

Alchemy 1441

Chapter 1441: Return

Alex and Pearl were led to the edge of the Beast Paradise by the Lion himself. They were brought back to the bright falls where they said their farewell.

"I will try to find what I can," the Lion said. "You two take care of yourself in the meantime. Try not to exceed what you can do. If there was someone else instead of me in the Colony, you might have been dead right now."

Alex nodded. "We'll take extra caution, senior Zhu," he said.

"I won't die, Uncle," Pearl said resolutely.

"Good, I wouldn't want my only nephew to die trying to get revenge on his mother," the Lion said. "Your mother would've never wanted that."

Pearl nodded. "Farewell, Uncle," he said and turned around.

Alex bowed slightly toward the Lion and left.

Pearl quickly entered Alex's beast space once they were far enough. Even though his fur was of a different color, he hid. Who knew what sort of artifacts the Azure Imperium could have?

A single mistake and their entire mission would come falling apart.

Passing the Brightfalls, Alex quickly found his hotel and went up. His two elders and General Fan were there cultivating in their rooms when he arrived.

"Your Majesty, you're back!" elder Liang said the moment she saw Alex come in.

Yao Ning walked out of her room as well. "Your majesty," she cried out.

"Sorry I took so long to come back," Alex said. "I wasn't expecting to take nearly a year."

"We were worried something might've happened to you," the elder said.

"Really?" Alex asked with a bit of a chuckle. "You had nothing to worry about." He wasn't going to tell them about the time he nearly died.

"Were you not going to stay in for longer, your majesty?" Yao Ning asked. "The Crown Prince told us that you would most likely only come out when it is time for the Golden Kingdom's auction."

"Of course not. I wasn't going to stay in there for so long," Alex said. "I have other things to do here than just visit the Golden Kingdom."

Alex went to his room to rest and the elders followed him.

"How long do we have until the Golden Kingdom's auction again?" Alex asked the elders.

"According to General Fan, less than 5 months," Elder Liang said. "We should get a more accurate date around 3 months before the actual auction is supposed to start."

"Hmm, then we have plenty of time," Alex said.

"General Fan also says that we should go there before the auction. At least 2 months before," she said.

"What for?" Alex asked.

"Apparently it is a good idea to visit the Golden Mountain range and mine for gold there before the auction," Elder Liang said. "If we want to do it afterward, there would be way too many people there and that would be problematic."

"Hmm, I'll have to see if that works," Alex said. "I don't really want to rush into things one after another. I want to rest a little too."

"Of course," Yao Ning said. "We have many years to go to the Golden mountain if we miss this chance."

Alex nodded.

"Anything new happened while I was in there?" Alex asked. "Anything I should be aware of?"

"Hmm, nothing massive, I suppose?" elder Liang said.

"I think the most important thing that has happened in the last year or so is the significant rise in voices of the players that want to be sent back home," elder Yao said.

"Oh, the players want to return back home, do they?" Alex asked. "Not bad. It seems sister Hao's actions are showing quite the fruit."

"It is," elder Yao said. "And since most of the players are of such high talent, they can't even be ignored."

"So, what's going on with them then?" Alex asked.

"They are being told to wait," the elder said. "The Emperor is in closed cultivation, so they have no choice but to wait for him to come out before their voices can be heard."

"The Emperor is still in closed cultivation huh?" Alex said softly. "I wonder what he is actually trying to do. Surely he isn't cultivating as he has already reached the peak of what is possible. So he must be trying to judge the many pill recipes I gave him and is trying to find what it is that makes them so good."

The two elders said nothing.

"Okay, you two may leave," Alex said. "I will rest for a while, and tomorrow morning, we will leave."

"Where are we going to next, your Majesty?" Yao Ning asked.

"We're going back to the Dragon Capital for now. As for where after that, I'll have to think a little," he said.

The elders nodded and left the room, leaving Alex alone with his thoughts on what he was going to do in the future.

After thinking for a while, Alex realized that he couldn't make much plans as he wasn't aware of the opening time for the various competitions and secret realms, which was a very integral part of his adventure.

He definitely needed to learn more about them before making the future plans. However, he still knew what the most important part of next journey was going to have to be.

He remembered the white haired young girl that laid in the bed with ice around her. Thinking about her, his heart sank a little as he remembered that feeling.

"They never contacted me," Alex thought. "So that must mean that she has healed and is well. I will have to go visit her as soon as I can."

As for how much later the 'soon' was going to be, he would have to find out later.

Alex started cultivating afterward and the next morning, he left the hotel to return back to the Dragon Capital.

This time around, they directly teleported instead of flying to the Dragon Capital. It wasn't that Alex didn't want to fly back there, as he would be more than happy to see the land here and enjoy the scenery.

Instead, he was actually not allowed to fly through there. If he wanted to fly back, he would have to go take a detour to move around the location that they would come across if they went straight.

The Azure Dragon's Realm.

Alex was more than willing to visit the realm if he was allowed to. No, he HAD to visit it if he was allowed to. However, given that there were so many soldiers that constantly roamed the area, it was impossible for him to visit there.

"I will have to find another way then," he thought.

The long way around took way too long, so instead Alex decided to teleport back to the Dragon Capital.

After teleporting back to the Dragon Capital, Alex was reminded of just how dense and well maintained this city was.

He had teleported back to the same teleoportatin house where he had first arrived over 3 years ago, and just like that time, there was a carriage waiting to take him and the elders to the Dragon Capital.

Alex and the others got into the carriage and made their way to the Dragon Palace.

Chapter 1442: Spirit Pill

Alex and the elders rested for a while after returning to the Dragon Palace.

Neither the Emperor nor the Crown Prince were there to welcome him back, and instead, it was the Emperor's servants that did so.

Alex somehow found it better that way since he didn't have to deal with the emperor or the crown prince and could instead do what he wanted to.

Late afternoon, he left the Dragon Palace and made his way toward the Royal School of Alchemy. It had been over 2 years since he had met up with these people, so it was more than important for him to see these people.

When the group of Alchemists found out that their King had returned, they were more than excited.

Every single one of the alchemists rushed out to greet him and Alex was happy to see them all as well.

Jai Heiyun was cultivating fine and had reached a high enough rank with her cultivation base. The rest were slowly coming along as well.

"I'm happy to see that you're all doing quite fine," Alex said. "How's your alchemy?"

"Our alchemy has been coming along well as well, your Majesty," Jai Heiyun said.

"Oh, good, good," Alex said. "What's the highest pill you've managed to make?"

"The best I've managed is 93%, your majesty," Jai Heiyun said. "But it was a fluke. My average high pill is around 85% these days."

"Not bad," Alex said. "You are all lacking a few skills that are keeping you down. Once you find those skills and perfect them, you will see explosive growth in your alchemy. How well is the pill-splitting Qi coming along for you all?"

