

Alchemy 161

Chapter 161: Pearl's First Battle

It was close to 5 pm right now. Alex walked to the gate on the southern end of the sect crater. Calling it a gate could even be considered wrong, as it was just a small opening in the giant wall that prevented monsters from the Southern Forest from entering.

He walked up to the small entrance and was stopped by the elders guarding the gate.

"Badge!" an elder asked.

Alex took out his badge and handed it to them. The elders recorded the badge number and handed it back to Alex. "You should know that since today is Friday, you won't be exempt from the matches by leaving the sect right?" the elder asked.

"Yes," Alex replied and walked out of the opening. He looked back at the wall and wondered, "Is this the wall for the Scarlet City?" He watched the wall go around the outside of the forest and curve outward after reaching a bit further.

"I wonder where the wall lies on Hong Wu sect."

He walked a bit further and started running. He didn't want to mess around with weak monsters on the outer side and needed at least a late Muscle tempering realm monster for what he was about to do.

His running speed, with zero air resistance thanks to making the air frictionless, was beyond amazing. In just a few minutes, he reached what would have taken him an hour at his speed a month back.

Now that he reached this far he decided to bring out Pearl. With a bright shine, Pearl came out of his left arm. He focused and saw the new stats on Pearl after the last few days of training.

[White Cat (Child) - Bonded

Name: Pearl

Cultivation Base: Bone Tempering 6th Realm

Evolution Chance: 40%

Cultivation Method: ?????? ??????'s Dominating Body (Shared)

]

"You are stronger than I was back when I came to this forest," he said with a chuckle. "Come, let's see if there are any monsters around for you to fight." He started walking in a certain direction while spreading his spiritual sense at a max distance without overstretching.

Finally, he found a small monster with a shell on its back.

[Smooth Pangolin: Bone Tempering 3rd Realm]

"Oh, that is perfect for you. You should be able to win easily, right?" Alex made Pearl go and fight the pangolin. Alex looked at the monster and deduced, "since it has a shell, it must be a defensive monster and have bad offensive ability."

Pearl didn't know what to do at first, but after Alex explained that he had to fight with the Pangolin, Pearl sped up and reached the pangolin and started purring at him.

The pangolin got surprised by the sudden incoming of Pearl and immediately got into a ball. "Meow," Pearl jumped forward and hit the ball with his paw. Like a football being hit by a professional player, the ball flew far until it hit a tree, and jolted awake a few birds.

The tree had a small dent on the trunk as the ball fell to the ground, taking no damage. The birds in the tree saw Pearl running towards the ball and started to target him.

Alex looked at the birds and realized they were in the lower realms of Bone Tempering, so he wasn't scared. Still, he ran a little behind Pearl to make sure he doesn't get swarmed by different enemies.

Seeing the birds coming towards him, Pearl jumped high into the air and swung his claws at one of the birds. In a single hit, the bird was sent flying to the ground with most of its body broken. The bird was dead, and Alex had gotten the notification for obtaining its core and feathers.

Pearl landed lightly on his feet, leaving Alex in a daze behind. 'Just one hit?' he truly hadn't expected the disparity of a few levels to bring forth such a gap in strength.

'Is it perhaps because his body is also cultivated?' he wondered. Training with Pearl, Alex had realized that the cultivation technique that Pearl used was one that both cultivated his Qi and Body. Only because it wasn't compatible, Alex had to suffer through intense pain and only get rewarded with Body cultivation alone.

'At this stage, he must be as strong as a late bone tempering realm monster.' After seeing the attack just now, Alex had no doubt that he had been underestimating Pearl until this point.

Pearl ran off towards the pangolin when another bird started to swoop down and attack him with its sharp talons. The small Pearl didn't even bother protecting himself. He took the full brunt of the attack and shoved it off like it was nothing.

His body was stronger than the bird's talons, and so the talons did not even put a scratch on his beautiful, white fur. Pearl once more jumped up to reach the bird, but by this point, all of the birds had flown away.

They had some intelligence and had already realized that this was an enemy they couldn't beat. Pearl landed on the sticks and stones in the forest, disappointed.

He then ran towards the pangolin and nudged it a little. It didn't move. Pearl cocked his head and didn't know what to do. Alex had arrived at this point and he used his spiritual sense to see what was going on with the Pangolin.

"Holy..." he was astonished. The pangolin's inner body had mostly been destroyed and it was on its last breath. Alex used his Qi to crush its body a little and got the notification that it had died now.

"No need to keep it suffering," he said as he looked at Pearl in a new light. He might look like a little cute fluffy ball of goodness, but that strength was anything but cute.

"Although you have started to slow down, if you keep on getting stronger like this, I can't say how long it would take for you to overtake me," Alex said, and then with a smile added, "Actually, I will look forward to the day when you are stronger than me if it ever comes."

Chapter 162: Testing Strength

Alex let Pearl fight for a bit longer. He kept finding monsters a little stronger than last time and had Pearl fight them. In the end, it was still the massacre. The cute, little guy could kill anything a realm lower than him in a single swing of his palm. Even monsters in his own realm struggled to stay alive.

Only monsters 2 realms higher than him could threaten him.

Along the way, he had seen quite a few alchemy materials by now and had taken them whenever he found one. He then found an area devoid of alchemy ingredients and no other monsters around.

"Alright, that's enough training against monsters. I came here to train and see exactly how strong I have become compared to the environment."

He stood in front of a giant tree and reeled in his Qi so that it was hiding in his meridian and was no longer available around his body. His natural defense and offense dropped by over an entire minor realm.

He made a fist and punched straight into the tree. The tree was about 2 meters in thickness and Alex punches the exact center.

BOOM

The tree rustled as hundreds of leaves started falling. As for the place itself where he hit, there was a gaping hole, at least 20 cm deep. "Wow, that is more than I would've imagined. "

He looked at the hole and realized just how strong he was. "Fighting against people in your own range doesn't exactly help you understand this sort of thing, does it?" he thought.

