

Alchemy 181

Chapter 181: Problem with being Rich

Alex left his master's house and went back to his house. He made a few more pills to pass some time and prepare himself for tomorrow morning.

"Hmm... I should have asked the master how the test is done. I hope I don't have to make a Metal aligned pill for the test or I don't know how I would make it so that it doesn't have a high harmony. Similarly, Other pills can't have high harmony or it would cause some trouble too. Although, I should be fine as long as I don't make a heaven-grade pill."

" I should also not use Elemental Guidance tomorrow so that the pills I make don't have a lot of Harmony," he said. He was making as many plans as possible to not do well in tomorrow's test.

After making those pills, at around 1 pm in the afternoon, he left the sect. It took him about 15 minutes to go from his house in the sect leader's mountain to the gate at the outer sect, and then it took him about 15 minutes of walking to go from there to the Pink Cloud Auction house.

"I hope the items have been sold by now. They did say

A staff lady who knew his face took him to the inside of the auction house where the Cai Ping and the old person from before were waiting for him.

"Fellow Daoist Yu, you're here," the old man with the long white hair spoke.

"Good afternoon, Fellow Daoist Yu," Cai Pint greeted as well.

"Hello," Alex gave a single nod as a greeting in return.

Alex sat on the chair opposite the two people and waited for them to speak.

The older man simply reached for a storage bag and gave that to Alex. Alex looked into the storage bag with some expectations, hoping to make some good bucks, but what he saw astounded him.

He started counting, one after another.

'1, 2, 3 ... 51, 52, 53 ... 172, 173, 174 ... 293, 294... 389, 390, 391 ... 422, 423, 429.' His eyes went wide with shock. "429 True Spirit stones?" he asked the people in shock.

"Yes," The old man nodded.

"Is this... after the 10% charge?" he asked hesitatingly.

"Of course, Fellow Daoist Yu," the man smiled seeing Alex's reaction. In fact, he himself was surprised at how much money had been issued for him to give back. However, he wasn't surprised why that was at all.

Being near the Saint realm himself, the man could understand the people's willingness to spend so many spirit stones to get their hands on something that could help them get the fabled Spiritual Sense.

Alex's hands were slightly trembling, holding the most expensive item in his whole life up until now.

'If I sell my remaining 3 flowers, I... I... I will be a millionaire,' he thought. This was a very tempting thought for him, but he managed to shake himself out of that thought.

'Take it slow. There will be other changes for that in the future. Invest these flowers on yourself for now,' he said to himself and started thinking about other things.

"How much did the pills earn?" he asked.

"The pills themselves earned you 29 True Spirit Stones. It was the flower that earned you the rest," the old man said.

Alex didn't know what else the two said by the time he was already out of the auction house.

'So much money... nearly 400 thousand... do I even have to worry about money anymore? I can just make pills daily and sell them, can't I? I can probably take care of mom and dad like this,' He thought.

'Is that what sister meant when she said to think of this like work? Is this what this is now? Work. I... should start working hard. I will have to earn more money soon,' he thought.

The path back to sect took longer this time since he had a lot on his mind. He slowed down his pace quite a few times even. Slowly a different feeling started to appear in him.

'I can earn money by making a few pills every day. I don't even have to stay online all the time. Why would I even stay online? I don't even need to play the game most of the time. Is that what this is all forcing me to do? Stop playing?' he asked himself.

Having been handed so much money suddenly made him lose all sources of motivation to play the game for fun. He started thinking of how he could earn money or manage his time.

Thinking so, he got back to the sect and went straight to his house. Once he reached there, he decided to send back all but a few spirit stones.

He put in all 400 True spirit stones in the transfer settings and hit send.

<Do you want to send 36000 spirit stones (\$360,000) to XXXXXXXXXXX343?>

"Uhh... the 10% charge. It took away more than what I earned the last time," he said as he felt a little annoyed but still clicked yes. The spirit stones disappeared from his inventory, and he logged out. He waited for a moment and heard a notification sound.

He quickly opened his phone to see a message on it.

<\$360,000 has been successfully transferred to your account>

He smiled and then thought, "What do I do now? Go back to making some more pills to earn more money?" he thought and then immediately got a little depressed.

"Sigh. I don't want to play anymore today. Let's just stay logged out for the day. Hopefully, I have more will to play tomorrow," he said and went on to use his phone and laptop.

He surfed the Internet to see what new things were happening, or just call home back to talk to his parents. He even decided to do some exercise to be a little more fit again.

He did that until at 7 PM, he had a knock on the door.

Chapter 182: Cab ride in the night

"You can come it," Alex said when he heard the knock on the door.

Hannah opened the door and walked in. She was wearing a beautiful purple dress that matched her fair white skin and dark brown hair very well. She looked at Alex who was looking at the computer and frowned.

"Why aren't you dressed yet?" she asked.

"Dressed?" he quickly looked at the time and realized it was 7 pm. "Is it time for us to leave already?" he asked.

"Yes! We need to leave in 15 minutes," she said exasperated.

"Oh," Alex immediately stood and closed his laptop. "I will dress right now sister. Are we going to a fancy restaurant or a dinner party?" he asked.

"No, it's much better than that. Just dress well, you don't really have to look the absolute best," she said and left him.

Alex looked through his old clothes and didn't find any that would be considered well enough for how Hannah was dressed. So he opened his bag of new clothes and chose a simple shirt, coat, and pants that looked sophisticated enough for whatever his sister was taking him to.

After getting dressed, he took his phone and left the room. Hannah was waiting for him in the living room and stood the moment he entered the room.

"Finally," she said and looked at him. "Oh, you look nice. You might just end up getting a girlfriend for yourself tonight," she said.

