

Alchemy 281

Chapter 281: Up-Grade

60%, that was the harmony level of the pill that was the center of attention right now.

The pill tester had finally stopped working and the final result was 60%. Alex walked up front and picked up his pill before putting it into his storage bag.

He didn't have a bottle right now and had to resort to keeping pills in the storage bag.

Although externally, he didn't act like what had just happened was a big deal, that was only because he was already done celebrating internally when he had found out the pill's harmony level before he had even brought it.

He waited for the staff and host to get on with announcing the results, but no one was saying anything.

He looked around and realized that everyone was still looking at him. Alex felt a little anxious with so many eyes on him and turned to the host.

"Umm... what about the result?" he asked.

"Ah, yes. Sorry about that. Everyone, please get your stuff, we will prepare the results right now," the host said and went to consult with the staff members.

"What's your name?" Huang Fu walked up to him and asked.

"Yu Ming," Alex said while looking straight at Huang Fu's eyes.

"Yu Ming..." Huang Fu murmured, "I will remember it. Congratulations."

"Haha, you too," Alex said.

"Brother Yu, that was amazing. Since when can you make such amazing pills," Wan Li asked.

"Ah, I got a little lucky with this one. It was only because I made the Bronze Tiger's Rage that I was able to get such a result. Had I tried any other pills, I doubt I could've gotten the same results," Alex said.

"I see, still, that was amazing. Although...." Wan Li trailed off as he thought of something and asked, "Are you an elder now?"

"Ah!" Alex had forgotten about the Elder rule where if one made a Heaven grade pill, they would be upgraded to an elder.

"I shouldn't right?" Alex said. "After all, I am not registering this pill."

"That makes sense," Wan Li said.

"Everyone, gather around. The results are set," the host said.

"Congratulations to everyone who managed to make the pills. I have good news for you lot and your sects. Thanks to so many people getting such close results, a lot of you will get the same ranking, and thus a high point from this competition in general."

"As for the winners, we already? know who the Top 3 are, but let me still announce them so everyone in the audience who didn't catch the incredible event can learn it as well."

"In the third place is Wan Li from Hong Wu sect who made a Hundred Poison Antidote with an incredible harmony of 49%."

"In the second place is Huang Fu from Royal Fu Academy, who made an Ulterior Bones pill with an incredible harmony of 53%."

"And now, in the first place, the star of this competition, and perhaps the entirety of Alchemy competitions for this year's competition in whole, is Yu Ming from Hong Wu sect, who managed to make a Bronze Tiger's Rage with a beyond amazing harmony of 60%," the host said.

Everyone started applauding and the rest of the results showed up on the ranking board behind the group. The girl from the Hong Wu sect managed to get 41% of harmony in her pill, making her 7th in the ranking.

There were more than 9 people in the same ranking as her, but that didn't deduct from the fact that her 41% harmony pill was considered to have ranked in the 7th place.

The young men and women took their items and returned back out of the arena, and went straight to the seating area.

As soon as the sect members saw the 3 of them come back, everyone started congratulating them.

"As expected of the set leader's disciple, that was great"

"You can make Heaven-grade pills?"

"Wan Li you did great too."

Heaps of praises rained down from both the elders and fellow disciples. Alex nodded towards everyone thanking them for their congratulations.

Fan Ruogang and Zhou Mei congratulated the 3 too.

"Good job you kids. That was amazing. That was much better than I could've expected of you guys. I doubt Fanfan or my Meimei could've done that good," the second elder said.

"True, true," the third elder said.

"You guys come take some rest. You deserve it," Ma Rong said.

Everyone went back to their seats and looked at the next competitions starting soon.

"Is that the best pill you've made till now?" Ma Rong asked Alex slowly.

"Yes. If I remember correctly, the last one that I made was 59% in harmony. So this beats it by a little," Alex said.

"Good. You've improved a lot. Thankfully, the metal energy pills are great for you. We will go see why those are the only ones that work in the library today," Ma Rong said.

Alex nodded. He was looking forward to going to the library since he had a lot of things to read up on. Things that pertained to both himself and the things he had.

Alex thought about something and asked his master, "Master, are we in the 1st grade now?" he didn't lower his voice so everyone heard it loud and clear.

Suddenly, everyone started counting. The girl got 14 points, Wan Li got 33 points and Alex got 100 points. Altogether, they needed 146 points to advance onto the next grade and they managed to get... 147.

"We... we got 524 points in total. We— We did it right?" the second elder said.

"We got more than that. The others got a few points here and there too. Woohoo, we finally did it," Fan Ruogang said.

Suddenly, everyone celebrated. Even Ma Rong smiled when she realized that she had succeeded in what she came to accomplish.

"Master!" Alex called, jolting her out of her happiness.

"What is it?" she asked.

"You see... since we succeeded in becoming a 1st-grade sect... can I not take part in tomorrow's competition?"

Chapter 282: Request Fulfilled

Ma Rong was a little surprised at the sudden request.

"But tomorrow is the last day of alchemy competitions. If you don't take part tomorrow, you won't get to take part at all," Ma Rong said.

"That's the thing master. There are other competitions on Friday too right? Aside from the battle ones of course," Alex asked.

"Hmm... yes there is but... you can't be thinking of taking part in those right? First of all, we don't even know what competitions there will be, and second of all, your cultivation base is still quite low. You are still only at the 5th realm of the Organ Tempering realm. That is not enough to be able to do anything," Ma Rong said.

"How about I just wait for a suitable competition. If there is one on Friday, I will take part in it, if not, I won't," Alex said.

Ma Rong was about to refuse when suddenly someone else spoke.

