

Alchemy 1551

Chapter 1551: Cave Of Frost

5 days went by in a flash as the time of the Cave of Frost's opening had arrived. In these 5 days, he took the time to deal with his internal thoughts regarding the girl named Shumi, his master, and the Moon Goddess.

The Demons had taken her away, that much was confirmed. As for where he had no idea. He couldn't even imagine how many different places there were in the Immortal realms where demons lived.

Godslayer spat out a few names while grumbling, like Eclipsing Heaven, Eternal Isles, Mystic Demon realm, Frozen Haven, Infernal Realm, and many others, but he could not tell which one of them it was that the girl had been taken to.

And it didn't matter to Alex either when he truly thought about it.

What was he going to do after finding out? Go to her? Go to a place where Divine realm demons were present? The same demons that most likely had an inborn hatred of Humans.

Alex would have to find some other way or wait until he was strong enough where he wouldn't have to worry about a Divine realm demon.

"How long would that take?" he wondered. For now, he had to focus on the cave and do his best to learn about Yin. That was what he had to focus on right now.

They flew through the air on a large boat this time, the Queen coming with him.

The Cave of Frost's opening wasn't as large a deal as the Golden Auction or Realm of Trial. It barely even got as many participants as the Endless Shadow Abyss, despite the fact that it only appeared once every decade or a decade and a half.

They went through a snowstorm, a strong barrier holding back the destructive air and the chilling snow from the ship. The front of their vision was completely covered up in the blizzard as well.

They were mostly blind to where they were going, but the one that was piloting the ship knew where they were going, so no one was worried.

That wasn't to say no one was on guard. After what had happened to Alex the last time he left King's city, the security had been improved and their attention sharpened.

They were constantly on guard for anything and everything that would come from somewhere. They weren't going to let their guest be stolen like last time.

Half an hour later, the storm parted away, and it gave a view of the Evening Mist Lake spanning hundreds of kilometers wide to the north. Alex looked to the side. The lake looked dark in daylight with no light shining off it as the day was cloudy.

Alex could see people gathering on the eastern side of the lake near a small mound of ice and rock. The Ice Mist Palace to the south was still covered in somewhat of a mist, but it was far thinner than the last time he had come here at night.

The Evening Mist lake only brought out mist in the evening after all.

The ship made its way toward the east where the people were gathered and landed with a soft thump on the pile of snow.

Alex jumped from the ship, landing on the snow down below, his feet sticking in the snow down to his knees. He was surprised to see how much fresh snow it was here. He floated up a bit and stepped on top of the snow and waited for the others to get down.

"I'll go deal with the Cave's opening along with the sect masters," the Queen said. "You will have to wait while we work to get it open."

"You have to open it?" Alex asked.

The Queen nodded. "We can't tell when it will open naturally," she said, pointing toward the snow and rock mound in the distance. "So, we have to push it a little to open towards the end so we can determine the time of entry."

Alex looked toward the snow and rock mounds and saw what she was pointing toward.

The mounds weren't there for nothing. They had holes in them that were completely covered in ice. He could tell what those openings led to. "So that's the Cave?" he asked.

The Queen nodded. "There are multiple entrances, with many different routes inside. But we believe they all go to the same place in the center. It gets colder the deeper you go in there," she said.

"Wait, regardless of length?" he asked. "Are you not judged based on who goes the furthest?"

"Uhh, not really, no," the Queen said. "We simply judge the progress based on the coldness that is recorded through a talisman that we send with you," she answered.

"Ah, I see," Alex said. "That makes sense."

"Anyway, I will leave, for now, Your Majesty," the Queen said. "I need to go help them."

She didn't wait for Alex's approval and went on by herself, leaving him behind with the two Elders and a few other people she had brought along.

Alex walked through the snow, slowly making his way toward the cave. He looked around the place, the canvas of white and black filled only by color with humans.

People wearing robes of all colors sat around in the snow, waiting for the cave doors to open.

Alex went close by and sat.

People turned to stare at him, many noticing who he was, talking to themselves. He had left quite an impression back in the Realm of Trails by completely passing three different trials, a feat that had never happened before. If it had, it had been lost to time already.

"Mostly girls, huh?" Alex said softly after seeing the demographic of the people assembled. Over 80% of them were females.

"Girls are closer to Yin than men, so it is no surprise," Liang Shufen said from his side. "Still, there are more boys than I expected. Surely not all of them are here to learn Yin."

"They're here to test themselves," Elder Yao said. "It's obvious. You can see the look in their eyes. They are ready to test their limits. Although, I am surprised to see many girls with the same fire in them."

Alex chuckled, letting the two of them talk about things while he just listened. More and more people arrived in time, sitting as close to the cave as they could without disturbing anyone.

There were a few that seemed to be wanting to talk to him, but none came forward. There was one girl in particular who kept eyeing him from far away.

He wondered if she had fallen for him or something, but he let go of that thought process. It sounded quite narcissistic of him, even if he was good-looking altogether.

He turned when he heard a loud snap and turned to see something. Of the 8 different cave openings, the ice on one of them had been shattered open, releasing a cold wind that made the outside air feel like a summer breeze.

People stirred, but the Queen spoke out loud.

"No one enters until all of the doors are open." Then, she moved to the other doors and started working with the other sect masters to destroy those as well.

When the last of the cave's ice was shattered, the people waiting to enter stood up, one by one, ready to enter when they were allowed to.

Alex stood up as well.

The Queen let one of the sect leaders speak up, a woman from the Thousand Snowfall sect. She was a beautiful woman, but that was hardly a rarity where they were.

She started explaining the important aspects of the Cave and how they would have to be careful. She talked for a while, but the essence of her speech was simple.

The Cave is cold. Don't die of it. Come back out in the next 2 weeks or you'll die in there.

"This is the talisman that will record the coldness of the place you reach," the woman said. "At the same time, this is also your life-saving measure. Crush this talisman and it will drag you along to a warmer place. Maybe even all the way out."

She pointed toward the many elders who stood by the cave opening. "Get one before you go in."

The many impatient individuals hurriedly nodded and started going in one by one.

The Queen herself brought one to Alex. "Make sure to leave within the next 2 weeks, Your Majesty," she said. "We cannot let you out if the doors are frozen by that time."

"They only open for 2 weeks?" Alex asked.

"We can't tell how long they stay open, but we have figured out 15 days to be the minimum. So we tell people to not stay in any longer," she said.

"Can't I just break through the mound and come out if that happens?" Alex asked.

The woman shook her head. "The ice that forms on the cave openings forms around the wall as well, and it's not normal ice. It's ice with Yin properties, which is why we need to come together to use our knowledge of Yin to break it," she said. "We can't break through a thick one if it closes."

Alex nodded. "Got it," he said. "I will take care."

With the talisman in hand, he walked in through the leftmost cave opening with people slowly walking around him, focused on themselves as they tried to handle the cold.

No one looked at him at all.

Alex brought out Whisker, placing him inside the folds of his robes.

"Why is it so cold?" Whisker complained.

"I told you it would be cold," Alex said.

"Not this cold," Whisker replied.

"Try to survive the cold. And try to learn what you can about Yin," Alex said. "And... do what you want. I don't have much else to say."

His eyes were already wandering around the place, his senses sensing the thick Yin just at the start of the cave. There was frost on the ceiling of the cave, yet to melt entirely, as the ice doors on the opening too had yet to melt.

