

Alchemy 231

Chapter 231: Wan Li

"Ah, hello, my name is Yu Ming, nice to meet you," he said.

"Nice to meet you too, Mingming," she said.

'Mingming? She is already making nicknames for me? Anyway, Fan Ruogang, I know that name rig—' his eyes went wide as he realized where he knew her name from.

'The third-ranked core disciple?' he said in shock. He finally remembered her. Both the contribution ranking and Alchemy Achievements ranking were as follows.

1. Wan Li

2. Zhou Mei

3. Fan Ruogang

He was surprised that such a bubbly girl would actually be so talented in alchemy. 'You really can't judge a person's ability by their appearance.'

"Oh, thank god."

"We made it in time."

Two voices spoke, one male, one female. Alex turned his head to see two Elders flying down with a disciple behind them. He didn't recognize the elders, but he sure as hell recognized the disciple.

'Zhou Mei? Of course, she is going too,' he thought.

Zhou Mei seemed to have also noticed him and was making angry faces while looking at him. She seemed to be still mad about the fact that he got for free what she had to work hard for.

"You are on time. Yu Ming, these are Song Heng and Su Shu. They are the second and third Elders respectively," Ma Rong said.

"Good Morning Elders," Alex greeted them

"Oh, we finally get to see the Sect Leader's disciple we've heard so much about huh?" the man Song Heng said.

"I didn't expect him to be this young, however. He barely looks 20," the woman Su Shu said.

"Right, Honey? I was thinking the same thing," Song Heng said.

"Ughh," Ma Rong said as she rolled her eyes after seeing the two husband and wife pair being lovey-dovey with each other. Even Zhou Mei was cringing a bit.

"Meimei, where is Wan Li?" Ma Rong asked.

"He told me he would come by on his own earlier, so I went to find masters. Is he not here yet?" she said while searching for him.

"Sigh, that guy. Alright, let's just wait for him," Ma Rong said.

About 5 minutes later, they finally saw someone walking down the core disciple mountain. Alex looked at the man coming down the mountain.

He was quite thin in build and wasn't very tall. His short hair was a mess and looking at his face, Alex thought he was the same age as him.

'Is that... ?' Alex thought.

"I'm sorry Elders, Sect Leader. I am late, aren't I? Oh no. I was sure I would make it here in time. I— I started making pills and soon forgot about the time. I am so sorry," the disciple started saying.

"It's okay, Wan Li. You aren't late. We only got here too," Ma Rong lied a little to make the disciple not feel as bad. Alex was quite surprised that she actually let him get away with being late.

He didn't think being late was punishable or anything, still lying outright to make him feel better... was this what it meant to be the best disciple in the sect?

"Oh, so I am not late? Ah, that makes me feel so much better." The disciples in the back seemed to be in the know about Wan Li's personality, so none of them got angry at all.

"Alright, since everyone is here, it is time for us to leave. First Elder, I leave the sect in your care while I am away," Ma Rong said.

"Don't worry sect leader. We old men will look after the sect. You just take care of the disciples that are away," the First Elder said.

Ma Rong nodded and pulled out a small item from her robes. It looked like a...

'A ship? Can a small ship even fit all of their disci—' before he could even finish thinking anything, Ma Rong threw the ship into the air, and suddenly, a massive ship of over 100 meters in length and 20 meters in height and width appeared.

Alex's jaw nearly dropped when he saw the massive ship in front of him.

The ship was nothing like what he had seen before. Even the ships in real life were nowhere near as big as this. 'Woah,' he thought. The more he looked at it, the more absurd it was.

How is such a massive ship even floating in the air? How was such a massive ship, even so, small that it could fit in his master's hands? She didn't even pull it out of any storage bags from what he could see.

Many questions ran across his head. "Alright, everyone gets up," she said.

5 elders beside Ma Rong and the 2nd and 3rd else flew up to the ship while carrying the other 11 disciples. 2nd Elder carried Zhou Mei, while 3rd elder carried Fan Ruogang.

Wan Li looked at only Alex remaining along with the Sect leader and said, "I can go second. Let little brother here go up first."

Ma Rong smiled a little and suddenly grabbed Wan Li with her Qi, and turned to Alex to say, "Let's go."

Alex nodded and used his Qi to fly into the air and land on the deck of the massive ship. Some of the disciples who were paying attention realized that he flew up on his own.

"Woah, how high is his cultivation?" they wondered. All of these disciples were either core sect or inner sect disciples.

Alex landed beside his master and Wan Li and looked at the deck full of people as he thought, 'if even Inner sect disciples are being taken, then that means that we will be taking part in more than just the Alchemy tournament right? I hope it's not a battle. I don't have a very high cultivation base to fight against other people.'

Ma Rong looked at the surroundings to make sure everyone was there. Once she made sure no one was left behind and they were all settled on the deck of the ship, she said,

"Forward."

Chapter 232: Headache

At first, the ship barely moved an inch. But slowly, it started catching up speed. Before Alex could even think of anything to say, the ship started moving at a faster speed than the bullet trains he had been in ever could.

'Holy Sh*t, that is a fast speed. Just how fast is this boat going?' he wondered.

Ma Rong was the one giving orders, while the one actually running the ship was actually an elder who was staying at the bridge of the ship. Ma Rong instructed the elder something and started walking towards Alex.

"So, how are you feeling? Do you think you can handle the boat? Most people usually vomit when they get on something so fast," Ma Rong said.

"It's fine master, I am perfectly fine," he said. Thankfully, he was used to being on such fast vehicles, Or else he would have gotten dizzy by now.

Ma Rong nodded when she heard this and voluntarily started explaining the origin of the ship.

"This is actually a sect treasure that the sect leader gets to use once in a while if the sect requires it. The boat was made around 40 years ago, and it has been used maybe 100 times at most. "

"It's mostly used to carry around disciples from the sect to a different location and back. If not for this ship, we wouldn't even reach Cardinal City by day after tomorrow," Ma Rong said.

