

Alchemy 1641

Chapter 1641: Blackheart City

"It happens every other day," Jai Heiyun answered Alex when he came to meet her. "I don't know how he's doing it, but he's been doing pretty well with forming pill clouds. He's very consistent too."

Alex grimaced when hearing that. The Dragon Emperor had gotten good, and he would only continue to get better. "And he wants the final trade next year too," he said softly.

"What trade?" Jai Heiyun asked curiously.

"Not something for you to worry about, child," Yao Ning said from the side. The two elders were grimacing the same as well.

After arriving in the Dragon Capital a week ago, Alex had gone to the palace to stay for a few days. At that time, the servants of the palace had notified the Dragon Emperor of his arrival, and Alex had expected to have to meet the man soon.

However, instead of asking him to meet him, the Dragon Emperor had simply sent a single message.

"I will meet you in a year when we'll have our final trade," he had said.

Alex very much openly frowned now, causing Jai Heiyun to get worried about what was happening.

Seeing that he was causing others to worry, he quickly let go of his expressions and instead put on a simple smile. "Anyway, it is time for me to leave," he said. "Once again, congratulations on your results in the Realm of Trials. Getting white there is no laughing matter."

"It's all thanks to you, Your Majesty," Jai Heiyun said with a proud look on her face.

Alex walked away. He said his goodbyes to the other cultivators once more, including Wu Shun, who was now a better cultivator than most of the ones that Alex had brought along from the Southern Continent.

After saying his goodbye, Alex went to the Teleportation house from where he teleported to the Blackheart City with a small honor guard to keep him company.

Wan Deming, the Ebony king was there to welcome him to Blackheart City, the Capital of the Ebony Kingdom.

Tall black walls surrounded the city with spires inside that grew to be large. While the outside walls were painted black, the inner city was as colorful as every other place.

The bustling city was wide in some places and narrow in others. Plants of various species grew along the sidewalk separating the pedestrian side of the road from where the carriages and carts moved.

Small and large shops selling all sorts of goods and services covered both sides of the roads, and more than once Alex saw people with high cultivation bases walking around the street with a lofty look to them.

Wan Deming wasn't much of a talkative man, but he still put on a simple conversation while they went to the palace. He asked Alex about the Silver Kingdom, and how he liked his time there.

And Alex answered every question without much hesitation as he had truly come to love the places he had visited in his journey.

"Which country do you like the most?" the man asked him.

Alex found it hard to answer the question. Every country had its own good parts and bad parts, and comparing them was like comparing apples to oranges. It was more to a matter of preference than anything, but then that probably was what the man was asking him about.

"I can't choose between the Silver Kingdom and the Emerald Kingdom for now," Alex answered truthfully. "Both of those kingdoms had the most fascinating cities."

"Why not the other Kingdoms?" the man asked.

"The Ivory Kingdom and Gold Kingdom were more snow and mountains than anything, so even while the cities were great, they didn't leave a lasting impression. They were also not as varied."

"As for the Azure Kingdom, it probably had the most amount of cities I visited, but all of those cities were generic cities and they didn't entertain me just as much either."

There was also the truth that he couldn't enjoy the 3 Kingdoms as throughout his time there, he had to constantly think about the Oathbreakers.

Sometimes it was in fear of if they would find him again, and sometimes it was in desperation to see if he could find them again.

After his short explanation, the Ebony king slowly nodded. "Well, I hope the Ebony kingdom will top your list," the man said. "I will be leaving soon to start collecting more of the artifacts from around the kingdom, so I will take you on some of my journey that I know you are going to like."

Alex accepted the proposition. He was interested too.

"Why do I see so many strong individuals walking the street so casually?" Alex asked once the conversation seemed to die a little.

One of the counselors to the King spoke after noticing what Alex was talking about. "Those are people hoping to get a hand on the ticket that is to be sold for the secret realm," he said. "Most of them hope to get a greater chance to buy one by coming early, even if they should know they wouldn't. The tickets aren't to be sold for another year and a half."

"They're just desperate. It's not easy to get your hands on the ticket after all, with so many people looking forward to it," the King said and the matter ended there.

They returned to the palace and the King hosted Alex as well as any other monarch had. They chatted when they had the chance and shared knowledge and stories of their past.

Alex got to understand the king closely and felt like he was a friend. A week later, they were ready to leave for their journey.

"Where are we going?" Alex asked him.

"The Celestial Peak," the King answered.

Alex showed a hint of surprise. He had known about the place and had even been planning to go there himself when he had the chance.

"What are you going to do in the Celestial Peak?" Alex asked curiously. From what he could tell so far, the Celestial Peak was simply the tallest mountain in all of the continent, perhaps the entire world.

As such, people didn't exactly live there.

"We're going to the Blackspine city that is right next to the Celestial Peak," the King said. "There are 2 great families and 2 notable sects in that region. I will deal with them, while you can enjoy your journey to the highest peak of the world."

Alex nodded excitedly. "I would love to go to this peak," he said.

"You will love the sunrise you see from this place," the man said.

Alex was about to say something when he felt like he missed something in those words that he needed to revisit.

"Blackspine City," he said softly. "I have heard this name before, in relation to something else. What was it?"

He tried to go through his memories as the name couldn't have been that much in the past.

"It's not a surprise you've heard of it," the King said. "It's where I come from. Or rather, it's where the sect I used to belong to still is."

That was when Alex finally remembered.

"That's right," he said with a surprised look. "That's where the Mountain Crushing sect is located."

Chapter 1642: Mountain Crushing Sect

The Blackspine City stood on the western side of the Ebony Mountain range, in the shadow of the single tallest mountain in the world, known as the Celestial Peak.

The city itself was moderately large with 2 great families making this their place of residence and 2 other sects lived close to the city as well, about an hour's travel on a carriage from the city.

When Alex and the rest arrived in the city through teleportation, the city was still in shade from the mountain to the east. Those who were here for the first time couldn't help but peer to the east where the mountain stood up tall like a spike out of the ground.

With all the mountain range still in shadow, marred with black, they truly did look like black spines growing from the ground.

"Please let everyone know we are coming," the Ebony King told his subordinate who quickly went to carry out his information. The King then turned toward Alex and asked them to come along.

Alex wandered through the city with the King, slowly going around the place while making their way to a lodge where they would have to stay for the night.

"I thought we were heading over to the Celestial Peak," Alex said with a hint of confusion on his face.

"Oh, it is better to climb the peak at night so you'll be there right around the morning," the King said. "We will head on over very early in the morning tomorrow."

"Ah!" Alex said. "I did remember reading something great about viewing the sunrise."

"Yes," the Ebony King said excitedly. "It's— no, you'll have to see for yourself. It's incredible."

Once the rooms were purchased for the night and for some reason many more days to come, the King left to visit the two great families of the city while leaving Alex behind in the lodge.

Alex had remained by choice as he did not want to visit any random families. The only place he did want to visit was the Mountain Crushing sect and even that was just to ask a few questions.

They remained in the lodge for nearly 5 hours when the King returned to rest for an hour before telling them that they were to leave for the Mountain Crushing sect then.

The sun was glowing orange on the horizon to the west when Alex and the others arrived at the Mountain Crushing sect. While the sect was half an hour away for carriage, to cultivators it was only a few minutes away by flying.

The Mountain Crushing sect was large but most of it was unused land. They held even more land in the past but had to sell it so they could afford to keep the sect running from what Alex heard along the way.

The Ebony King had once been a disciple of this sect, so he knew a bit more about the sect than outsiders.