"So cold," someone said not far away from Alex.

"Was it always this cold?" someone else asked with a worried tone to their voice.

"Maybe they opened it early this time around," the first girl said. "This was definitely not this cold the last few times I entered."

Alex looked at them and then felt the cold himself. He didn't find it as cold as they did, but that didn't mean it wasn't cold. It was a different kind of cold, one that he had gotten used to the last few years.

A cold that came from the presence of Yin, rather than a drop of temperature. Yin Cold.

Alex walked further, the cold increasing very gradually. He wanted to find a spot along the cave where the coldness was just enough that he couldn't go any further, but also where he could get to look into its secrets the most.

For now, that was going to be a lot more inward than he had expected.

Not even 100 meters away from the cave's opening, the cave started slanting, going downward. The lower they would go there colder it was going to be. 'The Yin is pooled up down below,' he thought.

People started sitting down very early on. It wasn't because they couldn't go further along, but rather adapt to the coldness before moving in. It was only the weaker ones though. The stronger ones could go on for much longer before they had to rest.

And someone as strong as Alex would have entered this place multiple times over and would not have needed to come.

Alex came across his first fork in the road and decided to go with the path on the left. He wasn't sure if his feeling was correct or not, but the path on the left felt colder than the right. And he had to keep moving toward the colder side.

After walking for 5 more minutes, he came across a drop nearly 10 meters below. He looked all over and saw that he had come to a giant pocket in the cave that was nearly 50 meters across on all sides, with even the height going over 20 meters.

The ceilings were full of icicles, made entirely out of Yin ice. He flew up to it and punched a single icicle. The cave shuddered in a boom, but the icicle barely showed any signs of cracks at all.

"What?" he looked up, surprised. That was not supposed to have happened at all. "I can't break it?" He had expected it to be tough, but not this tough. The ice was hard, reminding him of the ice back in the cave of the Turtle's domain.

That one was made using Immortal Qi, which was why it had been strong. Was this one made out of something similar as well?

He punched it a few more times, using Qi and heat to help him. In the end, it was the Space Dao that helped him cut through the icicle, which he grabbed.

Then, he reached the bottom and started studying the icicle. Whisker came out of where he was staying and looked at the icicle as well, his whiskers giving him information that a regular human or beast would never even know.

They studied the ice for a while in a corner of the cave. Many people came and went, but no one stopped to look at what he was doing. Everyone was stuck to their own thought.

"Ice..." Alex thought. "I need to know Dao of Cold or Ice before I begin to understand this. While Yin is helping form this, in the end, it is still made up of water. Water Dao, I will have to start there. I don't think I can learn anything else without learning those Dao first."

Whisker had nothing to say.

Alex put aside the icicle. "I guess the only thing I can possibly learn is Yin Dao for now," he said softly. Then he stood up and looked in a certain direction of the cave, towards the shadow where his purple eyes could see a haze of colors.

"You've been staring at me for quite a while," Alex said. "Care to explain, why?"

No one said anything.

"I can see you, lady," he stared directly in her direction.

"Well, I'll be damned," a figure appeared from the shadows. "I didn't expect you to see me this easily."

Chapter 1553: Jiaolun

Alex watched the darkness around the girl disappear as she appeared before him. He looked at her, somewhat surprised.

He didn't know her at all, but he had seen her looking at him from time to time. He had seen her gaze and had even thought that she had fallen for him, which was why she was looking at him.

Had she fallen for him?

The girl looked to be in her late 20s, which by Eastern Continent's standard would put her around 2 or 3 Millennia old. If she was talented, she could be even younger, and if she was a player, she could be so much younger.

Her black hair was tied in a braid, that fell in front of her, contrasting the stark white robe she wore. She was smiling with a look that hid a thousand mysteries.

"May I ask why you are following me?" Alex asked her.

"Yes, but I am not sure if I can answer just yet," the girl said, looking around. "Your Majesty." She added as an afterthought.

"You cannot answer?" Alex asked. He checked her cultivation base. At Saint Core 3rd realm, the girl wasn't nearly strong enough to be his opponent. She wasn't even strong enough to be Pearl's opponent, who had improved a lot in the past few years.

"I can, but maybe not here," she said. "Please continue on with yourself, I will show myself when I think it's right." Then, she slipped back into the shadows, hiding herself with what Alex could now see was a talisman.

The incident was too weird for Alex to just let go of what had happened. He looked in the girl's direction for a bit longer before understanding that she wasn't going to talk to him.

He considered her suggestion and started moving.

wanted pills from him. A girl who had fallen for him. A girl who wanted to learn alchemy or even wanted to be his queen. But none of that seemed right by the girl's attitude.

'She trying to hide our meeting?' he thought. 'Or is she an assassin and wants me to wait until she meets up with her crew?'

All sorts of thoughts went through his head as he continued onward. Throughout his walk forward, he saw many girls and a few men sitting around in the cave, meditating on the mysteries of the Yin.

He looked at everyone carefully to make sure not one of them was going to jump at him out of nowhere. He would not be caught off guard if that was their plan.

The massive cave pocket narrowed the further he went along until it was barely wide enough for him to spread his arms out. The further he went, the narrower it got until the point where he had to turn sideways and slide through.

Thankfully, past that point, the walls grew wider again and seemed to snake its way down into the ground. The Yin here was thick and strong, and not many people were there.

He looked at a large fork in the path again and did his best to check which one was colder of the two. That seemed more difficult here as the Yin in both was potent enough that he couldn't tell the difference between the two.

Still, he tried his best and found himself gravitating toward the one on the right. He had a feeling that the pathway he needed to take was the one on the right. While he was still oblivious about Yin to a certain extent, it would be a lie to say that he hadn't started peering into its mysteries.

Alex turned around, his eyes glowing slightly purple as he stared at the woman that was following. Recognizing that she was still there, he walked through the right cave and continued along.

The cave path once again snaked its way around, going steep once As he walked, he thought of all the things she could be. A girl who and then flat the next. It grew wider again and wider until it was larger than the first cave pocket he had been to.

The Yin here was the thickest it had been in a long time as well. Alex had to actively ignore the cold now as it was getting to him as well. Not only that, the Yin in his dantian was growing as well.

It wasn't a lot and normally he could go on for a week or more without dealing with it. But now, with Yin all around him, if he didn't deal with it early, he might have to deal with problems later on.

However, he didn't sit just yet. He wanted to go to a colder place. Primarily to be in a better place to learn about Yin, but also to torment the girl behind him who still wasn't speaking at all.

"Can you handle a bit more cold?" Alex asked Whisker, who could only shake his head.

"It's too cold. I can only stay safe, brother," he said. "I cannot learn about Yin here if that is what you want."

Alex nodded. "You're still young and weak. You'll have your time," he said. "Rest for now."

Whisker took the opportunity to disappear into the Beast space where he would be safe.

Then, Alex started walking.

He walked friskily, more running than walking, as he made his way through the cave. The coldness increased and he had to bring out his Qi at this point to stop the cold from getting to him, which let him continue further.

The path zigged and zagged, weaving through the ground, always going further into the ground where the Yin was heavy. At this point, there was no man or woman ahead of him.

Everyone had sat down somewhere to prepare themselves to continue moving, while Alex had walked on without stopping. And he didn't plan on stopping any time soon.

"Stop!" the girl spoke, her appearance visible without the darkness. "Your Majesty, please stop."