"Hmm... but the small boat you use is also pretty fast master. Maybe not as fast as this, but it shouldn't take more than twice what this one takes right?" he asked.

"Oh, that's not how flying works though. At some point, with small boats, we will exhaust all our Qi and have to rest. While with this boat, it uses True Spirit stones as a power source, so we can fly around non-stop," Ma Rong said.

"Oh, that makes sense," Alex said as he looked around. He looked at the back of the ship, beyond where the different disciples were staying, and asked his master, "What are those rooms? Do we get to stay there?" he asked.

"Of course. Just go into any open room and lock it from inside. It will be yours until you leave," Ma Rong said.

"Can I go there now? Honestly, I'm feeling kind of exhausted after staying up for nearly 3 days. Can I get the rest of the information later?" he said.

"Oh, okay. Sure, go and rest," Ma Rong said. He could hear the concern in her voice.

He nodded to his master and walked towards the back of the ship where the rooms were. Just as he was about to enter the rooms, he heard someone calling him.

"Hey, brother." It was a whisper at best with how quiet the voice was. If not for his acute senses thanks to his body cultivation and Qi Cultivation, he wouldn't even have heard anything.

He looked around and found Wan Li staying behind a crowd of elders as if he was trying to hide or something.

"What's going on?" Alex asked him in his regular voice.

"Sshh Sshh. speak quietly," Wan Li whispered

"What's going on?" Alex asked in a whisper as well.

"You are the sect leader's disciple right?" he asked without any other questions to bridge it. Alex was a little surprised at the sudden question and started to wonder if he wanted to tell him that he was being unfairly treated, just like Zhou Mei.

"Yes, I am the sect Leader's disciple. Nice to meet you," Alex said showing a fake smile, waiting for the obvious question to arrive. Instead what he heard next was truly out of the left field.

"Oh yeah, Hi. I am Wan Li. Brother Yu, can you do me a favor and take me inside the door to the different rooms?" he asked.

Alex surely wasn't expecting this at all. "Take you inside? You want me to carry you?" Alex was a little weirded out by the response.

"No, no. Just hide me while you are going inside. You just need to hide me until I enter the door," Wan Li said.

"Why though?" Alex asked.

"Please brother hurry up. Don't ask any questions or I will get into trouble," Wan Li said.

'Is it so serious?' Alex was a little surprised. "Alright, let's go," he said and stood up. Wan Li hurriedly stood up and hid in front of him as they both walked towards the door.

Wan Li hurriedly opened the door and walked in, closing the door behind him. Alex was surprised at how hurried he was. 'Does he have to go to the bathroom or what?'

"Wanwan, where are you? Wanwan! Come on out and we can play. Oh, Mingming, have you seen Wanwan?" Fan Ruogang suddenly walked up to him and started asking him questions.

"Wanwan? You mean Wan Li?" Alex asked as he got a foreboding of what the answer was.

"Yeah. I have been looking for him but he went somewhere. Doesn't matter now; I found you. Wanna come play with me? It will be fun, I promise!" Fan Ruogang said.

Alex's eyes were wide open as he finally realized what Wan Li was running away from.

"Umm... I have a headache, and I was going to go to sleep for now," Alex tried to lie to get away from her.

"Oh, you have a headache? That's bad. Here take this," she said as she took out a pill from her storage bag. "This pill will help you with your headache. Eat it."

Alex was dumbfounded at what just happened. 'Sh*t. I didn't expect her to take out a pill,' he thought.

"Actually, It's more than just a headache. I haven't slept in a long while and I feel like I am going to faint anytime now. So I really need that sleep. How about I play with you after I come out later?" he said and went inside without even waiting for a response.

Soon, he found an empty room and settled in it. After that, he logged out.

Chapter 233: Game

Alex logged out of the game and realized that it hadn't actually been that long since he had gone in, only 8 am. It had just felt like it had been a while due to the different people he had met.

'Whatever, I will just eat something that will keep me full until late afternoon today' he thought. So, he went to the kitchen to get something to eat.

"Oh, hey sister. Why are you here so early? Are you cooking lunch?" he asked.

"No, I got your note," she said as she showed the note and said, "it's my day off too, so I decided to take a break and cook the lunch later on," she said.

"Oh, ok."

"Oh yeah, did you ask about tomorrow?" Hannah asked.

"Tomorrow?" Alex was a little confused.

"The party? Will you have free time to party tomorrow?" Hannah asked.

"Oh, that. Uhh... so many things happened that I forgot to ask. Although we left our sect and are going to the capital city which we will reach tomorrow morning, I think. So I don't know if I will even have time for the shopping itself, let alone the party," Alex said.

"What? Try to make some time," Hannah said.

Alex got some food to eat and fill his stomach for the rest of the day. After that, he went back into the game. He logged into the same room on the ship. It was getting a bit boring to stay in the room so he walked out of the room to go back to the deck with his master.

'I need to ask her about tomorrow,' he thought.

He opened the door of the room and saw Fan Ruogang dragging the nearly crying Wan Li outside. 'What the...' he didn't even finish talking when Fan Ruogang saw him.

"Oh hey Mingming, is your headache gone?" he asked.

"Uh, yeah. It's gone," he said reluctantly.

"Oh, then you come too, we are going to play," she said and started dragging Alex with her other hand. She found a relatively spacious place on the deck and sat down.

She made both Wan Li and Alex sit a little further apart.

"Ok so..." Fan Ruogang was about to speak when Zhou Mei arrived from the side. "Meimei, come sit and play with us," she said.

Zhou? Mei looked towards Alex and asked, "What is he doing here?" she asked.

"Mingming? Of course, he is here to play. I brought him here," Fan Ruogang said.

"No, I mean he barely passed the core disciple a few days ago, you think he can play your game?" Zhou Mei asked. Alex was a bit surprised.

'Just what sort of game is this?' he wondered.

"He is the sect leader's disciple though, so he should be fit to play this right?" Fan Ruogang asked.