An elder man with gray hair and beard walked out to greet the two monarchs, and even from just a glance, Alex could tell that the old man had a body that was stronger than regular cultivators.

The old man welcomed the group of them and they walked inside.

The Ebony King started casually conversing with the man while telling him about Alex. When the old man heard that it was Alex who got the Mountain Crushing artifact, he couldn't help but show a surprised look. As well as a slightly saddened look.

The Ebony King handled his business with finding treasures while some other elders entertained Alex in his absence.

Alex talked with them for a while before getting to business.

"As you know, I bought the Mountain Crushing artifact," he said, catching the attention of the elders who were there. "Could I know who here knows the most of the artifact so I can direct my questions to them?"

The elders looked at each other and one of them spoke. "Everything we can tell about the artifact should have been written in a book we provided along with the artifact. Did you not receive it, Your Majesty?" they asked.

"No, I did," Alex said. "I was hoping to ask questions that weren't answered in the book."

"That would be me then," one of the older elders said. "After Elder Gun went to his final closed cultivation nearly half a century ago, I should be the most fitting to answer your question."

Alex turned toward the man. "I hope you can answer my questions then," he said. "My first question is what is the artifact actually called?"

The various elders gave a confused look and turned to look at the man who spoke.

"We do not know," the man answered. "The artifact has been passed through our sect for thousands and thousands of years, and while our sect has managed to remain, nobody knows how they came to this artifact or what it is called."

"Even the oldest records we have call it the body cultivation artifact of the Mountain Crushing sect, and as such it gained its name," the man said.

Alex had expected as much but had hoped to get more. "So you don't know how it came to the possession of your sect either, do you?" he asked.

The old man shook his head.

Alex expected as much too. The Sundering Sanctum —or as the spirit inside of it liked to call itself, the Playground— was also an Immortal artifact, and from what Alex could remember it telling him, it had come from the Immortal world along with a master that migrated here once the Eternal War had ended.

Alex had guessed that this was the same case as well.

"Then, my final questions," Alex said and everyone paid attention to him. Alex knew it was not the right thing to ask, but eh just couldn't help himself.

"What did you do with the artifact that caused your sect to degrade through the years?" Alex asked.

Everyone suddenly stiffened and eyes darted around the room, looking to see who would speak. Perhaps to see who would dare speak.

Alex waited for a few minutes and sighed as he got no answer. That he had expected too, but he at least wanted something.

The King arrived a few minutes later and it was time to leave. They flew in the dark and Alex told him what he had asked them and hadn't gotten any answer to.

The King remained silent for a while before speaking.

"It is unlikely you will ever get an answer to that," he said softly. "At least, they won't give it willingly away as they were told not to."

Curiosity took over Alex and he looked toward the King for more answers. The king was about to continue speaking, but he held his tongue and the rest of the flight continued in silence.

Alex expected to get no answer that day and went to his room to prepare for his climb to the Celestial Peak.

However, deep at night, a knock came to his door.

"May I come in, Your Majesty," the Ebony king requested.

"Come in."

The King walked in and closed the door. He walked up close to Alex and sat down.

"You wanted to learn why the Mountain Crushing sect fell from grace," the king said. "I came to answer that."

Chapter 1643: The Truth Behind the Downfall

"You are going to tell me about the downfall of the Mountain Crushing sect?" Alex asked the King. He hadn't expected to hear anything else about this after today.

"Well, I'm involved in it somehow, so I will," the King said. "But... in exchange, I wish to buy some of your Earth and Fire Spiritual Root enhancement pills."

Alex shook his head, causing the King's spirit to dampen a little.

"I do not have a Fire Spiritual Root enhancement pill. I never had," Alex said. "But if you'll tell me about the Mountain Crushing sect's downfall, I will give the Earth Spiritual Root enhancement pill for free."

The King's spirit returned at once. "Okay, that will do too," said more than happily.

"So... what did happen?" he asked.

The King took a deep breath and started. "The downfall of the Mountain Crushing sect, it... isn't exactly the fault of the artifact you bought," he said. "It is in parts, but it is only the accessory to a much larger cause."

Alex listened to it intently.

"The Mountain Crushing artifact was used carelessly in the past, but the elders had already recognized the slippery slope it created if it was to be let go for long. As such, everyone who says it is the artifact that caused the sect's downfall is completely wrong."

"They were already aware of the problem and were working to amend it."

"The real problem came when this kingdom lost its king," the King said. "Before this was the Ebony Kingdom, it was the Lin Kingdom. When the Lin Kingdom fell, the Emperor put someone to rule over the newly formed Ebony Kingdom."

Alex nodded. That was what he knew about the Eastern Continent before he had come here. There were 5 Kingdoms, ruled by individual Kings, who served the Empire as a whole.

But because of their rebellion, they were all executed, and new kings and queens were put in their places.

"About 4 thousand years ago, when the first King of the Ebony kingdom wanted to abdicate, the Emperor had to look elsewhere to find a suitable candidate," the man said. "Searching around, he found me."

Alex nodded. That was to be expected.

"I was only in the Saint Core realm at the time, but I had lived long enough and had enough experience to handle the kingdom," the man said. "However, instead of just letting me be the next king, the Emperor made a trade instead."

"What sort of trade?" Alex asked.

"In return for me becoming the King, the Mountain Crushing sect was to let him use the Mountain Crushing artifact to improve his physical body," the King said.

Alex felt an understanding forming inside of him. A question he had for a long time was going to be answered here.

"The Mountain Crushing sect accepted his request, and I became the King," the man said. "Except, the sect never realized what sort of bargain they had made until the end."

"Instead of taking away the Mountain Crushing artifact to use elsewhere, the Emperor used it right there in the sect. And the elders were forced to stick to their side of the bargain by helping him body cultivate."

Alex's eyes went wide. "And he made them use it until they used up most of their resources?" he asked.

The King shrugged in response. "He brought 3 Saint Spirit Veins from what I hear, but they were far from enough. He forced the sect to keep using the artifact until he realized his body wasn't going to get stronger without stronger material inside the artifact."

"By the time he had realized that the sect had used most of what they owned," the King said. "Having spent it all on His Majesty, the elders didn't have much remaining for their own disciples, and slowly they had to lower the amount of disciples they took in."

"Being no longer able to body cultivate like they used to, these disciples also started leaving the sect one by one. Even some of the elders left," the King said. "The other sects took advantage too and started expanding, taking over what the Mountain Crushing sect previously had hold of."

"Slowly, the sect had to become smaller and smaller to not break from within. Now, its a husk of its former self, and even the artifact that gave them their name had to be sold so they can continue to keep going," the King said.

Alex remained silent for a while, taking in all the information.

He finally knew that the Emperor's physical body was as strong as one could get using that artifact in the Saint realm. He had always known the Emperor was strong physically as well, but this was better than he had thought.

He would have to worry about that later when the time came.

"Does the Mountain Crushing sect have no chance of a comeback?" Alex asked.

"Only through a miracle," the king said with a dry laugh. It was the sect he was talking about. While he had left it long ago, he still belonged to it one way or another.

Just like Alex would always belong to the Hong Wu sect and the Tiger sect one way or another.

"Is that why they were so hesitant to tell me?" Alex asked the King.

"The Emperor told them to not talk about his presence, so they won't talk about it," the King said.

"Oath?" Alex asked.

"No, but an order from the Emperor is just as good as any oath," the King said. "I shouldn't be talking about it either, but..."