Alex turned around to look at her. "Are you ready to talk now?" he asked.

The girl was quivering, her teeth almost clattering as she said, "Yes."

Alex smiled. "Go on then, introduce yourself and why you are following me," he said.

The girl grimaced a little, a brief look of anger showing up on her face. "I understand," she said before throwing a soundproof barrier around them with a formation plate.

Alex waited.

"My name is Jiaolun, and I am here in hopes of getting pills from you," she said.

Alex looked at her, unbelieving. "If someone was here to buy pills from me, they wouldn't follow me all the way here," he said. "Speak the truth."

"That is the truth," the girl said. "But, I am not trying to buy pills precisely. I am trying to persuade you to make some for us."

"Without paying?" Alex almost laughed out loud at the audacity.

"Yes," the girl said. "We provide the ingredients, you make it for us. Our leader said you would most likely do it."

"Your leader?" Alex asked. "Who might that be?"

"Yu Yating," the girl said without stopping.

"Yating?" Alex's eyes flashed as he remembered the name. "You are..."

The girl nodded. "We are the Oathbreakers."

Chapter 1554: Questioning

Alex moved forward sharply, looking at the girl up close. The girl flinched and stepped back in fear, but stopped out of her need.

Alex stopped before he got too close as well. "You are one of the Oathbreakers?" he asked.

"Yes," the girl said.

"And you decided to reveal yourself to me?" he asked. "I will hand you over to the military. There are some members of the Head Legion that came with me."

The girl looked terrified and brought out a talisman that she held onto without using. Alex looked at the talisman and from the faint aura alone, he could tell it was a teleportation talisman, sent to send her somewhere.

If he could get his hands on it, he could most likely find a way to where the Oathbreakers were hiding. He could easily stop the girl from leaving if she used it too, but she didn't know that, so she felt safer.

"O-our leader said you wouldn't do it," she said.

"And you trust your leader that much?" Alex asked the girl.

The girl hesitated but nodded in the end.

"I see," Alex said. "You shouldn't have trusted him on that." His Qi grabbed hold of her, his aura claiming her from all sides.

The girl panicked, realizing that she had messed up. "Your majesty, please—"

"If you thought I was your ally, you are wrong," Alex said, his aura crashing around her even more. Just a little more and she would start crying.

The girl's eyes squinted with pain, her cheeks growing pink from it as well. She looked at Alex, understanding that he would kill her without any doubt if given the chance. She decided to not give him any.

This mission was a failure.

She activated the talisman, silver energy flowing out from around her, grabbing onto her. However, the light suddenly disappeared and she remained where she was. She looked around in confusion and saw the world twist around her, space itself folding as if it were made up of layers.

She looked toward Alex and saw him in control of what was happening. She saw him in control of space itself.

Her fear grew wilder. She did not understand how he did what he did, but now that he had done it, she couldn't fight back. The crushing aura around her would kill her at any moment.

She did not understand how it was that she could leave.

Suddenly, the space returned to normal and the aura around her disappeared as well, her breathing normal once again.

He huffed the cold air around her, fog escaping her lips with each exhale. She looked up in fear at Alex and only saw his mischievous smile. "What did you—"

"I'm sorry," Alex said as he moved toward the girl and helped her up. "Are you hurt?"

The girl was stunned, but she moved back the moment she got the opportunity, arriving at the edge of the soundproof barrier. She looked at Alex and then at herself, confused.

"What is this?" she asked. "Why did you not kill me?"

"Why would I kill you?" Alex asked.

"You were just trying to—"

"I was just trying to see if you were who you said you were," Alex said. "I needed to make sure you're not someone that the Emperor sent to check where I stand against him."

The girl frowned. "Is this some sort of trick?" she asked.

"No trick," Alex said. "I mean every word I am saying right now."

Jiaolun still found it hard to accept everything that was going on. While Alex's suspicion of her had faded, her suspicion of Alex had increased. She couldn't help but wonder if it was a ploy of his to keep her from running away.

Alex brought out something, ignoring whatever she was thinking, and tossed it to her. The girl caught it, a pill bottle, and looked at him with concern.

"What is this?" she asked.

"A Saint Truth Seeking pill," Alex said. "For that extra layer of confirmation that you are what you say you are."

The girl looked at the pill in her hand with confusion in her heart. She opened the top of the bottle and looked at the single pill inside. Inside, she saw a greenish pill with some darker green specks all around the pill.

She looked at Alex and then at the pill. Hesitating, she thought for a moment and then pulled out the pill to eat it. If that was how she had to get his trust, then that was it.

As someone weaker than him, she had no more rights in this conversation than what she was already getting, especially with her teleportation escape method already thwarted.

She swallowed the pill and felt the pill dissolve in her stomach, the energy from it moving through her body, going to her brain. She felt her mind grow dull as if she were drunk, but she could do nothing about it.

Her eyes grew dazed and her mind was not as conscious as she hoped she would be.

"What is your name?" Alex asked her.

"Guan Jiaolun," the girl said, surprised that she spoke her surname. She never gave that away when someone asked for it.

"Are you part of the military?" Alex asked.

"I was a part of the Tail legion," she said.

"Was? Are you not still?" Alex asked her.

"I left the Tail Legion a long time ago to become what we now call ourselves Oathbreakers," the girl said.

"When?" Alex asked.

"Over 50 years ago," the girl said.

Alex's eyes flashed with excitement. That was the time period he wanted to know about after all.

"So you know about the Azure Dragon's status," he said.

The girl paused. She didn't know what to answer.

"You don't have to hide," Alex said. "I know the Azure Dragon is dead. Your oath won't stop you from speaking about it to me."

The girl's eyes widened in shock. "What?" some lucidity returned to her. "Who... who is dead?"

Alex looked at her with a confused look, surprised that she was surprised by the revelation. "Wait, did you not know about it before?" he asked.

The girl shook her head. "This... is the first time I'm hearing about it," she said.

"Huh?" Alex was confused now. He had thought that everyone who became an Oathbreaker had known about the Azure Dragon's death, but as it would seem, that was not the case.

"Then why did you become an Oathbreaker?" he asked.

"Because..." the girl paused abruptly, her face turning to grimace as if she had swallowed something and it stuck in her esophagus.

She could not speak.

"Do you have an oath stopping you?" Alex asked.

The girl nodded, taking a deep breath in relief as she had not been forced to speak about something that was against her Oath.

A truth-seeking pill would force out the truth from her and the Oath would pull it back, hurting her to do so. As a result, it was the worst combination to deal with as someone being questioned.

Alex thought for a moment, curious that she had been made to speak an oath, but it had not been about the Azure Dragon.

He was getting curious about what other events had been in this continent in the past 50 years that had not only resulted in the military being forced into speaking oaths, and at the same time causing people inside it to turn against the Emperor.

Another question to add to the ever-building pile of questions that seemed to surround his journey in the Eastern Continent.

"Can you tell me anything about your oath or the events around it?" Alex asked.

The girl shook her head at first, but then paused and thought a bit. Then she said what she could.

"The Tail Legion were brought out of their waiting to... get... something," the girl said, each word carefully thought of so she didn't go against her oath.

"Oh," Alex said. "And you cannot tell me what this thing is?"

The girl shook her head.

"Was it a bad thing?" Alex asked.

The girl thought and shook her head. "It is not the thing that made me and a lot of us leave, it is the..." the girl thought for a moment and shook her head. "No way of answering."

