

## Alchemy 371

Chapter 371: Thursday

After the lunch was over, the 4 of them stayed in the living room couches for half an hour or so before going back to their room to rest and go back into the game.

Alex returned back to the game at around 12. "Alright,? back to training."

He spent the next 3 hours testing the different combinations of motion and temperature for the third ingredient of his pill.

Once that was done, he proceeded with the fourth one. That took him 4 hours to fully remember every single one of the combinations.

Once night fell and he was mentally exhausted, he mindlessly trained in his techniques. He could feel that he was getting better at using his techniques. They were starting to feel more natural to him, almost as if they were muscle memory to him.

"Ah yeah, my body feels great," he thought. He shot out some palm attacks and felt his body again. "The cultivation base seems very stable as well. Maybe I can do it once more," he thought and opened up his status page.

He contemplated for a second on whether he was ready or not. "I am so far behind the others. It's now or never."

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He broke through once more. He was now in the 8th Organ Tempering realm. Just 2 more realms and he would enter the Meridian Tempering realm.

"Although the book did say I can't use the Spirit Cleansing Lily after using it 3 times, maybe entering the Meridian Tempering realm will change it a bit," he thought.

Once he felt he was settled, he called Pearl back and started cultivating. Soon, he was unconscious as every other day.

Early morning, he woke up and logged out. He spent some time mulling over the things he learned yesterday and after an hour or so, logged out.

He went to the kitchen at the designated time of breakfast, and everyone was there. They had their breakfast and Alex and Emily got ready to go to their classes.

"Come, I will drop you guys," Sarah said and went to get her car from the building's parking space underground.

Alex and Emily went down the elevator and waited for Sarah outside the building.

"Oh, by the way Emily, is your class going on this upcoming Field trip as well?" Alex asked.

"Mhmm," Emily nodded. "We had to wait over 9 months for this. You are honestly lucky that you get to go in just after 3 months."

'Oh, do you know where we are going?" he asked.

"No, but they should announce it today," she said.

Sarah came to the front in her car and took the two to the university. Once they reached, they got off, and Sarah returned back home.

Alex went his own way to his classes.

The classes were just as empty once again if not more. 'It's almost like they are seeing that the others are absent and are leaving themselves,' Alex thought.

'Hmm... should I not come as well?' he thought. He was honestly contemplating it. Just then, the professor walked in and saw the classroom. He frowned once more.

"Sigh, it's going to be like this for a while now, isn't it?" he asked. The students couldn't really answer.

"Whatever, here is new information for you people that do care. Your upcoming field trip is on Thursday. Get ready for then," he said.

"Where are we going professor?" a student asked.

"Oh, yes. You guys will be going to Pinewood city. I heard the Archaic National Museum over there has been getting a lot of visitors recently. So, the university will take you there as well."

'Pinewood city,' Alex thought. 'What was there again?' he tried to think for a second. He could tell he had heard the name of long ago for some reason.

'Was it the one where the Connor guy was from? No. Oh yeah, the historical texts they used to make the game,' Alex thought.

"Hm... this will be a good time to check whether or not they really did gain the ideas for the game from there," Alex thought. He was now excited to go on this field trip.

Once the classes were over, he went to the driving range with Hannah who had come to the university in the car with Sarah who was here to take back Emily.

After returning from the driving range, Hannah and Alex ate the meal prepared by Emily. When Hannah and Alex told her that she didn't need to do that, she really insisted on making food for them.

'She must feel guilty about staying here for free,' Alex thought and let her do what she wanted. Once they were done, they all went back to their rooms to get back into the game.

Alex logged back into the game and sighed a little when he remembered that he basically had the same routine for the next 3 days.

He did nothing but test the different remaining ingredients for his pill. He had 4 remaining and he barely finished it on Thursday morning.

It had taken him a long while to learn all of these and it would take him more. "I wish there were more hours in the day so I could earn more of this," he thought.

He was damn near ready to stop going to the university classes altogether. 'Maybe I should just... drop for a semester or two, while I collect enough money from the game to make my life easy,' he thought.

However, he didn't want to make such a decision without the consent of his parents, so he shut off that portion of his brain for a few more days.