The King shook his head. "That's why I didn't answer it while we were returning. There were those guards, and I didn't want to say anything in front of them."

Alex nodded. "But you did now because of the pill," he said.

"Well, yeah," the King said. "I saw no reason to hide this information. You have the artifact now, so you deserve to know why the Mountain Crushing sect fell. And it was not entirely because of the artifact."

Alex nodded. "So if I make use of it in moderate amount, I will be fine," he said. That was good to know.

The King nodded. "Anyway, I will leave you for now. We have less than 6 hours before we need to climb the Celestial Peak," he said.

Alex nodded and quickly searched through his Soul Space to find the pill he was looking for. He put it inside a bottle and brought it out. "Here," he tossed it to the man.

The King caught the bottle with his Qi and slowly brought it to his hands. Opening the stopper, he saw a 5-veined pill inside. "Not 6 veins?" he asked meekly.

"I made these long ago," Alex answered. "I do not have the ingredients to make one currently. They are very hard to come by."

The King nodded. "Thank you," he said. "I will take my leave then, Your Majesty."

Alex nodded and the King left.

Once he was alone, Alex let a look of hesitation show up on his face.

"Dammit!" he said worriedly. "Not only does he have the strongest cultivation base under an Immortal, he also has the strongest physical body under an Immortal. How the hell am I supposed to defeat someone like that in a fight if it comes down to it?"

Chapter 1644: The Celestial Peak

When Alex was requested to get ready to leave, it was still 2 hours past midnight. He took no time to be ready and within 15 minutes, everyone was gathered outside on the streets where few people still walked and most of the shops were closed.

The moon was out, glimmering like a pale sphere of silver with a piece missing on the side. The spotless moon was otherwise beautiful in the open night.

"Perfect!" King Wan said as he looked to the sky. "No clouds today, so the views will be better than we could've hoped for. You should consider yourself lucky, Your Majesty. It's not every day that we see such a cloudless night."

Alex nodded but said nothing.

"Did we have to leave this early?" Yao Ning asked with a slightly annoyed look on her face. "It's still the middle of the night. When does the sun rise anyway? 5 in the morning?" she asked.

"Today it will rise some 20 minutes past 5 in the morning," one of the subordinates next to the King answered her question.

"So, we still have 3 hours. Isn't this a bit too early?" she asked. "I can see the peak right there. Even if it is the tallest mountain in the world, would it take us more than 20 minutes to fly up there?"

"Senior Yao," the King began speaking. "The Celestial Peak does appear close for us, but it is not so. And we cannot fly all the way up to the peak. We will have to walk a quarter of the way to the peak, which is why we need to leave as soon as possible."

"We cannot fly all the way up there?" Alex asked. "Why?"

The King was about to answer when one of his counselors, a man in a bright purple robe answered. "If you do not know about this, it will be better if you experience this yourself," he said.

The King quickly nodded. "Right, it will be better for you to experience it yourself," he said.

Alex gave a doubtful look but said nothing.

"Should we leave then?" Liang Shufen asked impatiently.

"Yes, we should," the King said and was about to turn around to lead when he seemed to remember something and looked back. "Oh right, I should warn you about something before we leave."

His gaze turned toward the two elders instead of Alex when he spoke again. "If either of you seniors has a Yin-based cultivation or has some Yin constitution, it would be better if you prepared yourself. No one has been harmed just yet because of it, but... they are weakened a lot when they go to the Celestial Peak and take some days to recover themselves."

Alex frowned when he heard that. Neither Yao Ning nor Liang Shufen had a cultivation base with Yin being any vital part of it, but he did. His body constantly created Yin and if something happened to Yin while he was up there, it would be bad.

It would be especially bad if the Yin backfired on the people, and he was an especially dangerous variant of Yin, one that was most likely comparable to Immortal Qi.

"What's so bad about Yin?" Alex asked the man.

"Well, it's like..." the King tried to think of ways to explain. "It's like quenching a red hot iron rod in cold water. The suddenness of what happens makes a woman, and sometimes a man weak afterward."

"Quenching an iron rod?" Alex frowned a little. "Is it the coldness at the top of the Celestial Peak?"

The Celestial Peak could even now be seen without any snow, but anyone who knew about heights knew that the higher you went, the colder it got. The Ebony mountain ranges weren't known for being snow mountains, but at the height that the Celestial Peak was, it very well might as well have been a snow mountain.

Only, because the Peak was so high, even clouds did not reach the top. The celestial peak looked like a sword thrust out of the ground, reaching for the heavens.

"His Majesty spoke wrong," one of the Counselors said. "What he meant to say is the exact opposite. Instead of a red hot iron to water, it would be like pouring drops of water into a red hot iron."

"Ah, right, my bad," the King said swiftly. "I wasn't trying to make a comparison to Yin and Yang when I said that, but with hot and cold, I should have realized. it is exactly this way."

"Yin and Yang," Alex appeared surprised at that. Drops of water to a red hot iron. He understood what they were trying to say. "Is there a lot of Yang at the top of the Celestial Peak?"

That sounded ridiculous. How could a place so cold possibly have enough Yang to cause a person with Yin to have problems? Or was he wrong in considering this place to be cold in the first place?

"If you do not have to worry about your Yin being stripped away for a few days, we should be moving," the King said. "The rest you should experience on your own and find out. Having me tell you everything here will not be much fun."

Alex thought for a bit and nodded. As long as the problem with Yin was only for a few days, he would be fine. In the first place, the only thing Yin had to do with him was his Undying Physique and that was only to improve it.

There was nothing for him to worry about.

They set off immediately, the group of nearly 10 flying toward the Celestial peak.

As they flew, the mountain got closer and closer to them, but even after flying for nearly 15 minutes, they weren't at its feet. They had thought the mountain was close, close enough to reach the peak in a matter of a few minutes, but now they realized how mistaken they were.

The mountain was the tallest mountain they had ever seen, but that was still while they were far away. Nearly half an hour later when they were finally at its feet they realized just how tall the mountain was.

Like look at a cliff wall, the mountain stood tall and erect for thousands and thousands of meters into the sky. Even as he tried to, Alex failed to see the very peak from where he stood. His head was fully tilted back and even with that, it was hard to see the peak that slanted just beyond what was visible from here.

"The mountains surrounding the Celestial Peak are tall by nature, with over 15 kilometers of vertical height, but the Celestial Peak itself stands nearly 22 kilometers tall," the King explained.

Alex gulped at the height. 22 kilometers tall. What the hell sort of height was that?

Even when flying through the sky within the clouds in large ships that crossed continents, the height was never over 10 kilometers, if that. And the height of the Celestial Peak was more than double that.

"There are exactly 5 peaks in the Celestial Peak, each at a lower height, but the one people refer to when they say Celestial Peak is usually the one that is at the very top, the one we will be going for today," the King said. "The lower peaks are for weaker cultivators to claim, so we should have no worries about reaching the top. Although you will still struggle a little even as strong as you are."

Both Yao Ning and Liang Shufen's faces had paled at the height of the mountain. They seemed to both fear something and realize something at the same time, but they didn't bother telling Alex.

From what he thought he saw, what they realized was supposed to be something obvious. Although what it could be, Alex couldn't see.

It was probably a realization that came with age and experience, and Alex didn't have very much of that just yet. He was going to get one today it seemed.

"Let us climb," he said.

With a nod from the Ebony king, they all started flying.

The mountain known as the Celestial Peak was nearly 7 kilometers wide at the widest part, and while sparse trees covered it at the feet, after about the 4 kilometer range, no tree or wildlife could be seen.