Alex nodded.

"Did you get it?" he asked.

The girl shook her head. "We were stopped by someone strong," she said.

"Who?" Alex asked.

The girl seemed pained and immediately Alex stopped her, seeing that he was entering oath territory again.

"Alright, tell me what exactly is it that Oathbreakers plan to do?" he asked.

The girl's breathing got harder. This wasn't something she could so easily speak to someone else, but right now she was being forced to.

"To get rid of the Emperor from the throne," she said.

"So you plan to kill him?" Alex asked.

"That is our choice of priority, but if that doesn't work, we will accept forcing him to ascend as a form of victory as well," the girl said. "Either way, he cannot remain on the throne or in this world."

Alex nodded. He asked her a few more questions but got nothing out of it. She had made an oath to neither reveal the status of the Oathbreakers nor where they were all hiding.

"Alright, I understand as much as I am allowed to," he said. "You want pills, but I need something in exchange as well."

The girl nodded. "What do you want, Your Majesty?" she asked.

Alex put up 3 fingers. "I have 3 conditions or favors that I will require to work with your group."

Chapter 1555: Demands

"We're ready to do any favors or demands you want," the girl said with no hesitation. "Our leader sent me knowing you would ask for some things. What is it that you want?"

The girl was ready. She didn't have much on her, but it was enough to provide as a show of trust, whether it be Spirit stones or artifacts or anything else of value.

"First, I want to learn everything about the Azure Dragon and the events that surrounded his death that everyone in your little rebellion group can give me," Alex said.

The girl was taken aback. His first request hadn't been regarding any treasures. "Are you sure he's really dead?" she asked. "Because that would be news—"

"Your leader knows," Alex said. "He just can't tell you because of his oath. Tell him you know about it already and he can tell you it is the truth."

The girl looked stunned. She shook her head quickly, focusing back on the subject at hand. "I'll try my best to gather the information," she said. "Whoever it is that will meet you next should bring what we can gather."

Alex nodded.

"Secondly, I want you to help me gather information about someone," he said. "Primarily if she is alive or not. I want whatever information you can find on her."

"Who?" the girl asked.

"A girl named Hannah," Alex said. "She's my cousin and is one of the players. She was sent to this continent 50 years ago when the players came, but aside from that, I do not know what happened to her."

"I tried finding information about her on my travel here, but 7 years later, I have come up blank. I fear she is dead. All I want is a confirmation."

The girl thought for a bit and nodded. "We don't really do this sort of thing, but we do have the ability to," she said. "We will find out what we can."

Alex nodded. "Thank you."

"But," the girl said, thinking for a bit. "I will need more. Do you have anything else about her? Where she appeared in, or what sect she got into. Her profession, age, anything works."

Alex felt slightly dejected at the question. "I'm afraid I do not have much to give you regarding my cousin. She was 20 when she arrived here and over 50 years have passed since then."

"I only know little about her time here and what I do will not be very helpful to you," Alex said. "I've tried."

"Still, anything could help," the girl said.

Alex thought for a bit and said, "If she's alive, then her cultivation base should be high. Among everyone here in this world, including me, her cultivation speed should be unmatched. If you do want to find her, you'll either have to search for someone very strong. If not that, search for cripples and dead ones."

The girl nodded. "That is helpful," she said. "We might be able to do something with it. Player and strong... that's a good combination to start with."

"Oh wait," Alex said. "I have a painting. That should make things a lot easier."

"Painting?" the girl got excited. "Why didn't you tell me before? That would help it a lot."

Alex nodded and brought out Hannah's painting from his Soul Space, turning it around for the girl to see.

The girl brought out a recording talisman and looked at the image. Before she even saw the image fully, she could feel the sense of melancholy that came from the painting, the sense of something that no longer was.

She felt sadness emerging deep within her, surprised at the emotion she felt. She hadn't seen many paintings that brought forth such emotions in her.

"That's a good—"

Her words stuck to her throat and her eyes widened in shock.

At first, Alex thought she was caught off guard by her own emotion from his painting. However, when he saw her staring at the painting with great intent, he was confused.

"What is it?" he asked her. "What's wrong?"

The girl shakily lifted her hand, pointing at the painting in front of her. "That girl... that's your cousin?" she asked.

Alex felt his heart skip a beat when he saw her face. "What... what's wrong?" he asked. His hands trembled from a foreboding feeling. This girl knew Hannah.

"You know her, don't you?" Alex asked. "You have seen her before."

The girl nodded. "I have seen her before," she said. She looked up in slight confusion, not realizing that she had spoken without thought. The Truth Seeking pill's effect was slowly leaving her body, but what remained still forced her to speak the truth.

"Where is she?" he asked. "Where did you see her?"

The girl gulped down a mouthful of spit, trying to speak, but nothing came out of her. Her face turned a shade of pink that she hadn't reached before. Veins popped up around her forehead and neck, as her body silently convulsed.

"Come on, tell me," he asked hurriedly, only realizing afterward that she wasn't able to answer. He looked at her and could immediately tell the tell-tale signs of an oath stopping her from speaking.

"Don't answer that," Alex said, stopping her.

He watched the girl breathe in relief and look at him with eyes of gratitude.

Alex's heart was in a million different thoughts so he didn't care much for anything else. He tried to make sense of anything given the information.

The girl had made multiple oaths, some with the Empire, some with the Oathbreakers. Alex wanted to figure out which one this was.

"What do you know about her?" he asked. "Anything."

The girl found it surprising when she could answer something at all, given how broad of an oath she had to speak to hide it.

"She... most likely died... away from the Eastern Continent," the girl said, finding loopholes around her oath to the best of her capability.

"Most likely?" Alex asked. "Did you see her die?"

The girl couldn't answer. Her oath stopped it.

"Was this oath forced on you by the Emperor?" Alex asked.

The girl could answer that. "Yes, it was the Emperor."

"And it is the same one that made you quit being part of the Empire's legionnaire?" he asked.

The girl nodded once again.

Alex frowned. "How sure are you that she died?" he asked.

"As sure as the fact that there is a moon in the sky," the girl said.

Alex felt angry. Given that it was the Emperor's orders that the Tail legion was working on and his cousin had been hurt, he couldn't help but feel hatred towards the Emperor that until yet had remained just a possibility.

He took a deep breath and spoke. "Bring me back what information you can about my sister," he said. "I can work with anything."

The girl nodded.

"Finally, my last demand," he said, anger filling his voice after learning that the Emperor had something to do with his cousin's death.

"I will not work if you work toward letting the Emperor ascend. That will not be a victory for me," he said. "My demand is that we have to kill him. No compromise."

Chapter 1556: Deal

The girl's face grew cold at the demand. However, when she took into context that Hannah was his cousin, she could see why he would want it. There were things that she could not tell him, but she knew what the Emperor had done.

"I understand," she said. "But... killing would be difficult; I want you to know that. The Emperor isn't a nobody when it comes to strength. We don't have members that can fight him."

"I'll give you the pills you need to get there," Alex said. "As long as they accept my demands, I'll make them strong."

The girl nodded. It was a possibility that Alex's pills were as good as her leader assumed it to be.

Not everyone had eaten a pill with a pill vein. Not everyone had that luxury. But old records that the legionnaires had been allowed to read did mention something about it making the pill better.

Adding on that the fact that each pill Alex made was 100% in harmony, they had to accept that he could do what he said he could. Still, she wondered about something.