Alex blushed a little and asked, "Are we going somewhere where there will be a lot of girls my age?" he asked.

Hannah made an embarrassed smile and said, "Not really. At least, I don't really know. Maybe there will be, but probably not. It's not a socializing place either so... sorry if I gave you any expectations."

Alex chuckled a little and said, "It's okay sister. I wasn't being serious. Should we go now?"

"Oh yes, let's go," Hannah said as she took her bag and walked out of the house with Alex in tow. They went down the elevator and got into a cab a minute later.

Hannah gave an address to the driver, but Alex didn't know that many places in Oakleaf City, so he had no idea where this place was. He just looked outside the cab, enjoying the nightlife of the city.

After 15 minutes of the ride, they were still in the cab, and Alex was surprised by how far away this place was.

"Wouldn't it have been better to take the train, Sister? It looks like this place is quite far away," he said.

"No. I looked up the map and the building is quite far away from any train station, so it's better that we took a cab," she said.

"Where exactly are we going sister?" he asked.

"To Channel 8's station," she answered finally.

"Channel... 8? Isn't that a news channel? Why are we going there?" he asked.

"Hehe, Your sister has been selected for an interview in tonight's 9 PM show," she said.

Alex was shocked. 'An interview? With sister Hannah? What is going on?' he wondered.

"Interview about what?" he asked.

"Oh, it's an interview with the people in Eternal Cultivation who have really good starting points like High talent, or great spiritual roots and body," she said.

"Huh?" Alex was surprised. "You have one of these, Sister?" he asked.

"I have all of these," Hannah said with a smug smile on her face.

Alex tried asking for more information, but Hannah just smiled and told him to wait for it on the news.

"How did those people even find you?" he asked.

"Oh, I saw it in the forum. The people at Channel 8 made a forum post requesting everyone with great talent to fill a form if we wanted to appear on an interview. I didn't want to at first, but then thought, why the heck not. Maybe I can even be popular like this," Hannah said.

"After that, I got a mail yesterday morning to verify some of the information I had put in. Can you believe I had to show them some screenshots of my transaction with Deva corp to prove that I was in fact a high-ranking player?"

"Thankfully, that was all I needed to prove. So I get to have an interview today. Although, there will be quite a few others there with me too," she said.

Alex fell into deep thought. 'I wonder if I could get in there with my current income as well?' he wondered. 'Although I don't think I would like that. I can't imagine myself on the TV,' he thought.

Suddenly, he remembered something about the TV. 'That news yesterday... that was... Oh, so this was what they were talking about when they said not to miss it as it would be the greatest news regarding Eternal Cultivation to date.

'I did want to see it, but it seems I will be seeing it live,' he thought.

The cab ride lasted 30 minutes more where Alex just looked through the different buildings lighting up bright in the night.

'This looks exactly like Hong Wu Sect's valley, only more modern. I didn't know cities lit this much at night,' he thought. This looked better than the festivals they had back in his hometown.

Approximately, 50 minutes later, They finally reached the Building for Channel 8. It was a massive building that was wider than his imagination, going up to more than 30 floors.

'Woah!,' he thought as he looked at it. Hannah paid the cab driver and walked out of the car with Alex.

"It's really big, isn't it?" she asked.

"Yes, Sister."

"Is this the place?" another voice came from behind them. They both turned around to see an elderly man walk out of a cab. He looked to be in his 60s and was dressed quite well in a simple coat and pants.

He looked at the sign that said 'Channel 8' and said, "Ah, this really is it." He then turned his head around to see Alex and Hannah in front of the building too and asked, " Are you kids here for the Eternal Cultivation interview as well?"

Chapter 183: Show Starts

"Yes, I am, but my brother here is not. He's just accompanying me," Hannah replied.

"Ah, I see. Nice to meet you two," the elderly man said.

"Nice to meet you too," both Hannah and Alex replied the greeting.

The three of them walked inside the building and were stopped by the guards. After verifying their information, they were made to go to a certain room to wait before the program went live.

There were already a few people, all young ones, in the room when the group of three arrived. Slowly people started being added one after another and soon it reached around 30 people in the room.

However, not all of them were being interviewed. Half of the people were like Alex, who came with their friends or family to support them today. Nobody decided to start up a conversation with someone they didn't know and only kept talking with the people they came in with.

After a while, a woman from the staff entered and started calling out names. She called about 13 names before she stopped. Hannah's name was among them as well.

"Alright, I will be off. You should be able to see me on that TV over there," Hannah said and left. 12 other people consisting of 5 young women, 6 young men, and the elderly gentlemen left as well.

Alex looked at the time and realized that there was still 15 minutes before the actual program began.

'Are they going to prepare their talking points or something?' Alex started wondering.

'I wonder if these people think of their time in the game as a job too. Sister did mention that they were selected based on their bank transaction. Also,' he looked around and thought, 'What happened to that guy that said he was the best in the game? He seems to be missing.'

After a few minutes, about 10 minutes before the show started, a woman walked in and asked, "Hello, would you people want to sit in the audience of today's show?"

"Yes, please," a bunch of people stood up and started walking out of the room. Alex decided to do so too. Along the way, the staff member gave them a bunch of information on the do and don't in the studio like putting your phone on silent or vibration mode.

Alex got seated at the corner seat with a girl about the same age as him seated next to him. She was wearing a small pinkish-red dress with frills all around it. She had glasses on that complimented her big and beautiful eyes. She seemed to be a little anxious about something and was constantly fidgeting about it.

"Are you alright?" he proceeded to ask.

"Oh!," the girl jumped in response. She then immediately apologized. "Oh, I'm so sorry. I didn't mean to freak out like that. I— I'm just not used to being around people," the girl said.