"I don't know. Try to play some and you will know," Zhou Mei said.

"Alright, you sit too," Fan Ruogang said.

Zhou Mei nodded and sat down between Wan Li and Fan Ruogang, opposite Alex, and kept staring daggers at him. Alex was getting used to that.

"So, what is this game? How do we play it?" Alex asked.

"Oh, it's quite simple. So, we take out a pill from our storage and hold it in our closed palm. Then the other people will go around guessing the ingredients, and the one holding the pill will tell if they are correct or not."

"The goal of the game is to know what the pill is and you can guess it anytime. However, if you guess wrong, you are out for that round, understood?" Fan Ruogang asked.

Alex thought for a bit and nodded. 'That sounds pretty simple,' he thought.

"Alright, I will start," Fan Ruogang said and brought out a pill from her storage bag and quickly hid it in her hand.

"Meimei, guess," she said.

"Aquatic Berry," Zhou Mei guessed.

"Haha, No. Wanwan, your turn," Fan Ruogang said.

"Hmm... what about a Curling Dragon root?" Wan Li asked.

"Nope," Fan Ruogang said with a giggle. "Mingming, your turn," she asked.

Alex could look into her hand and see what the pill was, but he decided not to. "Umm, Morning Rose seeds?" he asked.

"Yes. Finally, someone got it," she said. Alex simply smiled. Alex was looking into the recipes of the pills in the Hong Wu sect and choosing the most common ingredients. It was working.

"Spirit Rat Femur?" Zhou Mei asked.

"No," Fan Ruogang said.

"Uhh... Star Deer guts?" Wan Li asked.

"Yes, good job Wanwan," Fan Ruogang said.

'A pill that uses both Star Deer guts and Morning Rose seeds? There are 4 of them. However, if I narrow it down any further, it will make it easier for them,' Alex thought.

"Spirit ginseng," he chose a random ingredient that didn't align with any of the ingredients in the pills.

"Nope," Fan Ruogang said.

The game continued as they each said more and more ingredients and soon Alex realized, they were circling around the pills as much as he was.

'No wonder they are top 3 of the sect. They know just as much as, if not more, than me,' Alex thought. He then decided to cheat a little. Suddenly, he went into focus mode.

All of his senses were enhanced in this state and he could do something that was nearly impossible for him to do before this. He could smell the pill.

Normally, it was very faint for him, but with focus mode on he could smell the pill all the way from where he was sitting.

'I see, ' he thought.

"Hillside Roses?" Wan Li asked.

"Nah, you guys need to choose better answers, I'm getting bored," she said. "Mingming, please choose a serious answer, okay?"

Ning thought for a second and said, "Is it the Dawn Spirit pill?"

Fan Ruogang forgot to speak for a second and said, "Yes! It is. Finally, someone got it." She turned to Wan Li and Zhou Mei and said, "You guys couldn't even guess that much? You guys need to study more."

"Alright, let's continue. Whose turn is it now?"

Chapter 234: Beast hoard

Alex was forced to play for quite a while before he was allowed to leave. Aside from the first time, he didn't cheat anymore and decided to play fairly.

Finally, he made his way to the front of the deck where his master was.

"Did you have fun playing Fanfan's little game?" she asked.

"You were spying on us?" Alex asked with a chuckle.

"No, you guys were just creating too much of a ruckus. The top 3 disciples playing with the sect leader's disciple. That causes a small commotion no matter how one thinks of it," Ma Rong said.

"I see," he said as he looked around the area they were traveling through. Although the nearby areas were passing by in a flash, the areas further away were moving very slowly and were thus much better to look at.

"The southern forest is really large, isn't it?" he asked.

"Yeah, from what I have heard, it's larger in width than crimson empire is in length," Ma Rong said.

"What? Is that true master?" he asked.

"I don't know. As I said, I only heard that. Might be true, might not be," Ma Rong said.

Alex looked around and thought of a question and asked, "Master, do you know what an ocean is?"

"Ocean? Of course, who doesn't? The ocean covers just as much of Crimson empire as does the Southern forest," Ma Rong said.

"What? There are oceans around the Crimson empire? Can I see it on the way to the Cardinal City?" Alex asked.

"Oh no. The Oceans are around the outside of the Crimson Empire, while the Cardinal city is at the center of the empire, so you will never see the ocean around there. But don't worry, once you are strong enough, you can go roam the empire and see the different sites," Ma Rong said.

Alex nodded in disappointment. "What about continents then? You know about them?" Alex asked.

"Continents? Hmm... that word doesn't feel familiar at all, so no," Ma Rong said.

"Oh, ok," Alex said. He was dejected, but he had guessed the answer. 'So people really don't know we are in the western continent, do they?' he thought.

'Ocean and Continent, I will need to travel away from the city soon on my own,' Alex thought.

"By the way, Master. We will be reaching tomorrow morning right? Since the competition will start on Sunday, what do we do all day tomorrow?" Alex asked.

"Well, we usually give disciples free rein in the capital so that they can go out and grow. You can do the same," Ma Rong said.

That solved one of his worries. He could now go get a party happening in his place without worrying about not being able to participate in it.

Alex stayed on the ship talking with Ma Rong until a few hours later. He was once more reminded about the Royal Fu family and the different things he needed to take care to not reveal in the capital city and competition.

Afterward, they spent some time in silence, just looking towards the distance. After a while, Alex started feeling drowsy from the lack of engagement to anything.

'Maybe I should go sleep for real,' he thought.

"Master, I will go back to the room. You should go take some rest too," he said.

"Alright, go. I will take a rest when the second elder is done resting as w— Hmm" Ma Rong stopped abruptly when she noticed something in the distance.

She suddenly stood up and walked towards the front of the deck.

"Stop there," she told the elder responsible for flying the boat. As ordered, the elder stopped the boat right on top of a group of people who were on their way to another town. From the looks of it, they were part of a caravan.

Currently, they were being ruthlessly attacked by different monsters from the southern forest. Alex had at some point reached the edge of the deck and was looking down as well.