"You're talented, aren't you, Your Majesty?" she asked. "Players like you are supposed to be fast when it comes to breaking through for some reason."

Alex nodded. "Yes," he said. "I'm not bad, I suppose."

"Then..." the girl mused. "Why don't you do it yourself? Eat your pills, get stronger, and in a century or two, you should be strong enough."

At that point, Alex realized something that the Oathbreakers hadn't realized. Or rather, they had realized it and were banking on it most likely, which wouldn't work for him.

In 13 years, he would have given the Emperor everything that the Emperor would need to make Pill clouds. When he did, he would finally be ready to ascend.

That wasn't what Alex wanted anymore.

He wanted to kill the Emperor, so the only thing he could do was get stronger in time to kill him or use help from others who were close to that strength.

The Oathbreakers were the only ones who could do that, and he couldn't tell them what would happen if they didn't hurry, lest they decide to leave.

"Reaching the Emperor's level of strength as myself is near impossible given how long it will take. As I advance, I will become slower and slower. I will have to wait a long time before I can kill him."

"I can't wait. This is not my continent. My family is not here. I wish to see him die for what he did to my cousin. That is it."

"Tell your leader that. If he agrees, tell him to find me with recipes and ingredients for the pills he wants me to make," Alex said. "I'll wait for him."

The girl nodded. "How should we find you?" she asked. "We can't go to the Dragon capital or most capital anymore. The Emperor has improved his surveillance now."

"I am not sure about that," Alex told her. "What methods do you think there are?"

"It's difficult to meet you without your guards or the military around you. The leader sent me because I don't stand out as much," the girl thought to herself. It truly was a difficult situation. She had to give it some more thought.

After a few seconds, she pulled out something. "Take this," she handed over a talisman. "It is destroyed after a single message is sent and can't be reused."

Alex took the talisman. "You want me to communicate through this?" he asked.

"No, that's just there in case we can't come into contact with you and need to let you know," she said.

"Finding you should be easy. You aren't exactly a nobody after all," the girl said. "Meeting you is another mountain to traverse, but we'll think about something. You don't have to worry about that."

The girl smiled at Alex. She trembled a bit, shaking away the cold that she was getting used to. "I'll leave now, Your Majesty. If we're lucky, we'll see each other in the near future."

Alex nodded. "Bring me as much information as you can about my cousin," he said. "Of all my demands, that is the most important."

The girl nodded seriously.

The soundproof barrier disappeared and the metal disk floated into the girl's hand. "It would've been so easy to just teleport back there," she said with a sigh. "Now I have to go somewhere else first."

She brought out a talisman and was about to crush it when she stopped and looked at Alex. "Please don't stop this one."

Alex chuckled a bit. "No, I won't," he said.

The girl nodded. Then, she activated the talisman and teleported away from the location.

Alex sensed some difficulty in her teleportation, which he understood had something to do with the location. The heaviness of the Yin in the area caused her teleportation to slow down a little.

Still, he felt the teleportation aura, trying to understand the intricacies there, but without being the one that was teleported, that was a little difficult.

He was trying to figure out where the girl was being teleported to, where the Oathbreaker's hideout was. In the end, he could only tell the direction she was teleported toward.

South.

He could not tell the distance.

He stood there, alone in his thoughts, allowed to think about everything he had learned today. He felt his eyes moisten a little, now knowing that his sister had died.

But that brought along a question that he couldn't figure out. Why would the Dragon Emperor try and kill his sister?

There was one answer he had, a simple one.

He was afraid of her strength. She was so strong that the Dragon Emperor felt threatened and wanted to get rid of her. Given the condition she was supposed to have, that was an easy answer to get to.

But... was it the right one?

If he had tried to kill her, and she was strong, why was it not known more publically? He understood why the event itself wasn't known, but Hannah should be a popular figure nonetheless.

There were no talks about her disappearance, no talks about her past. There was no information there at all.

Also, no matter what, the Dragon Emperor wasn't petty. He wouldn't just kill someone because they were stronger than him. That wouldn't make much sense given what Alex knew about the man.

'Dammit!' Alex cursed on the inside. Not knowing anything was one thing, but not getting an answer from the people involved was even worse.

'Stupid oaths,' he thought to himself. How he wished they didn't exist. Life would've been so much easier. Just a Truth Seeking pill and he would've gotten all the answers he wanted.

"Tsk!"

He turned around, his emotions slowly fading away and the cold reminding where he was. This wasn't the time to waste on thoughts on his sister.

She was dead and he had grieved for her already.

'Keep moving forward,' Alex told himself and did exactly that, going deeper into the cave. He walked thoughtlessly, the cold bothering him just as much as his thoughts did.

Half a day later, when the Yin cold started becoming harder for him to deal with, he finally stopped and sat down to get used to it before continuing his journey.

Chapter 1557: Stronger Yin

"Just how long is this place?" Alex wondered. He had been walking down the cave with the ever-increasing cold for what felt like days now and still, he didn't reach the end.

Sure the path he walked didn't just go straight to the center, but rather snaked around multiple ways, even crossing into other paths many times.

Many times, it also split into other pathways, and Alex no longer could make judgments on which path he could take to the center based on the coldness. He had to make the judgment purely out of random.

Still, the path he chose never ended, so maybe the tidbit he had heard about none of the pathways mattering, and all leading to the center was correct.

He sat down once again, the floor that was once dry, then frosted, now completely covered in a layer of ice. It wasn't just the ground, but the wall and the ceiling as well.

It was an ice cave at this point, with icicles of nearly 5 meters in length available in some places even. However, they weren't normal ice or icicles, and were, in fact, Yin Ice, making everything much more difficult to handle.

Alex closed his eyes and started adjusting to the increased coldness, learning as much as he could about Yin. That to his surprise had been going on smoothly.

Alex was learning about Yin.

After some time, he opened his eyes, understanding Yin a little bit more, which allowed him to shave off its effect on him. He could go a little further.

Alex took a quick glance in his Soul Space, making sure no Yin had invaded it. Once he was sure, he looked at the timer in his Soul Space, the Voidsand Hourglass, which let him know that only 4 days had passed since he had entered this place.

"I have..." Alex thought for a moment. "10 more days?" No one was sure how long the cave would be open, so that was the amount of time he could stay in there safely.

He stood up to leave, looking in the direction he needed to move toward.

One thing puzzled him about the pathway that he hadn't yet managed to figure out about. How could he see in here?

Cultivators had incredible eyesight, needing barely any light to see things at all. But they still needed some light. This deep underground there should have been no light, and yet he could see.

Were the other cultivators using artifacts to light up the place? Giving him enough to see everything. He didn't believe there were even that many cultivators close to him to begin with.

The coldness he was facing needed either an incredible understanding of Yin to deal with or just an absurd amount of Yang to make Yin useless to himself. And Alex was doing both.

He had learned what he considered a lot about Yin and also brought out Yang from his Dantian. It was a good thing that he had started carrying a healthy chunk of Yang treasures since his Yin problem had surfaced a few years ago.

Thanks to it, he didn't have to worry about being unable to move forward more in the cave. After a few more hours of walking, he sat down to learn more about Yang and did this 3 more times over the course of the entire next day.

Then, around the start of the 6th day, Alex realized that there was some light coming from the end of the cave. There was something at the end that was providing light for him to see, for everyone in the cave to see.