"It's okay. I just saw you fidgeting a lot and wondered if you were alright. If you are fine, then it's okay," Alex said.

"Thank you," the girl said.

Alex looked back to the stage and nobody was there yet. There were still about 5 minutes for the show to start, so he decided to make some small talk.

"Are you here with someone?" he asked.

"Ah, yes. I— I'm here with my roommate. She is quite good at the game and told me that she landed an interview and dragged me here. I wonder when it will start," she started to drift off with her thoughts and then remembered that she was still talking.

"Oh, what about you?" she asked.

"I'm here with my cousin. She didn't tell me what was going on and just dragged me here," he said with a chuckle.

"I'm Alex by the way," he said as brought forth his hand for a shake.

The girl hesitated for a bit, but reciprocated at the end with a handshake and said, "I'm Emily. Nice to need you, Alex."

"Nice to meet you, Emily," Alex said with a smile.

Then, a bunch of noise started coming from the stage as the 13 people in the show starting walking up the stage to sit on one of the 13 seats on the stage. There was another seat a bit to the right reserved for the host.

"Ah, she said interview, but it seems like it's more of a talk show," Alex said.

"M—My friend said it was an interview as well. Seems like there were too many people for it to be an interview and they will have to change the format," Emily suppressed her anxiety to speak.

Once all the 13 people were seated in their seats, the host walked onto the stage and sat on his seat.

Within a minute, the light in the audience dimmed and the show started.

"Good evening everyone. This is your host, Drake Hamil from Channel 8. Tonight, we have these 13 people in front of us. Now, while they may look like some ordinary high school students ... or maybe teachers for one person's case, they are actually something way better."

"Ladies and Gentlemen, Let me introduce you to the 13 Best of the best players in Eternal Cultivation right now," the host spoke.

Countless applause rang up around the studio devouring any other sound. After the crowd was finally silent, the 13 people went around introducing themselves.

Hannah introduced herself 3rd. When a lady named Sarah introduced herself, Emily let Alex know that she was her friend there. The old gentleman introduced himself as Sean White. He was at least 20 years older than the host, so the host didn't try to make any more funny remarks about the man.

Soon, after the round of introductions were done, the host spoke, "Let's start tonight's show where we talk with the current top players of Eternal Cultivation. Go in-depth with some of the mysteries surrounding the game and maybe have some questions that a game developer over at Deva Corp can answer to us, all in today's show.

Chapter 184: 7 Grades

"First of all, let us tell the audience why you guys are the best of the best, shall we? Let's start with your Cultivation base in Eternal Cultivation okay?" the host said.

Some of the guests hesitated at first, but in the end, they all agreed.

"Let us start with our first guest on the left, Mr. Sean." The host started talking with the older gentleman. "Can you tell us your cultivation base?" the host asked.

"Yes, Of course. My cultivation base right now is the 4th realm of True Masters realm," the old man said.

"Oh, that is quite low, isn't it?" the host said.

"Haha, compared to the energetic youths? Maybe. However, I only play 3 hours a day at most since I have a very young grandchild right now. I would rather spend the rest of my time with her," he said.

"Oh wow. You only play for 3 hours a day and you are already in the True Master Realm? That is quite good," the host said.

"Haha, yes. I believe so too."

The host then went on to talk with the other. The young men and women he talked to were mostly in True King or True Emperor realms. None higher than the 5th realm of the True Emperor realm.

But that didn't matter to the audience. They gasped every time they heard the high cultivation base. However, Alex on the other hand cringed.

'That is clearly very bad, right? Getting to that high of a rank in 2 months would mean that they broke through non-stop using external means. Their bodies didn't have enough time to get used to a cultivation base before they were in another.'

'Why are these people acting like they are doing something very good? They are only seeing explosive growth for now. They will have to struggle to even breakthrough later on,' Alex thought

The host went on to talk with Hannah too.

"What about you, miss? What is your cultivation level?" he asked.

"I am currently in the 6th realm of True emperor," She said.

"Oh wow, that is the highest we've heard yet, isn't it?" the host said. The entire audience gasped hearing how high her cultivation base was. Alex gasped too this time.

He hadn't expected her sister to have such a high cultivation base either. 'But sister knows that cultivating fast is bad. Does she not worry?' he wondered. Then he realized another possibility.

'She doesn't care. Not only her but even the rest of them also don't care either. If they are making money by having such high cultivation, why should they care? It's only a game after all. In fact, it's

probably more than just a game to them, it's their work. If being stronger earns them more money, they will gladly do so, won't they?' He felt like he was just enlightened about something.

'What about me? Should I go and eat lots of pills to break through very fast as well? There are not many monster cores left so I might as well make a lot of pills,' he thought.

'Wait, these people are getting stronger to earn money, which means I won't even have to get stronger since I make money without my strength,' he thought.

He suddenly realized where his thought process was being strayed to. 'Ughh... money again. Why am I so fixated on it even when I can earn so much of it so easily?' he started wondering.

'Is that how I think of the game now? Just a way to earn money? What happened to the little bits of fun I was having previously? Is it all going to drown in my need to make money now?' he wondered.

The host had at this point proceeded to ask the rest of the people about their cultivation base and the highest had still been True Emperor 6th realm, which belonged to Hannah and another man.

These two were now unconsciously being viewed as the strongest players in the game, giving them respect much higher than the rest.

"Now, let's move on to the reason why these people, in general, had such a high cultivation base. The reason of which being undoubtedly their Talent and their Body," the host said.

"More specifically speaking, the grade of their talent and body. Now we've come to learn a few critical pieces of information these last few days through the forum post that we made a few days ago. The most important is the true grades of everything. "

"Dear Viewers, Did you know that there are 7 different grades in the game Eternal Cultivation?" The host asked and paused a bit. 'What?' 'huh?' 'No way! These sort of small murmurs ran through the crowd.