"Sect leader, can I not join in tomorrow's competition as well?" surprisingly, the person who spoke just now was Wan Li.

The other sect members had been listening to the Master-Disciple talk and hadn't said anything, so they were quite surprised when they saw Wan Li speak up.

"Why do you not want to take part in tomorrow's competition? Don't you want to earn points for the sect?" Ma Rong asked.

"I do, but you know me, Sect leader. I am very bad at learning anything quickly, so I will need a lot of practice tomorrow if I want to get a decent rank. I doubt that will be possible with how quick they will want us to be. Besides, while Brother Yu might not have the cultivation for fighting, I do. I can take part in the fighting competitions, right?" Wan Li said.

Ma Rong fell into contemplation. Wan Li was correct. His cultivation base was quite high. Even she was surprised when she saw his cultivation base last time during registration.

"Please master. I want to take part in a competition other than alchemy. I feel like it is a waste if I spend half my time in the tiger sect and still don't take part in a non-production competition," Alex said.

"Sigh, okay okay. You kids win. I will let you take part in those competitions. But only if it is suitable for you," Ma Rong said as she gave up on refusing any further.

She didn't want to deny the disciples what they wanted just for the sake of the sect.

"Sigh, what about you two girls? You have any such aspirations too?" Ma Rong asked Fan Ruogang and Zhou Mei.

"Haha, No way sect leader. I'm too weak to want to do anything. I'm fine with tomorrow's competition," Fan Ruogang said in her usual cheery self.

"I am looking forward to tomorrow's competition actually. I feel like I haven't done very well in this competition," Zhou Mei said.

"What? You've done pretty well MeiMei. Don't be down on yourself. Hehe, maybe with WanWan and Mingming not taking part in tomorrow's competition, you will be the best? Oh, of course, that's if that Huang Fu guy doesn't join. Tsk, Now I feel anxious thinking about tomorrow," Fan Ruogang said.

Everyone simply smiled seeing her talk so much.

"Alright. We will talk about this more during tonight's meeting. For now, just enjoy the competition," Ma Rong said. So everyone focused back on the competition.

The contestants in front of them were having a Talisman competition. According to the rules of the competition, it was to check who could make the best talisman.

Everyone was given an hour to make the best talisman they could, and the competition was coming to a close. They had to create their own ink before making the runes for the talisman so it took them quite a lot of time to make the talisman.

So, compared to alchemy, they didn't have enough time to create multiple ones and had to stick with a single one.

One tested the talisman was not by its effects or usage, but by the stability of the runes and the accuracy of the ink. Any slight inconsistencies in the ink mixture or irregularity in the talisman runes affected the output of the talisman.

Have the problems be big and you end up with a talisman that is not usable as all.

There were formations to check the inks and runes, just like pill testers. So, one by one, the contestants put their talismans face down on the talisman tester that was just a flat metal surface with a rectangular indent on it.

The talisman tester checked both the ink and the runes, and the balance between them. The higher the balance, the better the talisman.

Slowly, the results started coming in one by one. It didn't take long to realize who the winners were for the talisman competition.

As expected from the sects focused on talismans, like the Grand Void sect and the Little Dawn sect, they took first and second place respectively.

As for the third place, those were taken by none other than the Royal Fu Academy. No matter what the competition was, they were always there to take part in and most of the time ended up in the top 3.

Finally, there were no more competitions for the day, so Ma Rong stood up.

"Let's leave," she said and started walking. All the sect members followed her as well. Along the way, they saw the Spring Song sect standing up to leave as well.

Ma Rong didn't make any snarky remarks at all. However, she did simply just smile at them as she left. The fatty started fuming in the ears, but couldn't do anything since he had undoubtedly lost today's competition.

Ma Rong felt a sort of relief at what had just happened. The shame from losing last year was finally cleared in her mind.

Once again, everyone was allowed to do whatever they wanted, while the rest of them returned back to the hotel to rest.

Chapter 283: Good Reviews

As soon as the group returned back to their hotel, Alex went directly to his room.

"Yu Ming, we leave for the library in an hour. You lot as well. Come meet me in an hour if you want to visit the library," Ma Rong said just before everyone went back to their room.

Everyone kept that in mind and went to their room.

"Oh wow. I wonder how many alchemy books there will be in the library. I can't wait to go there at all," Wan Li said as he followed Alex behind to the room.

"Should be a lot," Alex said and went back to his bed.

"Brother Yu, why do you always sleep for small periods of time. Is something wrong with your body?" Wan Li asked as he cocked his head. He had been curious about that for quite a while but had kept to himself.

"Oh, I... ah... I am just taking a power nap. I feel refreshed after napping for half an hour or so every day," Alex said.

"Oh, I see. Maybe I should do that as well," Wan Li said.

"Umm... you probably don't have to. Just spend your time how you are doing right now," Alex said and sneakily acted like he was sleeping before logging out.

He opened his eyes inside the capsule and pushed it open. As he walked out, he felt like he was really dull somehow. As if he had lost all senses and feelings.

"Damn, spending too much time in the game through the capsule seems like a bad idea. I hope it won't harm me physically," Alex thought.

He was still feeling no hunger at all and that was a little concerning as well. 'Should I switch to the helmet from time to time?' he wondered.

Surprisingly, even after so long, he didn't need to go to the bathroom as well. 'They are really messing with my body,' Alex thought and started to get scared.

He grabbed his phone and walked out. He went to the kitchen to get some food, despite not being hungry at all. He needed to force down a bit of food.

So he served himself some and went onto the forums to check about the capsule.

Surprisingly, there was nothing but praise regarding the capsule. There were obviously people concerned about their physical health, but surprisingly there were no posts about the grave consequences of long-term capsule usage.

