

## Alchemy 1631

### Chapter 1631: Trial

Yao Ning paced back and forth in the hallway of a heavily gilded palace located in a city known as Truelight City. Her face was in a frown and had been in a frown ever since she had found out that her King had been taken into custody for killing a high-ranking member of the Empire's army.

No one had told her exactly what was happening and those that did only told her that it would be okay, and she should relax.

'Like hell, I can relax,' the old woman thought to herself.

Liang Shufen sat on one of the chairs in the hallway as well, her face grim as well. She bit her fingers in frustration, eyes unfocused as her mind was lost in some thought. There were other people around her, all important people in their own right, but none seemed to focus their gaze on her at all.

"What are they talking about in there? Why can't be with them?" Yao Ning asked once again, even though she knew the answer would be the same.

No one even bothered to answer her this time around. The old woman's frown only deepened, but she remained quiet. She knew she couldn't go in right now, but she was worried about what they were doing to her king.

'If these people lay a single hand on His Majesty, I swear I will—" her words left her mind when she noticed someone quickly walking down the hallway.

Long Fangyu, the Crown Prince of the Azure Imperium, made his way through the hallway, along with a host of other men following him. He seemed to be silently conversing with the people and stopped when he noticed her.

"Your Highness," Yao Ning quickly bowed. "What is going to happen to our majesty? You cannot keep him captive."

"Lady Yoa," the Crown Prince quickly spoke up. "Please calm down. I will go and see what is happening. I can promise you no harm will come to your King. Be calm."

The woman took deep breaths and nodded.

The Crown Prince left the old woman and walked ahead. He went into the room that had to be opened from the inside, and behind him, the door locked again.

Yao Ning could only pray the Crown Prince did something to help their king.

Alex sat in a rather comfortable chair with a cushioned seat that seemed too warm for the cold. Surrounding him were nearly 40 different men and women.

6 of those were the Kings and Queens who had happened to be there for the Continental Tournament that was to be held in a week or two at best. The rest of them were high-ranking members of the army that had gathered to hear from him.

And they had heard all he could tell.

Everyone whispered amongst themselves, making their own judgment of the situation, planning on what was the right thing to do. They couldn't punish a foreign monarch directly, but he had killed someone so he had to take responsibility for it somehow.

The voices suddenly died when the door opened and the Crown prince walked in. People quickly turned to give their greetings and remained quiet for the Crown Prince to speak.

The Crown Prince looked at the room and frowned.

"You, you, you, you, and you," he pointed to 5 old men he knew to be wiser than most. "Everyone except the kings and the ones I pointed, leave."

The sounds of people walking filled the room and within moments, the room of 40 people dropped to only a dozen. The room became much more quiet after that.

The Crown Prince then went forward and sat opposite Alex on an empty sofa.

"Your Majesty, I would like for you to recount your words on the last day again," the man said.

Alex nodded. "I had asked Zhao Boqin if he would fight me on the last day, so he came and said he would fight me if I agreed to his bet. He wanted my Mirror and I wanted some answers from him."

"He lost, so I went to ask him the questions. Before I could get to the questions, he attacked me with Immortal Qi. I managed to dodge due to remaining careful, and because he attacked me, I did so too. It was in retaliation, only I didn't expect him to die."

"I had expected the talisman to save him."

That was the story that Alex had made and everyone knew about now. He knew everyone would doubt that he didn't ask any questions, but that was the least of the problems for them, so he hoped it would get buried amidst the other problems.

"Do you feel remorse for what you did?" the Crown Prince asked.

"No," Alex said. "He attacked me, so I killed him. I feel no remorse."

"Then why did you give yourself up?" the Crown Prince asked.

Alex gave a frowned look. "What else was I to do?" he asked, laughing dryly as he did so. "Anyone would know I was the one who killed him when the dead body appeared outside. I had no reason to hide."

The Crown Prince frowned when he heard that. "There was no dead body that appeared outside," he said.

The words caused Alex to frown for real this time around. "No body?" he asked with a concerned look. "But I killed him, and I saw the body get teleported away."

"But nothing appeared outside. We scoured the entire island, but there was nothing there," the Crown Prince said.

"Nothing?" Alex fell into a thought. "The hell?"

He had clearly seen the body get teleported away. Did someone get rid of the body when they found it outside? Did someone rob the corpse and want nothing to get tied back to them?

Or... was the dead body just not considered a 'victor' per the Martial Ground's rule, and thus it remained inside the island. If Alex had to bet on one of the possibilities, he would bet on the dead body still being inside.

"You should send someone into the Martial Ground to recover the body then," Alex said. "Not that I should say it to you. You should have sent someone in already."

The Crown prince shook his head. "We cannot just send someone inside. The secret realm won't open for another 30 years, and until then whatever is inside will remain inside."

"Oh..." Alex wondered if he was a little hasty in giving himself up. He nearly laughed at the thought of that. Even if he had said nothing, sooner or later, suspicion would've fallen on him anyway. It was better to get it out of the way from the start.

The Crown Prince pulled out a formation plate and placed it down before asking, "About the questions you wanted to ask Zhao Boqin, can you tell me what they were?"

"I wanted to learn about the Military training, and how it was handled. My own army back home is relatively new, so I wanted to learn more. I had no 2nd questions planned at that time."

"I see," the Crown Prince said and poured Qi into the formation. "Please let us converse among ourselves for now."

The formation opened up to cover everyone but Alex. And Alex could only imagine they were going to come to a verdict by the time they came out.

#### Chapter 1632: Verdict

"So, what do you say we do here?" the Crown Prince asked the rest.

The dozen or so people looked at each other, waiting for someone to start speaking. Finally, one of the old white-haired men who was made to stay there started.

"Something is odd here," the man said. "How could someone in the Saint Soul realm possibly defeat someone in the Saint Transformation realm? Is anyone aware if he uses special artifacts or some such?"

"I don't think he uses any such artifact," the Emerald King said. "He fought someone stronger than him about a decade ago and he defeated that person quite easily too despite having a lower cultivation base. I believe he can overcome multiple realms to fight someone."

Another old man audibly harrumphed.

"I know of some players that can overcome a realm or two, but this is more than that. How can someone in Saint Soul 4th realm overcome someone in Saint Transformation 5th realm? That is some bloody nonsense if I've ever heard one."

"That does sound quite impossible," another person added.

"No, that is true," the Azure King answered. "One of my older cousins already told me what happened inside. They told me he beat them, but he used a puppet to do so. But he had defeated another girl before that, who had defeated the deceased leader. It is clear King Alex is capable of standing up to someone way stronger than him."

"I have already heard multiple accounts of how strong he is," the Crown Prince spoke. "There is no doubt he did what he did. Let's move on to whether what he did can be punished or not."

The Ivory Queen spoke this time. "Have you confirmed whether the words he said are true, Your Highness? About it being a retaliation more than anything," she said.