Alex could see paths along the top, made by both mortals and cultivators who dared to climb the thing. While most flew, there were still many that climbed on foot.

The mountain itself was full of giant rocks that studded out of the ground, along with winding paths created through years of rain and wind.

Around 7 kilometers, Alex felt the slight lack of air resistance that was always there when they flew and at 9, it was almost nothing. Flying was simple right now and they continued flying upward.

However, when he reached 12 kilometers, the resistance returned. It didn't return immediately, but it was there and it was getting stronger.

When he crossed the 13 kilometers, it was stronger, and at 15 it was now stronger than when flying normally. And unlike regular air resistance, he couldn't even work around it with his technique.

At this point, he understood that there was no regular resistance. His Qi was failing to push him upward. It was still doing a good enough job for now, but at some point, he understood that it would become impossible for him to continue flying.

It was at 17 kilometers when it happened, and that was when they all landed on the side of the mountain, with the remaining climbing to be done on foot.

Chapter 1645: A Barrier

The Ebony king had failed to continue flying a long way down and was pulled up by the multiple Saints around him. With a cultivation base in the Saint Soul realm, he had stopped being able to fly long before Alex did.

The few other saints had failed before Alex too, and only 3 could continue flying beyond the 17-kilometer point, 2 of them being his elders.

"What exactly is going on?" Alex asked once they were all standing on solid, albeit slanted ground. The air here was thin, almost nonexistent and breathing was hard, although not hard for a cultivator.

They were strong enough to last hours without breath so long as they had Qi to keep their body moving. Some cultivators were said to go on for days, but it needed practice.

"This is the most we can fly," the Ebony King said as a matter of fact, but Alex failed to see the point the man was trying to make.

"When did you learn how to fly, Your Majesty?" old Yao Ning asked him with a thoughtful look on her face.

Alex thought for a bit. If his memory was correct, it was around the time both of his masters had taken him as their disciple.

"I was in the Bone Tempering realm, I believe," Alex answered, sending a murmur of surprise through the people. Most people weren't supposed to be able to fly until they were in the Organ-tempering realm.

"And how far could you fly at the time?" the woman asked.

"Just a meter or two off the ground, if that," Alex said. A glimmer of understanding seemed to try and peer through the back of his mind, but he needed a little more.

"And it improved as you got stronger, did it not?" the woman asked.

Alex nodded. "It did," he said.

"How much did it improve?" the woman finally asked.

Understanding poured through him and he finally realized what he had been missing. "Is there still a limit when you are a Saint?" he asked before instantly realizing that there was. He had just felt the limit.

"You're young, Your Majesty, so maybe you haven't had the time to try and find your limits," she said. "Us old folks have lived long enough to sometimes have thought if we could reach the stars. But anyone

who did think of that would know that there was only so far you could fly as a Saint. We cannot leave for the star just because we want to."

Alex slowly nodded. He was surprised he didn't know that until now even though the explanation had been right there since he began cultivating. The limits of how far he could fly had been there even when he was a True realm cultivator. And yet, he had somehow forgotten about the limit as the constraints he had unknowingly set on himself made him feel as though he had no limit.

"I wonder why that is," Alex asked softly, although nobody answered him. No one knew it seemed. Either that or he had just asked these people why water was wet. It was something so obvious to these people that there was no point in asking about it.

"It's the same way if you try to make it to the edge I hear," one of the counselors said.

"We should start walking now," the Ebony King said hurriedly, catching everyone's attention. "We don't want to be late."

The path to the Peak wasn't difficult, especially because a path was already made with the thousands of people who visited the top every year. While the path was still rough, there were almost stairs in the mountain.

They weren't made there but rather were carved out of the mountain itself.

Alex and the group saw a few people on the way up, mostly weaker individuals who needed to catch their breath before they continued. The King remarked that those people should have stopped at a lower peak, but aside from that, he said nothing about them.

Alex was very much surprised at the thinness of air at this height, and at times his lungs tried to pull in air only to pull in nothing. It was an extremely weird experience.

They had been walking for nearly an hour, and even then it felt like they were still far away from reaching the peak. Alex could only just start to see the peak as the very slightly curved mountain revealed the peak to him.

His Demon Eyes could already start picking up movements at the top, which surprisingly his spiritual sense could not. There was something... wrong with this place where spiritual sense didn't work.

Alex didn't believe it was the fault of the mountain, but rather the fault of the height in general. Whatever was making them not fly so high was also suppressing the spiritual sense.

He knew that especially well because he could move the spiritual sense in all directions but just up. 'Just what the hell is causing such a phenomenon?' he wondered.

He was so very curious that he had to tell Godslayer.

Godslayer had to be woken up to ask the questions. For the past year, the sword spirit had nothing to do with Alex doing nothing but visiting the various cities. Keeping the Shadow aura around him took effort even for him and sleeping was a good way to conserve that energy.

It took a moment for Alex to tell the Sword Spirit everything, and after taking it all in, the Godslayer answered.

"I don't know what exactly causes this phenomenon, but I do know that it is not only your world where this is. Every other realm from the Bloodhaven to the Divine Sanctuary, from Myriad Spirit realm to the Sky God's palace, even Sun's Talon has this phenomenon."

"It's part of... for lack of a better word, a barrier around the world that does two things at once," Godslayer said.

Alex listened intently.

"First, it is a barrier, or maybe a suppression field, that stops regular cultivators from flying outside of the world. Only when you are strong enough, usually an Immortal would you be able to leave this place and fly into space," Godslayer said.

"It stops us from leaving?" Alex asked. "So we cannot just fly away?"

He wasn't sure, but he thought he remembered someone talking about flying away from one realm to another, only that it was difficult due to the distance. There was no mention of any such phenomenon.

"No, you cannot. Not unless you are an Immortal," Godslayer said. "Although that doesn't mean you can't leave. If you took a boat that could fly you away or had an Immortal help you, you could still leave."

"After all, it is just stopping you to go on your own."

Alex nodded slowly. The Ebony King had been aided into flight for part of the way through. "And what is the 2nd part of the phenomenon?" he asked. He wondered if it was about the spiritual sense, but it seemed likely that it would be part of the first explanation.

"The 2nd one..." Godslayer paused a second, seemingly thinking. "Oh right, it's so simple that you sometimes forget something is even causing it."

And then he spoke a single word.

"Atmosphere."

Alex paused in his step before quickly continuing his walk. "I'm sorry, atmosphere?" he asked.

"Yes," the sword spirit said. "The 2nd part of his phenomenon is that air sticks to one side of the world, the side that had life."

Now Alex had to stop. A few of them noticed his stop but said nothing. Yao Ning appeared next to him, but Alex quickly told her it was nothing.

"What do you mean?" he quickly asked Godslayer.

"You do know that your world is just a large chunk of floating rock where only one side, the flat side had an atmosphere, right?" the sword spirit asked.

Alex thought for a bit and nodded. He knew that, didn't he? But why was this being considered a phenomenon? Where else would the atmosphere be if not the side with life?

Thinking along the vein, he realized that while he knew that to be the case, he never knew why. To him, there being atmosphere on the this side was his version of water being wet.

It just was.

But now that he questioned himself why, he started to see that it was weird.

"The atmosphere stops at the edge of every world, like trapped in a bubble atop the floating rock," Godslayer said loudly in his mind before an almost whisper trickled behind it. "Why do I know that?"

Alex wanted to think about why Godslayer was questioning himself, but another part of what he had said caught his attention. His head jerked to the right toward one of the counselors who had said something that he had ignored previously.