The next thing he did in the last 3 days reached the 9th realm of Organ Tempering. Just a step further and he would be in the Meridian tempering realm.

Alex smiled and looked towards the time at the corner of the screen. It was 6 am in the morning, and since today was the day they went to the museum, he logged out of the game.

#### Chapter 372: Field Trip

Alex got out of the capsule early in the morning and went to the bathroom to freshen up. He then packed some light clothes for the trip.

'Pinewood city is in the south right? So I won't be needing any sweaters and such,' he thought. Once he was set, he grabbed his phone and walked out.

"Are you ready already?" Sarah asked.

"Yes, they called us by 8, so I have to be, right?" he asked.

"Well, if someone else had the same mentality as you, I wouldn't have to wait so long," Sarah said.

Emily walked out of her room, and said, "Stop badmouthing about me behind my back. Your voice is so loud I can hear it all the way from my room."

"Hehe, she's out," Sarah said.

Alex turned around to look at Emily who was just walking into the living room. She had a long white trouser-like pants and a yellow t-shirt that was full of frills and open at the shoulders.

"You look pretty," Alex said as that was the first thing that came to his mind.

Emily blushed a little and said, "Thank you. You look great too."

"Stop complimenting each other; I need to go back to the game. I have some grinding to do, remember?" Sarah said.

"Alright, let me get that."

Alex took Emily's small luggage and they walked out. Sarah took her car out of the underground parking spot and gave them a lift to the train station where everyone was supposed to gather.

"How's your driving lessons going on Alex?" Sarah asked.

"Umm... its taking longer than I had expected it to," Alex said. "I should be able to do it in the next 2 weeks though."

"That's quite fast. Emily, you should learn how to drive as well," Sarah said.

"I will do it later. Seeing how everything is going, I might end up having to take a break in between," Emily said.

"Woah, you too Emily? I was thinking about that too," Alex said.

"What? Why do you guys wanna take a break?" Sarah asked.

"The game has totally ruined the college atmosphere. The professor doesn't focus on teaching anymore, the students aren't focused, and now that the capsule is out, people aren't even returning back to classes."

"After my exam next month, I think I will drop out for a year," Emily said. "You feel the same thing, Alex?"

Alex was put into a spot. "Uhh... I was just thinking of earning more money honestly," he said.

"Can you even earn a lot?" Emily asked.

"Of course. If I really try it, I can make a couple hundred thousand dollars a day," Alex said.

"What? You can make that much with Alchemy?" Sarah asked in shock. Emily's eyes were very wide as well.

"Yeah. Of course, you need to have ingredients and people willing to buy the pills. I usually sell once every 2 weeks or so. Selling daily would be really exhausting," Alex said.

"I see. By the way, how good are you at making pills? Can you make True pills yet?" Sarah asked.

"No, I haven't even entered Meridian Tempering realm, remember?" he asked.

"Ah right, why are you so slow though?" she asked.

"I was told to slow down early on, so I've been focusing of training more than cultivating," Alex said.

"I see, I see. Argh, I might have to transfer a bit more money into the game today. If I can just breakthrough once more, I can grind faster," Sarah said.

Alex was surprised that she was even thinking of that, but soon remembered that there were these sort of people. That was one of the reasons Deva Corp continued to make money despite giving out so much.

There were millions of people willing to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars in the game so that they could progress through it faster.

Sarah soon dropped them at the station and returned. Alex and Emily walked to the front of the station where the teachers and the other students were gathered.

They both showed their ID cards and got into the group.

Emily looked around and sighed. "It seems none of my friends came after all. I doubt they even learned about the trip in the first place," Emily said.

"None of the people I usually interact in my classes came either" Alex said as he looked around. He searched for Matt, Eric and Logan, but none of the 3 were there.

"I guess I'm going to be alone for this trip," Emily said.

"No, you won't. You have me," Alex said.

Emily blushed a little and nodded. Soon, they boarded the train and had 2 compartments all for themselves. Alex chose a seat next to a huge window and sat down. Emily sat right next to him in the only seat available.

The train started moving, and soon they were out of the station. A teacher walked to the center of the train and started speaking.

"Is everyone of you fine? We will be on this train for the next 5 hours, so let me know if you guys find anything uncomfortable right now," the teacher said.