He punched the tree a few more times and decided to use different attacks. Legs, elbows, shoulders, fingers, palm, chops. He used whatever he could. In the end, the tree fell down from the overwhelming amount of holes in it.

Alex wasn't even a little bit out of breath. He looked around with his spiritual sense to see if he had attracted anyone, but thankfully he hadn't. He proceeded to the next tree about the same size as this one.

He let the Qi he was keeping inside his meridian flow out to every part of his body. Power coursed through his body once more as his cultivation base returned back to Organ Tempering 3rd realm.

"Alright, let's see what happens with a minor realm higher cultivation base. Although I don't think my cultivation base counts as a normal cultivation base," he chuckled to himself as he thought about it.

He separates his cultivation from his body, but he couldn't separate his body from his cultivation unless he resorted to Qi-based attacks.

He prepped his fist once more, expecting to make a deeper hole this time. Without further ado, he punched the tree.

BOOM

This time the sound was so big, that it caught Alex himself off guard. He looked at his arm, or rather, he tried to look at his arm, but it was so deep inside the tree that it wasn't even visible anymore.

He sent his spiritual sense to see inside the tree where his fist was and realized that his fist wasn't actually touching anything. He slowly sent the spiritual sense forward and realized that beyond where he punched was another massive hole.

Following the hole, he realized that a chunk of the back of the tree's trunk had been entirely destroyed. He quickly pulled out his arm and walked to the back to look at the tree.

"Holy..." he was genuinely astounded at what he was seeing. The hole behind the tree was massive in size, almost as if an explosive had been set off right there. The small bits of the tree trunk were all over the ground in front of the hole.

"Am I really that strong?" he was curious. Without hesitation, he gave one solid kick to the side of the tree and the whole tree fell to the ground. Its trunk had been decimated.

"This is beyond comprehension."

He tried attacking a bunch more trees, and the result was the same. Some trees were stronger and could survive a few more hits, but in the end, they didn't take more than 5 kicks and punches to go down.

"What about my techniques?" he wondered and took out his True Mortal sword. With the sword, it only took him a single hit to cleanly chop off the tree. He didn't even have to use the Smiting Blade technique or the 1st strike of Elusive Heavenly sword.

He threw around other techniques, sending Qi-based attacks to the trees nearby. Most of them fell down with a single attack. Especially Iron Fist Punch and Palm of the Sun, they were the cream of the crops among the abilities he had.

"I wonder when the growth abilities would level up," he wondered. He looked at the time and realized it was close to half-past 6, so he had to hurry back to the sect.

Instead of running, however, he decided to see how fast flying would be for returning. He manipulated his Qi to carry himself and was pleasantly surprised that he was taken off the ground pretty easily.

"Woah," he immediately slowed down the Qi outpour and balanced himself in mid-air. Then, he used the Qi to slowly push him from behind. At first, it was really slow, but soon enough, as he started using more and more Qi, he was flying at phenomenal speed. It was much slower than when using his movement speed but still moderately fast enough.

"Hmm... How about if I use the movement technique to remove all friction?" he wondered. He started moving his Qi to use Fluctuating Friction dance, as he coated his body with his Qi to make it have zero resistance with the Air.

Suddenly, his speed in the air pretty much tripled. It was now nearly as fast as when he walked, and before he knew it, he had arrived back to the sect.

He walked into the small gate and registered his name back. Thankfully, nobody had bothered to challenge him for a fight while he was gone.

Chapter 163: Popular

Alex walked back to his house to log out and go eat his dinner, happy that nobody cared enough about him to challenge him.

Unbeknownst to Alex however, his reputation in the sect was steadily growing. Pretty much everyone who went down to the fighting stages had heard about the match between the Inner sect disciple and the core disciple where the inner sect disciple won against the core disciple, going as far as to even make him unconscious.

The news spread like fire, and quickly 80% of the people were in the know. However, they only knew the name of the disciple and were unsure of how he looked like aside from the general description of a tall and lean body with long black hair.

Some people higher than him were scared that he might come for them next. Most people lower than him were waiting for him to beat the upper disciples. Core disciples were intrigued as to how he managed to beat Huo Tu, who they knew had a very tough defense that even they couldn't breakthrough.

However, Huo Tu was still unconscious and they couldn't ask him.

Alex returned back from his final dinner in the cafeteria and got back to his room. However, instead of going back into the game, he looked at the time.

"Hmm... it's 7:21 right now. I should pack my stuff right now. I can go play the game later when it's time for the daily training." He went to the closet and took out the small luggage he had brought from his home. He took out all of his clothing and started packing it.

His roommates had gone into the game before he had even thought of doing this, so he was left alone working on it. He didn't mind it though. He packed everything but a pair of clothes that he would be wearing tomorrow.

With that done, he finally went back to the game. He entered the game a little bit before his meeting with the master, so he decided to eat another one of the monster cores.

He took out two monster cores. One belonging to a monster with a cultivation base of Organ Tempering 4th realm, and another belonging to a monster with the cultivation base of Bone tempering 7th realm.

"Come out Pearl," he said as he sent his Qi to the tattoo on his left arm. Pearl came out in a flash and looked around confused, and he had rarely been called out in this room before.

"Meow," he looked at Alex, all confused. But just then, he smelled the brilliant scent of a monster core and started to climb on top of Alex to find the core. Alex showed him the core when he reached on his shoulder and let him eat it.

While he was eating that, Alex himself too decided to eat the core. With a single push to his mouth, the core vanished into this stomach and Alex to his spiritual sea.

He saw the monster the core belonged to, a massive rhino-like monster with no horns. Similar to last time, it only took him a few minutes to defeat the monster, but he could visibly see the strength of the monster in higher realms having a stronger form in the spiritual sea.