He wondered what it was.

Unfortunately, he had to stop once again as the Yin was getting incredibly dense around here, and cultivating alone was becoming hard as all he would absorb was Yin, and that was not what the Five Yang Divine Path needed to work properly.

Alex used the Yang treasures to fight back the Yin inside his Dantian, but other than that, he couldn't use his cultivation technique for actually cultivating.

So, he was forced to use his Undying Physique technique to cultivate. The sheer speed at which he cultivated using that technique in here was surprising. However, since that technique did use Yin, maybe it shouldn't have been.

Alex cultivated constantly, improving his physique, getting ever closer to that 3rd stage, but that seemed like a mile away. Still, he was traversing a healthy chunk with how he was cultivating down here.

That made him wonder what it was down here that was causing such a thick settlement of Yin to form. As far as Alex could remember, not even the Yin bead had caused such a phenomenon.

There had to be something here. Something stronger than the bead itself. He couldn't imagine something stronger than the bead, but then again, what did he know about the other realms?

He tried his best to understand Yin and once he had enough understanding to bear the Yin around him a little more. He started moving.

He was sure he was now on the final stretch of his journey in this cave. Just a little more and he would arrive at the center.

What was at the center? No one knew. No one had been here. He wanted to know what it was that could cause Yin to gather for so long, so periodically open, and be a great source for learning about Yin to every man and woman out there.

Alex continued walking.

However, he hadn't expected the final stretch to be this hard to walk through. He was there, he could tell. He could see the light bright enough that just around the corner was what he was here for.

But he couldn't move. The cold had gotten too much for him to handle even though he had just started walking again. Even just an hour of walking now increased the Yin by a magnitude that he wasn't ready for.

So, without any choice, he had to sit and dwell on Yin when the destination was right over there.

Thankfully, that also meant that Alex was learning more and more about Yin, to the point that he could tell how close he was to learning about the Dao.

He felt that if could just... if he could just.

Alex felt himself falling in and out of trances as he thought about Yin. Each time, he felt as if he would learn the Dao, but it didn't happen. Each time, he got closer.

In a way, Alex felt it was now or never. So, without hesitating, he pulled out the best Dao pill he had and ate it. He let the pill dissolve into his body and let the trance that came afterward take over him.

His mind grew dull but his thoughts grew sharper. While he had no control over where his thoughts went, they were very clear and concise and as such, having planned on learning about Yin, his mind went in that direction.

He stopped cultivating at this point, and his body stopped producing Qi as well. As he fell deep into contemplation about the laws and mysteries behind Yin, his body froze over, the Yin slowly getting to him.

Yin was a terribly difficult element to learn about. As one of the high elements, it was a rare element to come across in the lower realm and thus was harder to learn about.

Still, as someone who constantly had to deal with the Yin in his own body, he had always understood Yin to a certain degree. Maybe it wasn't at the same level of knowledge as Yang, but it was there.

And coming to this cave, spending days in such a thick world of Yin aura made that knowledge grow exponentially. Throughout the entire time he remained seated, lost in his own mind, Alex managed to get closer and closer to learning the entire truth behind Yin.

After a while, he did.

The world rumbled a deep growl as worldly laws lowered themselves down onto the Evening Mist Lake, reaching deep underneath it in the caves below its surface.

The many women who stood outside the cave's opening looked up in shock, most of them sensing the Yin that was being learned about. There was only a single person there who knew the Yin Dao, and it seemed there was now going to be another one.

The Queen looked up in the sky, wondering who it was. That didn't matter much, however. Whoever it was, they needed the person to get done with it quickly.

After all, 2 weeks had passed since the opening of the cave and it was time for it to end. And they would hate for the person to get lost inside the cave.

Alex was unaware of the situation as he was still in the midst of peering into the Dao, learning more about Yin. It took some time for him to learn it all.

Once he was done, he finally opened his eyes, having fully learned a very complicated dao. The Yin Dao.

Alex felt happiness bubble up inside him. He wanted to smile in happiness but found himself unable to. His entire body was frozen over, and most of his body parts nearly going to fall off because of frostbite.

His dantian was cold as well due to a Yin buildup inside of him.

Alex poured out his Yang, melting away the ice around him, and heating up his body. At the same time, he took out some Yang treasures and dealt with the Yin in his Dantian.

Once he was done, he was finally ready to get up and venture forward.

Chapter 1558: The Center of the Cave

Alex's instinct told him that the center of the whole maze-like cave structure was only a few minutes' walk away. So, despite the cold, and despite the time he had spent on learning the Dao, he had to continue.

He had to see what was at the center as he would never let go of the regret if he ever stopped out here.

"Congratulations on learning a new Dao," Godslayer said. "I thought the next few days after that woman's spirit died would have been normal, but nothing is ever normal with you."

"Thank you for the compliment," Alex said with a chuckle in his voice. "You weren't awake before?"

"I was, but I didn't bother checking what was happening outside," Godslayer said. "Are you in the cave?"

"Yes," Alex said. "I'm about to reach the center of the Yin cave. It is so damn cold though. I had assumed learning about Yin would've removed the coldness but it barely made it bearable."

"Most of the cold is Yin cold, I'm sure," Godslayer said. "You will either need strong Yang energy or Dao to fight it off or need to learn the Dao of Yin cold itself to make it easier on yourself."

"I would've loved to learn about Yin Cold," Alex said. "I wonder why it is so difficult. Is it because I need to learn regular Dao of Cold first?"

"Maybe," Godslayer said. "I don't know much about the cold Dao."

Alex shrugged and continued. "I have a plethora of Yin that forms in my body. I think I will have ample time to dwell on coldness later," he said. "Let us see what lies here at the center."

Turning a corner, he saw a small opening that led to a large cave with a bright blue center. Once he walked through it, he could finally see it all.

Beyond the path was a large opening with brilliant white light glowing in the underground cave. The hollow cave was large beyond Alex's wildest guesses. Nothing he had been to could prepare him for what he had arrived at.

The room was nearly 200 meters wide, circular by design, with even cave walls surrounding it. The circular walls could not have been natural as they were perfectly flat for the most part.

The walls were smooth, with the only imperfections on them being the large indents and inscriptions that took Alex a moment to realize that they were runes. The entire room was in fact scripted all over.

Alex looked around at the floor and the ceiling, all of which were certainly carved as well, but they weren't smooth like the walls, and unlike the walls, they had ice built up on them over the many thousand years that this room had been here.

"So much Yin," Alex thought, entering the room. He could tell that however, this room had come to form, the Yin there was way too much. It was too strong and potent for this place to be natural in any way.

He looked at the center of the room at a small monument that stood there. He wanted to look at what it was up close, but the walls took his attention. He could tell very clearly that they were still working and they were doing something important.

Alex just wanted to figure out what they were. He started at the left side of the opening to the cave and walked around the hollow room, looking through the runes to see what they did.

To his surprise, he came across multiple runes that he didn't have any idea about. Looking closely, he could tell that they were supposed to be combined runes, made out of two or more. He just couldn't tell what that could have been as the extra edges and protrusions from the combined runes had been cut off.

He would have to learn the technique to do this as well as know what it is in the first place to figure out more. For now, he tried to understand what he could.

Going around the room took him no more than 30 minutes, noticing several different pathways to enter this room from all sides, and in that time he could tell a few different things, albeit vaguely due to the lack of understanding of many of the runes he came across.