Alex himself was startled when he heard of this. '7? I only know of 5, maybe 6' he thought.

The host then spoke. "Yes! There are 7 different grades, and they go as follows. First is the three we all commonly knew from very long ago. These are the Mortal grade, Earth Grade and Heaven Grade."

"Then we have the next two that we only learned a little more recently thanks to people sharing it on the forum. These are the Immortal Grade and the Divine grade."

'I knew it. Divine grade really is a thing. So am I ever going to figure out if my body is God grade or Divine grade?' he wondered.

The host continued, "And finally, the 2 new grades we have come to learn are the highest two grades available in the game. The first one is called Ancient grade. This is one of the best grades in the game."

"However, the next one is even better. The final grade in the game is called God."

'Ancient grade? I don't think I have ever heard about that one before. To be fair, I only thought about Divine grade thanks to my body, to begin with, and I wouldn't have known about god grade if it weren't for my talent.' Alex thought.

Chapter 185: Nine Revolution Ancient Body

After letting the audience and the viewers have a bit of time to process what he had just dropped, the host continued the show.

"Now, let us ask these top players what their body and talent grades are and why they are so high up on the list," the host said.

"Let us start with the oldest of all, Mr. Sean once again." The host then turned to the old man and asked, "Mr. Sean, can you tell us what grade your body and talent rank is?" he asked.

"My body is not that good. It's only Immortal grade," the man said with a small smile and continued, "However, My talent... is God Grade."

'What?!' Alex nearly screamed out loud when he heard this. Some people in the audience actually did shout out loud in disbelief.

'I had expected there to be other people besides me with God grade talent, but learning there really are others is truly surprising. No wonder the old guy could break through so fast. He must face no bottleneck at all, just like me,' Alex thought.

The host asked the others the same question and the answer he got were amusing, to say the least. Emily's friend seemed to have a Heaven-grade body with an Ancient grade talent.

The best body that had been mentioned yet was only a Divine body belonging to another girl in the group. The host had purposefully kept the two people with the highest cultivation at the last place.

"Mr. Aaron, what about you?" the host asked.

The man was a little smug as he said, "My body is just a simple Divine grade body that allows me to eat monster cores and gain a massive amount of explosive strength from it. Although I have only been able to use it rarely lately, it's still good. As for my talent, it's at God Grade as well."

The host seemed to be curious about his explanation and asked, "Sorry, can you go back to your bit about your body. You said that you could eat monster cores for strength using it, but now you don't. Can you give us an explanation as to why?"

"I don't really know the reason why, but I just had to. When I started very early on, I did exactly what my body, Divine Devourer told me to do. I devoured pills, spirit stones, herbs, and monster cores. The first three only gave me a little Qi when I ate them, but the monster core, whenever I would eat them, along with Qi, I would get the strength of the monster whose core I ate."

"I slowly started to kill monsters and eat their core to become stronger and kill more monsters. Until about 10 days later, I got a small headache when I ate one. After that, from time to time I would get headaches whenever I ate one. Until one day I straight up fainted when I ate one. It also left my mind hurting for nearly a week. Ever since then, I have only stuck to the other items for Qi, and skipped monster cores."

'That is kind of like me,' Alex thought. 'Does he also need to fight the monster in the spiritual sea which is why his head hurts?'

'Wait, no. He probably hasn't unlocked his spiritual sea yet. so, he can't fight the monsters even if he wanted to. No wonder he has so much headaches. Atleast it's good to know that nothing bad other than some headache would occur in case I lose to the monsters,' Alex thought.

The host nodded a little and asked, "So, do you use the Qi from pills, spirit stones, and herbs to gather Qi and breakthrough now?"

"Kinda, but not really. The pills would help me gain Qi regardless of my body. I can just cultivate with a spirit stone instead of eating it. As for herbs, they are better if they are made into pills. Since these 3 things don't really have a huge impact on my cultivation process, I don't usually mention these when I talk about my body," he said.

"I see. That is unfortunate. Now, let us move on to miss Hannah. Can you tell us about your body and Talent?" he asked.

Hannah nodded and started talking. "My talent is not so special it seems. Most people seem to have Ancient grade talent, I have one as well. However, I also happen to have an Ancient grade body."

"What?" The guest on the stage turned their heads towards her in surprise, not to mention the shock amongst the people in the crowd and back home. Alex himself was surprised by this sudden information as well.

Even Aaron was surprised and slightly jealous of her now. Even though he had a better Talent than her, in the long run, the body would surely be much more useful. Especially if it was anything like his own.

"Isn't that your cousin? Does she have that good body?" Emily asked from the side. She was no longer timid as the shock had taken away any timidness in her for now.

"I— I did not know about any of this. She never shared to me about her talent or anything," Alex said.

The host was stupefied for a moment as well. It seemed he was not informed about this fact from the TV studio, probably for a more genuine interaction on today's show.

"Ms. Hannah, do you really have an Ancient grade Body? What does it do?" he asked.

Hannah chuckled a little and said, "Yes I do. It's called the Nine Revolutions Ancient Body. Basically what it does is every day and night, it gathers Qi from the surrounding until I cannot gather anymore. Which for me is around a few million Qi. Even when I am asleep or offline, It constantly brings in Qi for me."

Hannah's words caused a great amount of shock and envy among the crowd, but the Host seemed to have thought of something and asked, "While it does sound like an incredible body Ms. Hannah, I find it a bit too dull to be an Ancient grade body. Is there anything else you have to add to that?"