When the people in the caravan saw the large shadow appear and stop near them, they started shouting at the ship for help.

"Stay here," Ma Rong said and took a step off the edge of the ship. Suddenly, she disappeared. Many disciples didn't see where the sect leader went and was surprised.

Alex was surprised too, but he soon found her. Ma Rong was already at the bottom, in front of the various monsters. With the Flickering Shadows technique, she could teleport to her shadow regardless of the distance between her and the shadow.

Once she was below, she waved her hands once, and suddenly, all of the beasts were on the ground, frothing at their mouth. They were already dead.

Alex was beyond shocked when he saw the display of prowess. 'A single palm to clear a hoard of organ tempering realm monsters. I wonder when I can do that,' Alex said in pure surprise.

"Thank you senior for saving us, Senior. We thank you very much," the people in the caravan started to show their gratitude towards their savior. However, Ma Rong wanted none of it.

She got straight to the questions. "Why were you attacked? Do you have something in the cargo worth attracting a monster hoard?" she asked.

"No, miss savior. There is no such thing," the caravan merchants told her. Ma Rong had already checked the insides with her spiritual sense and really had found nothing from there.

She turned around and stored all of the dead beasts into her storage bags and said to the people, "Continue along." After that, she flew to the boat and landed on the deck.

Many disciples had gone to either side now, and while they missed Ma Rong's fight, they had seen the multitudes of monster corpses lying by the side. When paired with time, they knew what exactly had taken place down there.

Ma Rong went to where she was previously seated and sat down. She then said to herself in a small voice, "So the beasts really are getting restless."

Chapter 235: Unusual Activity

The ship started moving once more and soon they were back to the same speed.

Alex sat down next to Ma Rong looking at her contemplating something and thought, 'the beasts are getting restless? What does she mean?'

He didn't speak for a few minutes, but the curiosity got to him in the end, so he asked, "Master, What is happening with the beasts? Why are they attacking the caravans?"

Ma Rong thought for a while and said, "I do not know. I have tried making sense of what little information we have, but nothing makes any sense."

Alex got more curious, "What exactly is happening, Master?"

"Ever since a while ago, the monsters in the southern forest have been getting restless in several places. Monsters that never leave their side of the forest are coming out, attacking the people in the roads."

"I previously thought that these were just one-off incidents and would go back to normal after a while, but...? it has only started to escalate since then," she said.

Alex fell into thought as well. There was no such thing happening in the Scarlet city yet... but what if it did? What if suddenly, one day the monsters started attacking them from the south, while the monsters in the desert arrive from the north.

If that happened, the city would have to evacuate and relocate.

'Are these two things related? Can't be, right?' he thought. The monsters in the desert were strong, but they were not strong like regular monsters that had access to Qi.

No monsters in the desert could ever make him feel fear the way the worm had back then.

'Worm...?' he thought.

"Master, did I ever tell you about the strong worm? No, right?" he asked.

"A worm? What's this about?" she asked.

He proceeded to explain to her how he met a worm that was stronger than both her and Wen Cheng. Ma Rong heard it all with a face of shock. "Thankfully, you didn't get caught by it. You... I don't even want to think what would've happened to you," Ma Rong said.

"So, do you think the worm might be behind it?" Alex asked.

"No, I don't think it's possible for a worm that is not even the peak of True Realm to do anything so as to launch a coordinated attack against the empire. Besides, given how random these beast attacks are, I doubt a single monster could plan the attacks that currently happening. No, it's something else. Something entirely different," Ma Rong said as she looked far away into the south.

"Then... " Alex asked, "Could it be Pearl's mother? Is her corpse somehow responsible for this?" he asked.

"The cat monster? Why do you ask that?" Ma Rong asked.

"I mean, she was a saint realm monster. Considering how nonexistent saint realms are in the crimson empire, maybe that has something to do with it?" he asked.

Ma Rong chuckled a little and asked, "Who told you saint realms are non-existent?"

"Wha— aren't Saint Realm what everyone in the crimson empire is looking to be?" Alex asked.

"Yes, but that doesn't mean that no one has reached it. There are a few hidden figures in the Crimson Empire that are in the Saint Realm. Heck, I know for sure there are some old foggies in the Royal family that are hiding away in a dungeon as a saint realm expert, hoping time won't catch up to them," Ma Rong said and then immediately gestured to him to never talk about the royal family in this way again.

"Wait, if Saint Realm is not unreachable, then why were you guys so hung up on Spirit Cleansing Lilies and Pearl's mother then?" he asked in confusion.

"It's not that Saint Realm is unreachable, but more so that we have no idea what to do in that realm. Admittedly, from what I know, Saint realm is nothing like the self-tempering realm and True realm that comes before it."

"They say that the process of cultivation itself changes when one enters the Saint Realm. I have no idea what that means and I would love to get some. But those goddamn old people will die with their secret buried with them," Ma Rong said.

"We just want Spirit Cleansing Lilies cause spirit sense is helpful early on. As for the cat mother, I don't think there has been a saint realm monster in the crimson empire in a long time, so it was curiosity that we cared about them. Also, having a monster beast that can grow to Saint Realm for guarantee is very tempting."

"Which is why you shouldn't show around Pearl willy nilly. Not everyone you meet is a good person. Until you can be a good judge of character, try not to reveal your hands too much," Ma Rong said.

"Yes, Master." "I know. I've seen those people who will take help and return poison instead of gratitude," Alex thought.

"By the way, you guys never found Pearl's mother's body right? What happened to it?" Alex asked.

"No idea. We searched the area for a long time, but there was no sign of anything from the outside interfering. Unless there is a strong bird that flew away with the corpse before we arrived, we don't know what happened to it. Why do you want to know?" she asked.

"Oh, I... just wanted to perform a small funeral for Pearl's sake," Alex said.

Ma Rong nodded and patted his head while saying, "I hope you can stay just as kind forever."