Alex was quite surprised. 'I didn't think it would take so long,' he thought.

"Since we will be passing through 3 entire cities along the way, you will have plenty to sight see. We will reach the Pinewood City at around 1 pm, and should be settled into the hotel by 2 pm."

"As for the rest of the schedule for today, you guys have these things to look forward to today."

"From 2-3, we will have your lunch, from 3-5 we will be playing a bunch of board games amongst ourselves in the hotel. From 5-8, you guys are free to roam around the city as much as you want."

"Finally at 8 pm you will get your dinner, at which point your day will end for today."

"For tomorrow's schedule, We will let you know it tomorrow. For now, do whatever you want, just make sure to be in your best behavior," the teacher said and went to the front and sat back down."

Alex looked out of the window and enjoyed the view he saw outside.

### Chapter 373: Pine Wood City

The view from the window was truly very refreshing. The green land outside reminded him a lot of home, so much so that he started to get a little homesick.

"By the way Emily, I don't think I've ever asked you, but where are you from?" Alex asked.

"Oh, I'm from Cherrywind city," Emily said. "How about yours?"

"I'm from a village north of Mapleleaf city. My parents own farmland there," he said.



"Oh, you're from the countryside? I didn't know that?" Emily said.

"Yes. I was also homeschooled, so I am unaware of a lot of different things a boy my age should know by now," he said in a melancholic voice.

"Homeschooled? Why?" Emily asked curiously.

"Oh, the school was just too far, so my mother decided to teach me everything instead," Alex said.

"Even high school stuff?" Emily asked.

"Yeah. My mother is kind of a genius. She just has to learn something once and she will understand it. She takes care of the financial aspect of the farm and overlooks the entire production, while my father works in the fields tirelessly for hours on end," Alex said.

"Wow. My parents just own a small store in the town. Fortunately, it sells well enough for us to make a living. I had planned on earning from the game, but it seems I won't be able to anymore. The reincarnation really screwed with me," Emily said with a sad voice.

Alex didn't know what to do; he had never been around crying girls.

"Umm... let's not talk about those. Just studying and finding a good job should earn you much more than what the majority are earning from the game," Alex said.

"Yes, I just have to keep fighting, or should I say— I have to keep grinding," Emily said with a chuckle.

Alex's heart skipped a beat when he saw her smile. "Umm... are you bored? You wanna watch a movie?" Alex asked.

"Sure, what's it about?" Emily asked.

"I'm not sure myself, but I heard it's really good," Alex said and put on a movie on his phone. He put an earphone in and put one of the buds on each of their ears.

Alex scooted a little closer to Emily, who also came a little closer and watched the movie.

The movie was apparently a remake of a very old movie of unknown origin. In the movie, the main character was a normal man who thought his life was normal as well. However, one day, after gaining a red pill from another man, he realizes that he was inside a simulation and that the real world was out there all along.

Alex was entranced in the movie and so was Emily. By the time the movie ended, both of them were beyond surprised by how fun it was.

"Woah, that was a good movie," Alex said.

"Yeah, it was fun. I can see why they would remake it now," Emily said.

"Huh? What do you mean?" Alex asked.

"You know, the whole going into computer software and making your life their kind of thing. Don't you think that's very apt for the current times?" Emily asked.

"Oh, yes. I can see it now. It's the same as our current world, except everyone who is in the real world knows the game is..." Alex stopped.

"Yeah, they know the game is fake," Emily finished his sentence.

Alex fell started thinking about how that might not be actually true. There was more to the game than meeting the eye.

The teacher came by in a few minutes and passed along a few snacks to the students. Although there were only a hundred or so students in total, they were taking proper care of each and every single one of them.

In fact, the teacher actually seemed to be happy that he didn't need to look after so many students at once.

Alex spent the rest of the journey talking with Emily, getting to know her better. Emily also got more and more open with him and talked without any hesitance.

"Oh look, is that the city?" Emily asked as she pointed outside the window.

Alex looked outside the window and saw the skyline of Pinewood City. It had a very unique skyline compared to the other cities.

While it was mostly similar in that it also had many tall buildings, one of the buildings actually had a massive spherical metal ball on top of it.

"Ah, it seems we are here," Alex said.