"Hehe, you are not a host for just any reason, are you? Yes. I do have something else it does that work in tandem with the Qi gathering. And that is the fact that I can break through any realms without using any cultivation method at all. My body allows me to bypass that restriction."

Chapter 186: [Bonus Chapter]Continents

"Sorry, you said you don't need a cultivation method at all. Can you explain that?" the host asked shocked at what he had just heard.

"Yes. What I mean is my body can gather Qi on its own which I can then use to breakthrough without needing to learn a cultivation technique. If I had relied on the mortal grade technique that was gifted to me when I first created my character, I would have probably still been stuck at the self tempering realm like a lot of others," Hannah said.

"Oh, so does that mean that you breakthrough continuously without needing to stop at all?" the host asked.

"Theoretically, yes. But realistically, No," she replied.

The host got confused at that answer. So did the rest of the people watching the interview. "Can you elaborate?" the host asked.

"Of course. What I mean is that while I can go on breaking through forever, I don't do that. A bit recently, I came to learn that breaking through one after another without having a stable cultivation base first is really bad for you."

"I'm sure everyone here can attest to the fact that they are weaker than their peers in the game who are at the same cultivation base. All because we didn't spend much time in each individual realm, trying to become the best at that realm before moving on to the next one. I am regretting not learning about this beforehand."

The host looked with wide eyes. "I didn't know anything about this at all." He then turned to the camera and said, "There you have it, folks. If you aren't at a high enough realm yet, this is your time to fix your cultivation right now."

"Now, since spiritual roots don't add anything to cultivation itself, we will skip asking the guests about that. So, let's move on to another topic of today's show, The geography of Eternal Cultivation.

"Many of you viewers might already think you know this, but I promise you don't. This is exclusive information that only 3 of our guests today knew. Others were completely in the unknown about this."

Suddenly, a massive picture appeared on the screen behind the host and the guests. The picture consisted of a blue background with 4 irregular pieces on all 4 sides. It was a map.

Alex looked at it and wondered, 'What is that giant blue thing in the back?'

"This is the map of Eternal Cultivation, or at least an estimation of it since no one has really seen a true map of it yet. To all the viewers who have never seen a map of the game, you are in for a big surprise."

The host stood up and moved to the picture. "Look at this," he said as he pointed at the blue sections on the map. "Can you guys guess what this is?" he asked the oblivious viewers and audience.

"This... is... Water," he spoke trying to create suspense. "These," he gestured to all the blue parts of the map and said, "are all water. It is called an ocean. It houses more water than the land in the world itself."

The audience gasped. They had never heard of this 'Ocean' thing and when they saw that so much of the game was just water, they were surprised. Alex himself was quite surprised too.

'If the blue is the water, then the different 4 objects on the map have to be land right? Even if the left most land is half the size of our world, that is still so much water.'

His eyes shined brightly as he looked at the thing. 'Ocean... what a fantastical thing.'

The host continued, "Now,? look at the lands themselves. We have 2 green ones on the east and west that are similar to our own world, full of mountains, trees and rivers and ponds and cities. The north one, however, is fully clad in snow... all year round."

"Yes, the same snow that only occurs once a while on the northern area of our own real world. The northern lands are forever covered in the snow. The south, however, is perhaps more so bizarre. The southern land is actually covered in sand, all of it. There is not a single place that doesn't have sand in there," the host said.

Alex was listening intently to the new information he was learning through the host. 'Forever snowing land? Place all covered in sand? What sort of mystical land are these? The developers must have really gone above and beyond preparing the world for this game,' he thought.

"This land full of sand is called a desert. This southern continent is just a giant desert, through and through."

"Now, for the thing that is the most surprising of it all. For that, I will have to explain what Continents are. These all 4 lands are called Continents," the host said.

'That was what sister told me,' Alex thought.

"Continents are massive pieces of land on the ocean where the game actually takes place. Unlike our own real world, these lands have an actual edge to them. In our real world, if you walk in a straight direction, you will reach the endless forests and if you walk through the endless forests, you will just fall off the edge into the void and die. "

"But in this place, if you walk in a straight line, you would just reach the water. No worries about falling off and dying," the host said.

"Now, imagine the world we live in, all the 17 different cities with the nearly billion people was a circle, okay. Now look at this," the host said. Suddenly a circle appeared on the Northern continent that was always frozen.

However, the circle that appeared on it was about the size of a door handle on a door. The host then spoke. "This is how big the lands in Eternal Cultivation are. Just the Northern Continent alone is about 40 times the size of our own world."

"You can see why I would call it very surprising."

Chapter 187: Fifth

Most of the audience members including Alex were shocked at this information. This was such an out of nowhere piece of information that it had caught them truly off guard.

The host was smiling wide seeing the look of disbelief on the faces of the audience. Not only them, but it also seemed that even some of the players, including the old man named Sean, were completely unaware of this information.

"The world of Eternal Cultivation is truly vast, and it also contains a lot of different places not available in the real world. For example, in the northern continent, there are flowing frozen rivers called glaciers. In the eastern continent, there are mountain peaks that spew out fiery liquid from the top. The west has an unending forest."

"There are beaches, which are small strips of land on the edge of the world that meets the water. There are giant cliffs with deep ravines in between called canyons. There are so many different things to explore, and most of us just stay in the cities. Such a shame," the host said while shaking his head.

Alex thought so too. 'There is so much more world that I have yet to see, and I am just staying in one city. I should leave to explore other places.' A small fire of excitement began to light up deep inside him, bringing the fun back into the game.

"Now, returning back to the players while still staying on the topic of continents. How many of you are from the eastern continents?" the host asked the guests.

5 people raised their hands, including Hannah and Emily's friend.

"How many of you are from the Northern continent?" he then asked.