Once the monster was dead, a yellow aura once again came out from around a shadow at the surface of the sea, devouring both of them.

<Sun God's Divine Yang Body disintegrates everything>

<The monster core's element aligns with your spirit root>

<You have gained 1,240,000 Qi>

Alex opened his eyes and said, "It should be fine to break through now, right?"

So he opened his status page and hit [Breakthrough] without even looking at anything. He used up 2.5 million Qi at once and broke through to the 4th realm of Organ Tempering.

He looked at Pearl and saw that he was done consuming the core as well. "Come, let's go. Or we'll be late," he said and let Pearl get back to his arm. He disappeared and walked to the leader's building.

When he finally reached the building, he saw that there was more than just his master. There were also Luo Mei, Liu Xin, and Meng Yun. He let the illusion drop and showed himself.

"You're finally here. I heard you've made quite a bit of ruckus out there today," Wen Cheng said as soon as he came.

"Ruckus? Huh, Senior Brother, Senior Sister, what are you guys doing here?" Alex looked at them curiously.

"Of course, we came after hearing what you did, little brother," Liu Xin said.

"What I did? Did the information about my fight with Huo Tu spread to you guys somehow?" he asked.

"Not just us, little brother," said Luo Mei and continued, "The whole sect knows about your match now."

"Huh? Did the information spread that much?" he was shocked. "Oh no, no wonder even the First Elder came to recruit me. I didn't think it would be such a big event."

Wen Cheng's eyes perked up, as did Luo Mei's and Liu Xin's. Wen Cheng asked, "Did you say the First Elder came to recruit you?"

"Yes. He came by my house with a senior sister, his disciple I think, and tried to make me his disciple." He relayed what had taken place.

Wen Cheng's face got solemn, and asked, "And? What did you say? You didn't reveal our relationship yet right?" he asked.

"Oh, no. I only told him that I was not interested in being anyone's disciple right now. He left after I told him that," Alex replied.

"That should be enough, right master?" Liu Xin asked.

"I would say that's a crisis averted if you ask me," Luo Mei said so too. However,? Wen Cheng fell into deep contemplation, and he finally said,

"Qiu Ju is not a man that would give up so easily. He will come back to recruit you a few times more. However, that is not the problem now. The problem is that you have been recognized by everyone in the sect as a genius, so the Elders will come after you to make you their disciple."

"And not agreeing to a single one would make you the enemy of all of their disciples."

Chapter 164: Heaven Impacts once more

Alex and the rest of the group fell into thought. Finally, after a while, Alex said, "Will the Elders do something to me?" he asked. He was afraid that if the Elders themselves get in the way, then he would have little way to get out of the situation.

Even his nigh-invincible Immortal Concealment technique could be detected if it were the Elders. They were after all a major realm higher than him.

"No, that won't happen. The Elders care either too much about the sect, or at the very least too much about their face to something so underhanded. However, they would start sending their disciples to mess with you. They won't let you learn or train the entire week, and continuously register you to battles, trying to tire you and maybe eventually beat you."

"If they do that, you won't have enough time in the day to focus on yourself and go do something productive or maybe register your own fight to get to a higher rank. Who knows honestly what they would do? But they will try to hinder you, that's for sure. Especially to not let the other Elders have you."

Alex thought for a moment and said, "That should be fine then. At the very least, I am confident in beating any of the students I meet in the sect for now."

Wen Cheng got a little surprised at such an ostentatious statement from his disciple. "What do you mean you can beat anyone? You think you can beat the core disciples?" he asked.

"I should be able to, but that would be revealing all my secrets, master," he replied.

Wen Cheng started getting more and more curious. "What do you mean? What other secrets do you have?" he asked.

Alex stopped talking for a second and thought for a while. 'Should I tell them?' he contemplated for a bit and said, "Let's go inside first." He walked into the training hall where nobody could eavesdrop into.

"Here is the thing master," he said as he brought out an old, dusty-looking book. The moment they saw it, both Wen Cheng and Luo Mei were surprised. "The book from the auction? You got it?" he asked.

"Yes. Master bought it for me since I could read it," he said. The moment he said that both Wen Cheng and Luo Mei's eyes turned wide, while Liu Xin looked at them wondering why they reacted in such a way.

"Wait, did you say you can read it?" Luo Mei asked in surprise.

"What is the book about?" Wen Cheng asked, accepting his disciple's words without questioning. He had seen enough to be deterred by such small things at this point.

"It's a technique called Heaven's Impact, that lets you use Spiritual sense to attack the other people's mind. Depending on how different our mental capacity is, I can make them faint like I did Huo Tu back in the fighting stage today," he explained.

"So, you really did read that language," Wen Cheng said in shock. "Does that mean you've read the language in the black stele as well?"

"What is going on?" Liu Xin asked and Luo Mei explained to him. It was his turn to get shocked now. "But master, that stele has been here since before the sect even transferred here right?" he asked.

"Yes, but if he can read it, it might help us know about its origins." Wen Cheng said.

"Actually master, I can't read that stele. I have tried it earlier and I felt like I was close to death." He explained the circumstances under when and how he nearly lost all of his spiritual sense and was almost hit with a spiritual attack from the black stele.

Wen Cheng looked confused. "Why use spiritual sense at all if you can read it?" he asked.

"Oh, uhh... how do I explain this. I don't exactly read the language. It's more like I look over it with my spiritual sense and after enough time, the knowledge comes to me."

"If it were normal language, I wouldn't even have to use spiritual sense, but since it's not, I have to. Which turned out to be a bad idea when concerned with that Black Stele. You guys shouldn't use spiritual sense on the black stele either. It's really dangerous." He cautioned the three.

Meng Yun was standing behind Luo Mei, listening to the conversation. 'Attacking someone's mind? Like what I do with my flute?' she wondered.