"I am not aware," the Crown Prince said. "Whatever happened between them happened inside a barrier that stopped sound and light, so nobody saw or heard anything. They did mention a golden dragon appeared from the side that terrified so many of them. It was an Immortal attack, that much is confirmed."

"I can confirm at the very least that it was the deceased leader who attacked first once their battle ended," the Silver Queen spoke. She brought out a talisman and handed it over to the Crown prince to look at.

The Crown Prince looked through the talisman and frowned a bit. "They lose 50 points when they attack someone they weren't in a duel with?" he asked.

The Silver Queen nodded. "The deceased leader lost his points first, which meant he attacked King Alex, and then King Alex attacked him, which is why he lost points afterward."

"Can you figure out why he died through this?" the Crown Prince asked. "Wasn't the talisman supposed to protect everyone?"

"It was, but it didn't this time around. I'm not sure why," the Silver Queen said.

"Any chances of them receiving an altered talisman?" one of the white-haired men asked. "Someone might have conspired to kill the man. Maybe the girl who was his subordinate. I hear people say that those two fought as long as all of the two years they were inside."

"Not possible," the Silver Queen said. "I handed the talisman to the ones in the Saint Transformation realm myself. If you say someone conspired to kill him, then that implies that I had a hand in this."

The room seemed to grow silent all of a sudden as people very obviously looked at the Silver Queen with such thoughts.

"No one thinks you're conspiring here, Queen Mao," the Crown Prince said. "I've talked to the others, and I hear that the talisman had worked as well as it could multiple times even against Immortal attacks. So unless King Alex used something better than that, there is no conspiracy here."

"Do you trust the others' words, Your Majesty?" another older man asked.

"As much as I can. They all say the same thing, some even swore an oath that they weren't lying. So I have no choice but to trust them," the Crown Prince said.

"Then... I guess it is obvious what should happen now," the man said. "The death happened in self-defense, so we cannot give much punishment except maybe a bit of fine."

"Do you all agree that it was in self-defense and thus wasn't truly murder?" the Crown Prince asked the rest as well. One by one, everyone nodded.

"It is settled then," the Crown Prince said and closed the formation. The barrier around them came down, and Alex was finally visible again.

Alex watched them curiously, and the Crown Prince gave the verdict.

"It has been deemed that whatever happened inside the secret realm, happened in self-defense. Therefore, there is no reason for King Alex of the Southern Continent to be punished," the Crown Prince said. "You are free to leave, Your Majesty."

Alex stood up from his seat. "Thank you for your time," he said and left the room, with a few following behind him.

The door opened and he met with Yao Ning's fervent pacing, which immediately stopped. "Your Majesty! Are you alright? Did they harm you?" she quickly asked.

Liang Shufen was no less slow in standing up from where she sat, quickly arriving in front of Alex.

Alex gave a small smile. "I'm alright, Elder Yao, Elder Liang. There is no reason to worry," he said.

"Did they punish you?" Yao Ning asked.

"What will they do to you?" Liang Shufen asked with a worried look.

"Nothing," Alex said. "They realized that it was in self-defense, so I was free to leave."

The two elders released long sighs in relief and quickly took Alex away from the place to their room to rest.

The Crown Prince walked out sometime later with a sigh. "I'll have to go figure out who to make the next leader here," he said. "You guys probably have your hands full with the upcoming tournament too, don't you?"

The Silver Queen sighed more than anyone else. "I've had my hands full even before this. I should be getting used to this after preparing these dozens of times, but I still feel so stressed each time."

"I'm thankful for what you're doing, Queen Mao," the Crown Prince said. "Anyway, I will be leaving now. I have work to and need to let Father know what happened here. He definitely won't be pleased that this happened while I was ruling in his absence."

"Heavy is the head that wears the crown, Your Highness," the Azure King said.

The Crown Prince chuckled. "You would know, cousin. Anyway, I'll see you all during the tournament."

And he walked away.

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In the Martial Ground, within a half-destroyed forest lay a corpse of a man cut in half. There was no doubt that the man was dead, but even so, there was movement there.

A small, blue light drifted from within the body, taking the form of a man identical to Zhao Boqin. The Nascent Soul that left the body moved away from the corpse, unsure who it was, or what it was doing here.

With barely any conscious thoughts, the soul followed the wind, drifting through the secret realm with only a single objective in mind.

However he could, he had to find the Dragon Emperor.

#### Chapter 1633: The Troubled Dragon Emperor

Long Tiankong, the Dragon Emperor, put the final ingredient of a healing pill he had been making and gestured it around with his hands to control it around the blue and gold cauldron in front of him.

Hand gestures weren't necessary to control Qi. At his level, simply using Intent was all it took to do what he had to do. However, the hand gestures did help in tricking his mind into quickly forming those Intent and he didn't have to pay attention to it.

Those hand gestures had become second nature to him, and it was hard to get rid of it anytime soon. Not that he wanted to.

The Dragon Emperor followed the recipe in his mind to the best of his ability. It was an ability trained over thousands of years, so it was more than good enough for what he was doing.

Countless formations ran around him. Some were as basic as formation to ward off sounds and spiritual sense, to ones that were specific to alchemy like formations to keep the energy in the cauldron from escaping or maintaining heat of the cauldron.

There was even a formation to improve the quality of the ingredients he put into the cauldron, although one could never be sure if an ingredient was good enough past a certain point.

With a few gestures of his hand, the ingredient he had put into the cauldron was completely turned to powder and was ready to be formed into a pill. However, before the powder was to be made into a pill, there was one more thing to do.

He judged the energy in the cauldron and took a deep breath as he tried to focus on whether or not what he was to do next was necessary. He realized that it was.

A white mushroom flew out from his storage bag, a rare ingredient that was said to be nigh impossible to get without tainting. Only a dozen or so untainted World Defying Mushrooms came from a patch of over a hundred.

And it was difficult to find such patches even in the Hundred Blossom Valley. So he had to be careful of when and where he could use it. It wasn't always he could use it, but this time he felt that it was the right time.

A talisman buzzed in the ring on the Dragon Emperor's finger, but he ignored it for the moment. He put the white mushroom into the cauldron and let it burn. Swiftly, the mushroom vanished, not even turning into powder, and the energy that came out of it was tainted by the energy in the cauldron, turning into it.

That was a good sign.

Now that he had used the mushroom, it was time to form the pill.

Qi rushed through the Dragon Emperor's body as he used the Profound Revolution of Myriad Combination technique that had been handed to him nearly a decade ago.

His hands flickered over the cauldron as he caused the powder to combine into minuscule lumps that were too small to see to the naked eye, and then those lumps joined together to form the actual pill.

When the pill formed, the Dragon Emperor's eyes shined brightly as even before it happened, he could tell he had done it.

The crackling of the skies was only a confirmation of what he had thought he had done.

Clouds formed overhead and lightning shone from time to time, causing the Dragon Emperor to look up in anticipation. He quickly recounted the last time he had successfully formed the Pill clouds. It was 5 days ago, nearly 90 pills before this one.