Alex clicked on a post and read about some doctors and scientists doing experiments on people who used capsules. Aside from the slight disorientation due to the change in senses they felt when coming out of the capsule, there was nothing else wrong with the person.

Their physical strength was the same, motor coordination was the same and even their metabolism rate was the same once the player left the capsule.

Unlike the helmet, which had apparently failed to keep that during the early phases of the game's release, the capsule was miles better.

So both doctors and scientists were urging the player to keep on using the capsule as much as possible as opposed to the helmet.

'Huh, so it's okay?' Alex wondered.

He decided to check other sites and sources as well. But no matter where he looked at, they sang nothing but praises regarding the capsule.

As long as the player was being a responsible human being and didn't play unnecessarily long, they would be fine. Finally feeling some sort of relief, Alex quickly finished his food and went to his room.

He climbed into the capsule without fear and covered the lid. He slowly let his consciousness wander and before he knew it, he was inside the game once again.

He slowly got up from the bed and took a long, deep breath to bring his suddenly flared-up senses under control. Once he was done, he looked around and saw Wan Li writing something.

"What are you writing, brother Wan?" Alex asked.

"Oh, you are up, brother Yu. It's nothing much, just what I realized from the competition today. I had a few enlightenment during the competitions and I was writing them down before I forgot them"

"I believe that if I use this new knowledge of mine properly... I can reach the Heaven grade with my pills too," Wan Li said.

Alex looked at Wan Li very attentively. Despite being the number one disciple of the sect, he seemed to be the most hard-working of them all.

Or maybe that was the wrong way to look at it. He was most likely the number one disciple BECAUSE he was hard working.

However, despite being so hardworking, he still had to struggle through his learning process because his brain couldn't pick up on things instinctively and he had to write everything down.

That surely slowed down his progress a lot. However, Alex wondered, if he perhaps didn't have to bother with writing each time, and could easily remember everything... how great of an alchemist would he be?

Alex's mind went to the 3 Spirit Cleansing lilies he still had on him. Unfortunately, the lilies seemed to be useless by themselves to him. And unless he could find a pill recipe that included the Spirit Cleansing lilies as an ingredient, it was probably going to remain useless for a long time.

However, if he could just give the flower to Wan Li... that would help him a lot and secure his sect's future as well.

'Should I even do that?' Alex wondered. 'What if he isn't as good as he shows himself to be on the outside. I can never judge a person by how they look or act. Anyone is capable of sudden changes. I... I can't trust a person just based on what I feel of them,' he thought.

He had been traumatized by the events in the forbidden fields and didn't want to repeat the same mistake again. For now, the only people he could truly trust were his two masters and his senior brother and sister.

Everyone else, he would have to judge on a case-by-case basis, and he wasn't sure his judgment was refined enough to do that.

Chapter 284: Cardinal Library

Alex walked out of the room a little early and went to talk with Ma Rong.

"Master, are you there?" he asked as he knocked on the door. He didn't dare use his spiritual sense to check inside as that would be intrusive to his master's personal space and a stupid move in general.

"Come in," she said and called him in.

Alex walked in through the automatically unlocked door and saw Ma Rong cultivating on top of her bed.

"What's wrong? You need something?" she asked.

"It's... I'm actually here to talk about Wan Li," he said.

"Wan Li? What about him?" Ma Rong asked with a weird face.

"Wan Li looks like he is really hardworking and genuinely interested in alchemy. But he seems to be held back by his bad memory. I was wondering if I should give him a Spirit cleansing lily or not," Alex said.

"You have more? I thought you used up all?" Ma Rong asked with surprise.

"I was planning to use them up, but for some reason, I can no longer use them. I was going to check about that in today's visit to the library though," Alex said.

"Hmm... Wan Li is a good boy. He will definitely benefit from the lily if he got one," Ma Rong said.

"However, those lilies are something you got. You don't need to hand them over to people just because you feel sorry for them. Keep them to yourself. Just because it's not working right now doesn't mean it won't work forever."

"Maybe you just need to break through to make it work again," Ma Rong said.

Alex got to thinking. "I hadn't thought of that. Of course, maybe I need to be in a higher realm and then it will work," he said.

"Okay, I shall do that master," he said.

"Alright. Are you ready to leave? People should be gathering by now," Ma Rong said.

"Hm..." Alex checked the time and saw that an hour had passed. It was time to leave for the library. He and Ma Rong walked out of the room and saw a few disciples were waiting outside the door.

Wan Li had also come out at some point and was waiting with Fan Ruogang and Zhou Mei.

Ma Rong decided to wait for a few more minutes and started walking down the stairs. Soon, the entire group was out of the hotel.

Alex took out the map he had bought the other day and gave it to his master, but she already seemed to be in the know about the location of the library.

"Haha, disciple Yu, you seem to forget that we come here every year. We are more or less familiar with the layout of the entire capital," the second elder said.

Alex felt a little bashful but didn't let it show on his face.

The Library was located right on the South East side of the capital, about 500 meters away from the Royal Palace. Since it was exactly opposite to where they were in the capital, they had a walk a long while before they finally reached the Library.

"Woah," the disciples said when they finally saw the library. Fan Ruogang and Zhou Mei had come before so they didn't show any intense reactions, but others, including Wan Li were very surprised by the sheer scale of the building in front of them.

The library was a 20 story tall building with about 600 square meters of area. The building itself was painted in reddish-brown and had a design aspect that felt both modern and traditional at the same time.

It looked like it was a pagoda-like building, but it didn't have the traditional slopes of the pagoda on each floor.