"Alright, let's see what it can do. Use it on use, little brother," Liu Xin said as he walked in front. Alex hesitated for a bit, but then remembered that she was perfectly fine after using it on her, so he decided to do it.

Without giving Liu Xin any chance to prepare himself, Alex used Heaven's impact. A whirlpool appeared in his spiritual sea that drained an eighth of his spiritual sea, which turned into a mist that floated up and formed the shape of a fist.

It immediately flew towards Liu Xin's head. He wasn't even ready when suddenly, he lost consciousness. His whole body went limp as he fell to the ground with a loud sound.

"Wahh, Senior Brother?" Luo Mei immediately ran forward to pick him up. "Urghh... " Liu Xin couldn't form any words as his head hurt him like crazy. "What.... What was that?" he said as he woke up with his head in his arms.

'Huh? Is senior brother's mental strength much weaker than master's? She was able to stop herself from falling even a little bit, which senior brother fell to the ground,' he started evaluating the two and quickly remembered, 'oh right, Master did say she ate some pills that increased her mental strength. That should be the reason why,' he thought.

Wen Cheng watched as Liu Xin barely got up from the floor, eyes moving everywhere as he couldn't focus on anything immediately. "Are you okay?" he asked.

"I— I'm fine, master," Liu Xin replied.

Wen Cheng then turned around to Alex and said, "It seems we were wrong in worrying about you."

Chapter 165: My best Earth Grade pill?

"Little brother... that was too strong," Liu Xin said as he tried to stand still, his head still hurting a bit.

Alex looked at Liu Xin, feeling a little guilty. "I'm sorry, Senior Brother. I should have told you when I was going to attack," he said with a hint of sadness in his voice.

"It's okay. In fact, it's better this way since I get to see the actual effect of the attack. And I must say, it's stronger than I would've expected. However, are you sure you can win against the disciples in the higher realms?" he asked.

"Higher realms? Wouldn't this work well against anyone without spiritual sense?" he asked.

"I don't think so, Junior Brother. I think you are mistaking the spiritual sense for mental strength. One can have high mental strength without having a spiritual sense. I don't know if the other way around is possible or not, but anyone who is in the Mind Tempering realm should be able to get back up from your attack within 10 seconds. Unless you can somehow beat them to a victory in the 10 seconds, I don't think you will be fine while fighting against them," Liu Xin said.

Alex was left speechless for a few seconds. 'That's right. Mind Tempering does increase the mental strength of a cultivator, and Heaven's impact's description does say that the damage is the difference between our mental prowess. Although gaining spiritual sense might have increased my mental prowess quite a bit, that doesn't mean that other people won't have it as well,' he thought.

Seeing that he was silent for quite a while, Wen Cheng finally spoke. "Stop scaring little Yu. Don't worry, little Yu. There are only 7 disciples in the Mind Tempering realm and one of them is your senior sister. So effectively, you only have these 6 to worry about. And they won't be able to come after that easily without the entire sect learning about their masters trying to silence an inner sect disciple."

"Oh," Alex finally stopped thinking. He felt like a load had been taken off of his mind.

"However, we should still think of something." Wen Cheng started to think of ideas to keep the elders away from his disciple.

Just then, Alex spoke once more. "Umm... Master? I don't think we will have to do anything actually. At least, not for the next 2 weeks. Perhaps, even more, depending on the competition."

"What are you planning little brother?" Luo Mei inquired.

"Nothing really. I just thought I will go back to Hong Wu Sect tomorrow evening. After that, the Elders should be unable to do anything to me right? Also master said that the annual competition is coming up

next, and I will have to prepare for that. I have ignored Alchemy for quite a while now. I might be getting rusty."

Wen Cheng thought for a while and said. "Hmm... Alright, that makes sense. Although there are still 2 more days, I don't think there is anything you can do by staying here. At least back in Hong Wu Sect, you could get a little better in alchemy."

The others in the room nodded as well.

"Oh, now that I think about it, I don't remember asking this, but how is your alchemy training. Have you made any progress? If not, you can leave the Hong Wu sect and come here. You have shown so much progress that you will definitely be somebody big in the future by staying here." He tried to steal Alex away from Hong Wu Sect.

Alex chuckled a little. "Don't worry master. I have made quite a bit of progress. Me studying is more than worth it," he said.

"Oh, you act like you've made quite a few earth-grade pills by now. How many have you made?" Wen Cheng asked.

Alex tried to remember, but it took him a lot of time to. "What's wrong?" Wen Cheng asked, "are you not answering because you have not made any yet?"

"Oh, no master. It's just that I have made so many that it's hard to remember exactly how many. But it should be over 200 by now."

As if a noise-removing formation had just been employed in the room, everyone went silent. Only after a while did Luo Mei finally manage to speak. "Umm... Junior Brother, did you say you made 200 Earth grade pills?" she asked.

"Is that so surprising? I thought you guys knew I was talented. Didn't master tell you anything?" he asked as he turned towards Wen Cheng.

Wen Cheng's eyes were wide. He shook his head a little and said, "No. She only mentioned that you were talented. After seeing your speed in cultivation and learning new techniques, I thought I knew what she meant."

"Oh, ok well, that was what she meant then," he said. He didn't know what else to say.

"What is the highest harmony of the earth-grade pills you've made?" Luo Mei asked.

"Hmm...49," Alex said.

""49??!" All 3 of them shouted at once.

"You've made pills with 49% harmony?" Luo Mei shouted.

"How many of such pills have you made, little brother?" Liu Xin asked.

"When did you manage to make such a pill so fast?" Wen Cheng asked with his eyes wide.

"One at a time please," Alex said. "Yes, I've made a 49% harmony pill. I have only made one of such a pill, however, there are a few that came close to it among the different earth grade pills."

"Why are you guys so hung up on it though? It's not even my best pill." Alex had a smile on his face.

Suddenly a thought ran through the heads of all the three master disciples. Even Meng Yun in the back had her eyes nearly pop out when she heard this.