Even with a generous estimation, he had on average formed pill clouds once every 100 pills. That was an incredible achievement. He knew from the few records he had gotten to read that even in the higher realms, finding alchemists capable of creating pill clouds was extremely difficult.

There were things he doubted in the records as he couldn't believe that making pill clouds was so difficult since even he could make them. If they were true, however, that only went on to show just how good it was what Alex could do.

That thought made him frown sometimes. He wanted to know how Alex got the knowledge he did.

Any and all thoughts vanished the moment the first lightning bolt fell onto the cauldron. The Dragon Emperor had been distracted, but it was only lightning from pill clouds. He had come to get used to it by now.

The next 8 lightnings fell, each stronger than the last, but none were able to get past his defense. When the pill clouds disappeared, he pulled out the pill from the cauldron with a satisfied smile on his face.

He had managed to form another pill, and these ones were pills with 9 pill Veins. The last he knew of Alex, he had only been able to make pills with 6 pill veins, so he was doing better overall.

The Dragon Emperor put the pill into a small bottle and kept it in his storage ring. He started thinking of what pills to make next when he remembered the talisman buzzing from earlier.

He had to check what it was.

Pulling out the talisman, he sunk his consciousness into it and a while later opened his eyes again. His satisfied look from before had disappeared and a frown had taken its place now.

"It's a shame we lost a legionnaire, but you handled it as well as you could have," he spoke into the talisman. "Did you manage to figure out what questions it was that he wanted to ask?"

A while later, the answer came.

"I doubt this was what he had wanted to ask, but it will be hard to force him to reveal it, so forget about it for now," the Dragon Emperor said. "Reprimand Lady Mao for her carelessness regarding the life-saving talismans, and figure out if other talismans had been lacking, or if there is a flaw in the talisman."

An affirmative answer came from the other side and the Dragon Emperor sent no more messages.

He thought of focusing back on the task at hand, of taking pills, but the thought that a legionnaire had died made him lose all motivation at the moment. The thought that it had been done by Alex made him even more curious about the young man.

"The Phoenix is likely in rebirth, and the turtle and snake are hidden in their own domain."

The words he heard so long ago flowed into his mind again. It was such a distant memory that he wondered why he even thought that.

"A phoenix is reborn," the Dragon Emperor said softly. "And it chooses him. Why? Why does a ruler that has never needed someone under it, chooses to have one now? What is so good about him?"

The Dragon Emperor's eyes were unfocused while he stared at the ceiling as if searching for answers there.

"And it even made him a... a King." That last word was especially hard to speak for the Dragon Emperor. Every time he thought of the word, it reminded him of something else.

Flashes of memories passed through his mind. Memories of a time so long ago that people that were there had all died at this point already.

9 thousand years ago, when he could still be considered a very young man, he had taken a delegation to the Northern Continent to be part of the InterContinental Competition that was being held for the first time.

Only portions of the memories from back then were even clear to him at this point. He would have to search through his memories to recall more about the competition. What was very clear in his head, however, was one of the things he had done on that trip.

Under the direction of the then-head of the Snow Immortal sect, Xue Kuangren, Long Tiankong had visited the westernmost region of the Northern Continent.

A place known as the Nine Wells of Time.

Few knew he had gone there, and fewer knew what he had seen there. The Dragon Emperor himself forgot most of what he had seen in the earlier wells, but he remembered the prophecy of the final well very clearly.

The words of the prophecy still rang in his ears so very clearly, as if he had heard it just yesterday.

A prophecy that marked his downfall, and subsequently, his death.

The Dragon Emperor frowned when he remembered the prophecy once again. He tried his best to not remember it, but those were the words he remembered most clearly.

'It doesn't matter,' he told himself. 'It's just a bit longer. Just a few more years.'

There was not much longer before he broke through and became an Immortal. That prophecy would certainly not touch him there.

Before that, however, there were just 2 more things he needed.

The first was the final trade he would get from Alex any day now. Once he had that, he would be able to make pills with pill veins a lot more often and that would be enough to be respected in the upper realms.

Even if the lack of pill clouds was exaggerated, he could still do something with it.

It was the second thing he needed that was hard to get. Hidden behind a lock to which he had no key, it was impossible to get that thing.

All he could do was hope that the people he had sent to the other continents would soon find one of the keys.

#### Chapter 1634: Outside News

Alex sat in his bed, with the two elders sitting on chairs inside the room. They were still worried about him, but hearing that he wasn't to be punished had more than calmed their hearts.

"I'm sorry that you two were stressed because of me," Alex said with a small sigh. "I caused you to worry for me."

"That's our job, Your Majesty," Liang Shufen said.

"Not that you make it any easier," Yao Ning said with a small smile. "Did you kill this battalion leader all on your own? I heard his cultivation base was quite strong."

"We don't know much, Your Majesty, but we do know someone that strong should be too strong for him. Did you use some artifacts? Perhaps the Mirror?" Liang Shufen asked.

Alex brought out the dull mirror and handed it to Yao Ning. "I used the Mirror long ago, against an Immortal attack he made against me," he said. The handing of the mirror told Yao Ning what her job was to be for the next few days. She gladly accepted.

"As for killing him, I did it on my own," Alex said. "Just a sword and a technique I created."

A small smile appeared on his face when he mentioned his technique. It really had ended up becoming quite extraordinary. It was all thanks to Godslayer, so he would have to thank the spirit by quickly finding him some Darkness aura.

Not that it was easy to find though.

The elders were curious, so Alex explained what he thought he could regarding what he did in the secret realm. He talked about the first 6 months when he had to give away pills, about the next few months when he had to take Shan Wangjiu as an honorary disciple, and then afterward when he focused on just himself.

"You get headaches when you use your technique?" Liang Shufen asked curiously. "Why?"

"You're forcing too many Dao at once, Your Majesty," Yao Ning said quickly. "I'm sure it is because of that."

"It's more than that, but I can't explain what it is right now," Alex said. The mixing of 4 Dao at once was certainly heavy on his Intent, but over the past year, he had gotten used to it.

If he used it just as a technique, instead of using the Dao, he didn't even have to use much Intent at all. Although that significantly reduced the effect of the technique.

No, what was giving him those headaches was the 'embracing' he had been doing as per Godslayer's suggestions. He was sure that would come to pass soon as well, but for now, he would have to deal with the headaches.

"Enough about me. How have you two been? Did anything happen in the Realm of Trials or the auction?" Alex asked the two elders, watching the both of them curiously.

"There is good news on the side of the Trials," Yao Ning said with a soft smile. "This time around, 3 of our alchemists managed to get sent out with White light. They had all passed the final test."

"Oh, incredible," Alex said with a look of surprise. Last time it had been just him, so it was great news that 3 had managed to do that.

"5 more passed the penultimate test, and the rest fell behind quite a bit. They are weaker in cultivation base, so I assume it makes sense for them," Liang Shufen followed. She didn't know much about alchemy, so she assumed it made sense that people with higher cultivation bases were better.