Jai Heiyun gave a nervous smile. "Your majesty, that technique is truly impossible to master. I've tried so many times and yet I keep failing each time."

"Keep trying, and take it slow," Alex said. "Understand each pathway it is supposed to take by heart and that should be enough. I had an easier time with it because of certain reasons, so I won't say you are doing anything bad."

Jai Heiyun nodded.

After talking to the alchemists for a while, most of them left with only Hao Ya remaining behind.

"Sister Hao, I hear your work is going well," Alex said.

"Better than expected, honestly," Hao Ya said. "I don't know how long until the Emperor leaves his closed cultivation. Do you know when he will be coming out?"

"I can't say for certain, but it will be within the next 3 years," Alex said. "He will have to come out if he wants to learn about the mushrooms."

"The mushrooms?" Hao Ya asked.

"I'm planning on teaching him about the World Defying Mushrooms as my next offer for our trade," Alex said. "He will want to come out for that."

"Okay, so he will have to come out soon," Hao Ya said. "I will continue doing what I'm doing."

Alex nodded. "Try not to get caught," he said.

"Don't worry. Even if I get caught, I have many ways of escaping. Master made sure at the very least that I won't die here," Hao Ya said.

Alex sighed remembering that he didn't have something of that sort. Not anymore.

After talking to Hao Ya for a bit longer, Alex sent her back and left the area. This was only where the people from the Southern Continent were allowed to stay, so he wouldn't find what he wanted here.

After walking for a while, he arrived in front of a dorm and pulled out a talisman. He used the talisman for a few seconds, and within 3 seconds, someone came running out of the dorm.

"Your majesty," the young man said when he saw him. "You're finally here. I've been waiting for you for so long."

"Wu Shun," Alex spoke, looking at his robe. "Level 5, huh? Not bad."

"Right?" Wu Shun said. "I think I can reach Level 6 in just a month or two."

Alex smiled. "So, how's life? Have my alchemists treated you well?" he asked.

"Yes, they are wonderful. Sister Jai treats me like one of her own and is teaching me to the best of her abilities," the young man said.

"I'm happy to hear that," Alex said. "I will remain in the Dragon Capital for a week or two. In this time, I plan on holding up my end of the trade in these two weeks."

"I'm going to teach you everything you need to learn to reach the same level as the Dragon Emperor."

Wu Shun's eyes widened in glee as the time had come for what he had been waiting for since over a year and a half ago.

"Do you want my book now or later?" he asked in excitement.

"I am fine with either," Alex said. "As long as i—"

"Here!" the young man held up the precious book full of recipes.

Alex smiled and took it. He flipped through the book once to get an idea of what it had. His eyes shined when he realized what an amazing thing he had got his hands on.

"Rest well for today. We will start your lessons tomorrow," Alex said, and soon after left the school.

He went back to the Swan courtyard as quickly as he could and entered his room to privately view the book he had been given.

He opened the book again, this time slowly as he wanted to view it all. The first half of the book was nothing impressive at all.

It was full of recipes for Common and True rank pills, all of which were either useless to Alex or already had an alternative. Even if there weren't, he was already knowledgeable enough to create a pill with the same effects if he wanted to.

Doing the same thing out of Saint ranked pills would be a little more difficult, so he instead he read through the portion that wrote about the Saint ranked pill recipes.

The fun began for Alex when he viewed Immortal ranked pill recipes. There weren't much, just 7 of them, but each one was a useful one.

There were 2 healing pills, one for body, another for soul. There was one antidote pill for body. One pill to speed up cultivation, and another to help breakthrough in every realm in the Immortal realm.

The last 2 were quite the unique ones.

One of them was simply called the Spirit Pill. It enhanced the users Spiritual energy as well as improved his replenishment rate. Eating one before a battle would help one survive quite a lot, especially against cultivators with strong Spiritual energy.

Not only that, if you had strong Spiritual energy yourself, it would give you quite the edge as well.

Alex was quite excited after reading about this pill not because of the pill itself, but because of its effect. Now that he had the recipe, he could most likely downgrade the pill to create a Saint version of it.

With that, he could have another way to improve his battle strength in an instant.

Alex happily read through the pill's recipe and ingredients and took it to heart. Then, he flipped the page and started looking at the next pill recipe.

Chapter 1443: A Few Pill Recipes

Flipping the page, Alex saw the final Immortal pill recipe, one which was more unique than the last one.

It was a pill named Ten Thousand Earth pill. Once eaten, it gave the cultivator an imaginary weight of tens of thousands of tons. It didn't improve their defense much, but it improved their offensive strength by a lot, especially one's body cultivation.

Alex was quite surprised to see that there was something that could affect one's weight without actually affecting the person's real weight. He read through the recipe for a while before stopping.

The ingredients involved in it were ones that he had no idea about as well, just like the last one, so he wondered if he could even get to downgrading this in just a few years.

And if it took time, which one was better in his mind?

After thinking for a bit, he came to the conclusion that the first one was just that much better. Having a strong spirit that replenished just as quickly was definitely one of the more important aspects of the previous pill that was useful.

After looking at the two pills, he flipped the page, moving on to the Divine Ranked pills.

The higher rank one went, the more abstract a pill became. At the Divine rank, Alex didn't even know just what sort of pill one could get.

He was more than excited and looked at the descriptions of the first pill.

The first pill was a healing pill, which disappointed him a little. He wanted more than just healing pills. He wanted something that did much more, but this was all he was going to get for now.

The next pill was called the Spirit Creation pill. This was a little more unique for sure... but he had no idea what it did.

"Aids a cultivator in turning a Spirit into a Creation? What does that mean?" Alex thought for a second.

Creation... he knew this word. Remembering the idol that help the Death aura in the Broken Ravine sect, he knew a Creation was something a Divine realm cultivator could form.

"Then the spirit must be something similar too," he thought. If only the others would tell him what the Immortal and Divine realms were without the fear of overwhelming him and making him fear the future.

He sighed and read the next pill in the book which was the last of the Divine pills that was written.

"Divine True Fire pill?" his eyes narrowed a bit. "It grants a person the ability to use True Fire Dao for a certain period of time. Wait what?"

Alex read it once more to make sure he didn't read it wrong. "Huh? You can have pills that give you access to Dao?" he thought. Upon further consideration, he came to the conclusion that it was most likely not a Dao pill.

It was definitely something that used one's own Qi as a substitute for Qi that was provided by heaven, but that was already true for locations where Qi didn't exist.

He read that it left a person's meridian unusable due to the extreme Fire that it would create, but it was something that could be easily healed after a few months of cultivating.