"Uhh... Little brother, you don't mean to say that... uh..." Liu Xin never finished the sentence.

"Yes. Just before I left the Hong Wu sect to come here. The last pill I made there was a Heaven grade pill with exactly 50% harmony."

Chapter 166: Talisman and Armor

"This..." Wen Cheng didn't know what to say. He was having trouble coming up with words to form sentences to speak right now. Luo Mei and Liu Xin were the same.

Alex on the other hand was just having fun. After a while, they finally calmed down.

"Is that the only Heaven-grade pill you made?" Wen Cheng asked.

"Yes. I haven't been able to make another one since then. Although, I should be able to once I go back and focus only on Alchemy."

"Hmm... that should help you," Wen Cheng said. "Alright then. All of you go back to your residence. You too, Yu Ming. Go take a rest for today. You've been training every day for 2 weeks now. In fact, I don't think you've cultivated in the last 5 days, have you?" Wen Cheng asked.

"No, master," he replied.

"Yeah, you should not miss those. Don't just eat pills for your Qi. Cultivation is more than just gathering Qi. A little break in between is not bad, but you shouldn't go too long without cultivating.

"I understand, Master." Everyone left the room and started going back to their own houses. "Yu Ming, wait a minute. I need to talk to you about something," Wen Cheng said.

"Yes, master?" he asked.

"I decided to wait until you were a Core disciple, but it seems that they will come after you regardless of what rank you are in, so here you go." Wen Cheng took out a small talisman and handed it to him.

"This is a talisman that can defend against the attack of a True Lord realm cultivator. Keep it on your body at all times, since you don't know when you might need it." Alex looked at the normal-looking

talisman and was surprised that such a little thing could withstand the attack of a True Lord realm cultivator.

'Isn't True lord the third of the True realms? This thing can block their attacks?' he thought to himself.

"However, It can only block the attack for 1 time. So make sure that when it does happen, use your escape technique immediately. Since you have the concealment technique, you should be able to get out of harm's way soon," Wen Cheng said.

"I understand, Master," Alex said as he kept the talisman inside his robes, instead of his storage bag.

"Also, take this," Wen Cheng took out an armor from the storage bag. Alex was a little surprised as he saw the armor. The armor looked very weird as instead of having 1 opening for neck, 2 for arms, and 1 for torso; it had 1 opening for the neck, 4 for arms, and a small opening for ... another arm?

"What type of armor is this master? Can I even wear this?" he asked.

"Hahaha... This is not for you silly. This is for your beast. Take it." Wen Cheng handed it to Alex as well.

Alex curiously looked around the armor and felt that it was quite sturdy. Actually more sturdy than he could have imagined. He turned the armor all over and started to get confused as he saw the entire surface.

There were 2 problems with the armor. Firstly, it was too big. Pearl was at most the size of two palms now, but this armor would fit a grown adult's torso in it easily.

Secondly, there was not a single seam in the armor, almost as if it was made entirely from a single ingredient. Looking at the material it was made up of, Alex thought that was impossible as the various green and brown colors would say otherwise.

So, he decided to ask his master. "Master, do I wait until Pearl is as big as this armor before I make him wear it? I don't think he will need an armor by the time he gets this big. Also, how do I even make him wear this? Do I just put Pearl inside here and wait for him to grow into this armor?" he asked.

Wen Cheng chuckled at the hilarity of the statement and said, "Of course not silly. Just refine the treasure and you can freely use it on any beast companion you have. It can freely change its shape and size to match your beast."

"Oh," Alex said, finally understanding. "How strong is it, master? What grade is it?" he asked.

"This armor is a Common Heaven grade armor. The armor itself can block the damage of an early Mind Tempering realm cultivator. With your cat's current cultivation, he should probably be able to block up to Mind Tempering 4th realm attacks."

"Hmm... Although, I don't think that will be much help to you since your cat is so small and cant really block attacks."

"I see..." Alex kept looking at the armor.

"Oh, and also, It can stay with your beast in their personal space inside your body, so you don't have to keep on putting the armor on them when they come out." Wen Cheng seemed to really like that part about the armor.

"So, I just need to refine it and it's fine right?" Alex asked.

"Yes," Wen Cheng replied and he sighed as he continued, "honestly, I wanted to give you an armor as well, but with your current rate of body cultivation, there isn't a single armor in the treasure hall that would be suitable for you. Also, I wanted to give your a sword too, but you already have that True grade sword, so I decided to change the sword for the defensive talisman."

"I see, thank you, Master," Alex bowed a little towards Wen Cheng.

"You don't have to bow to me. When I first got you as a disciple, I had already promised you about 2 artifacts from the treasure hall. Although one of them isn't really an artifact, I'm just keeping my promise." Wen Cheng said.

"Either way, Thank you, master," Alex said.

"Alright, you can go now," Wen Cheng said as he sent Alex back for the night.

Saying his goodbyes, Alex too went back to his house number 86 to cultivate.

Chapter 167: Moving

Alex walked into his room and felt it a bit weird to be here during the nighttime. The only time he hadn't left the house at night was when he had the Blood essence enter him and had fallen unconscious for over 12 hours.

"Well, it's not like something different is going to happen tonight either," he said as he chuckled to himself remembering, or rather not remembering, how each night of cultivation went.

He sat down on the bed and closed his eyes. Abruptly, he opened them again. "It's been so long that I nearly forgot," he said as he took out a small pink flower from his storage bags, the Spirit Cleansing Lily.

"I can't forget about increasing my Spiritual Sea," he thought as he closed his eyes and started to cultivate. Slowly, he fell into a trance and fell asleep.

Early in the morning, just a few minutes past 6 am, Alex opened his eyes. He looked down at the flower and realized it was not there. He smiled. He sent out his Spiritual Sense and his smile went even wider as he realized that the Spiritual sea had grown once more.