That wasn't directly true, but indirectly it meant the same thing. With higher cultivation came higher spiritual strength, and that was what determined one to have greater Intent.

Everything else that mattered was talent, technique, and hard work. Rarely to do with cultivation bases. As long as one was a few realms into the True Realm or the Saint Realm, they could be similar to everyone else in comparison.

"Who were those 3?" Alex asked.

"Jia Heiyun, Zeng Chunwu, and Wu Shun," the woman answered.

Alex was taken aback. "Wu Shun got white?" he asked. A stunned expression lay over his face.

Wu Shun had been an alchemist he had picked up back in the Hundred Blossom Valley after he incorrectly diagnosed Yan Shumi, the girl with the Moon Goddess's body that was taken away.

He had traded with him to get his book of alchemy recipes, and in return, he had taught him alchemy so he didn't make a mistake. That had been over a dozen years ago now.



It was hard to believe the young man had improved so much in such a short time.

"I was surprised too when I found out," Yao Ning said. "Honestly, that young man never struck me as someone who would be that talented. Tells you never to judge someone without all the facts."

Alex smiled. "He did good, but so did the other two. Are they here? I should congratulate them, and maybe give them the recipe for the Spirit pill I made."

"They're not here, Your Majesty," the old woman said. "They're back in the Dragon Capital."

Alex frowned a little. 'The Dragon Capital. Right next to the Dragon Emperor.'

Smoldering anger filled him every time she remembered that the Dragon Emperor had in some way been responsible for Pearls' mother's death and quite directly responsible for his cousin's death.

Still, he couldn't do anything rash for now. Not because he was weak, but because in some way, the alchemist close to him could be taken hostage. At the very least, he would have to wait 4 more years for them to return.

He could do whatever he wanted after that. He could come back with might given to him by Bai Jingshen if nothing else.

"Let them be there," he said, letting go of his thoughts and emotions before smiling a little. "What of the auction?"

"The auction was quite big this time too," Liang Shufen said. "Although, your pills ended up selling for a little less than last time. We still made a lot of spirit stones."

With a nod, the old woman handed over a storage bag, and Alex looked into it. "Ooh!" he couldn't help but say in surprise. "What's that? a million Saint Spirit stones?"

"Close to that," Yao Ning said. "940 thousand."

"Great, great!" Alex said. "It was a good idea to sell more pills this time then. What about items you bought?"

Yao Ning looked toward Liang Shufen, and Liang Shufen brought out another storage bag. "We bought formation flags that could help grow plants as you asked for. Aside from that, there was only one item we could buy."

Alex looked in and found the item in a single glance. It stood out amongst the short formation flags.

A long and golden interlinking chain came out, with glittering runes carved onto each of the individual segments of the chain.

A talisman came along with it, explaining the details of the chain.

"Golden Binding Chain. Needs to be wrapped around someone to activate. Upon activation, it can bind the person and force them to hide their Qi, making them unable to use any techniques for as long as the chain is active."

#### Chapter 1635: Golden Binding Chain

The Golden Binding Chain at a glance was good. To take someone out of battle just by binding them meant it had to be incredible. But what sort of person would sell something like that?

There had to be some downsides to the chain, so Alex continued reading through the talisman.

The next section of the talisman went into how the chain was activated. A person had to hold onto one end of the chain and continue pouring Qi into the chain to bind the other person.

"That's certainly bad enough," Alex said out loud. Having to constantly grab onto the chain meant you could only use one hand. Some techniques required one to use both hands, so that was a downside to the holder of the chain.

Continuing, he found more downsides. The chain would only work for a maximum of 10 minutes before failing to work for a day again. The talisman mentioned that it was made this way to stop the chain from deteriorating too quickly.

'That's... idiotic,' Alex thought with a frown. 10 minutes was a long time for a cultivator, but it was still not long enough if you wanted to keep someone bounded but not dead.

Another downside was that the chain would only work on someone who didn't use Qi that was stronger than the holder's. If the other person's Qi was stronger, they could break and make the chain useless, so long as they managed to use it before the chain did its thing.

Thankfully, it wasn't all downsides to the chain. There was another good thing about the chain that to Alex outweighed many of its flaws.

If Qi was channeled into the chain while it was being used, before it even bound someone, it could pass through anything nonphysical. It took only a moment for Alex to realize what that meant.

The chain could bypass all defenses that weren't physical. All protective shields and barriers. The only way to dodge it would be to run away or use some sort of artifact to stop it.

"Not bad," he said. "How much did it cost?"

"87 thousand Saint Spirit stones," the old woman said with a sigh. "Almost everything we owned."

"Thank you for getting me this," Alex said. "It will be useful."

Alex put the chain into his Soul Space and then looked at the spirit stones. He took 800 thousand spirit stones and handed the rest to the elders to split amongst themselves.

"What other artifacts did I miss?" Alex asked.

As he had thought it would turn out, he missed many.

A formation artifact that created colors and sounds to disorient enemies.

The gauntlet released a sandstorm that cut through someone's spiritual sense.

Crimson darts that exploded upon impact, but only when they impacted the target chosen by their owners.

A beautiful painting of a river that could be used to summon a river of varying sizes.

A miniature tree that calmed one's mind when cultivating around it.

There were many such items from what Alex heard of the elders. The Elders skipped over the ones that they thought were useless, but still over a month's worth of auction, even the few items they thought were good numbered in dozens.

After a while, the elders stopped and stood up to leave. "You need to rest, Your Majesty. We'll come back tomorrow."

"Wait," Alex said. "Give me the Mountain Crushing artifact. I have been wanting to use it for a long time. I finally have the money for it."

Yao Ning chuckled and pulled out the artifact. "Then I suppose we'll have to come back more than a day later. Let us know when you're out."

Alex nodded and watched the elders leave. After they were gone, he brought out the Mountain Crushing artifact and put enough Spirit stones to last for two days.

Once done, he filled the inside with tiny pieces of Starforged Tungsten ore before getting in himself. Once he began, the artifact closed itself with a lid, and Alex started spinning within.

He hadn't felt this feeling for a while now. With the lack of funds, he had to stop a long time ago and hadn't been able to improve his body.

Now he did.

Dull light shined inside from the lid, a light that Alex had missed the first few years he body cultivated inside. The pain forced him to close his eyes all the time back then, but now he was strong enough that the pain didn't stop him from keeping his eyes open.

There was a circular light shining from the lid of the artifact as if embedded in the lid itself. It was like a glowing rune, but there was no such rune that he knew of.

It wasn't a circle in the first place either. It was a hexagon, that only looked circular because he spun inside the artifact. But his eyes were good enough to notice the hexagon even as he spun.

The shape in exact was a thinly drawn hexagon with some script at the center that wasn't runes. They weren't alphabets either. They were... not something he recognized at all, as if the letters to a language that no longer existed.