Alex kept quiet and thought to himself, 'I hope so too.'

Alex talked to Ma Rong a little more and asked different questions such as the Royal family's saint realm experts or the forbidden realm. But Ma Rong didn't know much of either, so the two remained mostly quiet.

"Sect Leader, You can go back, we will take it from here for now," A voice came from the back. Both Ma Rong and Alex looked back and saw that the second and third elders had arrived.

Chapter 236: Second and Third Elder

"Ah, You guys are here. Alright, take over. I will go get some rest," Ma Rong said as she looked towards the two elders.

"Are you gonna go take a rest as well, Yu?" she asked.

"Umm... I will stay here for a while and leave around evening time," Alex said.

"Very well. You can stay here with Second Elder and Third Elder," Ma Rong said as left.

The two elders came and sat a little to the left of Alex and looked towards the horizon. "I'm really surprised sect master is letting you take part in the competition so soon, Disciple Yu," the Third Elder said.

She was a little younger than Ma Rong and was shorter too. She also had robes that were custom-tailored to fit the curvature of her body. Overall, she looked much more appealing to the eyes than any of the other Elders Alex had seen, including his master.

"Yes, Elder. I was surprised when I learned it too," Alex said.

"But I heard you are quite talented, Disciple Yu. Is that true?" the second Elder asked.

"I wouldn't really know about that. I haven't had much interaction with the other disciples, so I don't know what is normal and what is not in terms of talent," Alex replied.

"Oh, nice reply. Not arrogant at all, I like it," the Third Elder said.

Far away, Zhou Mei saw her masters talking with Alex and got a little ticked off. She walked up to them and heard,

"So you will be taking part in two of the competitions huh? Any idea what the third one will be?" Second Elder asked.

"He'll be taking part in the competition? Isn't he too new to all of this to take part in them?" Zhou Mei asked.

"Oh, maybe. But he is talented, so he gets to," Third Elder said.

"How talented can he be if he only just entered the core sect? Master, you must be pulling my leg," Zhou Mei said.

"Oh, then you mustn't know about his ingredient finding and pill-making abilities. I thought you already talked with him after finding out who he was a few days ago?" Second Elder asked.

"I... I didn't talk with him. Why? How talented can he be?" Zhou Mei asked.

"Oh, Disciple Yu, what is the highest harmony pill you've made yet?" Second Elder asked.

Alex was a little surprised by the line of questioning. 'Why would you ask that of someone?' he thought. But they were elders and probably already knew about the ones he registered, so he replied, "It was 43%."

The two elders nodded as if they were just testing him, but Zhou Mei's eyes were wide open. "Wait what? No way he is making 43% harmony pills. That is way too high. Even Wan Li can barely make 40%, and that's under best conditions," Zhou Mei cried out.

"What can I tell you, Little Mei, that is true," Second Elder said. The third Elder giggled at the side.

"But... But... That must be because he got everything handed to him. He learned everything in the sect was treated with bias," she tried to make accusations.

Alex started to get annoyed a little. 'Why do I have to sit here and listen to her bullsh*t?' he thought and decided to leave.

But then, the second elder spoke, "No, there was no bias in his treatment as far as I know. To be fair, me and her were out here learning about the competition when he joined the sect. But from what we heard afterward, he made a great contribution to the sect."

"So big, that everything in the sect was given to him to use with full authority," he said.

"What? What could he have done to gain that?" she asked. Full authority over everything meant that everything in the sect was free for him to use. That would obviously help everyone get a little better even if they put no effort into anything.

"Oh, that's a secret for now. I don't know if anyone other than the elders is allowed to know it or not. You will have to ask the sect leader herself," Second Elder said.

Not getting any answers, Zhou Mei left. Alex felt a little weird about everything and left them as well and went back to the room in the ship.

Having nothing to do anymore, he logged out.

He woke up from his bed feeling hungry. "Uhh... I haven't eaten in nearly 9 hours," he thought and walked out of the room. He made his way to the kitchen and found Hannah in the living room watching the TV.

"You ate already, sister?" he asked.

"Hmm... oh yeah. Go get your food," she said.

Alex went to the kitchen and got himself a snack. He then walked back to the living room and sat down on the sofa watching the TV.

"What are you watching?" he asked.

"Oh, I was watching the news about the capsules and one thing lead to another. Now I'm just watching whatever is on," she said.

"Oh, what was the capsule's news about?" he asked.

"Oh, it seems we won't have to go to the shop for shopping at all. It will be delivered to us. We only have to go to the shops to give them our helmets and get a discount," Hannah said.

"Oh, then I should go there tomorrow, right?" he said.

"What? Do you really care about some measly discounts after earning so much?" she asked.

"Umm... I guess not?" he said. "Oh yeah. My master said that we can stay in the hotel tomorrow, so we can have that party? you've been meaning to have for the longest time."

"Oh, nice. I will start ordering stuff. Wait, no. I have to let them know first," she said and started messaging the guests.

Alex just stayed there and ate his snack. "Sister, I think I have a little problem for next week. I don't know what to do about it," he said.

"Oh, what problem?" she asked.

Chapter 237: Buying Rush

"You see, it seems like there are going to be a lot of different competitions in the upcoming annual competition and I might end up missing a lot of days of classes," he said.

"Haha, you are worried about that? Then you will love the news that came out today at noon," Hannah said.

"Hmm... what news?" he asked.

"Look," Hannah said as she handed him her phone. Alex took it and saw that it was an official email from Oakleaf University.

-Due to the upcoming release of a gaming capsule from Deva Corp. for the game Eternal Cultivation, the university is going to remain closed for the next week. Classes will run as usual from next week-

"What? They are stopping classes just for a game, why?" he asked.

"Just a game? Do you not know how big Eternal Cultivation is right now?" Hannah asked in surprise.

"I mean I know, but still. Closing a university due to the game, isn't that a little extreme?" he asked.

"Not really. Just think about how many students will be absent from their classes due to playing forever. Especially since you won't have to log out as much with the capsules. Besides, I'm pretty sure the teachers want to play the game too," Hannah laughed.