It was now 3 times as wide as the first time he unlocked it. "So, it will last a long while, if I don't over-extend it right? Actually, it should be pretty much forever." He was happy thinking about this fact.

'Alright, let's leave.' He then logged out.

He woke up and took off his helmet. He looked at the helmet, thinking this was the last time he would be using this. 'Well, I should stop being lazy and go buy my own,' he thought.

He freshened up and got back. He changed into a different set of clothes and made sure nothing of his was left behind. After he was all set, he was ready to leave... except,

"Why is she not picking up? Is she still in the game?" Alex wasn't able to get a hold of his cousin, without whom, he wouldn't get the address. He called a few times and decided to wait for her to call back.

Time slowly passed by and it was 7 am now. The roommates slowly started logging out of the game and saw the Alex was all packed.

"Are you ready to leave already?" Matt asked.

"Yes. Oh yeah, Eric, here's your helmet. Thank you so much for letting me use this. You can't imagine how much this meant to me." He handed the helmet back to Eric who just smiled and said, "Don't worry about it."

TRING TRING

Suddenly, his phone started ringing. He looked at the screen and it was his cousin Hannah. He picked up and could immediately hear the loud voice from the other side.

"Alex? I'm so sorry. I was busy answering some important emails and I lost the track of time. Also, just my luck that my damn phone was on silent for some reason. Anyway, are you prepared to leave? I will text you the location now," she bombarded his ear with a whole bunch of things.

"Okay, sister. You don't have to worry about it. Just send me the location info and I will be on my way," he said.

"Alright. Let me do that real quick. Call me when you are near okay?" she said and ended the call before she could even hear a reply.

Alex looked at the phone and just shook his head.

"Was that your cousin you are going to stay with?" asked Logan.

"Yeah. She will send me the location soon and I will have to leave," he said.

TING

The location info arrived. "Alright, I should leave now. She will be waiting for now." Alex started to get up to leave.

"Wait, let us escort you to the gate." The three of them stood up too.

"You guys don't have to," Alex tried to refuse but they wouldn't budge.

"It's just the gate. Besides, we have to leave for breakfast right now anyway," Matt said.

Unable to refuse anymore, Alex let them follow along. At the gate of the university, Alex stopped a cab and got on it. "See you guys in class," he waved the 3 goodbyes and finally left.

In 10 minutes or so, he reached the location mentioned in the message. He paid the cab driver and got off. He looked around but couldn't see his cousin at all. "This is the right place, right?" he thought as he started calling her once again.

"Sister, I'm here," he said.

"So fast. Wait, let me get down." She ended the call. Alex looked at the tall building in front of him. The building was mostly gray in color and was similar in height to the other buildings around it. A height of over 10 floors. 'Oh my god. She lives in such a tall building.' He was quite surprised.

Within a minute, Hannah came out of the door. "Ah, you're finally here. Vinny left a few days ago, so I've been bored all alone in the apartment. C'mon, let's go in." She made him follow her.

They got into an elevator and Hannah pressed button 11. Alex was surprised. "You live on the 11th floor, Sister?" he asked.

"Yeah. That was the only floor available to us when we moved in." She said.

"Wait, the whole floor is just for you?" Alex asked in surprise.

"It was meant for four different people, but now it's just me, i guess. oh, and you too now." Hannah chuckled a bit.

"How much does the rent cost here then?" he asked. He didn't know anything about renting places and could only wonder.

"Well, the monthly rent is around \$10,000. The location is very populated, so it just costs a lot. I had to pay \$2500 before, but ever since the other girls left, I have been stuck with it all." Her reply shocked Alex. \$10000 dollars was a lot of money.

'I will be broke in 2 months if I had to start paying for the rent,' he thought.

DING

Finally, the door of the elevator opened and revealed what lied beyond it.

Chapter 168: New Place

"Come, this is your new home for probably the next 3 years of university," Hannah said as she opened the door in the hallway outside of the elevator. Alex walked inside to see another door to his front and two smaller doors to his either side.

"These are for shoes and coats, don't worry about them and come on it," Hannah said as she opened the actual door to the house. Alex walked inside and saw a massive lounge room with white walls and gray sofas. There was a big TV in the middle of the room above the fireplace.

'No wonder it costs \$10,000 a month. But still, isn't that a lot?' he wondered. "Come, I will show you the other rooms," she said as she walked towards another small corridor. There were 2 doors on either side and she opened one of them.

"This will be your room from now on."

Alex walked in and saw a massive room with light blue walls. The room was about the size of his dorm room, but instead of 4 different people, only he was going to stay there now.

The room, however, was all but empty and only had a closet in it. "No bed?" he asked.

"No. This room used to be used by the first girl that lived here, and she took everything in here when she left. We wanted to put a bed in here, but since no one was staying, we laid it off until someone came along."

"We can go buy one today. I'm free all day," Hannah said.

"It's okay sister. Actually, I don't even know if I will be needing a bed in the first place, since they will be releasing capsules next week where we can sleep all we want," Alex said.

"Don't be silly. Sleeping in a bed, and sleeping in a capsule are two entirely different things. You absolutely need a bed," Hannah reprimanded her little cousin.

"Alright sister, if you say so." Alex just accepted her words as truth and didn't go on further about getting just the capsule.

"Okay, keep your luggage there and come eat some breakfast. You must be hungry," she said as she headed back out. Beyond the lounge area was a half-open room, which was the kitchen.

Hannah put some bread in the toaster and started frying some eggs. Alex happily ate all of that. After they finished the breakfast, Hannah proceeded to show him more of the house.

About 10 minutes later, she finally stopped when her phone got a notification. She picked up her phone and smiled when she saw what was in it. Alex was curious as to what could make his cousin smile like that but refrained from asking. If she deemed it important, she would tell him herself.