This pill could be used either in combat or in production. Given how many uses True Fire dao had, more than enough people would make good use of it.

"Amazing," Alex couldn't help but say. He had no use for this pill, but just the fact that a pill of this sort existed meant that the possibilities for other Dao pills were there as well.

As long as he could have the talent for it, he could use any and all Dao without actually ever learning the Dao itself.

"Surely learning a Dao is better," Alex thought for a moment before his eyes narrowed. He read the talisman once more and his eyes widened once more with shock.

The pill's description had nothing about it requiring people to have Fire Meridian to be able to use the True Fire. Which meant that it most definitely made one's meridians capable of using Fire Qi.

Given that it also didn't mention the lack of ability to use neutral Qi, the Meridian was most definitely capable of using both Qi at once.

"Damn!" he couldn't help but say.

This was definitely one of the best pills she had read about until now.

Alex was a little sad that he had absolutely no way to downgrade this pill as the intent in his mind still held tightly onto Divine Ranked ingredients.

He recognized the names and what they looked like, but any more than that he would have to fight the Intent in his mind to access them, and he didn't want to do that.

He flipped the page and was surprised to see the end of Divine Pills. Instead, there was a single pill recipe on the last page of the book.

And it was a Celestial-ranked pill.

There was a single pill there, but given that it was a Celestial Ranked pill, it was most likely one of the strongest pill he had ever learned about.

Alex breathed in and out slowly, calming himself before laying his eyes on the name of the Celestial pill.

Celestial Tribulation Pill.

"Cultivators can eat this pill to manually trigger a... tribulation? What?" Alex couldn't help but be confused the moment he saw that. "Trigger a tribulation on your own? Why?"

He continued reading. "The tribulation triggered will be the next Immortality Tribulation one is supposed to face. You can face as many as you want, and in exchange, those tribulations will never arrive."

"The next tribulation after that will come at its expected period."

Alex thought for a bit. This was something he had learned about from Scarlet over a decade and a half ago.

When a person became an immortal, they needed to pay a toll to the heavens to remain an immortal. That toll was the tribulation lightning that they had to suffer from.

Every time you won against the tribulation lightning, it would return 10 millennia later stronger than before. If one remained complacent and didn't strive for a higher realm, the lightning tribulation would kill them the next time.

It wasn't as big of a problem as Alex initially thought, but that was only for the talented people who could breakthrough to higher realm with ease.

The weaker ones that barely broke through to the Immortal realm would most likely die in a few tribulations as breaking through in the Immortal realms was a difficult task for ones that struggled through the Saint realms.

"So, if you are strong, and don't want to be bothered by the lightning every 10 thousand years, you eat this pill and be done with it in advance?" Alex thought.

Finally, it made some sense. "That must be it," he thought. "What a unique pill."

He looked at the recipe for that pill and memorized. It was so far away in his future that there was simply no point in trying to understand it just yet.

He would do so when the time came for him to do so. Until then, learning about it was enough.

Chapter 1444: Working Hard

Alex spent the next two weeks teaching Wu Shun about Alchemy. When he didn't do that, he spent his time on the Wood Spiritual pill that he had wanted to make for such a long time.

When he found himself at a block, he shifted his focus to the Spirit pill and tried to downgrade the ingredients.

This downgrade was the hardest downgrade Alex had to do until now. The most important part about downgrading was understanding an ingredient from the inside out and trying to find a lower version of it that did the same thing.

However, as there was no Immortal Ranked ingredient, it was a difficult task for him. Taking the knowledge about the pill from his memory was not the easiest way for him to improve it.

It was the difference between memorizing an answer for the test and understanding the context behind the question to naturally write an answer. One needed far less effort than the other one.

However, if you bothered to put in any effort, it paid off well when the questions were made to trick you.

Fortunately, of the pill's ingredients, 6 out of the 10 ingredients have Saint Ranked ingredients and thus could be either ignored or easily downgraded to True Ranked ingredients.

Comparing that to the Ten Thousand Earths pill which had 6 Immortal ranked ingredients, this was much better.

Alex became so busy with everything that he didn't even realize when the 2 weeks were over and he had finished teaching Wu Shun everything that he needed to know for now.

Wu Shun's understanding of Alchemy had improved to the point that if he took the test, he could easily pass Level 6. If he studied a bit more about the ingredients and experimented a lot with various pills, he could even reach Level 7 in a year or two.

"Thank you, your Majesty," the young man bowed when the final lesson was over. "Thank you for believing in me and teaching me so much about Alchemy."

"It was trade between the two of us. You do not have to thank me for something you paid to learn," Alex said.

"No, I must thank you," the young man said. "You have no idea how long I've struggled to become a decent alchemist, and now my dreams will come true. Please accept my gratitude," the young man said.

Alex smiled and patted him. "Do your best from now on. You are a member of my Southern Continent," he said and walked away.

Alex went to meet up with the other alchemists as well as Hao Ya before finally returning back to the palace to rest for the day.

Now that he was done with external matters, it was time to focus entirely on the Wood pill and also the downgrade.

For the next month and a half, Alex did nothing but focus his entire time on those two tasks alone.

He had already learned about the many wood ingredients since his time in the Hundred Blossom Valley. Now that he had practical knowledge of so many ingredients, all he did now was a mental simulation of how the various ingredients would react when used together in certain ways.

Alex also focused on some practical knowledge, but more than not he stuck to metal simulation.

Given how many wood ingredients there were, even hundreds of thousands or even millions of simulations wouldn't be enough at all.

It was truly going to take him such a long time.

In contrast, he was done with the 6 saint ingredients in the Spirit pill, which he wasn't sure yet was necessary to be downgraded or not.

He would have to do a few tests with those ingredients once he was done with downgrading the Immortal ingredient. That was what took more time than not.

After the month and a half he spent working on it, Alex was notified of something by his elders.

The time for the next Golden auction had been set. Which meant it was going to take place exactly 3 months later.

"So I have a month to go there, huh?" Alex asked. If he wanted to visit the Golden Mountain range, that was what he needed to do.

"Still there is a month," he thought. "And I'm getting nowhere with this."

There were only so many months he could spend in the Eastern Continent before it was time for him to go back to the Southern Continent.

Surely he couldn't spend it all holed up in this room. "I will have time for that later in the Southern Continent," Alex thought. "For now, I need to do what I can about everything else."

Deciding so, he finally left his room.

He met up with his elders and let them know that he was planning to leave.

"But your majesty, there is still a month before we need to go to the Gold Kingdom," Elder Liang said. "Do you wish to visit it this early?"

"We're not going to the Gold Kingdom," Alex said. Although he wanted to visit the Ice Mist Palace, he couldn't do so as well.

Instead, he wanted to go to a place that he had heard such high praises about.