4 hands raised this time including the old man Sean.

"The Southern continent?" the host asked.

All of the remaining 4 hands were raised at this point, including Aaron.

"And we can see that there are none of you from the Western Continent. It's weird, isn't it? We have seen the statistics report and surprisingly, only 12% of all players are in the Western Continent."

"And furthermore, they are always slow on the rise. The resources there are lower than the ones in the other continent. Do any of you have an idea why that might be?" the host asked.

'Didn't sister say that I was from the Western Continent? Is it really that bad?' he wondered.

The guests there made some guesses as to why that might have been. Some said they might have been slow to develop. Some said, the developers just made it that way. However, none of the guests could make any credible guesses, so the host decided to change the topic.

"Since we do not know about it that much, let us move to another topic. That topic being..." the host immediately turned around to point at the center of the map which was nothing but water.

Suddenly, a green land appeared in the middle of the map. "... The Fifth Continent," the host spoke.

Everyone was suddenly confused. Murmurs started appearing among the crowd as they tried to figure out how there could even be a fifth Continent. There were quite a few in the crowd that were quite learned regarding the geography of Eternal Cultivation.

Even though they didn't know the exact area of the continents or their relative location. They still knew that there were 4 different continents. Yet, the host was speaking about the existence of the fifth one that they had never heard of.

The host smiled when he saw the different reactions on the faces of most of the guests and all of the audience.

"You heard it here first. We are revealing to you the yet unrevealed fifth continent of the Eternal Cultivation. This is a very different continent from most of the other continents. Let us ask the three people who provided us with this information," said the Host.

"Ms. Hannah, Mr. Aaron, and Mr. Shane, could you tell us how you came to learn about the existence of this continent and why no one else knows of it?" he asked.

The man named Shane first spoke, "I actually do not know much about the Fifth continent aside from the fact that it exists. I came to learn about it on an accident when my master mentioned that we would have to take a detour through the Eastern Continent if we ever wanted to go the Southern Continent from the Northern continent. All because of the weirdness of the fifth continent."

Aaron followed up, "The fifth continent is actually way more commonly known in the Southern continent. Well, at least on the higher level it is. There are records of land being visible from the southern continent itself when the weather conditions are perfect. Although, because of how hard it is to stay around at the northern part of the Southern Continent, I myself have never personally seen this fifth Continent appearing."

"I see," the host said. He then turned to Hannah and asked, "What about you Ms. Hannah? How do you know about the Fifth Continent?"

"My Hu— Friend from inside the game told me about it. He has a rather high rank among the people in the Eastern continent and has access to a lot of important information. He let me know about, rather cautioned me against ever going towards the Fifth Continent cause of the dangers there."

"Danger?" the host was curious. "Any idea what sort of dangers?" he asked.

"Apparently, a very high-level battle took place in the fifth continent a few generations ago, and the land was left torn apart from the battle. Ever since then, the final continent has remained unapproachable by anyone due to the turbulent Qi in it."

"However, I believe that is what the developers are telling us right now," Hannah said.

"Hmm... what do you mean Ms. Hannah?" the host asked.

Hannah replied, "I believe that this Fifth Continent is going to be the next expansion of the game and is going to open up soon in the near future."

Chapter 188: Developer

"Oh," the host got a little curious. "Is that so? So you believe the reason no one can visit the fifth continent is that the developers haven't fully made it yet and it is still under development. That kind of makes sense."

"Doesn't it?" Hannah said with excitement. "Imagine later down the line we reach the saint realm and have to go up, and the only way to do that is to move to the fifth continent where there will be much stronger people, better techniques, and all the pills and weapons and artifacts. It will truly be an amazing time."

The host talked with the guests about the fifth continent for a little longer before saying that the talk with them was over and going on a break.

Alex was still taking in the pieces of information he had just gotten. "I didn't know there was so much more to the world of Eternal Cultivation. And here I am staying in one city in one empire in one continent," he said out loud.

Emily didn't know if he was talking to himself or to her so she just decided to respond, "I— I also just stay in a city in the northern continent. I haven't left the city yet since I started playing 2 months ago."

"Oh, you played the game right after its release?" Alex asked.

"Yes. My friend forced me to buy a VR Helmet within the first 4 days of the release. I've been playing passively ever since then," she said.

"Oh, then you must be at quite a high realm," he said.

"Not really. I— I don't go out to fight monsters or buy pills or even get spirit stones. So, I am very slow at cultivating. I barely reached the true realm a week ago," she said.

"Oh, that's not bad," Alex said.

"What about you?" she asked.

"I only started playing about a month ago, so I'm not really that high. Only Organ tempering realm," he said with a smile.

The guests were taken to a different viewing spot in the audience reserved for them where they chatted amongst themselves and in a few minutes.

Then, the show was back on.

"Welcome back viewers. We finished talking with the 13 best of the best players in Eternal Cultivation. Now, we move on to the developer side of the game. I believe we have a developer from the game with us on the line."

"Can you hear us, Mr. Developer?" the host asked.

"Hello? Yes, I can hear you." The person on the other side of the connection said. There was no video and the audience and viewers could only hear the voice.

"Can you please introduce yourself to the audience?" the host spoke.

"Yes. Hello, I am Robin Howard and I have been a developer for Deva Corp for about 9 years now. I have been a part of the big games Deva Corp put out the past few years. Recently I was assigned to Eternal Cultivation as one of the people in charge of looking after the feedback and collecting data."

The host then asked, "So, let me get this straight. You are not part of the developer team that made the game, and you only came to the team later on."

"Uhh, you're not wrong in saying that," Robin said. "Except for the fact that Eternal Cultivation has no developers team."

The host and the other audience members were a little taken aback.