"The library itself is free and maintained by the Royal Fu Academy on the behest of the Royal Family. You can read whatever you want as long as you follow those rules written on that wall," Ma Rong said as she pointed to a bunch of texts written along the side of the wall.

The disciple walked forward to better see the rules amongst the crowd that was already gathered in front of it to read it.

Alex walked in close as well and started reading it along with the others.

-Welcome to the Cardinal Library-

-Please feel free to read any book, on any floor as it is public knowledge-

- Please be mindful of the other readers and be as silent as you can most of the time.-

-Please do not fight with the other readers on books you might want to read. We suggest you take a first come first serve approach. However, we have multiple books so that shouldn't be a problem.-

-Please do not destroy any books-

-Please do not steal any books-

-Failure to comply with any of these rules will be an indefinite ban from the library, and in worse cases, a punishment from the local law enforcement-

Alex read all of it and was quite surprised at how serious they were with the library. 'It must contain a lot of knowledge in there for them to be this careful,' he thought.

Once everyone had read the books, they walked in. One by one, the disciples entered the library from the front door and looked around in a weird manner each time they did so.

Alex was curious why they acted as they did, but he soon realized why that was. On the gate of the Library was an invisible barrier that constantly checked the Qi of everyone entering the library.

That was probably something to do with checking if the people were violating the rules written outside.

As soon as Alex entered, he looked around and was a little surprised at the sheer number of readers as well as shelves upon shelves of books scattered everywhere.

There were boards hanging from the ceiling that let the readers know the category of the book they contained.

Ma Rong said in a low voice, "Go ahead and do what you want, but be mindful of the rules." She then left on her own towards a staircase as well.

Chapter 285: Lower Floors

Alex was a little surprised that his master didn't call for him to follow her since their original plan was to come and check the books to see if there was some knowledge about anything they had trouble understanding.

But after seeing everyone else basically start to look for books, he decided to look for them on his own too.

He looked up and checked the names hanging from the ceiling and searched for any that caught his interest. The first thing his eyes naturally went to was Alchemy.

'Do I check alchemy? I don't think there can be anything there— Ah, the pill made from Spirit Cleansing Lily. Maybe there is some information about that,' he thought and went over to the area.

He saw quite a few disciples from his sect hanging around the shelves. As one would expect, this was where the disciples from an Alchemy sect would hang out at.

Alex looked through the shelves at the titles of books and tried to search for any that he would want to read. A few books caught his attention, but when he read them, he was disappointed.

They contained knowledge that he already knew or wasn't very helpful to him. He looked through more books but they weren't very good.

'Perhaps the first floor is too low level for me,' Alex thought and left them there. Disciples like Wan Li and the others who had been learning Alchemy for half their life also didn't need this information, so they decided to go up the floor.

Alex didn't immediately go up, however. His books of interest in the library weren't alchemy books necessarily. He wanted to learn about the Lilies and his body.

He looked around the lower floor and came across the formation section. For the last few days, he had been really curious about the formation and had wanted to learn it.

There was also the formation that gathered Qi that he had acquired the tools for from the place in the southern forest. They had been sitting in his storage bags, doing nothing and he wanted to desperately make use of them.

If possible, he wanted to learn formations and swiftly recreate the formation in the Hong Wu sect's alchemy garden.

'Arghh, I need to focus on Alchemy. Practicing two different veins of production might slow me down on both of them,' he thought. However, the curiosity still remained in his heart and he couldn't throw it away.

So, he opened some of the formation books from the shelves and started reading them. He didn't bother understanding what the books said. He only concentrated on remembering everything he was looking at and reading.

He couldn't send his Spiritual Sense to swiftly look through all of it, so he had to manually flip through the book to read it.

He read through a few of the basic knowledge books and stopped. There was nothing significant he had to read here. He stopped searching through the first floor at all and moved up a floor.

There were a lot more people on the 2nd floor than there were on the first floor. Perhaps the first floor was really beginner level for these people to bother with them.

Alex chuckled softly and shook his head. He was not even a beginner in formations, so it was okay for him to waste his time there.

He swiftly found his way around the floor and went to the alchemy section. There wasn't a lot here and it seemed most of his fellow disciples had already gone up a floor again.

'This must be too easy for them too,' Alex thought.

He didn't bother reading these books at all. He instead started searching for any slightest hints of Spirit Cleansing lily in the books.

Unfortunately, there weren't any here either. He found some mentions of Spirit Cleansing Lily, but they more so talked about what it looked like more than anything else.

Those information were useless for Alex. He then went around searching for any other places that could mention the lilies such as cultivation. After all, one could unlock the Spiritual sea when cultivating with one of them.

Unfortunately, there weren't any.

He searched for information on bodies at the same time too, but he could find none for it as well.

'Damn, how high must I go to find any relevant information at all?' he wondered. Thankfully, the formations were new ground for him and any information was relevant information.

He read them for a few minutes, basically cramming anything and everything into his brain without trying to understand it.

Once he was done, he left that floor as well.

He went to the third floor and looked through the alchemy section once more. He once again found mentions of the lily, but none of the information was new to him, so he reluctantly went to search for other things.

He started looking for books on the different bodies, but something else caught his eye. It was a book in the artifact section that talked about different materials.

'Maybe...' Alex wondered as he had a small premonition.

Alex quickly opened the book and started looking through it. It took him a dozen or so seconds, but his eyes caught it. The thing he was looking for in the book.

'Yang Jades,' he read it. He found information about Yang Jades.

There wasn't much information on it, only that they were jades with Yang energy in them. However, there was something in them that intrigued Alex way too much for the book to not be worth it.

According to the book, Yang Jades were actually not naturally occurring jades, but something that was a result of something else. The book didn't say anything else but that alone was worth it.