"We're going to the Azure Kingdom's capital next," Alex said. "The Blueheart City."

Within a day, all the preparations that were necessary were made and Alex got ready to leave. The King on the other side was notified as well, and once again, Alex flew away from the Dragon Capital, making his way toward another Kingdom.

Unlike the Emerald Kingdom, the Azure Kingdom was nearby.

Technically, he was already inside the Azure Kingdom, but the Dragon Capital didn't count in its jurisdiction as it was its own thing, same for the Azure Dragon's realm.

They flew through the Azure Kingdom itself, viewing the many cities and forests as well as the beautiful rivers that were on the way.

It took them only 5 hours in total to fly to Blueheart city, and that was with taking their time.

The distance was nearly 3 times as small as the distance to the Greenheart city of the Emerald Kingdom, so it was why it all felt so relatively quick.

"General Fan, are all the kingdom capitals renamed?" Alex asked curiously. He had learned a few things about the Kingdoms, but they didn't mention anything about the names of the capitals.

Or if it did, he missed it.

"Yes, your majesty," the general said. "After the previous kings and queens were executed, to make the new kingdom be neutral, it was all renamed to neutral names."

"Each of the Kingdom was given a color to represent it and the same went for the capital."

Alex nodded. "So the Goldheart city of the Golden Kingdom wasn't a fluke either."

"Yes," the General said. "Neither is the Darkheart city of the Ebony kingdom, the Snowheart city of the Ivory kingdom, or the Silverheart city of the Silver Kingdom."

Alex nodded. "That's good to learn," he said.

He was really surprised at how thoroughly the previous kings and queens had their names wiped from history.

'They must've really offended the Emperor with their plan to overthrow him,' Alex thought. 'Just in case he is involved in the events with Pearl's mother, I will need to be extra careful around him.'

Chapter 1445: Blueheart City

"Your Majesty, welcome to this one's humble kingdom," Long Weiyuan, the King of the Azure Kingdom spoke happily after seeing Alex and the rest arrived in the Blueheart city.

"King Weiyuan," Alex spoke. "It's been a while."

"It has indeed, your majesty," the king said. "How have you been?"

The thin man with silky black hair was full of smiles when meeting Alex again. He somehow looked both young and old at the same time.

It was as if he was an old man that was forcing himself to remain youthful using external means.

Alex knew that the 5 kings from the other kingdoms were killed and replaced. He wondered what the situation was with the king of the Azure Kingdom.

He hadn't read about it planning on going through a coup, so he assumed it was all the same from the very start. Except the name of the capital city changing to one that suited the changes that took place over 4 thousand years ago, he didn't expect anything else to have changed here.

Long Weiyuan was the son of the son of the sister of the Dragon Emperor before the current one. His mother was a direct cousin to the current Dragon Emperor and thus he had managed to find himself a throne in this kingdom.

The group got into a carriage and started making their way to the palace of the Azure King.

"What brought you here, your majesty?" Long Weiyuan asked. "I was quite surprised to hear that you would be coming."

"Can I not come?" Alex asked jokingly.

"You know that is not what I mean, your Majesty," the king said. "With the Gold Auction so close, I had assumed you would go there before coming here."

"That was my first thought as well," Alex said. "I had no intention of coming here at all, not this soon. But, when I thought about it more practically, I realized that I was going to be wasting my time in the Gold Kingdom if I went there this early."

"I didn't want to spend my time visiting random cities when I was just back from doing the same, so I wanted to do something more productive," Alex said. "And the closest location where I could be productive was here."

"I see," the King said. "Your highness much wish to enter the Boundless Enlightenment Domain."

Alex nodded. "That is what I wanted to do. I'm not sure how useful a month in there would be, but at least I would be using my time for something productive."

"Certainly," the King said. "The Enlightenment domain isn't really about the time you spend in there, so a month should be enough time for you to learn for there."

"I know that it depends on how well I understand what I view in there," Alex smiled. "It's just that I intend to view a lot of different things."

"I would suggest against that," the king said. "At least don't view all one after another. Its better to stick to one until you make some progress before moving to the next one."

"Of course," Alex said.

"Still, you will be spending a month in there," the king said. "I don't know if your Majesty is aware of this or not, but the Boundless Enlightenment Realm is very expensive ot go in and out, so most people only enter for a few days at most as it eats up a fortune."

"Not for me, right?" Alex smiled.

"Of course not," the King laughed along with the others.

They started talking about various things as Alex looked around at the city. It seemed people weren't aware of his arrival just yet, so the newsboard said nothing at all.

Instead, the news boards were full of news about the Golden Auction as it was being advertised a lot. It was relatively new news, so it was being spread as much as possible.

As they talked, the king suddenly stopped and pointed. "Look your majesty, that is the gem of our kingdom," he said.

Alex turned back and saw a massive sea-sized sapphire lake in the distance that glittered with the golden light of the morning.

"Is that..."

"The Azure Lake," the king said with a reverent look. "That is the lake that was created by the first Azure Dragon using secret treasures from the Immortal realm."

"If you ever feel your heart growing uneasy, I suggest you visit the lake, your Majesty. I'm certain the serene atmosphere will help you a lot," the king said.

"Is that so?" Alex said, looking at the Azure Lake from afar. "I will have to remember that then."

A few houses quickly passed by and blocked the view. The road winded away from that location and the lake was no longer viewable from where they were.

Since the lake was gone, their conversation went back to normal.

"Are you by chance married?" Alex asked the king.

"I am married," the king said. "Although I do not know if you will be able to meet the queen. She is in closed cultivation, and will be there for a few months."

"I see," Alex said as a thought grew in his head. "Do you have children then?"

"No," the king said.

Alex's eyes widened. "Are you perhaps not allowed to have children as well?" he asked. "Like the other kings?"

"Oh, no no, I have no such obligations," the king said. "I just feel like I am young. I do not wish to have children just yet. Maybe in a few centuries."

"I see," Alex said. 'So, it must just be the other kings that have this obligation. This king probably didn't have to give up on things like the other ones.'

He recognized the situation and stopped asking questions about it any further and started speaking about his own experience in the other kingdom.

"Oh, you went to the Beast Paradise? I hear they accept no humans anymore," the King said.

"I went with the Crown Prince and stayed there for 3 quarters of a year before returning two months ago," Alex said.

"Oh wait, the Crown Prince did mention that. I am stupid and forgot," the King said.

"Oh, has the Crown Prince been here? Last I heard, he was busy with some military stuff in the Ebony kingdom," Alex said.

"Yes, he came here about a year ago and mentioned it," the King said. "It was information in passing, so I didn't really think much of it at the time."

"I see," Alex said. 'The Crown Prince visits this place, huh?'

The carriage went on to a more sparse section of the city as it got closer to the Palace.