'Her phone looks quite good. I should probably buy myself one as well.' Although the phone he currently had was a birthday present, it was a cheap model and was thus quite slow.

'I should get myself a laptop as well,' he thought. After learning that he could complete his first semester of university without requiring a laptop, he had decided to buy it later.

That later was now. 'What else do I need? Let's see... a bed, a VR helmet, a phone, a laptop, maybe some clothes as well.'

"I have something to do for a few minutes. Why don't you go watch TV or something? I will come back, and we can go shopping," Hannah said and left Alex alone in the living room.

Alex stayed behind and watched TV for quite a while. Since he had nothing else to do, he just switched the channels over and over, until he landed on a news channel with a flashing headline.

Alex read the headline and thought, 'should I set a reminder so that I catch it?'

"Hey, are you ready?" Hannah suddenly appeared.

"Oh yeah, I'm ready to go anytime," Alex said and got up.

"Okay, let's leave." They both got out of the house and Hannah locked the doors. "Oh yeah, keep this." She handed him a key. "This is the key to the house. You should keep it for now," she said.

"Do we have to take a cab?" Alex asked.

"No, the market is right around the corner, we can just walk there," Hannah replied. "What do you need exactly other than the bed?" she asked. Alex relayed everything he had thought of buying earlier.

"Oh wow. You really want to buy so much huh? Thankfully, your big sister is rich and she can buy you anything," Hannah said with a smug face.

"Oh, have Aunt and Uncle been sending you money?" he asked.

"No silly. I'm talking about my own money. I have already told them that I don't need their money anymore since I have a lot of it," Hannah said.

"You have a job, sister?" he asked. He had never heard of his sister working during the last 2 times they had met.

"No. I am making money from the game." Hannah seemed quite proud.

Alex was surprised. "You make money from the game too, sister?" he asked.

Hannah looked towards him with a curious look and asked, "What do you mean 'too'? Do you earn money too?" she asked.

"Yeah, I've been making pills in the game that I later sell to auctions. I have sold it a few times and was able to accumulate quite a bit of money," he said.

"Not bad. Making money in this game is quite easy, so you shouldn't have a lot of problems with it," Hannah said. But then she thought about something and said, "Actually, maybe it's just me that got really lucky, and making money isn't that hard. How much money have you even made till now?"

Alex thought for a second as to whether saying it was a good thing or not, but since she was his sister, he decided to say it.

"I have managed to make about 25 thousand dollars by now. I should have some increments from my earning tomorrow," he said.

Chapter 169: Shopping

"Oh, 25,000 dollars? Not bad. So, I wasn't alone case like my friends said." Hannah's reaction was nowhere near what Alex would've expected it to be. She seemed to be completely fine with the idea of someone making 25,000 dollars a month after playing a game.

This made him curious. So much so that he couldn't help but ask.

"Sister, you said you earned money. How much do you earn?" he asked.

"Umm... I don't know. A couple of hundred thousand dollars. But that is just cause I am much higher in cultivation than you. So, if you reach my realm, you will make the same amount as well." Hannah seemed to be completely unphased by what she had just said. Yet, those words were like bombs to Alex.

'Hundreds of thousands of dollars? Do people make that? How does a company like Deva Corp even survive after giving that much money away to just a single player?' Alex couldn't understand.

"What exactly do you do to earn so much money, sister?" he asked. Hannah seemed to be waiting for this question because when she was asked, she started giggling like a little child.

"Hehehe. I don't do anything actually. The money just comes flooding in." Hannah was still giggling.

Alex didn't know what to say. 'Money comes in without doing anything?'. He was surprised to hear that. "How exactly does that work, Sister?" he asked.

"Don't tell anyone the secret okay?" she said while moving in close to whisper, " I got married."

"What?" Alex instinctively shouted.

"Keep your voice down," she said while making sure so one heard her.

Alex hurriedly quieted down. "What do you mean you got married? To whom? Do Uncle and Aunt know?" he asked.

"In the game, Silly. The game. I got married to someone in the game," Hannah clarified.

"Oh," Alex finally said in understanding. "Who did you marry?" he asked.

"His name is Long Huan, he is really, really handsome, and he also turned out to be really rich," Hannah said.

"Turned out to be?" Alex was confused.

"Yeah, I didn't know at first. He just randomly started talking to me and before we knew it, we were together most of the time. Soon after that, he asked me to marry him, and since it wouldn't hurt trying once before doing the real thing here, I married him."

Hannah had a little blush on her cheeks that she tried to desperately get rid of, but it never went away.

"Do you like him, Sister?" he asked.

"Yes, of course. He's so sweet. Also, I didn't randomly get married to somebody I didn't think was worthy, okay? It was mutual liking. Either way, let's not talk about this anymore. It's too embarrassing to think about."

Hannah started walking a little fast. "Ok, Ok Sister. Now, wait for me," Alex walked a little faster as well. Within 5 minutes, both of them came upon of rather large building. It was a store for different types of furniture.

"Let's see. You will need a bed, some small furniture by the bed, a studying desk and a chair. Do you need a bookcase?" she turned to Alex who simply just shook his head.

Hannah went ahead and chose what she would think would be nice. Alex didn't mind since she seemed to have experience doing this and was choosing some good-looking furniture and other things to go along with them. After selecting all of them, they went ahead to pay for it.

Hannah decided to pay for it herself and was about to take out money, when Alex said, "What are you doing sister? I will pay for myself. Keep our money."

"It's okay, I will do it. You just keep your money. Uncle and Aunt will need it." Hannah didn't back down and insisted on paying it herself.

"No way sister. Don't worry about mom and dad, I will have some money coming my way tomorrow as well." They argued for a bit as to who would pay and in the end, Hannah reluctantly backed down letting Alex pay for it.

Learning that the furniture would be delivered to them later on, they decided to go buy the other stuff. In another store with big glass doors and windows, Alex saw a bunch of phones and laptops.