The runes there were the main reason for the Yin that had gathered in the cave. He had assumed it was a Yin cave due to a natural treasure at the start, but as it had turned out, it was instead this scripted room that forced the Yin to gather here.

"How many millennia has this been doing this?" Alex couldn't help but ask. But even Godslayer had no answer. He watched around, just the same as Alex.

Alex could tell one thing for certain, however, which he had understood as soon as he had started going through the walls.

"Demons built this place," he said. "They had to. Immortal ones at that." He looked around the place and his eyes fell on the small monument about 100 meters away from him.

He could see it clearly, but he wanted to make sure what he was seeing was correct.

He walked across the room, the icy floor doing nothing to stop his stride as he arrived in front of the monument that wasn't even taller than him. He looked at it, a thin triangular object seemingly made out of glass-like black material.

And it was entirely cracked.

It had been destroyed and Alex had no idea why or when. There were words written on it, in a language he could easily read. The Demon language. However, the cracks had destroyed most of the letters and words, so he had to decipher the missing words himself.

Thankfully, Godslayer was there to help him; however much he could.

The words came to him and with some context clues and what he could see of the broken letters, Alex managed to make up a decent sentence. And then he read it.

"This stone shall reveal the one chosen by fate. Place your hand upon this holy relic and the truth will be unveiled. Should the essence of the ones lost to ages reside within you, the forest of the moon shall be filled again as we proclaim you our long-awaited goddess."

Alex said nothing for a long time after reading that.

"Shit!" Godslayer was the first one to speak. "That right there... that's a beacon."

"I guessed," Alex said while in absolute awe. "That monument, it was made for the demons in the Upper realm to find their goddess?"

"It seems so," Godslayer said. "And find they did."

Alex looked around. "So that means the girl had come here," he said. "She had to have arrived in the room and placed her hand on this monument."

He wondered... was this before or after her physical constitution had changed to the Moon Goddess's Celestial Yin body? Either one worked for him.

"Nothing is waiting for us here," Godslayer said. "We should return."

Alex nodded. "We should... but I might have some more time," he said, looking around. "Let me learn some of these runes and see what I can come up with. That shouldn't take very long."

Chapter 1559: Walking Out

Alex went around the place, copying the runes down so he could learn about it later. If not him, he could give it to his mother, so she could learn from it.

"My spiritual sense is struggling in this place," Alex said with a bit of a struggling look on his face. "Is that the room? Or just the Yin?"

"Could be the room," Godslayer said. "But a heavy concentration of Yin or Yang Qi is known to make it impossible for you to properly use your own Qi and senses."

Alex nodded. He was reminded of the Forbidden Fields, where the Nine Yang Divine Tree had taken root, and thus one could not use their cultivation base there at all. It was so difficult to use his spiritual sense there too.

The same was happening here as well but on a much weaker scale. The Yin Qi was strong, but not strong enough for it to stop him from using his spiritual sense and Qi entirely.

Still, it caused problems in other ways. His talisman refused to work properly in the room, so he was forced to take out his brush and start drawing those runes in paint. He had to constantly pump Yang Qi through his brush as the ink froze as well.

Simply remembering might've worked, but he wanted something more than just a memory. A painting would go a long way for him.

The coldness in this room was extreme, and Alex was barely getting by with multiple Daos and a strong physical body. Just sitting down and learning the mysteries again would've helped him learn so much about Yin Cold and Yin Ice.

Alas, he didn't have the time.

Once he was done copying the runes, which took him nearly 5 hours, it was time for him to leave.

He took one last look at the room, his eyes looking for things he had not seen, but there wasn't really anything to hide in this place. It was any moment now that the opening to the cave would close, so he had to hurry up.

He took out the talisman that was supposed to measure the coldness of the room, which would also take him out if only he just crushed it. He decided to not crush it immediately.

He could just run his way back.

So, he chose a random path out of the room and started hurrying.

Outside the cave, elder Yao and Liang started worrying a little. Most of the people had managed to come outside, and those that remained were forcefully dragged outside by remotely activating the talisman they had been given.

And yet, it hadn't brought out their King.

"Why is he not out?" Yao Ning asked the elders around her. "Is there any place inside to get stuck on?"

"No," the others answered her.

"Then... could he still be disoriented from having just learned a Dao?" Liang Shufen asked. "Should one of us go in and get him?"

"How will you even find him? There are hundreds of tunnels here, and days of walking in between," the Queen told her. "You will have to believe in His Majesty. He will make it out."

The openings to the cave had already started sealing, with still a few more hours remaining before they would become unable to fully open the ice. The cold was increasing every minute.

"Something is really wrong with the cave this time around," the Queen said to the others. "Have you ever remembered a time when it barely lasted for 2 weeks?"

"No," another woman answered. "Never have I experienced the cave being this cold. Something must've happened this year."

They still waited for a few more hours, but Alex didn't walk out at all. The elders feared that he would be stuck in the cave. They wondered what they would have to do if that happened.

As far as they could understand from the way the Queen and the sect masters talked, if you were stuck inside, you either had to survive for the next 15 years or so it took for the cave to open, or just die inside.

Neither of the elders believed Alex was going to die inside. Still, they couldn't help but fear a certain possibility of that happening.

Alex hurried as fast as he could, but that still took him hours to get anyway. The winding tunnels of the cave were just too long and took anyone hours upon hours to get anywhere.

He hurried to the best of his ability, while constantly hoping that he wasn't too late. Although, he wasn't sure if he had to worry as much. If the opening had iced up, he could just teleport outside.

It wasn't as if this place was separated spatially, making it harder for him to get out. That lessened his worry quite a bit.

More than half a day later, Alex realized that the light was getting brighter. He was getting close to the surface. No one was around him at this point. He had not seen a single soul.

"I must be the last person," Alex said. "Let's hope I can go past the ice wall and it doesn't somehow obstruct my ability to teleport out."

"You'll be fine," Godslayer said. "Stop worrying."

Godslayer was correct. He had to stop worrying. And there wasn't any reason to worry at all. After all, he had arrived at the surface.

And the opening of the cave was still open, with no ice covering it at all.

"Phew! I think we made it in time," he said, watching the world beyond the opening. He walked out of it, took a long deep breath of a world without much Yin, and immediately paused.

He looked in front of him, 3 young girls who were lazily standing around, who immediately stopped slacking off the moment they saw him.

One pulled out a spear, and the other two pulled out swords, pointing at him.

"Who are you?" one of them shouted. "Where did you come from?"

"Uhh..." Alex looked at the girls, but his attention was taken away by the short buildings all around him. This... wasn't where he was supposed to have come out.

Where had he come out?

"Answer us! Or else we will—"

The woman who spoke stopped halfway through speaking before taking a closer look. "Wait, are you King Alex, of the Southern Continent?" the girl asked.

Alex looked back at the girl speaking. "I am," he said, before focusing on her features. She was a tall woman, with a beautiful feminine face. Her hair was filled with jewelry and she wore familiar milky blue robes that Alex had only recently seen another person wearing.

When he actually paid attention to the girl, he recognized her. He had even talked to her a few years ago, albeit very briefly.

"You are... Su Railin, correct?" Alex asked.

"Your Majesty," the girl said in surprise. "You recognize me?"

"We talked, didn't we? Back during the time when I went to the Endless Shadow Abyss," Alex said. "I remember."

That was a complete lie. That was not why he remembered this girl at all.