Or maybe to one that had never existed.

He wondered what that was. And what he wondered more was... where had he seen that before.

The hexagon tugged at his memory from somewhere, but he had seen so many hexagons in his lifetime that it was hard to tell what exactly this was reminding him of.

But it most definitely was, or the feeling wouldn't be this strong.

'Maybe something from my Clone's memory?' Alex wondered even as he spun. After not being able to remember what he was trying to remember, Alex let go of his thoughts and once more let the artifact do to him as it pleased.

He had thought of the drawing many times by now, so there was no point in trying this time again.

He was lost in his own thoughts afterward, no longer paying any mind to the pain that engulfed his body. He simply drifted into making different plans for what he wanted to do in the future.

There was the competition next, then he wanted to go to the final secret realm if he could make it. He couldn't leave without visiting the Ebony kingdom, so there was that too. And people spoke good things about one of the mountain peaks in the Ebony mountain range, so there was that too.

There was still much to do with only 4 years remaining.

Alex felt surprised when the artifact stopped working. He hadn't realized where time had passed. But when it stopped, he realized that over 2 days had already passed.

He came out of the artifact, his body marred in his own blood. His wounds had already healed at that point, so it was just a matter of removing blood from himself.

He quickly dressed and notified the elders that he was out. When he did, they let him know that the kings and queens wished to meet him soon if possible.

With a simple affirmation, a meeting was set up with the monarchs of all the kingdoms, and Alex made his way to meet them all.

#### Chapter 1636: Meeting with the Monarchs

Alex took the 550 thousand Saint Spirit stones that were handed to him not long after walking into the gathering of the monarchs.

All 6 monarchs were there, and none looked very happy to be handing away the money, not that anyone would be.

"You cheated, Your Majesty," Mao Yingtai, the Silver Queen said with a pout. "If I had known you could set up your own little system in the secret realm, I would've never bet against you."

It seemed the woman had switched once again, going from a serious woman to a happy little girl.

Alex couldn't hide his grin at all at the situation. He had momentarily forgotten about the bet, so when he was given the money, that was a surprise on top of what he had been given to him by the elders just days ago.

"It's not cheating, Queen Mao. His Majesty just did something we hadn't thought of," the Emerald King spoke. "We should have put some clause in the bet, but alas we didn't."

"It sucks having to give away money in a bet," the Ivory Queen said with a deep sigh. "Would you have considered teaching for that much money instead of it being through a bet?"

Alex thought for a bit and shrugged. "It would've been enough to make me consider. As for if I would, that would depend on my mood and free time," he said.

"You all made me lose 150 thousand in total," the Azure king said. "Do you want to force me to fork out more or what?"

The others gave a grim smile.

"Would you mind just doing it out of pity, Your Majesty?" the Gold King asked. He held a rueful smile and was clear that he had no hopes of Alex accepting.

"I don't know," Alex said. "I might give a lesson or two if I find the time. It will have to be close to when I leave. I don't want to waste my upcoming free time on anything but cultivation."

"Will you not be taking part in the competition?" the Silver Queen asked with an awkward look. "I had been meaning to ask you this question for a while."

"Take part in the competition?" Alex asked with a chuckle. "I killed the strongest man in the secret realm. I don't think I can get much out of the competition, now can I?"

"But you earned the most points, so you would be highest seeded in the competition," the girl said. "If you won't take part then..."

She sighed as she realized there was more job to do now. It was a good thing she hadn't set it all up yet before asking Alex, but things were in motion that would have to be diverted. And it was so close to the competition too.

"You won't take part in the competition?" the Ebony King asked. "It is a good place to showcase your skills if that is what you wish."

"I don't want to," Alex said. "Honestly, I don't even want to go to the competition, but I suppose I will have to. I'll watch a few matches. I want to see how far a few of them will go."

A thought came to him. "Oh right, do those outside the secret realm also join?" he asked.

"You have to meet one of two requirements to join the competition," the Silver Queen said. "You must be no older than 2 thousand years of age, or you must have been one of the last 2000 people to come out of the secret realm."

"Can the one that fails the second requirement join using the first one?" Alex asked.

"They can, which is a problem," the girl couldn't help but sigh as she said. "There are too many this time around. I don't know why, but there are nearly 5 thousand of them. And most of them seem to want to join just for the sake of joining."

"Too many players," the Gold King grumbled. "The next century is going to be difficult with the players slowly edging out everyone with their incredible talents or techniques."

He quickly glanced at Alex before realizing what he had been saying. "My apologies if that offends you, Your Majesty," he quickly added.



"It doesn't," Alex said. "I can understand your frustration with players. I'm a king too, so I have to go through something similar once I go back in 4 years."

An awkward silence drifted through the room as everyone came to realize that Alex wasn't going to remain here for much longer.

"4 years," the Ebony King said with some thought. "Wait, does that mean you won't be taking part in our Secret realm?"

"The Harmonious Balance Haven?" Alex asked. "I heard it was after the competition. Has the date of when it opens been determined?"

"It should open in about 3 years from now and last... well, that one lasts as long as the last treasure is found," the Ebony King said with a sigh. "I need to start going around gathering treasures as soon as the competition is over. That will be a pain."

Alex knew some things about the final secret realm. He knew that everyone there was suppressed to have the same cultivation base, and the objective was to gather treasures inside. He hadn't known that the treasures had to be first gathered outside to send in.

"How do you select who can go in?" Alex asked curiously.

"It depends on the treasures that are sent by the various sects or clans. Depending on the value of the treasures they hand over, they are given a certain amount of tickets to enter the secret realm," the Ebony King said.

"How many tickets do you have in total?" Alex asked.

"Depends on the number of treasures we have, but usually we have no more than 5 thousand entrants," the man said.

"That's fewer than I would've expected," Alex said. Even the Sundering Sanctum took more than that.

"It has to be few," the Silver Queen said. "The formation there uses up a lot of energy to suppress everyone's power. If there are too many, it won't work properly."

"I see," Alex said. That did make sense now.

"If you wish for me to save a ticket for you, I will," the Ebony King said. "But with the secret realm opening on... what? Your final year here. I don't know if you will want to go in. You can come out at any time, but it wouldn't be fun if you had to give up halfway through."

"That would suck," Alex said. "I'll think about whether I want to join or not later. Since I still have 3 years, there is no point in fretting about it now. I will be spending some time in the Ebony Kingdom as a tourist, so I will give you my answer then."

"You must tour the Silver Kingdom too, Your Majesty," the Silver Queen said. "If you don't, I'll get angry. You visited everyone else's kingdom."

Alex smiled and nodded. "I will, I will," he said. "I have nothing else to do after all."

With the Silver Queen appeased, the group of monarchs went on to talk about a few other matters, but soon enough there was nothing more to talk about.

Alex returned to his room and then spent the next few weeks waiting for the start of the Continental Tournament.