"Maybe that is the case," Alex thought and nodded.

"Yeah, either way, it doesn't matter to us, d—," Hannah stopped talking and looked at the news. "Oh, sh*t. Go get your laptop and phone, fast," she said and ran from the sofa.

"What?" Alex was a little surprised and looked at the TV. There was flashing breaking news at the bottom.

- From Deva Corp.

- Sales for Capsules will start at 5 PM today. The sales system will be a first come first serve. Meaning, whoever orders first will get a capsule delivered to them first.

- One will only be able to order a single capsule at a time.

"Ah," Alex exclaimed and ran to his room too and brought back his laptop and smartphone. Hannah was already in the room with her laptop open.

She was furiously typing something. Alex looked at the time and saw that it was only 4:50 PM right now. So the sales shouldn't have started yet.

"What are you doing, sister?" he asked.

"Oh, you are here. Open your laptop and start typing everything necessary for buying a capsule, like the home address, your bank account, and everything. It will be easier to copy-paste later," she said.

"Oh, that's not a bad idea," he thought and started typing the same as well.

Time started ticking by. They were constantly refreshing the website trying to not miss it.

The clock hit 5, and the page was available.

Both of them furiously started inputting the data into the different fields. There were a few more fields to type in than they had prepared for, but they could just type that right now.

"Done," Hannah said and exclaimed.

Alex jumped of fright from the sudden exclamation and missed the 'BUY' button. So he brought the cursor back and pressed it again.

"Sigh, I did it as well," he said as he took a breath.

"Hmm... tomorrow at 3 pm huh? That's... around the time the party will end. That actually works out for me perfectly," Hannah said.

"Oh," Alex heard her and looked at his information as well. Then, he started laughing. At first, he chuckled and then broke out into a burst of full laughter.

Hannah was caught off guard. "What's wrong?" she asked. That was definitely not good laughter from her perspective.

"I finished a split second later than you, and yet my delivery date became Monday in the morning," he said.

"What? That's so late though," Hannah said, not realizing that she was the entire reason he was slow in the first place.

"It's fine, I can work with my helmet for 2 more days," he said.

"Alright then," Hannah said.

Alex went back to eating his snacks. With the laptop right next to him, he decided to check a few things that had been bothering him for the last few days.

He went to the forum and looked up stuff about Crimson Empire. Especially, he wanted to see if he could find any information about the beasts getting restless.

"They only talk about the beasts attacking and never say why," he thought as he read through the information. He looked up other information about the Crimson Empire and found out that the upcoming competition was quite popular amongst a small group of people.

These were probably the only people who were in the Crimson Empire. Most of them were taking part in it as well.

Next up, he looked up the Evolution thing that was in Pearl's status.

Unfortunately, only 30 people had even managed to bond with a beast and of them, not one of them had a beast with over 2% in evolution chance.

The highest one was 6% that the person acquired through a guardian in their sect. Aside from that, there was no information about evolutions at all. Everything else was just speculation.

And they matched what he had been thinking in the first place.

He sighed and looked through more information that was popular on the forum. Apparently, a tournament in the southern continent had just ended, and a lot of players had managed to get a good result there.

He looked through the other information and found a post that talked about the reincarnation problem the game had right now. Unfortunately, it was nothing but people complaining. There was nothing informative about that post, so he closed it.

He went to the kitchen to help his cousin prepare food for the night and ate it afterward as well. At the same time, the things she had ordered for the party arrived as well.

"I can do it myself, you can go," she said and sent Alex who wanted to help. So, he returned back to his room and logged back into the game.

Chapter 238: Raining

Alex logged back into the game and walked out of the room.

As soon as he was in the hallway, he heard something. It was an ambient sound, like a static of a radio. "Could it be?" his eyes went wide and he walked out.

Opening the door, the sound got much louder and he could hear each individual sound that collectively made the overall sound. Cold air with drops of water struck his face.

It was raining.

This was the first time he had seen rain in the game.

"Haha, it's actually raining," he said with a smile. He looked out and saw many disciples in the rain, practically dancing, letting the rain hit their faces.

Alex was quite surprised, but he understood. 'They haven't seen rain in a long time as well, have they?' he thought.

He walked out into the rain and let it fall on him. He could easily create a layer of Qi to block it, but he didn't do so. He walked to the front of the ship and saw that his master was already there.

So were the two elders.

"Ah, you are here disciple Yu. Came to check the rain?" the Second Elder asked.

"I just came out because I thought I had enough rest," he said as he looked around the deck. The various disciples were all happily walking around in the rain.

Fan Ruogang had Wan Li in her clutches and was walking around the rain with him. Even Zhou Mei was smiling a little after seeing the rain.

He then looked up at the sky and saw the clouds were looming for quite a long distance. There were even some lightning discharges in the rain.

"We... won't get hit by the lightning, right?" he asked.

"Don't worry, the ship has protection. It can divert lightning attacks around us with its barrier, similar to how air is diverted away," Ma Rong said.

"But the rain still hits us?" he asked.

"That's because we can allow what to enter and whatnot," Ma Rong said.

"I see," he said. "Anyway, this is my first time seeing rain since I joined the sect. I wouldn't have imagined the sect to be in such a place of drought," he said.

"It's not really in a place of drought. There are springs of water deep underground. It's only that it never rains. Even when the sky gets cloudy, it immediately goes away," Ma Rong said.

"Huh, Why?" Alex asked.

"No idea. It's never rained in Scarlet City for nearly hundreds of years. Thankfully, the weather doesn't get too hot, or we would be a desert right now," Ma Rong said.

"Like the forbidden fields?" Alex asked.

"Yeah, like the forbidden fields—," Ma Rong stopped. She remembered what was happening in the forbidden fields for the last few years. The land was getting deserted.

Alex realized what she was thinking. It was not far off in the future when the scarlet city would become a desert as well. And no one knew the reason why.