When they arrived at the palace, Alex noticed the Azure Dragon imagery that was used there as well. He walked through the gate with the King and made his way into the palace.

Just as he was entering, a woman came out from the palace, seemingly in a hurry.

She stopped when she saw Alex and the others. It took her a moment to recognize Alex before she quickly bowed.

"King Alex," she spoke with a hint of surprise in her voice. "My sincere greetings."

Alex smiled. "I did not expect to see you here at all, lady Zhan."

Chapter 1446: A Cup of Tea

Zhan Luoyang, daughter of the Zhan Family of the Ebony Kingdom, was the fiancée of the Crown Prince. If nothing went wrong, she was to be the next Empress of the entire Continent.

There was not a single person in the continent that wouldn't be polite to her, and the same went for Alex.

"My apologies. Had I known that you were coming, I might have left with the Azure King to welcome you," she said.

"Ah, that was my mistake. I apologize," the king said quickly. "Lady Zhan has been in somewhat of a closed cultivation these days, so I didn't think to bring her along."

"It's alright," Alex said. "I would be fine even if no one came to welcome me."

He looked at the woman in front of him once again and noticed something. "You seem to be in a hurry to go somewhere, lady Zhan. I hope I'm not stopping anything urgent."

"No, no," the woman said. "I was just on my way to the secret realm to gain some inspiration. I feel like I'm close to a breakthrough on something, but it seems hard to do so right now."

"Ah, I see," Alex said. "Please go ahead then. We can catch up on some other time."

Lady Zhan nodded. "Thank you, King Alex," she said. "If you are free, we can talk tomorrow morning."

"Sure," Alex said. "I shall make some time for you."

The woman nodded and bowed before leaving in a hurry.

"I should have mentioned to her that you were coming, but it all happened so quickly and..."

Alex chuckled a bit. "As I said, I don't mind," he said. "It was partially my fault that I didn't notify you about my arrival a few days in advance as well. Let us go in."

After they walked in, the King introduced Alex to a few more people before bringing him to a hall to talk about various things and continue their conversation from before.

"Is there any particular reason that you want to enter the Enlightenment realm, your majesty?" the king asked.

"None in particular at the moment, as I mentioned earlier," Alex said. "If anything I'm more so trying to find if I can get inspired to try to reach enlightenment in something."

"Reaching enlightenment just because you want to isn't that easy, but the treasures in the Enlightenment realm do help quite a lot," the king said. "I myself learned my first dao on a chance in the domain when I visited there for something else."

"I wanted to learn the Dao of water, but to my surprise, I gravitated toward the dao of Mist. Having spent my youth around the Azure Lake's mist, it came so naturally to me," the king said. "I will pray that your majesty has a similar experience as well."

Alex thanked the man but said nothing else. They talked for a while before Ning and the elders were led to their rooms that were inside the palace.

After finally getting some privacy, he rested for a bit. He called out Pearl and Whisker a bit after that and started cultivating.

After a night full of cultivation, he woke up in the morning to the call of his elders.

He walked out and found Elder Yao in front of his room. "We had a message from Lady Zhan that she will be waiting for you in the Garden. If you don't wish to see her, we can send a message."

"No," Alex said quickly. "I will go meet her right away."

Alex left the room and went to the palace garden where the morning sun was just shining its rays through the misty sky that surrounded them.

He was greeted with the sight of a large area full of flowers and various plants with birds and butterflies that covered it completely. In the center was an open space with a small stone platform with a roof for shading.

Lady Zhan sat on a chair as she drank from a cup that was sitting on the table next to her.

She turned around when she saw Alex walk out of the palace and smiled. "Your majesty, you accepted my request," she said.

"Good morning, lady Zhan," Alex spoke. "How could I not accept your request? You could say that I have been looking forward to this ever since you mentioned it yesterday."

The woman smiled, not taking it to heart. "It is a beautiful day isn't it?" she asked.

"It indeed is," Alex said. "Although, it is a bit too misty for my liking."

"Yes, but it does create a bit of a unique atmosphere. You will find it hard to find this sort of atmosphere in many places in the continent," she said.

Alex looked around. "I don't doubt you on that," he said.

The mists covered more of the sky than the group and had a bluish hue to them that wasn't all that natural at all. When the golden sunlight peered through them, they contrasted each other, truly creating quite the mood.

"You were in quite the urgency yesterday. I hope you dealt with whatever it was that caused the urgency," Alex said.

"I dealt with the urgency, although it will take me some time to deal with the source of the urgency itself," she said. "Tea?"

Alex look at the teapot and cup sitting on the table and nodded.

The woman swiped her hand, and Alex felt the dao of heat move around her fingers, heating up the teapot in an instant.

She then poured the steaming tea onto the cup and pushed it toward Alex. "It's my own brew that I perfected in the last few centuries. I hope you like it," she said.

Alex took a cup of tea and took a sip. Immediately, he tasted something so mystical and magical that he had never really tasted anywhere in all of his life.

Even the refreshments he received in the Dragon Palace could not compare to the cup of tea he drank right here.

"You must have spent over millennia perfecting this cup of tea," Alex said. "I have never tasted something so divine in my life."

"That is the highest compliment I could have received for my tea, your majesty," she said. "Thank you for your kind words."

"It's the truth," Alex said.

He took a sip of the tea again and looked around.

"What brings you to the Azure Kingdom, your majesty?" Lady Zhan asked.

"I'm here to visit the Boundless Enlightenment domain," he said. "See if I can learn something in the time I have before I need to leave for the Gold Kingdom."

"Ah, will you be participating in just the Auction? Or will you be there for the other two events as well?" she asked.

"Other two?" Alex asked with a confused look. "Isn't it just the gold mining? What other event is there?"

"Oh, does your majesty not know?" Lady Zhan said. "About 6 months after the auction is over, the secret realm there will open up, allowing you to enter it."

"Secret realm?" Alex was a little surprised. "Ah! Are you saying that the Realm of Trials will open up in around 9 months' time?"

Chapter 1447: Specific Pills

Realm of Trials, also sometimes known as the Production Trials, was another one of the 5 secret realms that the first Azure Dragon and his son, the Dragon Emperor had created for the saints of this realm

It was a realm where one went to test their production skills through various tests and trials to see how good they were.

Alex had been planning to go there to see how good his Alchemy skills were and to improve his other skills if he could.

"Thank you for letting me know," Alex said. "I can prepare better for my future with this knowledge."

"Your majesty must be looking forward to it then," Lady Zhan said.

"Of course. Are you not looking forward to it, lady Zhan?" Alex asked. "It sounds like something you would be excited about as you are an alchemist as well."