"Sorry, what do you mean Eternal Cultivation has no developers team?" he asked.

"Just what I said. The game Eternal Cultivation was not made by anyone in Deva Corp. It was actually sold to us by a different group of people using another person as a middleman."

"We still have no idea how the game was made, how the helmets made the game seem so realistic, or even how the capsules work. However, we have already tested the capsules and they work fantastically. In fact, it might be considered better than the helmets due to a certain feature that I am not allowed to tell you guys yet," Robin said.

This was a new piece of information that nobody in all the 17 cities knew.

"So Deva Corp is not responsible for making and distributing the game?" The host asked to confirm.

"Oh distributing absolutely, but not making the game. I know Deva Corp has gotten a lot of hate for not answering comments like why the game is not fair, or why we keep the helmet internals proprietary, or even just why we won't let the technology be used in other sectors than just the game," Robin said.

"I see, I was about to ask you if you guys got the idea for the world in the game from the old texts, but it seems you guys probably do not know about it," the host said.

"What is this about the old texts? The ones left by our ancestors?" Robin asked.

"Oh don't worry about it. A player actually found it and had posted on his own forum, but due to lack of exposure, it had been left buried until now. The thing that person found was that Eternal Cultivation was inspired by the old texts. The geographical anomaly all matches the old texts. Of course, except for the part where they were mistaken about the world being round when it is perfectly flat. "

" It would seem that the real developers of the game read the old texts left behind in Pinewood city, and implemented it onto their own game. Unfortunately, due to it being not allowed to be photographed, we couldn't show exactly what the old text said." the host said.

"I see. We wouldn't know anything about that," Robin said.

"Anyway, Thank you for taking the time to appear on today's show, Mr.? Robin."

"Thank you to both you and Channel 8 for having me," Robin said and cut the connection.

"Anyway, that is it for tonight folks. Keep watching for more fun stuff coming along. We will be sure to have prepared more Eternal cultivation. Goodbye."

And with that, the show ended.

Chapter 189: Blushing

"Finally, it's over." Alex took out his phone to look at the time and realized it was 10 pm. His stomach was starting to growl a little.

GRRR

He heard a stomach growl from his side too. He turned left to find Emily's face nearly red in the studio light from the embarrassment. He chuckled a little and said, "You must be hungry as well. I haven't eaten anything since during the day."

Emily chose to say nothing. A staff member came by hauling everyone out through the side door.

Alex met Hannah who was outside, along with the other 12 people.

"That went quite well, right?" Hannah asked.

"Yes. I can't believe you hid how good you were in the game. If not for the interview, I would've never known," Alex said.

"Nah, I would've told you sometime soon. I can't keep it to myself at all," Hannah said with a giggle.

"It's so late, we should return now," Alex said.

"Let's get something to eat before we do," Hannah said. "Hey Sarah, you want to get something to eat before we leave?"

"Sure," A voice came from the group. Alex was a little surprised because the person who had just spoken turned out to be Emily's friend.

"You guys are already familiar?" Alex asked.

"Kind of. She was in one of my classes a year ago. I noticed her in the waiting room but didn't remember her name, so I stayed quiet," Hannah said with a chuckle.

"Yeah. I'm so hungry. Let's get some decent meal if the restaurants are even open at this time," Sarah said as she walked towards Hannah and Alex. Emily was following her timidly among the group as well.

They went to a nearby diner, the only one that was open at this time of the night, and ordered some meals.

Hannah and Sarah started talking with each other, while Alex and Emily were just left there silently eating their food.

"So, is he your younger brother?" Sarah asked.

"He is my cousin. He is in the first year of university and is staying with me right now," Hannah said.

"Oh, Oakleaf University?" Sarah asked.

"Yes."

"Emily here started studying at Oakleaf University too. She is in the 2nd semester of the first year," Sarah said.

"Oh, Alex is joined just a month ago, so he is only in the 1st semester," Hannah replied.

They talked a bit more and finished eating. They left the diner and Hannah started looking for cabs to return back home.

"Since we are going the same way, why don't you two come with us?" Sarah asked.

"With you guys? Sure. Are we sharing a cab?" Hannah asked.

"Oh god no. I brought my own car," Sarah said.

"Oh, nice. I should learn to drive too now that I can buy a car myself," Hannah said.

From a nearby parking lot, Sarah brought out the car. Hannah got on to the front seat, leaving Emily and Alex to take the back seat. There wasn't a lot to talk about so, the car was mostly silent the whole way back.

At some point, thanks to it being boring and having just eaten, Emily fell asleep on Alex's shoulders. Alex thought of waking her up for a second but decided not to.

"Oh, is she asleep?" Sarah said looking at them through the rearview mirror and quickly took a photo of them.

"Hehe, she will be so embarrassed when she sees this photo." She then told Alex, "Don't wake her up. She usually goes to bed early, and it's already 11 pm. We still have half an hour left before we get back."

Alex just let her sleep on his shoulders the entire way back. He himself, however, couldn't fall asleep. Having been homeschooled and having barely any contact with girls before, his heart was racing like crazy.

It remained that way the whole way back. Hannah would look back through the rearview mirror from time to time and smirk. Finally, at around half past 11, Sarah stopped in front of a moderate building.

"Let me just get Emily into the room and I will come back to get you guys to your place," Sarah said and got out of the car.

"Oh, no need," Hannah said. "Our building is right over there," she said as she pointed to the tall building a few hundred meters down the line.

"Thank you for giving us a ride, we can walk from here," Hannah said. "Alex, Come one, let's go."

Alex didn't move however and simply pointed at the sleeping Emily.

"Oh," Sarah said as she chuckled and pulled Emily towards her from the window to shake her awake. Emily woke up and looked around, confused as to where she was.