He now knew where he could search for more information. Alex spend a few more minutes looking through the different books in the Formations section of the floor, and once he was done, he went up a floor again.

Chapter 286: History

'How many floors was it again? From the outside, it looked like it was 20 stories tall. But from the inside, the ceiling seems much higher than what one would expect.'

'Is it 2 stories for a single floor? The size seems to match that. Hmm... so there must only be 10 floors in total, and I? am on the 4th floor already,' Alex thought as he walked up the staircase to the 4th floor.

He immediately walked over to the Artifact section since it was the closest and started looking through books, searching for information on Yang Jades once more.

It took him a while, but he successfully found it.

'Ah here it is, let's see. Yang Jades are originally just normal jades with no Qi in them. However, when those normal jades come in contact with the incredibly dense source of Yang energy, they start getting affected by the Yang energy and turn to Yang jades.'

'Yang jades are very rare as places with extreme yang energy is... nearly impossible to find... what? How can it be rare? There is literally slew of yang jades in the forbidden fields,' Alex thought.

The book was giving information that didn't seem to match with what he knew about the yang jades.

'That means... the book is wrong... or the other possible scenario, the Forbidden Fields is just that unique. But according to the book, the Yang Jades are only made when they stay around in the extreme yang spots and swallow some of the yangs to themselves.'

'However, if the forbidden fields had Yang energy, shouldn't my body react to it— No wait, it did react, in the desert. That thing... that reaction my body showed towards the place in the north of desert... Was that the extreme yang spot? If so... then how are the Yang Jades so scattered away from them.'

'None of this makes sense,' Alex thought. He didn't know if his hypothesis was right or not, so he tried to look for information on eating Yang Jades. As he had expected, there were none.

He left the book and went to the alchemy section to look for Spirit Cleansing lily, but there was nothing about it. So, he moved to the cultivation section where he searched both about the lily and the different bodies.

However, he was disappointed when he found out there was no information about them here.

'Sigh, I will have to go up a floor,' he thought and moved away from that section. He went to the formation section to read for a few more minutes before he went up a floor.

He walked up the staircase and now he was on the 5th floor. He directly went to the artifact section of the floor and read up on yang jades again to see if there was any additional information.

There was, but it only talked about how Yang Jades would lose their energy over a few months if one didn't use it at all or kept it in yang concentrated place.

'A few months? Didn't master say it lost energy very quickly? Was she wrong?' he wondered. Seeing that there was no more information, he left that section and went to the alchemy section.

He looked through the books and searched for information on Lilies again. Finally, he found some relevant information.

The book talked about using the lilies to cultivate and unlock the spiritual sea. That wasn't anything new to him, but it was a good start. He now knew that he would be able to perhaps find more information if he went up the floor.

He went to the cultivation section and searched for bodies. There was some information but none of it was what he wanted to learn.

He decided to leave the floor once more after remembering the formation books of this floor.

He walked up to the 6th floor and searched around for any information he could find. He went to the artifact section for the yang jades but there were none anymore.

The alchemy section didn't have much for Spirit Cleansing Lilies either. At least, the information they did have was useless to him.

He was a little excited on the lower floor, but it seemed he would have to look around some more. He wanted to go to the cultivation section to look for more information on the lily and bodies but instead stopped, because of what he saw in one of the other sections.

The section he stopped at was History and the book that caught his attention was The Entire History of the Crimson Empire.

'Oh, history of this empire, huh? I'm quite curious,' he thought and started reading.

Before the Crimson Empire was formed, the place was called the Shattered Kingdoms. There were multiple small countries that ruled their own lands and were in constant war with each other.

Each of these kingdoms had their own king that tried to fight against other kingdoms to add those lands to their own country.

The kings were obviously a cultivator, so the mortals remained in fear every day, hoping this wasn't the day that they were randomly attacked and killed.

The different cultivators showed no mercy to anyone they met and freely killed people in the name of their kings. The war-trodden times were a time of terror and fear.

Each of the kings wanted to rule over the entire land, but they were all equal in strength so they couldn't do anything to each other. The king's armies weren't very strong either when compared to the others.

So, this caused a lot of small skirmishes and battles that simply showed aggression for the sake of aggression. None of the kings could win against the other kings and they knew it.

That, however, lasted for not so long. A person appeared out of nowhere and became the king of a small land near the southern forest called the Cardinal Kingdom.

The name of this illustrious person who was going to change the stability amongst the different kingdoms was Fu Qiong.

Chapter 287: Maximum

Fu Qiong, according to the book, appeared out of nowhere and swiftly defeated the gang leader of a bandit group that was taking residence in the Cardinal Kingdom.

He then slowly defeated everyone and turned the Cardinal Kingdom into his own land. He then slowly started declaring wars against the rest of the kingdoms and one by one defeated them.

It took him 8 years to fully destroy all the 18 different kingdoms that were available at the time and took them all under his own rule.

Once the land was too large to keep calling it a kingdom, he took the chance to call his land an empire and named it the Crimson Empire. Then he named himself an Emperor as well.

Fu Qiong ruled as the first Emperor of the Crimson empire for nearly 6 decades before he retired and passed along his throne to his first son.

The son of the emperor was also talented as well as being very strong. He successfully took over his father's work and continued to keep the empire united.

Thus came the rule of the Fu family. All of that happened nearly 1200 years ago.

Alex was a little stunned as he read all of this. 'It's not different from when our real world was separated and people fought over land. I guess they really did take inspiration from real-life stories to make up this game world,' Alex thought.

He then read the final page of the book.

'It was later revealed that the first Emperor...was not a resident of the Shattered Kingdoms but someone that came from... beyond the Southern Forest.' Alex's eyes went wide when he read that.