#### Chapter 1637: Tournament's Start

Alex was dressed in a golden robe with regal embroidery on it representing the red and purple colors of the Phoenix. He walked in a manner fitting a King as he approached the stands that were prepared for monarchs and others of high standing on the continent.

The Gold King, Ebony King, and the Emerald King were already present when he arrived with his two elders.

After a short greeting, the two elders moved a few seats back, letting Alex remain with the three.

The Ivory Queen arrived not long after him, making small excuses for why she was late, but she didn't seem much concerned about what others said.

The Silver Queen had her hands tied with the competition, so she was going to be later than most.

The Azure King and Queen arrived a short time later, greeting everyone.

There were many others that came in between them, but Alex didn't give much thought to those, even if they were people that he knew and recognized. A simple greeting sufficed with most.

The Crown Prince arrived sometime later, and along with him came people that Alex hadn't expected to see arrive.

Xiang Yuxie, the current Empress of the Continent made a regal stride through the stands and made her way to a predetermined seat at the front of everyone.

People stood to greet her, some surprised to even see her here. Soft whispers filled the room as people found it hard to not talk about what was happening.

Xiang Yuxie was the current empress, but she was never treated as one. Since not even the Emperor gave much thought to their marriage besides giving her a son, people quickly forgot about her.

However, even with that, she was still their empress, so they had to be respectful.

Next to her was Long Hanjue, her son. He was in his mid-30s now, no longer the 17-year-old Alex had seen when he first arrived. But he had kept his youthful look thanks to having entered the True realms early on.

Currently, he was in the True Emperor 2nd realm, so it wouldn't be long before he entered the Saint realm.

The Empress made it to her seat after greeting back everyone who greeted her, and the young prince did the same. The Crown Prince sat down beside her on the left.

To her right, the seat remained empty. The Emperor wouldn't be coming, but the seat had to be prepared nonetheless.

The Crown prince struck up a conversation with the others once seated, and Alex quickly lost himself in the talk too. There was still some time before the competition started down below, so they were busy talking.

A while later, another person arrived.

Zhan Luoyang walked softly, bowing her head slightly as she passed in front of everyone, greeting everyone she passed. Her head bowed more deeply in front of the monarchs and even more so in front of Alex.

She gave a soft smile toward her fiance and gave some soft words to the empress before sitting next to the prince. As the future Empress of the continent, she made much talk amongst the people in the back.

As the talk went along, the Ebony king mentioned something about Alex visiting the Ebony kingdom in the future and that seemed to catch Zhan Luoyang's attention.

She turned around to inquire about Alex, asking whether that was true or not.

"In a year or two," Alex answered her. "I promised Queen Mao I would visit the Silver Kingdom first. Once I'm done here, I'll take some time for myself and then head over to the Ebony Kingdom."

"I see," she said, a look of contemplation appearing on her face. If Alex didn't know any better, he would've thought the woman was in a dilemma and was making some important decisions right there.

"If you are free during your travels," she spoke softly. "Would you mind visiting our home? The Zhan Family will love to entertain your stay, Your Majesty."

"Is this coming from you, or Family head Zhan?" the Crown Prince asked his fiancée.

"No, this isn't father," the woman answered quickly and turned toward Alex, her gaze no longer wavering. "I request Your Majesty to visit our family house when you can. The sooner the better."

Alex found the situation a little problematic. She wasn't the first to request Alex to visit their house. There were many others who wanted him to come by their clan or their sects.

But this was the first time someone seemed so adamant, so forceful. Not to mention, the person asking him wasn't a nobody either. She was the future Empress of the land.

She wasn't yet the Empress, but that didn't mean he could stand to offend her. Not that he wanted to either. He liked her company, and helping her with Alchemy last time they were in the Azure King's palace had been fun.

"I will come by when I have the time," Alex said quickly to appease her troubled look. That confused him even more. Why was she so troubled? Was it bad for her if he refused?

"Does this have anything to do with..." he paused for a moment, not knowing if he should voice what he was thinking. Letting others know that he was going to help her with her Level 10 Alchemy test might make others believe that she hadn't done it all by herself.

"It must be to make a pill," Alex said. "I would love to spend some time talking about pills and alchemy with you, Lady Zhan."

Zhan Luoyang didn't show much change in expression, but there was a clear look of relief. "Thank you, Your Majesty. I will wait eagerly for your visit," she said.

The Crown Prince noticed the relief in her as well. "Don't worry, I will bring His Majesty. I haven't met Family head Zhan in a while, so I can meet him again," he said.

"No, you don't have to—"

"Don't worry, it's no trouble for me," the Crown Prince said with a chuckle. "You need not be troubled by it anymore."

Zhan Luoyang was clearly more troubled after hearing that, but now she hid it well enough.

Alex couldn't help but be curious about what was going on here.

All those thoughts disappeared with a loud bang that rang through the sky. Another bang, and then another bang.

Some bangs overlapped and soon it became apparent that strong fireworks were being used outside. Loud sounds of cheers rose through the crowd that was gathered in the arena stand below, and even sounds of large drums rang out through the noise from time to time.

The Competition had begun.

The celebration lasted for a short moment before a large screen appeared all around the arena, one appearing inside the stands that were prepared for the monarchs and leaders.

Mao Yingtai stood aloof at the center of a large stage, wearing an intricately laced silver robe with a flowing shawl around her.

She spoke and her voice echoed throughout the surroundings.

"Welcome to the Continental Tournament."

Sounds of cheers and celebration filled the stands and the voices and drums swallowed everything again.

This was going to be the biggest tournament that Alex had ever seen before.

#### Chapter 1638: The Tournament

Before the tournament battles started, Mao Yingtai had something else to do. She had to reveal the amount of points everyone had received in the secret realm, especially the ones that were to be seeded in the competition.

There were going to be 16 seeds in total, who wouldn't have to fight until the Top 16 were decided from the remaining. Adding the seeded, there would be another round to finalize the real top 16.

When the points were revealed for everyone to see, gasps of shock ran through everyone in the room, and most definitely through everyone in the stands outside.

Alex stood at the top of the list with nearly 80 thousand points. The closest to him was Sarah with only 29 thousand points. After that surprisingly the leader of the group of 5 tried to attack Alex while he was breaking through.

That man had a total of 21 thousand points.

Alex looked through the list and frowned at the lack of Zhou Boqin in the list. Had they removed him because he had died? Were they trying to hide his death?

Whatever the case, Alex saw no reason to worry.

A simple explanation of Alex not taking part in the tournament was made and the remaining top 16 were given the seed.

Alex remembered most of the names on that list. Every single one of them was someone he had fought. Many of them had even taken his pills while he trained his sword.

After that, they went through a few statistics of the various points based on age, cultivation base, and kingdom.

Surprisingly, the highest number of points gathered in total was by the Ebony kingdom. No one could tell if it was a coincidence, or if it had something to do with the fact that the Ebony kingdom was the largest in size of all the other kingdoms, with few places that weren't inhabited.