"I have entered that place since I was a child," Zhan Luoyang smiled as she said so. "I no longer have much use in going to those secret realms. Instead, I can focus on my current task better and not have to spend it in there."

"I see," Alex said. "What is your current task, if I may ask?"

Lady Zhan hesitated a bit before saying it out loud. "I'm trying to come up with a new pill and for that, I have to spend my time researching and trying to understand more about pills in general. I've been spending my time trying to gain some enlightenment in that regard, but it hasn't been of much help yet."

"I will have to spend a while trying to do so," she said.

"Ah!" Alex said. "You're trying to create a new pill, huh? That is somehow both easy and hard at the same time."

Lady Zhan nodded. "It is," she said. "Creating a random pill is not that hard. In fact, as long as you even understand in the least how pills work, you can create any random pill."

"But the moment you need it to do something specific, it becomes incredibly difficult," she said with a sigh. "Of course, your majesty probably doesn't have that sort of problem. You created that Water pill during the showcase in just 10 days."

Alex chuckled. "I may not look like it, but I too struggle with making pills," he said. "It's quite hard having a make a pill that does something specific."

"I'm trying to make one currently, and it's been over a year and a half and yet I feel like I'm going nowhere," Alex said. "I swear it is going to take me decades to create it at this rate."

"Oh!" Zhan Luoyang was a bit surprised. "You struggle with pills too, your majesty? I assumed you would be good enough to make any sort of pill that you wanted to."

"That is not the case," Alex said.

"What sort of pill are you trying to make anyway that is so hard to make?" the girl asked curiously.

Alex didn't hold back at all and told her exactly what he was doing. "I'm trying to make a pill that can improve the Wood Spiritual root of any person by a decent level," he said.

Zhan Luoyang stared with wide eyes for a moment. "Improve one's spiritual root?" she asked.

"Wood spiritual root," Alex said.

"Is it like the one you made in the showcase?" she asked. "How long will this one probably last?"

"Last?" Alex chuckled. "It will last forever. I'm trying to make a pill that can permanently turn even the worst spiritual root into a superior Wood Spiritual root. And that is taking a lot out of me."

"Wow!" the girl couldn't help but give a look of awe. "Making permanent improvements to your spiritual root... I wasn't even aware that was possible with Saint pills."

"It is," Alex said. "Of course, as I mentioned, this is going to take me a very long time before I get anywhere."

"Still, a long time to you is probably nothing to the rest of us," she said. "I hope I can make my pill that quickly as well."

Alex thought for a moment. "Now that I think about it, the crown prince went to the Beast paradise for you, didn't he? He brought you back the 6-Eyed deer's bone marrow?" he asked.

"Ah yes, his highness brought the bone marrow to me a year ago," she said.

"And you used it for the pill you are trying to make?" he asked her.

"Not yet," she said. "I'm still trying to figure out if I'm on the right track. There is only so much of the bone marrow that I can use before I run out of it."

"I remember hearing that you were trying to make some sort of healing pill, is that true?" Alex asked.

"Uhhh... not entirely correct, but that is the gist of the pill I'm trying to make," she said.

"Oh. What sort of pill is it, if you don't mind me asking," Alex said.

"Well, I'm trying to make a pill that is more of a hybrid of two types of pills," she said. "I want my pills to both deal with poison or toxins that one might be dealing with and heal their body at the same time."

"Oh, so instead of having to use two pills, you can only use one?" Alex asked.

"Something like that, yes," the girl said. "But of course, I'm struggling with it a lot."

"Hmm, do you want my help?" Alex offered. He doubted she was going to take up on his offer to help.

After all, this was her test to create a pill on her own to reach Level 10 and wasn't going to let the possibility of someone else helping her to reach that level exist at all.

So, when Zhan Luoyang accepted his offer, Alex was more than surprised.

"Will you help me?" she asked excitedly.

"Uhh, yes," Alex said. "I meant what I said. I didn't expect you to accept my help though."

"I feel like I'm forced to," she said.

"Won't it cause problems with your level 10 test if I help you?" Alex asked.

"It doesn't matter. I will make some simple pills for that. I don't want to be stuck with this pill when it could be of so much help to the average person."

Alex smiled. "You are very kind, lady Zhan," he said. "Please, tell me how I can help you."

The girl brought out a talisman and started explaining what and how she was going about making this new pill.

Alex looked at the list of ingredients and asked, "Do you have any specific effect in mind? Or just a normal pill that does both healing and curing poison at once?"

"Hmm," the girl thought for a bit. "I would like it to remove the poison first and then heal and then once again try and do both at the same time if the problems still persists."

"That's... a lot of requirements for a single pill," Alex said. "That makes it quite the challenge. I do love a good challenge."

Alex looked at the list of ingredients for a few seconds and started coming up with changes that could hopefully send the research further in the direction of successfully creating a pill as Lady Zhan desired.

"I see you are using the 3-leaved Glorious Vine roots for their properties of healing, but might I suggest using the 2-leaved Glorious Vine roots so that the intense Wood energy in it doesn't affect the Heavenly Fire Basil seeds," Alex said.

"I did think of that," Lady Zhan said. "But when I tried it, the energy in the 2-Leaved Glorious Vine roots is too weak to be of any effect. Unfortunately, I need every bit of strong energy I can."

"Hmm..." Alex gave it some thought. "Then it might be better to take out the 3-leaved Glorious Vine roots entirely."

"Take it out?" the girl said with a frown on her face. "But then we'll have to replace it with something that is similar to it and doesn't affect the Heavenly Fire Basil's seeds."

"I've been practicing with Wood ingredients for the past 2 years now, so I know enough about it right now to suggest you two ingredients," Alex said. "We can either use the Jade Gale Orchid's flower petals, or we can use the Emerald Spider Lily's stamens."

"Both have incredible healing energy, but they are mild enough that it won't affect the Basil seeds," Alex said.

"Jade Gale Orchid's flower petals?" Lady Zhan thought for a bit and brought out a flower petal from her storage bag and looked at it. She recalled everything she knew about that flower and nodded.

"You're right. They are quite similar," she said. "I'll have to check if it's energy is mild enough to work or not later one."

"Check the Emerald Spider Lily's stamen too," Alex said.

"I don't have them on me, so I'll have to go find the later on," she said.

"Here," Alex brought out a small wooden box. "I have some that I can give you. I've already come to the conclusion that I won't be needing this for a while, so you can use it."

"Ah, you don't have to give me anything, your majesty. I can go get it from the shops around here," she said quickly.

"I know you can," Alex said. "But that will cost you some precious time, and I have no use for it, just take it."

Lady Zhan nodded in the end and accepted it. She stored away both the ingredients and went back to talking about the pill recipe with Alex.

After talking to Lady Zhan, Alex had come to understand a few things about her.