"Lord Jian, it was you who said something about not being able to fly near the edge, right?" he asked. "Did you mean the edges of this world?"

"Oh yes, Your Majesty," the man quickly answered. "I've not tried it for myself, but I've read records of those who tried to reach the edge in the east and they describe an almost similar thing happening where they cannot fly close to it. It was almost as if their Qi failed them."

"But their boat could take them?" Alex asked.

"I don't know. They never went to the edge itself," the man said. "They were afraid of falling into the void."

Alex thanked the man and returned to his thoughts.

So, it wasn't because he was flying too high that he wasn't able to fly any longer. It was because he was reaching close to this figurative barrier that lay across the world.

Chapter 1646: The Edges of the World

Godslayer spoke a bit more about this barrier that was around the world, and how it affected the entire world and was weaker as it got lower.

There wasn't much to learn after that, but at least Alex was now happy to know why there was atmosphere only on one side of the land. That made him want to see the other side.

How did it look on the other side of the world? A place with no air, no life, nothing. He would go there one day, but it would be a long time in the future.

They continued walking silently, a few of them silently panting for more air, failing to get used to the lack of air. They knew they didn't have to breathe, but even then muscle memory took over for the most part.

Alex was the same many times and had to keep himself from trying to suck in air and fail.

The other worlds that glittered in the sky, or what most people simply referred to as the stars, slowly dwindled as dawn seemed to be on the horizon.

"Just 2 more kilometers," the King said. "We should be able to make it."

The moon had moved further to the west as well, so there wasn't a lot of time to go up.

The pathway up got more and more ragged by the distance, and the closer they got, the worse it was. Still, they were good enough for them to continue climbing.

As they climbed, Alex felt a peculiar sensation that he couldn't give a feeling to. It was like a gentle wind caressing his hair, but there was no wind for his face to feel. Something was there but he couldn't tell what it was.

"Do you guys feel that?" Alex asked.

"Feel what, Your Majesty?" Yao Ning asked.

"I don't know," Alex said. "But it is growing stronger I believe. But still, it is very mild."

Nobody knew what he meant. They tried using their spiritual sense, but even with that, they felt nothing. "If you're not feeling well, Your Majesty, we can rest for a while before climbing. Or we can go back down and come back tomorrow."

"No," Alex quickly said. "I'm alright. And this feeling isn't necessarily a bad one either."

But what was he feeling?

Alex decided to continue his climb and see if it became apparent once he was closer to the top. So, the climbing continued.

Around the time they reached the 21-kilometer mark, the sky had brightened to the point that nothing but the moon was visible. Around half an hour more and the sun would rise.

"We should go faster," the King spoke. His voice was soft now, which had nothing to do with his lack of ability to speak, but rather the lack of air to transfer those sounds to their ears.

They picked up their pace and as they continued, the feeling Alex felt got stronger. It got stronger, but it was still very mild. He couldn't tell what he was feeling or if he was really even feeling anything.

After climbing for another 15 minutes, they arrived at the peak.

The peak was a small plateau of around 20 meters of uneven ground and crumbling rock. There were several people there already, all of whom were cultivators in the Saint realm.

A few of them recognized the King and others and made simple greetings, but this was no time to talk with someone else. Just minutes from now, the sun would come up and they would experience something that one could only experience in this place.

Alex found a place without anyone there and sat cross-legged on the freezing dirt. The feeling here was stronger than ever, but he found it hard to focus on it. Especially, he had something else to see in front of him.

Sitting at the edge of the peak, he saw the other side of the mountain range.

The tall mountain cascaded rapidly and a dark land lay below from where Alex could see. Large glowing cities looked like embers floating from a campfire in the night. They were many and far spread, but they were tiny from this height.

From where he sat, he almost thought he could reach the ground in a single step. It felt like he would be jumping down a slightly taller step. He knew how far down that land was, but it felt right at his fingertips.

Beyond the land, which there wasn't much of in his vision, lay the slightly glistening ocean of dark colors. It was only visible thanks to the brightening sky and it looked like the sky itself, reflected in its colors.

There were many dark spots along those waters, like tiny pieces of trash floating in a small puddle. But Alex knew those were islands, and some of those were as large as cities if not countries.

How incredibly small they looked.

As Alex's vision moved forward, in the distance he saw something. His eyes glowed purple and what he saw became clear as daylight. His breath grew slightly haggard at the sight.

He saw the edge of the world.

Like jagged pieces of land jutting out from the ground, they covered the horizon. Their silhouettes were clearly visible with the sun slowly shining behind them.

It was coming out of the horizon and soon they would see the sunrise.

Alex stared at the jagged pieces of land, surprised they were there in the first place. He had heard about edges, but never knew there were lands on those edges. Curious, he asked Godslayer about it.

"Every world has it," Godslayer said. "I don't know how they came to be, but they were tall and they are strong. Not as tall as mountains, but those jagged edges go for a few kilometers in some places."

"Why are they there?" Alex couldn't help but ask.

"To stop the water in the ocean from flowing out," Godslayer said, his tone almost making it seem like it was supposed to be obvious. "If not for that, your world wouldn't have oceans."

"Huh?" Alex asked. "That barrier doesn't stop the ocean?"

"No, only the atmosphere," Godslayer said. "I told you, it's not a real barrier."

Alex nodded thoughtfully. "Thank you for telling me," he said.

"That's alright. You wouldn't know these things anyway," Godslayer said. "I don't even know if you're supposed to know it. Not that there is any purpose to learning about it this early. What can you even do with this information?"

Alex said nothing.

"Now that you do know this, make sure never to attack those lands," Godslayer said. "If you do, the Heavens will destroy you the moment you even show any intention of doing so."

"What?" Alex asked Godslayer in surprise. "Then I should have known about this. This shouldn't have been hidden from us."

"It doesn't matter," Godslayer said. "Not that any of you can go—"

A few shifting of clothes and movements around the plateau told Alex that it was beginning. Just as he understood it, the first ray of light trickled its way past the jagged lands of the edges.

And fear gripped Alex's heart.

Chapter 1647: Intense Sunrise

Alex was terrified for a reason he couldn't understand. But he knew he wasn't alone as Godslayer's terrified shouts came at the same time.

"GUARD YOUR SPIRIT!" Godslayer shouted in his mind. "DON'T LET IT GET INTO YOUR SPIRITUAL SEA!"

Alex didn't understand what was happening, but he quickly took his spiritual energy and placed it around his Spiritual sea. And for better or worse, did the same thing with his Soul Space as well.

He thought of doing the same to his dantian as well, just in case, but it was too late.

The trickle of sunrays turned into a blast, and the full force of the sun hit Alex like they never had.

Yang.

Glorious, burning, raging Yang.

Yang like he had never felt before washed through him, burning away all remnants of Yin that were around him and in him.

During the travel up the mountain, a bit of his Yin had gathered up in his dantian. But with just a second of the rays of sunrise hitting him, they were all gone.

And either to his fear or surprise, the Yin that was part of his Qi now was gone too. All that was left was Yang Qi, and it burned brilliantly in his dantian.

The sunrise itself was magnificent and it lasted nearly a minute before the entire sun was out of the horizon, but the wave of Yang was there for no more than 3 seconds.

And those 3 seconds were enough to leave him gasping.

Alex was holding himself up with his hands behind him on the ground, ragged gasps trying to suck in what air there was at the peak. He didn't have enough focus on the matter at hand to realize that there was no air for him to breathe.