After that information was given, the Silver Queen had no reason to remain on the stage anymore and arrived at the stands with all the others.

After a quick greeting, Mao Yingtai slumped on her chair, almost disregarding the Empress and the Crown Prince around her, not to mention everyone else.

"I hate how much work that was," she said in a deep sigh. "At least I'm done with it now."

A few people around her gave her some words of comfort and then focused on the matches that were going to start soon.

The Continental Tournament was going to have over 8 thousand participants from what Alex had gathered, and that was going to take a long time to get through. Perhaps for as long as it would take.

Multiple stages were prepared for the starting battles, and soon they were underway.

Inside the shades stands where Alex and the rest lay, multiple screens had appeared, each focusing on one stage or another. People could only watch the matches through this as all Spiritual senses were blocked from entering the stage.

Battles started and ended, one after another. Many people that Alex did not recognize fought each other, oftentimes one easily coming out in front of the other with ease.

There were a few times when the fighting got tense, and those were the fun ones to watch, but this early on there weren't as many of such fights.



It took nearly 10 days for the first round of battles to end and the 2nd round to start. At that time, Alex saw the few people he cared about watching in the tournament.

Shan Wangjiu, Talia, Fang Yimu, and Mao Yingkong had to fight normally to get through the competition, but it wasn't that difficult for them. After this fight, he knew when they would show up in a fight next.

He left the stands once nearly 14 days into the competition and returned 2 days later. He had made excuses to have to go cultivate, and that was what the people thought he was making. Excuses.

Alas, he truly had to go cultivate. Going for 2 weeks was difficult without dealing with the Yin that gathered in his body. If he didn't do something about it, it would affect his cultivation base.

Not that he could tell anyone about it. It was a somewhat annoying situation in moments like these when people were gathered and could stay there for months without having to do anything.

He couldn't wait until his Qi was strong enough to not get affected by the Yin again.

Shan Wangjiu had a somewhat difficult battle against his next opponent, a man who used a giant war axe as a weapon. Their cultivation base was similar, so it took him a while to defeat the man. There were so many weaker opponents still around, so it was quite unlucky for both of them.

The rest had uneventful matches.

The 2nd round of battle ended faster than last time, in just 6 days. And then the third round began.

Shan Wangjiu had an easy time this time around with his opponent being someone weaker than him. He also seemed to have broken through to Saint Soul 3rd realm after the last battle, so he was doing better.

Talia had a rather difficult battle in the 3rd round. With cultivation in the Saint Core realm, she should have still been considered to be one of the stronger individuals in the competition. However, she ended up coming across someone just slightly stronger than her and ended up losing.

The rest managed to win through easily.

The next few rounds went faster and faster, and after a month with some setup of the hosts, only 256 people remained.

The Top 256 fought, and Shan Wangjiu sadly lost his battle. There were too many stronger individuals around and he couldn't make it past that.

Fang Yimu nearly lost as well, but she managed to make it through with the skin of her teeth.

Mao Yingkong had a much easier time than the rest thanks to not having to fight someone very strong.

Top 128 and Top 64 went by, and on Top 32, Fang Yimu lost against someone with a cultivation base of Saint Soul 8th realm.

Mao Yingkong managed to make it through, but when the true Top 32 was created by adding the 16 seeded individuals, he immediately lost to Ren Wujin, who had become his opponent.

On the final top 16, Alex recognized everyone and had no one he truly rooted for. If he had to name someone, it would be Sarah, but it was easy to see that she would most definitely be the person to win here.

Ren Wujin managed to pass the Top 16 and lost in the Top 8.

Teng Xuegang also lost in Top 8.

The Azure Prince lost in the Top 4.

The finale was between Sarah and the leader of the group that had attacked Alex.

After a fearsome battle that seemed to shake the world itself, Sarah managed to emerge victorious thanks to her quick wits and fast attacks.

Sounds of cheers and noise erupted at her victory, with fireworks and paper lanterns completely lighting up the night.

2 months passed since the beginning of the tournament and finally, it was completed with Sarah's victory.

Chapter 1639: Ticket

The award ceremony for the tournament ended after all the winners in the top 16 received their rewards.

Afterward, Alex found Sarah and handed her a bottle of pills.

The girl looked at the bottle in surprise. "Your Majesty, I cannot take this," she said quickly, but her eyes betrayed how much she wanted it.

"Take it," Alex said. "I announced before I entered the secret realm that anyone who challenges me and wins will receive a pill. You never got your share."

Sarah couldn't help but feel warm inside, and she clutched the bottle to her chest before bowing in thanks.

Alex nodded back and went to meet a few others before finally arriving next to Shan Wangjiu.

"How've you been doing? Are you training daily?" Alex asked the young man.

"I am, master," Shan Wangjiu answered quickly. "I've been training every day."

The people around them who heard Alex being called 'master' couldn't help but give a second look toward the young man. They recognized him from the competition, but not enough for them to know exactly who he was.

That got them perhaps even more curious.

"What do you plan on doing now?" Alex asked him. "Will you join any sects? I'm sure you'll get tons of invites if you just show some willingness."

"You're joking right?" the young man asked, laughing out loud as if the funniest joke had been made. "I'm a free spirit, master. No sect or clan shall bound me. I will go where my heart desires."

Alex couldn't help but admire the man. He wondered what it would be like if he wasn't constantly bound the same way.

As far as he could remember, he had always been bound by something.

Bound to the sect.

Bound to his need to heal his arm.

Bound to his need to return to his mother.

Bound to his need to find his father.

Bound to the Southern Continent.

Bound to the duties and responsibilities that came along.

Bound to a path of revenge.

How much longer was it before he wasn't bound by anything and he too could be a free spirit?

He could only imagine that it would be so after he left this world and went to a higher realm.

'Not much longer,' he hoped.

"Have you made any plans of coming with me to the Southern Continent?" Alex asked him.

The man gave a frown as an answer. It was a hard choice to make for him, and as he said, he didn't want to be bound.

"Forget I asked that," he said quickly. "Do you want to enter the secret realm in the Ebony Kingdom then?"

The young man's ears perked up. "The Harmonious Balance Haven? That costs a lot of money to get tickets from what I hear."

"I'll get you the ticket," Alex said. "Just tell me if you want to enter."

"Absolutely!" Shan Wangjiu answered. "I won't give up on a free chance to enter the secret realm."

Alex nodded and tossed him a small token.

The young man looked at the token in surprise. "What is this?" he asked, but he knew the answer before Alex even said it.

"A ticket to the secret realm," Alex answered.

"You got one already?" Shan Wangjiu asked.

"I thought you would want one, so I asked the Ebony king for it a few days ago," Alex said. "Don't lose it."

"I won't," Shan Wangjiu said with a blank look on his face. After a while, he found the courage to ask the question.

"Why are you helping me so much?" he asked. "I thought you didn't consider me your disciple?"