'Another person from beyond the southern forest. How does one traverse the giant forest?' Alex wondered. Just as he was wondering that someone tapped on his shoulder.

He was jolted awake from his stupor and quickly turned around. Behind him was Ma Rong who had at some point appeared on the 6th floor.

He looked at the book he was holding and said nothing. Instead, she just gestured for him to follow her. He was curious as to what she had found, so he quickly closed the book and put it away before following her.

Ma Rong climbed the staircase and went up floors without stopping anywhere.

7th floor, 8th floor, finally 9th floor. Only after reaching the 9th floor did she stop climbing the stairs and walked towards the books.

Alex expected her to walk towards the Alchemy section, but instead, she walked towards the Cultivation section. She picked up a book as soon as she reached there as if she knew exactly which one to pick up and turned the page.

Once she reached a certain page, she handed the book to Alex.

Alex curiously looked at the page and was surprised to see the information about the Spirit Cleansing Lily that he had been looking for all this time.

'Finally. No wonder I couldn't find it on the lower floors. It's so high up,' Alex thought. He quickly read the chapter of the lily and learned the thing he had been so desperate to learn for the last 10 days.

'Spirit Cleansing Lily can help unlock the Spiritual Sea of a cultivator before they even reach Saint realm. Simply cultivating with a lily allows one to unlock a spiritual sea.'

'Spirit Cleansing Lily in its raw form is useless for Saint Realm cultivators.'

'Self Tempering or True realm cultivators with unlocked Spiritual sea can use Spirit Cleansing lily to expand their Spiritual sea.'

'A cultivator can only use 3 Spirit Cleansing Lilies in their lifetime...? So that's what it was. I used up all of my available lily turns. So I guess I can no longer use the lilies huh. That would be quite a waste of these flowers,' Alex thought.

He looked through the book to look for more information, but that was it. There was no information about any pills or items that could be made using the lily as an ingredient.

He was disappointed that he couldn't learn any more information, but what he got was enough to satisfy his thirst for learning what was up with the lilies.

He turned towards Ma Rong who was looking at the book behind his back and thanked her.

Ma Rong nodded and left, basically leaving him to do what he wanted. He decided to look at the book about bodies that were right next to him.

The book recorded information about different bodies but it wasn't extensive enough to be of any use to Alex. In fact, it didn't even have any information about his body.

Alex had to reconcile with the fact that it was pretty much impossible for him to learn anything about his body through the books.

'Maybe there are NPCs out there that know about my body,' Alex hoped.

Once he was done with that section, he went to the Alchemy section but realized that it had information about True Pill making processes.

From what he could read, it wasn't any different from what he was doing, other than the fact that the book was teaching him to use something called Qi sense. He didn't really know what it was so he decided not to bother with it until he was in the True realms.

He tried to search about Yang Jades in the artifact section, but unfortunately, there was none. He could find 0 information about the yang jades.

Alex was a little disappointed regarding that and went to the formation section and started reading those books. He had directly jumped to the 9th floor, so he didn't even know what he was reading right now.

Thankfully, he could recall later on once he was freer and look over the different information he had gotten right now. Still, he didn't want the gaps to exist in his knowledge, so he went down the staircases to the 6th floor once more and started reading everything before going up.

He was going to grind for a little while more.

Chapter 288: Earnings

Alex searched a bit more about the different bodies. He found some information about few bodies, but nothing concrete. He didn't find the thing he was especially looking for, the Sun God's Divine Yang body.

He searched through the 6th, the 7th, the 8th, and the 9th floor and couldn't find any. He wanted to go search on the 10th floor, but unfortunately, it seemed that he was wrong.

There was no 10th floor and 9th was the highest. Once he realized there was no information that could help him at all, he was a little disappointed.

He instead read everything he could about the formation and put them in his mind. He also looked for some information on True pills as well on the alchemy section.

According to the books, True Pills required True Qi to make. This was something he already knew but what he didn't know was that one didn't necessarily have to be in the True realms to make the True Pills.

'Anyone who has True Qi... meaning when I start converting my common Qi to True Qi, I can start making those pills that soon,' he thought. His hypothesis was proven correct by the information in the book.

Another thing about True Pills was that they were highly volatile during the process of making them. The energy they produced during preparation was a lot more prone to instability than when making the common pills.

'Is this why master told me to wait until learning about True pills? Because they are very violent and didn't want me to get hurt?' he wondered.

It had been a few hours since he had come to the library. The elders were all gathering the disciples who were willing to leave and started leaving the library.

Alex wanted to join them but decided not to. He stayed in the library for another hour reading up on different things and finally left it.

The reason he didn't leave with the group earlier was that he wanted to take a different route and go get his spirit stones from the Auction house on the southern side of the city.

It was only a few minutes walk away from here, so he walked towards there as soon as he left the library.

Along the way, he tried to process the information about the formations as much as he could, but he didn't know the first thing about formations, so it was impossible to learn about them on the fly.

So along the way, he simply gave up on it. He instead focused on the Alchemy knowledge he had learned today, but unfortunately, none of them were revelatory enough for him to dwell on it for long.

So, he gave up on it too. Fortunately, the auction house was quite close so he reached it before he would have to think about something else.

The attendant at the door of the auction house tried to stop Alex, but he just showed her the contract and was quickly taken in.

The familiar hallway was way too familiar and he felt a little uncomfortable, knowing that he wasn't in the place that his brain was telling him he was.

Alex was taken to one of the waiting rooms where he sat down and waited for the person in charge to return soon.

After a few minutes, the door opened and Han Jing walked in with a face full of wide smiles.