They had told him it would be like drops of water to a red hot iron and they weren't lying. In fact, they had underplayed the severity of the situation. The yang that had hit him just now was most certainly as strong, if not stronger than the one he got from the fruit.

Shouts of cheers came from all around Alex, but he was too busy trying to focus on himself and see what was wrong.

And there was quite a bit of wrong here.

Many years ago, after Alex had eaten the Nine Yang Divine Tree's fruit, his body had gone through an evolution where he had attained the Sun God's Celestial Yang body. However, that had come with a drawback of filling his body with Yang, causing him to heat up, and affecting his everyday life.

And the main cause of it had been the Yang source that still remained in his body like a beacon of light.

The situation was dealt with when he finally found the Yin bead and took it within him to work in tandem with the source, to not only give Yang but Yin as well, causing harmony throughout his Qi, making him stronger.

What would be regular Qi for others was instead a mixture of intense Yin and Yang that controlled each other.

That was why when the Yin had become slightly stronger after healing the young girl with the Moon Goddess's body, the Yin had taken to filling his dantian slowly as it overpowered the source.

However, right now when the wave of intense Yang went through him, it had undone all of that. The Yin half of his Qi was gone, and only Yang remained. Not only that, even the Yin bead seemed to be hiding in fear, and the Yang source took over their balance, slowly causing his entire body to be filled with Yang.

Alex burned with it.

It was bad.

"Are you alright?" Godslayer asked from his mind.

"I'm fine, I think," Alex said. "I might have to leave this place so my Yin can return. I can't think of any other way right now."

"You're not alright," Godslayer said. "I can sense Yang even in your Spiritual sea. What is going on? This is dangerous."

Alex was taken aback and quickly checked. He was still properly protecting his Spiritual sea, but it could stop his own body from interfering as much as he could stop his mind from giving his heart the orders to beat.

"Control your Yang," Godslayer said.

Alex nodded and started doing so. Controlling Yang was not easy, but it was something he could do. Thanks to having Supreme Yang Spiritual root, he could somewhat control the Yang Qi, and that had to be more than enough for now.

Alex took the Yang Qi around him and his body and slowly pushed it down. It was a little difficult, but not so much that it caused a problem. Even as he pushed it all back into his dantian or at least far enough from his Spiritual sea, he could already begin to feel the return of Yin in his body.

It was a bucket in front of a vast ocean, but it was coming back.

"Good thing you closed your mind swiftly," Godslayer said when he felt the burden in the spiritual realm lessened. "Had I not let you know in time, or had you not done it in time, all of the Shadow aura I've been holding on to would've been destroyed at once."

Alex gave a start at those words. He hadn't even thought about the Shadow aura. Hurriedly, he checked the Blood God's Manual where he had been keeping the Death aura, and felt better once he realized it was still there.

It was a good thing he had blocked off the Soul Space too. Although with the size of his Soul Space, it would've been surprising if the strong Yang had found it.

Things calmed down, but it was only calm in comparison to what had happened in the instant of sunrise. He still had raging Yang in his body, and whether it was for good or not, for the first time in what felt like forever, he could feel pure Yang.

Yang to him was always together with Yin, so learning about it had been difficult. But now that he was once again free to feel just Yang, he studied it and soon found himself getting lost in what Yang was.

Time passed and no one came to disturb him. Everyone recognized that he was in a half-trance, learning a few things. It was late at night when Alex came to his regular senses and frowned.

'I need more,' he thought. A good portion of the Yin he had lost had returned, which had made learning about Yang difficult once more.

He looked around and found his elders there, along with a few other people, but the King had left. He had his job to do, but he had left a few of his people behind with Alex.

Alex let them know he was alright, but that he would be spending a day or two more in this place.

Unable to refuse, they left Alex to do as he pleased.

Alex prepared whatever he could to the best of his ability and waited as the sky on the horizon once more brightened slowly.

The intense sunrise would come once again.

Chapter 1648: Yang

Alex was better prepared for the 2nd sunrise that was to come.

The crowd around him was different now, with people leaving and new people coming to visit the peak. Aside from his people, few were the same ones from yesterday.

Not that he had half a mind to memorize who they were.

As the sunlight glittered behind the edges of the land far in the east, Alex took a deep breath and immediately stopped when he realized what he was doing. He was so used to breathing in and out to calm himself that he ended up doing so here as well.

This time around, he would just have to do it without that.

A flow of his spiritual energy wrapped itself around his spiritual sea. He had already put away his Blood God's Manual to a corner of his Soul Space that was far beyond the point where the Yang could touch it.

His Soul Space would be opened just around the Nine Yang Divine Tree and hopefully, that would help it grow a bit. The World Tree wouldn't do too badly to get some sunlight either.

As for his Dantian, there was no point in blocking it out. He was not sure if he could even do it.

As the first glints of light shined through the horizon, and in the next instance, the intense sunlight brought forth another wave of Yang that only lasted 3 seconds.

But those 3 seconds were once more enough for Alex to be left gasping once more.

The feeling of shock wasn't as great as the last time, but it was still intense, and Alex still hadn't gotten used to it.

He quickly controlled himself, getting into a cross-legged position where he closed his eyes and concentrated on the intense raging Yang that burned within him.

Once again, he felt the potent Yang and sent his mind into it, searching for knowledge hidden within its brilliance. A distant warning from Godslayer made him keep part of his attention active to look for problems, but the majority of his mind was lost in searching for the meaning behind Yang itself.

Finding answers now was so much easier than at any other time.

One after another, understanding of Yang poured into Alex.

Yang was light. Yang was life. Yang was vitality.

Yang was heat and it was radiance.

It was the other side of the coin to Yin which he already understood. Understanding Yin should have made it harder to understand Yang, but it somehow helped Alex instead.

Having Yang and Yin intertwine in his body forever left him with an understanding that many didn't. On top of that, having a body that was most supremely related to Yang of all things helped more than he could ever credit it for.

Time slipped by Alex and he became lost in his own search for knowledge. A part of him focused on blocking Yang from entering his Spiritual Sea, but that was the bare minimum it was doing.

He wasn't even sure what was happening in the Soul space. He didn't have the time or luxury to check. He could only hope whatever was happening inside was good. The only thing to worry about there was his book after all.

Alex was taken out of his concentration for the first time when a hit of intense Yang made him stumble back like a scorching sun burning him awake. He hadn't realized that night had come and gone, and the sun had come up again.

He had unknowingly gotten used to the returning Yin too, so when it disappeared once again, it left him surprised.

In a way, it was good that he had been brought out of his trance. He was so close now and he believed he could do it in one single go.

Alex brought out a pill and quickly ate it before returning to his medication so as to not lose the train of thought he had.

Falling back into a trance was easy when one ate the Dao pill. It was even easier since he truly was on the verge of learning everything he could.

Only 3 hours passed since sunrise, and everyone that still remained atop the peak was suddenly alerted when they sensed the Worldly laws. Everyone looked at Alex, realizing it was him, but what surprised them was something else.

Whenever someone tried to learn a Dao, the World Laws descended from the heavens. But this time around, they didn't descend at all. They simply... appeared around them.

It was almost as if they were already in the heavens.

Thousands of different aura coalesced around the people, each one looking surprised. They tried to peer into the aura, trying to see what they were, but every single one of the aura contained mysteries of the world and an answer they couldn't find so easily.

The Worldly laws threatened them to not dare do it again. Or at least that was the feeling everyone got when they tried to learn from it.