"Let's go in," Hannah once again walked in first. They walked in and saw a large number of people inside the store, browsing through the different items in there.

"Look around and see what you like."

Alex decided to look at the smartphone section first. "Woah," he was surprised. "I didn't know phones could get this expensive." Most of the phones in there were between \$800 to \$1500. He who had a \$150 phone, couldn't imagine using such an expensive phone.

"Hmm... isn't that there a new model?" Hannah said as she pointed at one of the phones.

"I don't know much about phones sister," Alex replied.

"I think it is. You should get that one. It's really good."

Alex decided to do so and chose that phone. He then moved on to laptops. When he saw the laptops, he was floored at the variety. Even a laptop with similar-looking names was completely different on the inside.

"You know much about laptops? Cause I don't," Hannah said.

"A little. I can tell what's good from my Computer Science classes. However, I can't tell how good they are so we will just have to go off of the numbers they provide," Alex replied.

They decided to ask the store clerk which laptop was better. The store clerk politely explained the features and differences of the different laptops. At the end of that, Alex chose one of the better ones and bought it.

"Alright, now that we are done with phone and laptop, let's just buy the remaining item and get it over with." Hannah was starting to get a little hungry by this point.

Finally, she took Alex deeper into the store, and only then did Alex see what he truly wanted. A VR helmet.

Chapter 170: More shopping

There were not a lot of people at the place where the helmets were stored. Most people were waiting for the new capsule to arrive and didn't want to waste money right now.

Alex looked at the brand new helmets on the shelves and was quite shocked at how many there were. Not just in amount, but in different brands too. There were barely any helmets for Eternal cultivation.

'Why did Deva corp even decide to make helmets if they were making capsules in the first place? From a business perspective, that doesn't make sense. Aren't they losing money in production?' he wondered.

He then looked at the other helmets in the business. They were nothing like the one made for Eternal Cultivation. These were the helmets, about which he mostly learned in the VR class.

Apparently, due to having proprietary technology and design, no one was allowed to know how it worked or was able to produce such amazing realistic senses. So his class was stuck with these other VR technologies that were trash when compared to Deva corp's helmets.

"What can I do for you?" the Clerk asked seeing the two of them come towards the counter.

"One of those please," Hannah said the moment she reached there.

"The EC Helmet?" The clerk asked in surprise.

"Yes, please," Hannah said.

"Dear customer, we are required to let you know that a better version of the helmet is going to be available in about a week. Deva Corp will start selling a capsule at about the same price range for a similar amount of money," The clerk said.

"Yes, we know, and we still want it."

The clerk sighed and took one out from the shelves. They went to the front of the store where they paid for all of the items at once. Together with the phone, laptop, and helmet, Alex had to pay exactly \$3200.

'Oh my god. Just one day of shopping and I'm already down so much money.' The furniture had cost quite a bit as well, but not as much as these 3 items. They got a free backpack with the items, which they carried the 3 things in.

"Let's go back and eat something. The clothing section is on the other side of the house, which we can go to after eating." They walked back to their home. Alex was still surprised every time he saw the large building, but after being in the city for a month, he was starting to get used to it.

They took the elevator back to their apartment and Hannah proceeded to cook some food.

"You need some help sister?" he asked.

"Hmm... okay. Cut the onions and potatoes, while I prepare the other dishes," she said and proceeded to make the other food.

Alex looked at the vegetables that were already on the table. He took a knife from the counter and started cutting them.

"Hmmm...." He voiced out as he stopped cutting. Hannah looked back hearing him and asked, "What's wrong?"

"Oh, uh nothing. It just felt a little awkward chopping the onions for some reason. Maybe not cutting something for over a month has messed with my ability to cut." Alex tried to squeeze his palms almost as if that would reawaken his senses.

"Oh, okay." Hannah went back to cooking. Alex resumed cutting as well. He finished the onions and proceeded to cut the potatoes. He still felt awkward cutting them but kept at it.

Suddenly, "OUCH!" Alex screamed.

"What's wrong?" Hannah immediately came to him after hearing him scream.

DRIP DRIP

Droplets of blood fell onto the marble floor. Hannah then saw that Alex had ended up cutting his finger while cutting the potatoes.

"Oh, no. Are you okay?" she rushed to check his finger. Thankfully, it was just a shallow cut and he was fine.

"Yeah, I'm fine. I just cut a little." Alex held his finger up high.

"Let me get some bandages," Hannah said as she left the room and came back with a small bandage and put it on his finger.

"Honestly, you should have told me you were bad at it if you couldn't cut potatoes. I would've done it myself."

Alex's finger had now stopped bleeding after the bandage was put on. "I know how to cut them, Sister. Or rather, I knew it. It seems I have lost my muscle memory. Probably because I spend so much time in the game," he said.

"I think so too. You should exercise every day after playing the entire night. You probably have a really bad lifestyle right now with only playing games and sleeping. " Hannah chided quite a bit.

"I guess so," he said.

"Alright, go and rest. I will do the rest," she said as she took over the potatoes and started cutting them. Alex went outside to the lounge room and sat there watching the TV once more.

"Have I really gone that bad with the rest of my skills as well?" he wondered. He continued watching TV, flicking through the channels but nothing fun was on it. So, he took out his new smartphone and started setting it up.

After a while, he finally managed to get it working properly. When it finally worked, he was absolutely floored at how fast it was. He switched the number from his old phone and started using it.

"Cmon, the food is ready," Hannah shouted from the kitchen.

"Coming sister," Alex said and went to eat his food.

The food was delicious, much better than the ones made in the cafeteria. After eating, they went to the clothing stores on the next side of town and bought a bunch of clothes for themselves.

Just as they were returning from their shopping, their furniture was delivered as well. They opened the door for the delivery people and had them set up the bed and the other furniture.

Alex put his clothes inside the closet and finally, after a long day's work laid on his bed.