The train soon stopped in the station and everyone walked out of it.

"Urghh! My back hurts from sitting for so long. I'm so used to just sleeping in the bed or inside the capsule while playing the game."

The people started complaining left and right. Alex also stretched a little as he also had a similar problem.

The teachers then made the students walk a few minutes away from the station to the hotel they were staying at. The girls and boys were separated and made to stay in different floors.

Alex was put together with 3 other boys he had no idea about. He introduced himself to them, and that was the most of it.

The teachers called them to have lunch and all the students gathered in the dining hall of the hotel. The food prepared wasn't particularly good or bad, but Alex ate it with no problem.

Once the students were done eating, the teachers took them to a lounge area where they were allowed to play any tabletop games there.

Alex walked up to Emily and went around playing a lot of different things. Some card games, some dice games, etc. There were many games and everyone there played them all.

"Come, and take these cards," the teacher said, and everyone went around to take a card each. Alex looked at what he had got. "Eh?"

They were going to play bingo.

The teacher started saying numbers and Alex started cutting them off on his card. He needed 5 lines, and he had 4 of them already.

"Damn, just a little more, and— "

"BINGO" someone won before him.

He looked to the side only to see Emily with a wide smile and her hand raised straight.

Chapter 374: Date

"Congratulations, young lady. Come on up to get your prize," the teacher said. Emily smiled and walked to the front.

The teacher put up something in the air and said, "This is a ticket that contains 1000 points. You can use it to—"

"Ahem" another teacher coughed from the side.

"Oh, right. Haha, it's a secret for now. Nearly forgot about that. What it is used for, we will let you know tomorrow. For now, you guys can go do whatever you want. Just return here by 8 pm."

"Anyone who doesn't return by 8 will have credits deducted from their finals," the teacher threatened.

Emily walked back while curiously looking at the ticket she had in her hand. "Do you know what this is?" she asked as she handed him the ticket.

Alex looked at the ticket and his eyes shined a little. A smile appeared on his face that even turned a little mischievous. "They have it here too? It seems tomorrow will be a lot of fun," Alex said mysteriously.

"What? Do you know what this is?" she asked expectantly.

"Yes, but as the teacher said, I think it's better to not tell you until it's time. You might like the surprise more," Alex said.

"Hmm... so this is good?" she asked.

"Yeah. If the price isn't different here, then it should cost like 50 dollars," Alex said.

"Oh, then it's not that bad. But I don't think I will enjoy whatever this is alone. Do you want to come with me?" she asked.

Alex decided to tease her and said, "Miss Emily, that sounds like an awful lot like you are asking me out on a date for tomorrow."

Emily blushed a little when she heard that. "Andwhatifiam?"

"Sorry, what was that?" Alex asked.

"And what if I am?" she said.

It was Alex's turn to blush. He gathered all the confidence he could and said, "then I am very much obliged. In return, since we have 3 hours to ourselves, will you allow me to take you out on a date as well?"

Emily smiled. "Yes, I will."

The two went out and looked around the city. It was starting to get dark, and the city was starting to light up. Alex and Emily went around the city looking at the different things.

They tried out some small snacks, went around malls to go shopping, and even stood around a street performance and enjoyed it. Alex dropped a 20\$ bill before leaving.

"We should return now, or we will be late," Alex said.

"Yes, let's go back," Emily complied.

"Open your eyes!" A man suddenly started shouting a bit far away from both of them. "Look. Look and you will see the truth. They lied to us. People, Just look."

The man screamed at every passerby. "Just look for once. I promise you, I am not going mad. Just look," the man shouted as he kept pointing towards Alex's location.

However, Alex could tell that he wasn't pointed at him, but rather behind him. While the buildings were blocking his views, he could tell just what was a few hundred meters behind these buildings.

If he walked in the direction the man was pointing at, within 10 minutes, he would reach a forest. This was the barrier that stopped him from falling into the void.

"Let's leave Alex." Emily grabbed his arm and started pulling him away. She seemed to be freaked out by the man.

"Alright," Alex said and decided to leave.

"They are trying to hide something. Don't believe them ever. Just look when the sun shines the brightest and you will see," the man kept on shouting even as Alex and Emily walked far away.