It was similar to interfering with someone else's progress in something the Heavens were strict upon, and thus disturbing the heavens wasn't allowed here.

Everyone stood silent where they were, letting the worldly laws concentrate on Alex. They could feel one aura stronger than any other, the aura that they had felt just this morning when the sun came up.

The aura of Yang.

People gasped in surprise when they realized what was happening. Alex was trying to learn the Dao of Yang.

Would he be successful? Would he suffer a failure? People were curious and the inability to be sure pained them.

Yang wasn't like the other elements. Alongside Yin, the two were greater elements that were harder to find and harder to learn about. As such, seeing how Alex was trying to acquire it made them extremely shocked and curious.

With how great of a chance he had been given, Alex wasted no time. He learned everything he could, understanding Yang to its essence, and understanding its fundamentals.

When he opened his eyes an hour later, he had successfully learned the Dao of Yang.

The Worldly Daos remained around him when he opened his eyes, so they were his to study. Even as they receded, he looked through them and found something that he thought he could learn.

But it was difficult to say what it was. It felt like something he was close to now, but the Dao didn't come. Even bits of understanding didn't come by the the Worldly laws simply dissipated into the atmosphere.

They were always there and never there at the same time.

He opened up his lungs and paused. Once again, there was no air. He had to remember. He wasn't fully attentive to the present yet.

He looked at the sky where the sun was a good way up the sky, although noon was still a good few hours away. He calmed himself and looked at the world in front of him.

The brilliant blue ocean and lands of brown and green gave a serenity to the scene that would be hard to find anywhere.

Alex stopped blocking his spiritual sea and let out his spiritual sense. When he did, he realized that the feeling he had felt while he was coming up the mountain had become clearer.

Chapter 1649: Scary Intent

The feeling Alex got that seemed to surround him was... familiar? He wasn't sure if he was correct in thinking that or not, but it did feel that way. At the very least, it wasn't a hostile feeling.

He didn't move. People would start congratulating him and whatnot, so he stayed there like he was still in a trance. As long as they didn't bother him right away, he was okay with this.

Godslayer spoke in his mind though, telling him to focus on his guard and whatnot, but Alex ignored him as well, focusing only on the feeling to see what it was.

He had started feeling this when he had climbed past the point of flight and it had grown stronger. Now, he was feeling it even better.

No, it was his body that seemed to feel it. A vague impression of something softly resonated in the back of his head, and finally Alex realized what it was that he sensed.

Intent.

He was sensing Intent. The Intent wasn't directed at him or the other people, so it was barely a feeling. "Elder Yao, can you feel any outside Intent around you?" he asked the old woman.

Yao Ning heard the message that was sent through Spiritual sense and quickly started concentrating on her. At the height they were, Spiritual sense was highly restrictive, so she couldn't fully use it, but just covering the plateau alone was no problem.

She closed her eyes and concentrated, but no matter how much she did that, there was nothing she could feel. In the first place, could you even feel Intent that wasn't directed at you?

"I feel nothing, Your Majesty," she said. "Are you feeling something?"

Alex said nothing. He was confused enough by himself to make others feel the same. He was feeling Intent that was not being directed at him. Intent with no aura.

That should have been impossible, or at least if it was possible, he had never experienced it before.

But he did feel it now, resonating in the back of his head. Intent that surrounded him. The question now was... whose Intent?

There was nothing around him. Could it be that it was not 'who' but rather 'what'? What's Intent was he feeling?

A thought came to him, almost too profound to be there, almost too... impossible. The feeling had become stronger after he had learned his Dao. Two things had happened right then, and either one could be a possibility.

The first was that he had successfully learned the Dao of Yang, and the Intent had something to do with Yang. As someone with Sun God's Celestial Yang body, it could be that he was sensing some Intent that was left behind by something full of Yang.

That was the lesser possibility though.

The greater possibility in his mind was that what he was feeling had to do with him learning the Dao right here. Or more accurately, him bringing forth the Worldly laws here.

If the remnants of the Worldly laws were what he was feeling, then could the Intent belong to... the Heavens?

That was a scary thought to think. How could the heavens have Intent? Was it really the case of a 'what' and not a 'who' then?

'Heavens have Intent!'

The thought was enough to make everyone weep from fright. Everyone who knew enough thought of the heavens as something real. But at the same time, it was something abstract, and something distant.

But if the heavens had Intent, if heavens could enforce Intent, then didn't that mean the heavens were intelligent enough to be sentient?

Heavenly Judgment, Worldly Laws, Tribulation Lightning, Pill Clouds, and so many more things relied on the heavens. If the Heavens were to suddenly find intelligence and do what they wanted on their own accord... that was a dangerous thought.

"Godslayer," Alex called him. The fear of what he thought he had found out wracked his brain and the thoughts were distracted and slow.

"Are you hearing me, boy? Keep the Yang—" Godslayer had been talking to Alex when Alex's voice cut through him. "What?"

Alex gulped and did his best to not sound scared. "Do... do the Heavens have Intent? Are the Heavens... intelligent?" he asked.

Godslayer said nothing. The floating clear crystal in the Spiritual sea could be angry, surprised, happy or all 3, and Alex wouldn't know what he was feeling at the moment.

Godslayer took his time, and when he finally spoke again, it was a question. "What... makes you ask that, boy?" he said.

"I... I can feel an Intent around me, and I think it was left behind when the Worldly laws came here earlier. It is much stronger than the last time," Alex answered.

Godslayer remained silent for a while longer this time, and Alex got a suspicion that he was hiding something.

"Tell me!" Alex demanded before catching himself doing so. "Please," he added quickly.

Godslayer sighed. "You're too weak for this to be of much concern to you. I don't know how you could find out while being so weak, but forget about what you learned. Many people are known to have created Inner Demons that destroyed them just by learning this fact."

Alex felt a pang of fear go through him. But it was done, wasn't it? He had already learned the truth.

It was indeed scary to learn that the Heavens had intent and could thus currently be or in the future form intelligence at any time. But was it that scary that you would create Inner Demons out of that knowledge?

Alex didn't believe he would.

"That's alright," Alex said. "Your response was an answer on its own. Haha, I won't have to despair in the future since I now know that the Heavens are intelligent too."

Alex felt slightly better and was about to stand up when Godslayer's voice stopped him.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"About what?" Alex asked. "That the Heavens have intelligence? Or might have in the future. I don't know which one of that is true currently, but neither will frighten me."

Godslayer wanted to leave the talks at that, but he found himself wanting to continue. No, he had to continue.

"If you think that misconception is truth, then the shock truly might hurt you in the future," he said, catching Alex's attention.

"Huh? What do you mean?" Alex asked. "Was I wrong?"

"Yes, you're wrong," Godslayer said. "Goddammit, I shouldn't be telling you this."

"What? Tell me!" Alex wanted to know.

He couldn't believe how he could be wrong. There was Intent around him, and it had come along with the Worldly laws. Unless his previous assumption of Yang being the answer was true. But Godslayer acted as if he had the right of it until he didn't.

"The Heavens aren't intelligent, kid," Godslayer said.

"But I can feel the Intent," Alex said. So there had to be a chance it could be intelligent in the future.

"You can, I don't doubt it," Godslayer said. "Even Immortals should be hard-pressed to sense it, but you do and I don't know why, but you have the wrong idea of what is going on."

"Then what is going on?" Alex demanded.

"The Heavens don't have Intent," Godslayer answered, his words thundering in his mind.

"The Intent is the Heavens."

Alex was stupefied.

"...what?"