"Am I still in the game?" she asked.

"Haha, silly. You were asleep in the car back home. Now get out," Sarah said.

Finally realizing where she was, Emily hastily got out of the car and fixed her clothes. Sarah and Hannah laughed and Alex finally left the car.

Saying their goodbyes, Hannah and Alex walked back to their home.

"It seems I was right," Hannah said.

"About what, sister?" Alex asked.

"About me telling that you might find a girl today," she said.

Alex immediately blushed. "Oh look at you, already embarrassed about it," Hannah said. "You are blushing more now than when she was sleeping on your shoulder."

"Can we not talk about this, Sister?" he said.

"Hehe, alright, alright."

They reached back home and Alex went straight to his room with the intention to sleep. He laid down on his bed ready to sleep when he remembered something.

"Ah, that's right. There is the exam tomorrow. I almost forgot. Do I go into the game or do I sleep?" he wondered.

He decided to sleep for the night but everything he learned today started appearing on his mind distracting him from his sleep.

'Sigh, I will just go to the game and cultivate for now.' Thinking so, he logged back into the game.

Chapter 190: Second Best

Alex logged into the game at midnight. He originally planned on cultivating when he came here, but then he remembered what happened this morning.

"If I also mess up the time of me waking up tomorrow morning as well, I will miss the exam," he thought. So he decided to just not cultivate his Qi for now. Since he could manage to cultivate his body without going unconscious now, he decided to do that instead.

He called out Pearl and told him to cultivate. Within minutes, Pearl was glowing gold, and he had started to cultivate. Intense pain shot throughout Alex's body, but it was nowhere near concerning for Alex. He was perfectly fine handling this sort of pain, even though it hurt a lot. His pain tolerance had really gone up a few realms after the continuous body cultivation in the Tiger sect.

Throughout the entire night, he cultivated his body, and a bit before 7 in the morning, he stopped. He sent Pearl back into his arm and logged out. After getting refreshed, he went to the kitchen to have some food. Hannah didn't seem to have woken up yet, so he prepared breakfast only for himself and ate it.

After having his breakfast, he logged back into the game.

The exam started at 8 am, so he decided to leave now. He slowly trekked down the mountain and reached the Elder's hall a bit before it was time for the exam.

'Woah,' he thought as he looked at the slew of disciples standing outside the Elder's Hall. 'What's going on?' he wondered. There were nearly a thousand of them here.

If it had been only a few disciples in front of the Elder's Hall, he would've just assumed they were here for the exam, but the disciples in here were from all 3 sections of the sect numbering in 4 digits.

'I... am at the right place, right?' he thought.

"Alright everyone, come on in," an Elder said and the crowd of disciples walked in. Alex didn't know what was going on, but since his master told him to come here, he didn't think he was in the wrong reason. So, he just followed the group of disciples.

He passed a number of doors and took a sudden left turn. He sent out his spiritual sense to look at everything and realized that he was walking into a big open area.

As soon as the disciples walked into the open area, nearly 90% of them split from the group and started sitting on the floor all around the room. Alex was a little confused.

'Do I sit down too?' he wondered.

"Alright, Examinees and Viewers come with me," the elder said once more and walked even further.

'That's where I go?' Alex thought and walked along, but he still looked at the different disciples sitting on the ground, as if they were at a concert or something.

'A concert... wait a second. Of course.' He felt like facepalming right now.

'God, I can't believe I forgot about the weekly lectures. No wonder there are so many disciples in here,' Alex thought.

The elder took them through a narrower corridor to a different open room, only this time it didn't have many places to sit as there were fire pits all over the floor.

'Are we supposed to make alchemy out in the open?' he wondered.

The entire floor was about a hundred meters long and 50 meters wide. There were about 60 fire pits on the ground and a section had been separated for the spectators.

"Wait here for the other elders to arrive," The elder said and left. Alex took the time to send away his spiritual sense into the crowd to see who was here.

'Oh, it's the core disciple from yesterday,' he thought when he noticed the core disciple that was with Zhou Mi, the one that had bumped into him the day before yesterday.

He found Zhou Mi right next to her as well. He then found a man next to him, another core disciple, and he was looking directly at him. He started walking and came up right next to him.

Alex looked at him in surprise and he hadn't expected to see a core disciple's robe on the man's shoulders this soon. He smiled and said, "Congratulations, brother Kong. I see I missed your actual ascension."

"Thank you, Brother Yu. You could've come watched me pass it as well. I did it last week," he said.

"I was out of sect for the last two weeks, so I couldn't have even if I knew it," he said.

"It's alright. Why are you here? To spectate?" he asked.

"Oh no, I'm taking part in the exams as well," he said. "What about you? It can't be you are already going to take your examinations for the elder role, right?" he asked.

"Oh, you know about that? I'm quite surprised. Also, No. I'm actually here to cheer for sister Mi who is going to take part in the core disciple exam today," he said.

"Oh," he said as he looked towards Zhou Mi. He also saw the core disciple with her and asked, "by the way, brother Kong. Who is that senior with Sister Zhou Mi? They look so similar," he asked.

Kong Yuhan didn't even have to look back to know who he was talking about. He looked at Alex with a small shocked expression on his face.

"You don't know who that is?" he asked as if not knowing who she was unheard of.

Alex started to get more curious. 'Just who is she to garner such a reaction from a core disciple?' he wondered.

"Brother Kong, you seem to forget that I am quite new around here," he said.

"Yeah, but it's still unusual for anyone to not know who she is. Although, I guess outer sect disciples might have only heard her name and never really seen her."

He then turned to Alex and started whispering as he said, " That is Zhou Mei, the second highest-ranking disciple of the sect."