"I think we should put up the barrier, sect leader. Or the deck will be full of water," Second Elder said.

Ma Rong got out of her stupor and nodded. Suddenly, with a wave of her hand, the rain stopped falling. All the disciples stopped and looked up. Rains were streaming down the air as if there was a glass roof on top of them.

"We will go back now, sect Leader," Second Elder said and walked away with the third elder.

Alex was left alone with his Master.

"Are you worried about the sect becoming a desert later on?" he asked.

"Yes. As a sect leader, I can't help but be worried about it. At first, I thought it not raining in Scarlet City had to do with the geographical location, but now, I'm starting to think it has something to do with the desert in the forbidden fields," Ma Rong said.

Alex had no answer for that.

"Anyway, you should go back and cultivate or something. You don't need to stay out here in the rain. I can stay all by myself," Ma Rong said.

"It's okay, I can cultivate here too," Alex said and called out Pearl.

"Hide him," Ma Rong got a little frantic.

"It's okay, master," Alex said and quickly hit Pearl in his robes. "Pearl, start cultivating," he said.

"Meow," Pearl said and started to snuggle up on his body before glowing a bright white color. He then turned to yellow before fully glowing in golden color.

Thankfully, Alex's robe was hiding most of the light so only Ma Rong could see the shine.

Slowly, cuts started appearing on Alex's skin. Ma Rong got scared a little thinking he was hurt. "Yu Ming, are you okay?" she asked in a hurry.

"I'm okay, don't worry. This is just how I body cultivate," he said.

"But... that looks so painful. Are you really fine?" she asked.

"Yeah, don't worry about it. I'm used to the pain now," he said.

'Used to the pain' and not 'it's not painful'. Ma Rong felt a deep pain in her heart when she heard that. She knew she couldn't shelter him forever, but she wanted to keep him safe for as long as she could.

However, he was already getting hurt in ways she couldn't imagine. The physical pain of such body cultivation and the psychological pain of killing a person. She never wanted him to feel those. Yet, he did, and she couldn't stop it.

She stood there for a few hours, watching him cultivate and making sure that he didn't make a mistake during his cultivation. Fortunately, she was worrying needlessly.

Alex could talk through his cultivation now, so she just talked back whenever he spoke and let him be when he was just cultivating.

Soon, the clouds parted away, giving ways to the moonlight. Clear rays of moonlight lit the world below. And in that light, Ma Rong saw something.

Another monster hoard attack.

Chapter 239: Fraudsters

'Another one?' she thought in surprise.

"Stop the ship," she ordered the elder who was currently driving it.

Feeling the ship stop suddenly, Alex opened his eyes and told Pearl to stop cultivating. The cuts all over his body quickly healed from the Qi his body had.

"What's going on master?" he asked.

"Another monster hoard attack, down there," she said.

Alex looked from the front and saw a bunch of monsters attacking a small carriage.? "Come, let's see what is going on," Ma Rong said and beckoned Alex.

Alex nodded and flew with her to the bottom.

On the ground were a bunch of young people trying to fight the monsters with an elderly at the front trying to fend off the beast. The young people had at best the Bone Tempering realm of Cultivation and the old man seemed to be at 1st realm of Organ tempering realm too.

They were very weak against the hoard of beasts in front of them. Just the fact that they were alive right now was a miracle.

Ma Rong couldn't quickly teleport down as she did during the day without her shadow being there. However, before even reaching the 10-meter mark, where one was supposed to be able to teleport, she disappeared.

Alex was surprised. "How did she teleport 30 meters away?" he wondered in surprise.

Ma Rong immediately suppressed all the beasts down there and waited for Alex to arrive. Once he was there, she said, "Kill them."

Alex nodded and took out his Steel Sword. The monsters were around the Bone Tempering realm, with some being in the mid organ tempering realm, but that was no problem for Alex.

He easily cut through the different beasts with his sword like it was a hot knife attacking butter. Within a few slices, most of the monsters were dead.

For the monster in the Organ tempering realm, he used Smiting Blade, and soon they were dead as well. He quickly took the corpses into his storage bag.

Ma Rong saw that the fight was over and nodded; she then looked towards the old man asked, " Who are you people and what are you guys doing here?"

The 5 young people in the back were shivering with fear and didn't speak at all. So, the old man decided to speak.

"We come from a nearby village. I am a sect leader and these are my students. I wanted to take them to the capital to register them in the annual competition."

"We were riding the carriage to the capital and... and... the beasts, they came out of nowhere and attacked us."

"I thought we were going to die, but you saved us. Thank you, Miss, young man. You saved this old man's life," the old man said.

Alex nodded and said nothing as he accepted the gratitude in silence. Ma Rong nothing whatsoever.

Alex looked at the poor young people, still shivering from fear. 'I would probably be scared just like that if I knew I was going to die too,' he thought.

"Can I ask who you are Miss? I see that your ship is big. You must be from a well-known sect," he said.

"You don't need to know," Ma Rong said and looked around. She then asked, "Where are your horses?"

"They were eaten by the monsters miss. Gobbled up entirely. Honestly, I was scared to death. Thankfully, you guys saved me. I don't know how I can repay you," the old man said.

"You don't have to repay us. We were just doing what anyone would do in this situation," Alex said. Ma Rong kept quiet.

"Alright, you said you were from a nearby village right?" Ma Rong asked.

"Yes, it's about a few dozen kilometers that way," the old man pointed behind him.

"I see. Then gather up your belongings and go back. You do not have horses to carry the carriage anymore, so you won't make it to the capital before the registration date. I doubt you could've made it even if you had one. So just return back to your village," Ma Rong said.

"I can't do that. These disciples of mine have wanted to take part in the competition for such a long time. I cannot let their dreams go to waste. Please, can't you just let us up on the ship? I'm sure you have a lot of room, right?" the old man asked.

"No," Ma Rong said with a cold face and flew away, forcefully pulling Alex along with her. Alex was surprised at the abrupt pull, but let her do it.