First, it wasn't a fluke that she was a Level 9 alchemy master at all. Her knowledge of alchemy and her drive to learn more was perhaps the best of anyone else he had seen.

She was maybe even more driven in learning about alchemy, not for the sake of herself, but just to learn about it than even the likes of the Dragon Emperor himself.

She perhaps loved Alchemy more than Alex too.

She had been practicing alchemy since she was a child and had the best of the best tutors brought to her when she was in her family. Ever since childhood, her thirst to learn about alchemy had blossomed and now it had fruit into the alchemist she currently was.

When she started talking about alchemy, it became hard to steer away the conversation in another direction. He barely managed to learn that she and the Crown Prince fell in love with each other when they had to work together to make some sort of pills in the past and ended up deciding to get engaged.

As for their marriage, they hadn't decided on it just yet. It was more so the Crown Prince who had yet to make a proper decision due to how busy his current life was.

Her age wasn't something Alex had managed to discern just yet either, but by the way she was talking and with her cultivation base being in the Saint Transformation realm, she was certainly 3 or 4 millennia old.

After talking to her about alchemy for a while, 6 hours had passed in an instant, surprising Alex.

"Thank you so much for all of your help, your majesty," the woman said before standing up to leave. "I will test out everything you suggested. Would you mind if we meet a week or so later to judge my progress and see if I need something else?"

"Of course," Alex said. "I will be at the Enlightenment domain for quite some time now, but you can contact me when I'm back."

"Thank you," the girl said before walking away.

Alex sat there and looked at the garden for a few minutes before he decided to leave as well.

The king walked out of the palace just as Alex was returning. "Have you enjoyed your time with lady Zhan, your majesty?" the king asked.

"Yes," Alex said. "It seems she was making a new pill and it was fun to talk about."

"I'm gald," the King said. "Have you planned on what you will be doing next? If not, I can take you to the Azure Lake to show you around."

"Ah, that is not needed," Alex said. "I will be going to the Enlightenment domain next. I can visit the lake at some other time."

"I see," the king said. He looked outside to judge the time and said. "Its already past 1 in the afternoon, so you might want to hurry up, your majesty."

"Hmm? Why is that?" Alex asked.

"The teleportation formation to the secret realm activates twice a day, once in the morning and once in the afternoon. The one in the morning was at 9, and the next one will be at 3 in the after noon."

"If you wish to enter, then you will have to be there beforehand," the king said.

"Ah, I see. I wasn't aware of such schedule," Alex said.

The king nodded. "To be honest, you actually have to register to enter at least a day in advance, but they will make exceptions for you. Will you be entering all alone or will your elders be going as well?" he asked.

"There's is no problem if my elders enter, is there?" Alex asked.

"No, no problem," the King said. "Let us go and register the three of you."

Alex nodded and left the palace after a few minutes.

Elder Liang and Elder Yao were quite excited about the prospect of finding answers to mysteries that they had peered through for a long time but had never gained any substantial information back.

They excitedly left the palace in a carriage along with many other individuals that were there just to guard them on their way.

After riding the carriage for what felt like 15 minutes, they finally arrived at the location of the secret realm, which was surprisingly two large formation platform with a lot of soldiers surrounding it.

At the center of the two platform was a small building with a long line of individuals waiting to get registered to entered the secret realm.

Alex sensed the space aura around him and quickly recognized that the secret realm was inside of that building.

A man from their group left and went toward the building.

"Let us wait here, your majesty," the king said. "The time to enter will come soon enough."

Chapter 1449: Boundless Enlightenment Domain

Alex stood atop the stone formation, surrounded by his two elders while many other people gathered around as well.

He looked around at the formation to count the number of people there, and soon enough the number exceeded over 2 thousand.

A few people had noticed him and recognized him even before he got onto the formation, so when he was finally there, there were a lot of people that gossiped about him.

Each of the people there wore a talisman on their person, including Alex and the rest, and it was what the secret realm inside judged to see if you were eligible to stay there any longer.

Most people bought the talismans with a few days of eligibility in them. Alex and his elders had the special ones that allowed for infinite eligibility.

Alex ignored the people that gossiped and instead focused his attention on the other formation platform that was as of yet completely empty. He had expected people to be filling that up as well.

However, after thinking for a while, he came to the conclusion that this was a receiving formation and the people that had to leave the secret realm would be coming through that platform instead.

It was similar to the teleportation formations that were set up in the Luminance empire that he had used so many decades ago.

The formation started lighting up and everyone perked up.

Alex let the teleportation formation gather around him and sooner than later, he was teleported to the other side.

When Alex arrived on the other side, he was in an outdoor space just like the place outside with people walking around them.

There were many people that were flying as well, but most of them were members of the military and were here to keep folks civil and have them follow the rules.

Alex and the Elders got off the platform and looked around at the weird realm.

The Boundless Enlightenment Domain was just as its name suggested, boundless. The secret realm was so large and so wide that Alex couldn't even see it all easily.

He probably could reach the edge with his spiritual sense, but he didn't try it.

The secret realm right from the start was separated into two sections from what Alex could see.

One-half of the region was all about the elements. The 5 natural elements, the 2 higher elements, and a few other different types of auras one that a person could want to learn about covered one-half of the realm.

That would contain every single Dao pertaining to the elements.

On the other side was a region that was created specifically for the rest of the different dao and knowledge.

Alex looked around for a bit and nodded. "You guys don't have to stick around me. Go and learn what you can. I will be fine," he said.

"We can't leave you alone," Elder Liangg said.

"Will you be following me around to the alchemy section then?" he asked her. "I might stay there for the entire month."

"Urgh! Fine. But remember to call us when it is time for you to leave," Elder Liang said.

They left to their own choice of section, and Alex was free to roam the sections he wanted to. He thought for a bit about what he wanted to visit first.

Gaining Dao on Yang and Yin would be amazing if he could do it, but he wasn't sure there would be enough knowledge on such important energy here.

Even if just to check, he decided to visit that section when he could.

The Fire section was useless for him. As for the Metal section, there were still quite a few things for him to learn so that was another place he wanted to visit.

"Ah, I should learn about Earth and Water too," Alex thought. He had learned the Dao of Earth a few years ago, so wanted to see if there was anything else he could learn from it aside from the simple Dao.

As for the Water Dao, since he had a superior Water spiritual root, there was no harm in trying to check if he could learn that Dao as well.

He intended on visiting the Wood section as well, but there was little expectation in his heart that he was going to learn absolutely anything from there. At the very least, he wouldn't learn anything from here unless he came up with the pill first.

He turned around toward the other region and sighed. 'Will I even have time to visit that side?' he wondered. With how little time he had here, he was certain that he would have to wait until after the Realm of Trials to go to that side.