"Greetings fellow Daoist, I hope you didn't have to wait too long for this unworthy attendant to arrive," he said.

Alex was a little taken aback when he heard Han Jing call himself unworthy. 'What's going on?' he wondered but didn't ask.

"Is today's auction over?" he asked.

"Yes, fellow Daoist. Today's auction ended nearly 3 hours ago. Thanks to your pills, it was a smashing success. At least for my part, it was, hehe," Han Jing said while showing his teeth.

Alex didn't say anything else and instead asked about the thing he was here for. "So, how much did I earn?" he asked.

"Fellow Daoist, your pills were extraordinary. Even for being a common rank pill, Heaven grade ones are rarely seen so freely on the market. Not to mention you brought so many great pills at once."

"Those sales were a smashing success. So much so to the point that the audience nearly rioted trying to ask for the alchemist that made those pills. So... would it be possible for you to reveal who your master is?" he asked.

"I am afraid my master does not wish to be named. Which was also why he sent me to sell his pills, instead of coming on his own. Now that it is clear, can we get onto the part about my pills being sold?" Alex asked.

"Ah yes, yes. Of course. Your 23 pills sold for a total of... 66 True spirit stones. The Fat Converting pill earned you 16 True Spirit stones, the Rubber Body pill earned you 18 True spirit stones. And most surprisingly, the Energy Negating pill earned you 32 True spirit stones," Han Jing said.

Alex nearly asked Han Jing to repeat those numbers again, because of how unbelievable they were.

'But I only got 29 True spirit stones when I sold 21 pills back 2 weeks ago. Suddenly, it's doubled now? Wow, I must be still underestimating how lucrative the Heaven grade pills are,' Alex thought.

"Those stones... they are after the 10% tax right?" Alex asked.

"Oh, yes of course. We have already taken our part, and these are yours," Han Jing said. He handed a storage bag over to Alex, who took it and started looking inside.

He couldn't freely use Spiritual sense, so he would have to use normal means. He checked the spirit stones and was once again surprised to see so many at once.

If he converted them, he would get around 55 thousand dollars, but that was not the reason he sold those pills. He looked at Han Jing and asked,

"When is the next auction?"

Chapter 289: Next Auction

"Sorry?" Han Jing was caught off guard a little and immediately started running his little minds regarding the different scenarios that might come true.

'Does he have more pills to sell? I got a 3% commission from everything I sold today. Since he was the highest, I got above 2 True spirit stones from his alone. If he is willing to sell more of those pills then..' His mind started running wild.

"Um... fellow Daoist?" Alex called.

"Uh. Uh... yes?" Han Jing answered.

"About the next auction, can you tell me a little about it," Alex asked.

"Um... Fellow Daoist, do you have more pills to sell?" Han Jing asked.

"Sorry? No, I don't. I was just thinking of taking part in the next auction. So I was wondering, is it still taking place every day? When will it take place tomorrow?" Alex asked.

"Oh, fellow Daoist, you meant to ask that," Han Jing said in a dejected voice. He could practically hear his wild daydreams shatter around him. Still, he was professional and answered professionally.

"No, we do not have any auctions planned for tomorrow. Since Thursday is a break from the competition, the auction house is organizing an auction as big as the bi-annual auctions it has every 6 months. That will be the final auction for a few days," Han Jing said.

"Thus, if you wish to take part in the auction, I suggest you either take part in Thursday's auction at 10 am, or the one that takes place right after the competition ends," Han Jing said.

"After the competition ends? When is that?" Alex asked.

"Umm... we have no idea fellow Daoist. You must know too that the final competitions can sometimes last for days. So, the very next day after the end of the competition will be another auction held by the auction house. However, that is too far away, so I suggest you join the auction for the day after tomorrow," Han Jing replied.

Alex thought for a second and said, "Very well. Thank you for the information. I will take my leave now."

"Umm... Fellow Daoist, Should I save a VIP room for you?" Han Jing asked.

Alex thought for a bit and agreed. He knew there were VVIP rooms as well, but since he was a single person a VIP room alone would suffice him.

Alex thanked Han Jing and left the auction house. He looked at the time and realized that it was around 5 pm, so he didn't dilly dally and went straight back to the hotel.

He reached the hotel 15 minutes later and returned back to his room.

"Oh, brother Yu, you are back," Wan Li said, while constantly writing on a new book. He had probably learned a lot of new things and he was trying to write them down before he would forget them.

Alex really wanted to give him a flower right away but was still a little hesitant. It was going to take him a while to trust anyone on the same level in the game again.

"Yes, I'm back. You guys returned quite early," Alex said.

"Well, I didn't see any point, hehe. It's not like I could remember anything by just staying there. So I decided to come as quickly as I could and start writing the stuff down," Wan Li said.

"I see. Then continue writing Brother Wan, I will try to recall what I read as well," Alex said and went to sit on the bed.

Finally, he was free enough to revise everything he learned today.

One couldn't use more than 3 Spirit Cleansing lilies at once. That meant the remaining 3 of his lilies would be useless until he found other usages for it.

The Yang jades were just simple jades that found a concentrated spot of Yang energy and absorbed it. That didn't explain why they were available in the grassland of the forbidden fields, but Alex would find the answer later on. Especially, regarding the thing that attracted him to the north of the desert.

Perhaps the information he wasn't expecting to learn was about how Fu Qiong conquered the Shattered Kingdoms and combined them to form the Crimson Empire. Also, the fact that he was from beyond the Southern Forest was something Alex was still curious about.

He wanted to know how one could traverse in and out of the crimson empire. If he could do that, then maybe he could go out and see the true continent.

The outside world knew the secrets to the saint realm, he could perhaps learn those too.