They both landed on the ship and Ma Rong told the elder to start moving again. Very soon, they were moving at a fast speed away from the place.

Alex was confused as to what had just happened. His master was unusually cold today after helping the people down there. 'Does she hate outsiders that much? Can't we just take little stowaways? I'm pretty sure there is plenty of places,' he thought.

"What's going on master? Why didn't you help them?" Alex asked.

"They... didn't need our help," Ma Rong said.

"But their carriage is broken. I'm sure we could've ta— "

"No, before even that, they didn't need our help. That old man was crafty. I don't know if he is a thief or what, but he wanted to get onto our ship for some reason."

"If I am not mistaken, that wasn't a monster hoard that randomly attacked them either. It was clearly set up beforehand to make it look like they were attacked. The horses were never there either, it was all a lie."

"He must've paid some kids to act like they were in trouble and take the chance to rob whoever stopped to help them. The old man was looking towards our ship from the very moment we arrived."

"He wanted us to help him, that bastard," she said.

Alex was surprised. 'How much experience do you need to have to catch things like that? If it were me, I would've just let them into the ship openly,' he thought.

'I still have a lot to learn.'

Chapter 240: Death

Down at the ground where the old man and the 5 young people were staying at,

The old man watched the ship fly off into the distance with his crafty eyes and made an angry smile.

"Tsk, that young girl is too crafty. She saw through my ruse too easily," he said. He shook his head and looked at the blood on the ground.

"Sigh, I worked so hard to gather the beasts. You could've at least stopped the young man for a few moments if not for a minute," he said. His eyes would have hints of irritation whenever he remembered the young man's face behind the young woman.

"Tsk, I'm getting annoyed again," he thought.

He looked back at the 5 young people and looked at their shivering figures. "Stop shivering for one second," he shouted at them. That only made them shiver harder.

The fear on the faces of the 5 people was even higher than it was when fighting the monsters. He stopped looking at them and thought, "Urghh... I could've killed them if I was just a little stronger," he thought.

"At least that young man. Ughh... I so want to kill him," he said in agitation.

"And then, I would kill that girl, Ma Rong. That little girl thinks she is something huh."

" Well, she did help me a little... No, I will still kill her someday." He then turned back to the young ones again and saw them shivering with a face full of fear.

"Sigh"

Suddenly, the old man's cultivation base flared and started increasing. From Organ Tempering 1st realm to 2nd realm to the third realm... Organ Tempering 9th realm... Meridian Tempering 1st realm... Meridian Tempering 9th realm... Mind Tempering 1st realm... Mind Tempering 9th realm...

True Disciple 1st realm... True Disciple 9th realm... True Master 1st Realm... True Master 9th realm... True Lord 1st realm... True Lord 5th realm.

Finally, it increased once more to True Lord 6th realm and stopped increasing.

"Ahh... It feels so much better when you don't have to hide your cultivation base. Sigh, I'm still too weak to fight the girl with her True King realm cultivation," The old man said.

He then turned around to the 5 people and said, " You guys must be lonely. Why don't I send you to your friends and families from the village?"

The young people were relieved for a split second before realizing what he meant. The man in front of them had killed their entire village to capture the 5 of them for this one thing.

If he were to send them back, then...

Before the young ones could even think anything anymore, the old man swung his hand horizontally and 5 heads fell to the ground.

"Ahh... I wish I could do the same to those people. Especially the boy. Although, letting him grow a little stronger before taking his body doesn't sound too bad either," he said as he looked towards the distance where the ship had flown to.

And then, his cultivation base started to disappear once more until it was no more. Not even the previous organ tempering realm remained and he looked just like a mortal.

Then, he turned right and started walking into the southern forest. Before entering, however, a veil of light came upon him, and soon, he disappeared from where he was.

Alex was back to body cultivating on top of the ship under Ma Rong's supervision. He didn't need it, but having someone look after him why he was cultivating was still very much appreciated.

Ma Rong kept on watching him for a while and asked a question that she had in her heart for a long time.

"How long has it been since you cultivated normally?" she asked.

"Hmm... normally? Let's see... I have cultivated my Qi for a single time since I could do body cultivation," he said.

"Hmm... do you find body cultivation better than Qi cultivation?" she asked. She was genuinely curious about body cultivation.

"Not really," he said. "It's both the same. At least with Qi cultivation I don't have to feel this pain, and it doesn't get slower as you get stronger," he said.

"Oh, sounds like body cultivation is not as good as Qi cultivation. Then why do you keep on body cultivating? You can just cultivate your Qi too. I can look after you," She said.

"Uh... you remember the first time you came to teach me? The thing I said that morning you found me in the room?" he asked.

"Hmm?" Ma Rong didn't know what he was talking about. It was before she had unlocked her spiritual sense, so it took her a while to remember.

"Ah, that time I found you asleep? What about it?" she asked. She remembered the first time she went to his house to give him his alchemy lessons, and he was in one of the rooms, asleep.

"You see... I still fall asleep when I cultivate and... I don't know when I stop doing it," he said.

"What? You haven't fixed that yet?" she asked.

"I don't know how to, master. I keep falling asleep. At first, I thought that was normal, but it seems that it is not. I don't know what to do," he said.

"You should have let me know that way earlier," Ma Rong said. "Alright, Cultivate right now and I'll try to see what the problem is."

Alex nodded and asked Pearl to stop cultivating.

"That's enough for today, Pearl. You can go back now," Alex said.

"Meow?", Pearl woke up from the cultivation and went back to his beast space in Alex's arm. Ma Rong waited for Alex to start.

Alex knew he was in safe hands, so he sat in a relaxed posture and closed his eyes. He started breathing in and out slowly, and soon the cultivation method kicked in.

<Sun God's Divine Yang Body increasing cultivation speed by 500%>

<Starry sky Qi Absorption method's Night bonus increasing cultivation speed by 200%>

<Obtained 200 Qi>

And, as usual, Alex fell into a trance and lost consciousness.