After making his decision, he left for the Yang section of the Enlightenment domain.

There was a formation barrier set up around each and every single location to keep in the aura and stop it from degrading way too quickly. He had learned that the items inside of this domain were switched around every time the next Azure Dragon came around.

'This must be at the worst stage possible then,' Alex thought.

His first visit was to a small glowing yellow rock that gave off yang energy. He stopped by it for a second and looked at it before coming to realize that he was looking at a Yang Jade.

Unlike the Yang Jade that he was used to finding back in the deserts beyond the Forbidden Fields, this one wasn't made from yang-affected Spirit stones, and instead was a spirit vein that was partially consumed by Yang energy.

Taken away like this, it was pretty much the same thing now.

He felt the yang energy and sighed. It was just not strong at all. There wasn't much he could learn from it and as a result, he had to leave that place.

The next 3 items, of which 2 were paintings, were also unable to evoke any feelings in Alex that he already wasn't familiar with.

He walked over to the next location which was another painting. Alex looked at the painting and saw that the entire painting was all yellow, with no other colors present at all.

He was confused for a moment, but when he kept staring at it, he realized that the one massive yellow painting was actually a combination of many different shades of yellow, each barely distinct from the other one, but enough so that there was an actual image for one that could view it.

The image was of a simple man that sat cross-legged with a bright yellow sun in the sky.

Alex kept staring at it and started feeling slightly uncomfortable for a moment. He started feeling hot for some reason.

With the Dao of heat and a body that was from the god of Yang, he had rarely felt hot in a long time. And somehow the image in front of him was evoking that feeling.

He stuck to the image to see if he could learn what was happening, but unfortunately, he couldn't peer into the truth that was hidden in that painting.

After realizing that he couldn't learn anything, Alex was forced to walk away from the painting, but not before making a mental note that he would return to this one.

Chapter 1450: Many Dao

The Yang section of the Boundless Enlightenment Domain did not have as many customers as it would be normal for anyone trying to learn a Dao.

Due to the number of people that had a Yang or Yin spiritual root being very low compared to the other spirit veins, it was normal for there to not be that many people in this section or the Yin section.

Alex visited the other regions of the Yang section, viewing the many different painting and objects that helped with enlightenment.

He saw a painting of a landscape with beams of light peering through the clouds. The golden beams of light illuminated the painting to the point that the dark room the painting was kept in was brightly illuminated as well.

Alex was surprised how this was possible at all. He tried to stay and learn some more, but he was forced to leave after many hours of staying without gaining any enlightenment from it.

He moved on to another section and found a rock that looked like a lady. Alex couldn't tell just what was happening when he first saw it, but after viewing it for long enough, he learned just enough from it to be able to tell that someone had created an illusion of a girl and pasted it onto the rock.

"Yang illusions?" he wondered. He had his own Yang clones, which were nothing more than illusions as well. If he understood how that worked, could he figure out this Dao by any chance?

Alex then went to a painting of a man on his deathbed. However, no matter who looked at the painting, they all had a single thought.

This man was not going to die today.

The Dao of Vitality that was used to create the painting was strong enough that it was affecting even people that didn't have Yang spiritual roots.

Alex stayed there for a long time to try and learn something, but he couldn't gain much either. However, compared to the other places, this had the most improvement of all.

Alex spent nearly 3 days going around the Yang section, trying to learn what he could from there. Within those 3 days, he learned as much as he could. If he had more days, he could have probably learned more, but the amount he would've learned then wouldn't have mattered much.

With only a month to stay here, he didn't have much time at all and instead had to go look around the region.

The next one after the Yang region was the Fire region.

Alex looked around there for a while to just see how the Dao was being provided and after seeing what he could, he left.

Having learned the True Fire Dao, there wasn't much for him to learn at all.

Next up was the Metal region.

The metal region was the one that Alex was looking forward to the most. He had already learned the Dao of Metal, the Dao of Sharpness, the Dao of Cutting, and the Dao of Malleability.

He wasn't aware of how many more Daos he had to learn in the Metal category, so he was quite excited here.

The first painting depicted the Dao of Metal and there wasn't much he could gain from it. He moved to the second one and it depicted the Dao of cutting, as a man cut a mountain in half in the painting.

Alex moved on to the third one and paused because this was the first unique one he came across.

He paused for a moment, wondering what he was looking at.

The third painting depicted a simple image of a sky with clouds, but there was something wrong with the image. He couldn't place his hand on it, but he could tell that something weird was going on with the pic.

He thought for a moment and continued watching silently, along with the many other people that were there as well.

Alex could feel the Intent in the painting and let it affect him. He tried to understand the Intent but it was difficult for him. There was something about the painting that he had still not managed to figure out.

He kept staring at the image for a bit before he thought he saw something. He stared more intently and a few minutes later realized what he was looking at.

'Ahhh!' he thought. 'It's not the image of a sky at all. It's the image of a lake or a pool of water.'

What he had been looking at was not a painting of a sky, but rather a reflection of a sky.

'The Dao of Reflection,' he thought. That was the same Dao that Elder Yao was familiar with. He remembered the young man from her clan using that dao in their fight, reflecting all attacks back to him.

'This is a strong Dao,' he thought.

He tried to understand the Dao now that he knew what he was looking at, but that didn't help at all. Realizing that it wasn't helpful at all, Alex sighed and left for another section.

The True Metal Dao wasn't low on the number of Dao at all. Aside from the ones he knew, there were various others like the Dao of Rust, the Dao of Magnetism, as well as a weird one known as the Dao of Alloy.

However, none of them came close to affecting Alex as the next one did.

The next object was not a painting. However, it was a piece of art.

A figure of a beast stood on top of a platform. The body of the beast was made entirely with a single thread of metal that was turned and twisted into various shapes to make the single giant statue of the beast.

Alex quickly realized that this was done to show the property that metals had where they could be made as thin as one wanted, and they would still be strong without breaking apart as any other material would.

He was quite familiar with this property of metals. Having become an Artifact forger, there were many times when he needed thin strings of metal to tie something or to form the structure for something.

He looked at the art piece in front of him and let its aura affect him. At the same time, he closed his eyes and thought of the numerous times he had done this with the metals.

As time went on, Alex stepped deeper and deeper into the mysteries. At some point, he stopped.

If he continued any further, he would fall into a trance right then and there. So, he quickly flagged down one of the people flying in the sky and let them know that he needed a safe space.

The people were used to this and quickly took Alex to the edge of the secret realm where many houses were built for this exact reason.

Alex was taken to one of the houses and quickly made to enter a room where he seated. He brought out his Dao pill and ate it before he was slowly sent into a trance where he began to think about the properties of metal just as he had before.

He was trying to learn the Dao of Ductility