Chapter 1650: Theories

The Intent was the Heavens. What did that mean?

Alex knew what that meant, or at least thought he did. But surely that couldn't be true, could it? How could that possibly be? The possibility itself felt absurd to Alex.

Intent required intelligence and that came from...

No, what he was thinking could definitely not be possible. He must've been misunderstanding once more. After all, he had made a misunderstanding last time as well.

Surely this time he had assumed something wrong in the process too. It was better to be absolutely sure he wasn't letting his mind roam into places he would rather it not go.

"What do you mean?" Alex asked Godslayer.

He was inside his Spiritual sea now and was looking at the small white crystal sphere with dark clouds of shadow aura floating around him. He had no face and thus Alex couldn't see any expression on his face.

But the sound came from the sphere nonetheless.

"I mean what I said," he said in a deep voice. "The Intent is the Heavens."

"Yeah, you said that," Alex said hurriedly. "But what do you mean by that? Surely you don't mean that the Heavens are a product of someone's Intent."

"That is exactly what I mean," Godslayer said softly. As soft as his voice was though, the confirmation rang like giant gongs in Alex's ears.

The Heavens, the thing that could be said to be the biggest thing of all the worlds was simply someone else's Intent? How was that possible?

And how strong did someone have to be to be that strong?

"Who..." Alex slowly asked. "Who does the Intent belong to?"

Or was it a 'what' again? He had thought the Intent belonged to the Heavens before, but if what they called Heavens was the intent, then who or what did that Intent belong to?

"We don't know," Godslayer said. "It's one of the great mysteries of the world."

"Mystery?" Alex asked. "So people in the other worlds, these so-called false Gods, do they not know the answer either?"

"To my knowledge, no," Godslayer said. "But my knowledge isn't as extensive as those gods. The most I know is what a regular late Divine realm cultivator would be knowledgeable about. Maybe a bit more due to my... circumstances at the time, but not a lot."

Alex was about to speak when Godslayer continued.

"But, I do not doubt that a few of these individuals would have inklings of what is going on," Godslayer said. "I, myself have a theory, although I cannot prove if it is true or not."

Alex was in shock and nearly missed what Godslayer said. After the disappearance of the True Gods, the false gods were the greatest power in the collective realms. And yet, they didn't know who created the Intent.

"Wait, could it be the True Gods?" Alex asked as soon as his thoughts reached there.

"That's... what was I getting to," Godslayer said slowly. "That is my theory too, but proving so is difficult."

"Why is that your theory? Any evidence suggesting it?" Alex asked.

"None that I can think of," Godslayer said. "Maybe I was just thinking about the gods all those years that I believed it to be the case. Mind you, this is not a rare theory."

"Everyone who can feel the Intent once they're strong enough and is aware of the existence of True Gods comes to this very theory. Only they can never prove it," Godslayer said.

"What other theories could there be?" Alex asked. "An existence that was stronger than these True Gods?"

"There are theories of existences greater than them creating this Intent, but those are rare," Godslayer said. "Rather, the major theory is that billions of different weaker Intent are coalescing for a specific goal. In this case, survival. The combined Intent of every human existence of a realm forces the world to form a barrier and protect them."

Alex was slightly stunned. "That's... that sounds plausible," he said. "Subconscious Intent for survival, huh?" He gave it some thought.

As Alex thought, Godslayer spoke once again. "There is another theory too, one that is in some ways major too, but not as strong as the first too."

Alex stopped in his thoughts and paid attention to Godslayer. "What theory?" he asked.

"The possibility that we are wrong about sensing Intent in the first place," Godslayer said.

Alex paused to give his words some thought. They made no sense. "I'm feeling Intent. I'm sure of it," he answered.

"You are feeling something, and I'm not denying there is something out there," Godslayer said. "But are you feeling Intent? Or are you feeling something that makes you think it is Intent?"

"You're going to have to elaborate," Alex said.

Godslayer grumbled for a bit and started speaking. "You put a human's hand over a flame and he screams that it burns. Then you take his other hand and put it in extremely cold ice and he still screams that it burns. Two different scenarios, same result."

"That's what I mean. Something completely different from Intent could be happening here, and we only believe it is Intent because that is the only thing we can associate this feeling with," Godslayer said. "I don't believe that to be the case, but many do."

Alex was stumped for a while. The explanation of something so extravagant was surprisingly... sound. "So these people who have this theory, do they have some idea of what instead could be happening?" he asked.

"They mostly believe that it is just a property of Qi that no one knows about. Something that you don't have to worry about as Qi does what Qi does," Godslayer said.

"Whatever the case may be, whatever made the Heavens had to be someone or something Intelligent. That is the scariest thing here. The possible existence of someone or something so far stronger than you that he could command the world and it would obey him."

Alex shuddered at the thought. That would be scary. But he quickly put the thought out of his mind.

He had to deal with the fact that there were individuals far scarier than him for most of his life already, and he had gone by fine. He would continue to do so.

If they were so strong that they could destroy the world he lived in with a simple command, then there was no point in being scared at all. Scared or not, if that death came, it would.

"Now that you've learned the truth, what do you think?" Godslayer asked.

Alex stopped there for a while, thinking to himself what he thought. The first thing he remembered was the thing that began this whole conversation.

He had felt the Intent, something that even Immortals shouldn't have been able to do. Why?

Was it because he called the Worldly laws so close to where the Heavens were? Certainly not. He had felt it before that, vaguely. The Worldly laws had just made it stronger.

If it was just a property of the Qi, then everyone else should've felt it too.

If it was the human's collective strive for survival, then everyone else should've felt it too.

If it was the True God's Intent, however... yes, that was possible. The Sun God was one of the two True Gods. If he was feeling this feeling because of him then...

"I agree with the theory about the True Gods more than the others," Alex said.

"Oh," Godslayer said. "So you believe the same theory as me then. Did you come to the conclusion on your own, or was it because I said I believed it?"

"I have my own reasoning to believe them," Alex said. "But the other theories have merit too, so I won't dismiss them immediately. It is possible that what is happening is either one of the three theories, a combination of the three theories, all of them, or something entirely different."

"Chose one for your own sake," Godslayer said. "Chose one and let your heart be calm."

"No," Alex said. "I do not need false consolation to be calm. I was scared, and might still be, but the fear I felt was irrational. Fearing this is no different than fearing that the sky would fall. If it does somehow become a problem, then fear will be a luxury."

"For now, I will fear what is right in front of me. The damn Dragon Emperor," Alex said.

Godslayer was astonished by Alex's words. "I..." he slowly spoke. "You should leave."

Alex thought for a bit and nodded. "If there is no more, I will go. I need to check on the plants," he said and quickly looked around. "I should suppress the Yang too."

He disappeared.

Godslayer remained where he stood for a long while before speaking to himself softly. "He handled it so much better than I did," he said before quickly stopping. "I did? When?"

For a while now, bits and pieces of his memories were returning to him. Not from when he was consumed by hatred and went around killing Gods. But one from much before.

Memories he didn't know he had. Memories that he thought should not exist. Since Alex had cleansed the corruption in him so long ago, he was being healed in more ways than one.

His memories were returning to him, and he didn't know if he liked that very much. Sometimes, it was so much better to just know these things without the memories.

Now, he questioned who he was before the corruption got to him. Had he always been like this, or had the corruption changed him?

If he had become different, could he ever return to a time when he was someone else?

Lost in deep thoughts, Godslayer drifted through Alex's Spiritual sea, to see if he could jog some more memories up for answers.