'That guy was from outside the Crimson Empire too, wasn't he?' Alex thought as he took out the one talisman he had acquired from the guy.

There were a few things that he had never revealed to even his masters, to who he revealed everything. One of those things was the Ebony Corundum Stiletto.

Another thing was this talisman that he got from the man. The sword he had hidden before they even took him as a disciple so he never revealed it to them afterward, especially because he wasn't sure they would let him keep such a strong sword.

The talisman, however, he wasn't sure why he was hiding it. Still, he had kept it and tried to understand what it was but was still unable to.

'Maybe I will know what this is after I reach the other side,' he thought.

He was still a little disappointed that he didn't learn anything regarding his body, but he would probably have to leave the crimson empire for that too.

At least the trip to the library was partially successful, so he was quite happy. He went on to recollect what else he had learned from his trip to the library and tried to learn it.

He didn't bother with the formation stuff for now as that would take truly too long for him. He learned everything else he could for the next 30 minutes or so until there was a knock on his door.

It was time for the next meeting.

Chapter 290: Natural Law of the Body

Alex and Wan Li walked over to Ma Rong's room and joined the meeting.

"Alright, everyone is here right?" Ma Rong asked as she looked around and nodded to herself seeing everyone there.

"First of all, let us celebrate us reaching the 1st grade as a sect. Congratulations to everyone who helped make it happen," Ma Rong said and started clapping.

Everyone followed and soon there were smiles and cheers amongst the disciples. Now that they were a 1st-grade sect, they had a better reputation in the land and more young folks would decide to join the Hong Wu sect leading to them joining the sect.

"We needed 523 points to enter the first grade, and from what I calculated... we have actually reached 594 points as of today. The alchemy competitions helped, but the rest of you who took poison, formations, and talisman competitions also helped quite a bit."

"So, thank you to everyone who took part and helped us go a level higher as a sect," Ma Rong said. Everyone was smiling at her mentions. Ma Rong let them celebrate for a little while before continuing.

"Now, on to the second part of today's meeting. Since Yu Ming and Wan Li decided to skip out on tomorrow's competition, who wants to enter as the third person along with Meimei and Fanfan?" Ma Rong asked.

A few people raised their hands and Ma Rong chose a male disciple who was good at learning as that was tomorrow's theme.

She then asked what other people wanted to do. She got a few answers but in the end, everyone decided to wait until they saw tomorrow's competition before agreeing.

Ma Rong thought that was for the best and dismissed the group.

Alex and Wan Li returned back to their room and Alex immediately went to log out.

'Sigh, tomorrow's going to be kind of boring,' he thought. There wasn't anything really happening in tomorrow's competition that he was either taking part in or looked forward to.

So, nothing about tomorrow's events attracted him.

He got out of the capsule and commented to himself how he was still not feeling any hunger or need to go to the bathroom.

'That is really weird. I really hope it's okay and the doctors and scientists didn't mess up the tests,' he thought.

He went to the bathroom to freshen up a bit but that was useless. Inside the capsule, there was the perfect temperature and was hidden to the outer environment, so he never sweat or got dirt on him.

Still, he freshened himself and got out. He wanted to go eat something but he just wasn't hungry.

'Sigh, let me check if it's really okay,' he thought and went online to check again just to be sure there weren't any bad complaints.

There were complaints as one would expect. People just weren't getting hungry, but nothing was physically wrong with people.

And the only suggestion for them was... don't play. That was not something people were going to do. Still, some people were really happy regarding what was happening.

They could go on for nearly 2 days with a single meal. That was a lot of money saved for people who needed to spend quite a lot on food.

Alex wondered if he should go eat, but didn't want to feel uncomfortable, so he simply decided to skip today's dinner. However, he did decide on one thing.

He was going to use the helmet for today. He wasn't sure if it was necessarily a good idea or not, but he decided that he wanted his hunger back, so he went to his bed, put on the helmet, and logged in.

Alex opened his eyes inside the game and nearly thought he was still in the real world because of how dull everything was.

He immediately activated focus mode and felt like he finally got his senses back. It was a little harder to control for some reason, but he very quickly got used to this focus mode as well.

'That... feels a little more... natural,' Alex thought. Even after the senses were amplified, it wasn't to the same level as the one from the capsule and honestly, it just felt like something he was able to use on a normal day even in the real world.

'The capsule one is a little too... amplified. This one is way better,' Alex thought. Still, he couldn't argue that the capsule one probably was more useful than this one.

He looked around and saw that Wan Li was back to writing as usual, totally focused on himself.

So, Alex also decided to focus on himself. He sneakily called out Pearl and hid him in his robes before starting to cultivate.

Before long, he was asleep.

Alex opened his eyes early in the morning. He looked around and saw that Wan Li was cultivating. 'That's new,' Alex thought. He had only ever seen him read and write.

'Maybe he cultivates during the night,' he thought.

He sent Pearl back to the tattoo and realized something was different. 'It's still night?' he thought as he looked outside.

He could see the sky light up a bit, but the sun had still yet to rise. 'Oh, I woke up earlier today,' he thought and looked at the time. It was 5:48 am in morning.

'Whatever, let's leave,' he thought and logged.

As soon as Alex logged out, he wasn't greeted with the usual dull sense like when he did from the capsule. Instead, he was greeted by 3 new senses, that he had honestly missed for the last 3 days.

He felt hunger and need to go to the bathroom for both number 1 and number 2. "Oh sh*t," he thought and quickly sprinted to the bathroom to relieve himself.

Once he was done, he went to the kitchen to eat something. He was really hungry, so he ended up eating two bowls of cereals by himself.

Once he was done, he went back to his room and got into the capsule. After that, he logged back in.