surprised. "How many brothers do you have, by the way?"

"2," the Crown Prince said. "My 2nd brother, and my half-brother that was born only a few years ago to the Empress."

"Ah, I see," Alex said.

The Crown Prince nodded. "So, should I tell the chefs to bring you some snacks?" he asked.

"Oh yes," Alex said. "Please do."

The Crown Prince nodded. "I will let them know. I will be leaving now, your Majesty. Rest well."

The prince bowed and left.

Sometime later, the head servant lady arrived with the snacks which Alex tried out. He was pleasantly surprised by the food, not just because it tasted good, but because it helped a cultivator just that much.

The food energized them, freshened their mind, and sharpened their focus. It was just the food you wanted when the day was getting long and tedious to get you back on track.

Once he ate his food, Alex started cultivating. He cultivated for the entire night, focusing on many different parts as he was so used to now.

It wasn't just Qi he cultivated, but also body and mind as well.

His white mask that improved his spiritual sense was now usually at level 6, which placed quite the burden on anyone wearing it. While on his face, the mask hurt him to the point that he could barely focus on cultivating the other things as well.

He could have placed it on Level 7 as well, but after learning the Dao of Technique, Alex had figured out something that he should have figured out a long time ago.

Because his Five Yang Divine Path technique used Yang Qi to cultivate, and his Undying Physique used Yin Qi to cultivate, as long as he was focused enough, he could actually cultivate both of those at the same time.

However, it took incredible focus on his end to move such vastly different Qi, through such vastly different meridian routes that were required to cultivate. Which was why he had to take the mask down a notch during cultivation.

He was starting to get certain that he would be able to use the 9th level of the mask without even entering the Saint Transformation realm, which was amazing.

His Demon Eyes were coming along fine, but Alex had given up hope on it ever upgrading anytime soon. The thing that he had come to understand while helping his family and friends with the technique was that each level of the technique cost more and more time.

The first level cost him about 2 years to fully learn, and that was without even counting the time it took for his broken eyes to heal after he was done with the medicine.

The second level took him another 12 years or so after that. At that rate, Alex wouldn't be surprised if the third level took him more than a hundred years to learn with dedicated cultivation towards it.

The same went for the Undying physique as well.

Whisker's cultivation increased thanks to Alex as it was tied to his Undying physique technique, while Pearl cultivated on his own.

Alex was still dejected about the fact that he couldn't gain the benefits of a strong physical body now that Pearl had completely absorbed the White Tiger's blood.

Unless Alex found another few drops of White Tiger, which was equally as potent as the one he got before, if not more, then he doubted he could get the benefits he used to before.

After a night of intense cultivation sessions, Alex left his room with neither Pearl nor Whisker outside.

It was obvious why Pearl wouldn't have to be outside, but after giving some thought to the matter, he decided to not keep Whisker out as well. After all, a seeking mouse with a cultivation base would be harder to explain than a black cat.

Yao Ning met up with him outside and asked, "What plans do you have for today, your Majesty?"

"Tomorrow is the show match, so let's just go meet up with the Alchemists and give them some encouragement," Alex said. "We need to get elder Shufen too."

"Only that?" the elder asked. "I thought you would want to go roam the city>"

"I would," Alex said with a dry chuckle. "But it doesn't feel right to enjoy myself with the problem we have."

"Right, we still need to figure out what to do there," Elder Yao said.

Alex nodded. "Well, don't worry too much. We'll come up with something," he said. He hadn't told her that he had already decided to give in to the Dragon Emperor's demands, even if it was in batches.

He still wanted the elders to come up with a better solution that lets them still stay in the Eastern Continent so that they could search for his cousin and Pearl's mother's killers.

Alex looked at the talisman that he was provided by someone in the palace that contained the map of the Dragon Capital. Only now did Alex see just how the Drgaon Capital was set up.

The Dragon capital was separated into 3 areas.

The first was the Royal area, the second was the commercial area, and finally the residential area.

The capital itself was in a square shape, and the northeastern corner was the Royal area where the Palace, the Royal Schools, and various other royal facilities were located.

Then the majority of the middle portion, going from Northwest to Southeast was the commercial area. It was full of shopping districts and entertainment zones and needed a large area.

It was also where all the hotels were placed, and many people chose to live in that place. Still, the rest of the people lived in the Southwest region of the capital which was the residential area.

Alex had only seen the Royal and Commercial area until now, so he thought of visiting the Residential area to see if he could find his cousin there by any chance.

It was already going to be harder than finding a needle in a haystack, but given how popular his image was around the continent thanks to the Newsboard, there was a chance that Hannah herself would come and find him.

He was hoping for that too.

Alex arrived at the Royal School of Alchemy and was taken to his Alchemists by the headmaster herself. After meeting with the alchemists, he gave them some words of encouragement as well as a very serious order.

They were not to use the Pill-splitting Qi in the match tomorrow.

The alchemists nodded seriously, but the truth was, they couldn't use it even if they wanted to. Alex still had no idea just how difficult it was for a regular person to learn the Pill-splitting Qi after all.