Alex blinked in surprise before scratching his chin in embarrassment. "Well, I suppose my mind changed while I was teaching you in the Martial ground," he said. "I still don't consider you my disciple, but you are definitely an honorary disciple of mine now. With all that I taught you, you can't be anything less than that."

A wide smile appeared on Shan Wangjiu's face and he showed his teeth in his grin. "Master!" he said in delight.

The two parted afterward, and Alex went to bid farewell to the Empress and the prince as they were to return to the Dragon Capital as well.

"I will leave too, Your Majesty," The Crown prince announced. "Let me know when you are done with your adventure so we can go meet the Zhan Family head together."

"I told you, you don't have to," Zhan Luoyang tried to whisper to the Crown Prince, but her words came more as more hurried than she would've hoped and louder still.

"I gave my words," the Crown Prince. "And now that you're acting this way, I must definitely come."

Zhan Luoyang could only give a small pout before turning toward Alex. "Please don't forget to come," she said. "As soon as you are free to."

Alex almost thought he could hear the urgency in her voice that she didn't want to say. Was he making himself think that? Should he go there right now?

"I will come as soon as I have the chance," Alex said.

The group bid farewell and they left. After that, the kings and queens left as well.

"Finally, I'm free," Mao Yingtai in a tone that was unfitting of a queen. She massaged her shoulder as if to show how tiring it all was.

Alex could imagine how tiring it was.

"When do you plan on going on the tour, Your Majesty?" she asked him.

Alex thought for a bit and answered. "A week later from now," he said. That was decided now.

"Great!" the Queen said. "I'll deal with the leftover work as soon as I can and then we can go together."

Alex looked at her in surprise. "I'm sorry. You're coming along?" he asked.

"Of course," the Queen said. "I've been working hard for the past 3 years in a row. I deserve a break too. And I wouldn't want anything else but a vacation as big as the one you're taking, Your Majesty."

#### Chapter 1640: Around the Silver Kingdom

The Silver Kingdom had many fantastic locations both on the mainland and the islands for Alex to visit.

They began touring the land from the very north of the Silver Kingdom, in a city known as Frostspire. Giant pillars of ice grew from the ground of this ever-snowing city, with most people finding residence within the alcoves formed from most of these spires.

The city was away from the ocean to its west and was just a few hour's flight away from the frozen mountains of the Silver Mountain range at this time of the year.

The ice spires were large and contained a mineral that could only be found in small clumps in this area of the continent which absorbed light and let it out slowly when the sun was down.

It was similar to the Sunstone that Scarlet lay on all day inside her golden dome, but this wasn't sunstone from what Alex could tell.

Whatever it was, it glowed with the beauty of a million stars, with specs of light glittering inside the somewhat misty ice spires, giving an incredible view for anyone living in the city.

As the city itself was built inside and around the spire, they lacked the need to glow lanterns around the city at night both outside and inside. Only deep inside a house where the sparkling light couldn't reach did people use a lantern.

Alex was fascinated by the city and enjoyed his time at the place along with his elders, the few guards who came with him, and Mao Yingtai who wanted to come here with him.

They spent no more than a week in the city, but that was enough time for Alex to experience the beauty of the city. If he remained there any longer, the mysticism of the city would dwindle, so he found little hesitation within himself to leave this city.

They moved on to the next city, Moonshadow Glde.

The city, if it could even be called that, was built inside of a large forest mostly comprising Silverthorn trees. The houses were set up inside open spaces in the forest and the pathways were also natural pathways through the forest.

The city was a small city compared to even most of the cities Alex had seen,, but it had a mayor, and it was one of the richer cities of the Silver kingdom.



The Silverthorn tree was a tree with wood as strong as steel, whose color almost made one think it was coated in silver. They were great for making artifacts and weapons, and could even be used by Saint realm cultivators.

The tree also produced a corrosive sap twice every year, and they were harvested to be sold throughout the continent. The Silverthorn sap wasn't just an ingredient for poison but was also a necessary ingredient in one of the antidote pills that Alex knew of.

The sap they produced was metallic in color as well, but was more solid than most sap and almost looked like metal balls at a glance. Aside from that, the city also grew various spices that only grew in the Silver Kingdom.

This was another incredible place for Alex to stay in.

Sunlight pierced through the large trees in the forest every morning, bringing broken rays down toward the city, and giving it an ephemeral look. The city folks were kind and hospitable.

With most of the people there having to leave to a sect in another city if they wanted to cultivate properly, there weren't many cultivators that caused problems in that city.

Even if they did, guards were always around to help squash any grievances before they got serious.

Because of the peaceful nature of the city, it was also very much a major choice of destination for any couple on their honeymoon.

More times than not, people congratulated Alex on finding a good wife. Mao Yingtai was quite pretty and she had been hiding her status in the place in fear of being treated not how they wanted, so people easily misunderstood them.

All the residents of the city thought was that they were some young lord and lady of some big city who got married and wanted to come there.

Alex tried denying the first few times, but after seeing how many people had the same misunderstanding, he let them have it.

They left some time later, going south this time to a city called the Ivory Veil.

It was a city in perpetual fog that settled from the warm hot springs that were all around the town. A magma vein ran deep below the surface of the city and the water that sprung out from underneath was always heated when it came out.

The hot springs were said to have an incredible cleansing effect on the body and Alex found that it was no lie when he lay in one of them on his own. Pearl and Whisker enjoyed the place with his as well.

He didn't know how much of a cleansing it did to a body as he had already gone through Mortal cleansing and there wasn't much impurity in his body that his Qi didn't destroy each time he cultivated.

His body was particularly good at destroying things that it considered not good for the body.

Still, he felt fresh as a man who peacefully slept through the night every time he walked out of those hot springs.

After that, they went to Quicksilver Heights, a city on a plateau in the Silver Mountain range. The plateau the city was built on was perfectly flat as if someone had taken a knife to the mountain and cut off the top half of it.

The city had a few martial houses where battles took place all throughout the year, and many people came to watch or participate in those battles.

Alex stayed there just long enough to see the sights he thought he had to and left.

He visited many more cities after that. Whitejade City, Silverglint City, Freshpearl City, and Pureshore City were some of the best cities he saw throughout the Silver Kingdom, but that wasn't to say that there weren't many other cities with their own beauties to see.

Aside from the cities, he also met many great sects and families, people who were more than excited to host both Alex and Mao Yingtai on their vacation.

Some of the people Alex had met before, some he met for the first time. All of them made sure to only show the best to them.

It took Alex 9 months to get through all the cities in the Silver Kingdom before it was time to leave the place.

"Have you made plans on where to go next?" Mao Yingtai asked him the day they were to leave.

Alex nodded. "I will return to the Capital for a while and then go to the Ebony Kingdom," he said. "I don't have many years to remain here, so I will have to make do with what I have."

The Queen nodded and Alex left the place with his 2 elders at his side. Going through a teleportation formation in the city, he arrived back in the Dragon Capital instantly.

When he did, the sky rumbled with lightning bolts as a pill cloud covered the sky above the palace.