The reason he remembered her at all was because she was one of the four girls that the Crown Prince had brought him the information of.

She was one of the Queen candidates.

Chapter 1560: Prisoner

"I'm flattered your majesty remembers me," the girl said, bowing a little. The two other women that were next to her watched their conversation with an awkward look on their faces, not sure what they were supposed to do here.

They had a job to do, but it didn't seem possible to do given the situation.

Alex turned to look at the two other women, who while didn't look like it, were certainly older than him by many years. Most likely centuries.

"Greetings, sisters," he greeted them and the two women quickly greeted him back. They said something to Su Railin and all of their faces grew stern at once.

"Your Majesty, what are you doing here?" the girl asked.

Alex took a look around. There wasn't much to see from where he was, but the thick fog around him gave him an idea of where exactly 'here' was. Still, he acted like he didn't know.

"Where is this place exactly?" he asked her.

"You don't know?" the woman asked him.

"Why should I?" Alex asked them.

They looked at each other, somewhat unsure of what to do. One of them had already secretly sent a message to their sect master and other elders who would arrive here soon enough. But until then, it was their job to find out things.

"This is the Ice Mist Palace. Did you sneak in here, Your Majesty?" Su Railin asked. "This isn't a place you could have randomly stumbled upon."

"Is that so?" Alex asked. "Well, I randomly stumbled upon this place. May I leave now?"

The three gave side glances to each other before looking back at Alex. "I'm afraid you'll have to wait here until our sect master comes back," the oldest of the three said. "We can't just let you leave without figuring out how you came here. It's a matter of the sect's security. I'm sure you can understand."

Alex smiled. "Oh, I can understand," he said. "But there shouldn't be much confusion if the three of your sisters were paying attention." He pointed to the cave opening behind him. "I came out right through there."

"But you never entered," the girls said. "How did you come out of there?"

Alex sat down. "Well, you have all the information. So you might as well guess," he said. "Since I am your prisoner, I'll be here on this cold floor, and wait for your sect master to show up."

The girls grimaced at him calling out for their apparent lack of hospitality, but they weren't sure they could allow him anywhere else. This was a sect that only the girls were allowed in.

Men could never wander here.

Still, they got him a chair and brought some warm drinks to keep him occupied. Alex sat quietly, waiting for the others to show up.

They went silent in waiting, but Su Railin seemed to want to say something. "Your Majesty, is it true that the path to the Central Continent won't open again?" she asked.

Alex looked at her. "It is unlikely it will open in the near future," he said. "If it does, it will need to be done by the emperor and I don't think it will happen."

He looked up at the somewhat sad look on the beautiful face of the girl and felt a pang of guilt. "You must've missed the chance. My apologies," he said.

Many in the Ivory kingdom had missed their chance to go back. She was one of them.

"It is alright," she said. "It's been over 50 years, so there isn't much to gain by going back. Still... I would've loved to do so."

Alex nodded. "Did you have family back home that could've come to this world?" he asked.

"No," the girl said. "I am the lone daughter of my parents and they were never that technologically adept, so I doubt they played the game. 50 years later, they must've already passed away. I just hope that whoever took my place loved them the way I did, and took care of them."

"I'm sure that they did," Alex said. "The one that took your place would have been your clone. As long as there wasn't something to miss on this side, their thoughts and emotions would've been the same as yours."

"If you loved your parents, then she did too. If you wished to take care of them, she did too," he said. "You might've missed your parents, but they never missed their daughter at all."

Su Railin wiped away a single tear that slid down the side of her face, before chuckling a little. "I'm not sure if that is supposed to make me happy or sad," she said.

"How about just content knowing that your parents were not alone?" he asked.

"Yeah... I can do that," she said with a wide smile. "Thank you for your words, Your Majesty."

Alex nodded.

A few minutes later, a small group of women came up to where he sat in the mist, at the edge of the sect. As they got closer, Alex could see the four women.

"Your guys sure took your time," he said, placing down the cup of warm tea and standing up to meet them.

"Your Majesty, thank the Phoenix you're okay," Yao Ning said. "We were afraid you were stuck in there for good."

"I wouldn't miss the chance to get scolded by you, Elder Yao," Alex said and turned to Liang Shufen. "Although, Elder Liang, you should be more worried when your King goes missing."

Elder Liang just chuckled. "Are you made a spectacle of learning the dao, I knew you couldn't be kept inside. Besides, you had a plethora of ways to come out even if you were stuck."

"Well... not a plethora, but I did have a few," he said. "Anyway, this is a nice little place you have here, sect master Bing. It's a shame I had to take the backdoor to get here."

The woman looked stunned, same for the Queen as the two of them most likely understood what it meant for him to come out this way. Still, they couldn't help but doubt it.

"Your Majesty, did one of the tunnels lead you outside?" Bing Zhenshuang asked.

"One of the tunnels, yes. But if you're asking if it was a tunnel on the other side that curved its way toward here, then no," he said. "What we were told before entering the tunnel was true. All pathway leads to the center."

"Then..." the Queen looked in shock at Alex as the possibility in her mind became certain. "Then you reached the center of the cave?"

The question came with shocked glances from the three girls who had waited by him. Su Railin's eyes went wide at the feat that she only remembered being completed once.

Alex looked at the queen and nodded. "I did," he said.

"How... was it?" she asked him, unable to hold in her curiosity. In the millennia she had spent in this place, she had used this tunnel that remained open permanently to enter and learn Yin inside.

As such, she had had a much higher opportunity of learning Yin or reaching the center. And yet, she had never been able to do that.

"Hmm... it was..." he paused. "Would you rather I tell you how it was or would you go there by yourself one day and see for yourself?"

The woman shook her head, having seemingly given up on the possibility of that ever happening. "Not a single person has ever reached the center, your Majesty. Not a single other person aside from you," she said. Her words made apparent how amazing a feat this was.

"Is that so?" Alex asked. "Surely that isn't true." His eyes moved to the sect master's shocked look as he said that.

She saw the look and felt a chill go down her spine. She knew that he knew what she tried to hide the most.

"It is certainly so, your Majesty," the Queen said, oblivious to the meaning behind his words. She was too shocked and surprised to have noticed anything else. "So please, tell us what it is like inside. I would very much like to hear about it."

Alex thought for a bit and started explaining it. Those who didn't wish to hear could cut off their hearing with their Qi, so he had no problem answering them.

The women listened curiously and once Alex was done, they were a little disappointed.

"There is nothing inside? Just a bunch of runes on a wall?" the Queen asked.

"I'm afraid so," Alex said. "That's why I didn't want to tell you. There isn't much to look forward to inside. But, if you are there to learn about Yin then it is an incredible place still."

"I see," the Queen said. She felt... betrayed about the whole thing. And somehow, she didn't feel disappointed about it all. Almost as if she knew this already, from somewhere.

The girls showed the same expression.

Only the sect master showed no sign of disbelief or surprise. She knew how it was all along. Her niece had already told her.

"You three," the sect master said. "Not a single word of this to anyone else. If anyone finds out, I'm punishing you three."

"Yes, sect master," the three said quickly.

Then the sect master turned around to Alex. "Your Majesty," she said. "I'm sorry, but I cannot let you stay in the sect for much longer. You will have to depart."

Alex shrugged. "Sure," he said. "But please answer this. When exactly did you learn about the center of the Cave of Frost yourself?"