Emily walked away quickly, but Alex was left thinking about what the man was saying for a little while. In the end, his words sounded like the speakings of a conspiracy theorist, so he stopped thinking about it.

Emily didn't leave his arm even after she was far away. Instead, she slowly brought it down and grasped his hand in her hand.

Alex also clasped his hand tightly. They walked around for a few more minutes before returning back to the hotel. Alex took the luggage that contained everything they bought today and went to keep it in his room.

After that, he returned back to Emily to have their dinner at the hotel's dining room.

The meal this time was a little better than the afternoon. Alex and Emily ate side by side and went to the hotel's lounge area to rest for a while.

"Are you not bored?" Emily asked.

"Why would I be bored?" Alex asked.

"Don't you miss your game? I heard a few people saying that they should have rather stayed back at home. Apparently, this hotel doesn't have places for the helmet connections, so they are quite mad about it," Emily said.

"Oh, are they? Well, I'm not bored," Alex said.

"Really?" Emily asked.

Alex looked at her and smiled as he said, "How could I be bored when I'm with you?"

Emily blushed a little and punched him lightly on his shoulders. "Why are you so confident today? You even asked me out on a date on your own," she said.

"Wait, no. You asked me out first. You can't blame me for returning the favor," Alex said.

Emily chuckled a little and said, "Stop speaking nonsense and just tell the truth."

"Well, I would be lying if I said I didn't want to do it earlier. It's just that... the opportunity never seemed to come up. Now that I finally had the time, I decided... why the hell not?" Alex said.

Emily was about to say something when the teacher came to the lounge and asked everyone to go to their room in 15 minutes. They all had to be ready by 8 am as the museum would open at 9.

"You were about to say something?" Alex asked Emily.

Emily shook her head. "It's nothing. I'll see you tomorrow morning. Good night," she said and hurriedly left.

Chapter 375: 600 Years Old

"Alright everyone, I'm going to take a quick attendance, get ready," one of the teachers said and started calling out the student's name.

Soon, she called out everyone's name. Alex responded to his own when he was called, and once everyone responded, they got onto the tour bus.



It was a double-decker bus with 60 seats per deck. So, all 100+ students and teachers fit inside easily. Alex and Emily sat on a seat towards the back on the lower deck.

Just after 15 minutes of getting on the bus, they had to leave again. They had reached their destination.

Alex walked down and saw the massive building that was in front of him. 'So this is where the museum is,' he thought as he looked as high as he could. The building was at least 200 meters tall if not more.

At the top of the building was a massive golden sphere that shined in the sunlight. It had some sort of pattern or drawing that he couldn't make out from this far below.

As he brought the vision a little below, he saw a name for the building.

"How do you say that word? Gol- no, Gl-"

"Global, right?" Emily said from the side.

"Yes, Global. So the building is called The Global Building huh. Wonder if that's the owner's name," Alex said.

"Might be," Emily replied.

A lady wearing professional clothing walked from inside the building and shook her hands with the teachers.

"Hello, You guys must be from Oakleaf University. I will be your tour guide for the day. Welcome to the Archaic National Museum."

"Please follow me," the lady walked inside. The crowd followed her and soon, they were all inside the building. The inside hall was grandiose in its size and color. The chandelier hanging from high up in the ceiling looked very expensive and made the students a little apprehensive about where they were.

The lady took them up the stairs to the actual museum.

They all walked in and were surprised by how crowded the place was. Everywhere they turned to, there was nothing but people. They couldn't even see anything that was inside the museum.

"Haha, don't mind the crowd. It's been like that ever since that one TV special a few weeks ago where they talked about the museum. Now, everyone thinks the content in our museum influenced the game, Eternal Cultivation, and visit here," the lady said.

"Is there any truth to that claim?" a professor asked.

"Um... Kind of. While the game certainly seems to be inspired by the contents, there are also things in here that... uh you may call the ancestors stupid for even thinking about," the lady said.

This statement only made the students and teachers more curious. The reason most of the students had even come to this field trip was for this exact reason.

Alex was also looking forward to once and for all clearing his confusion about the game being real.

The lady took them along and showed them the first exhibition of the museum, A car.

This was a simple car that was rusted in many places and was encased in some sort of resin to stop it from rusting any further.

'What significance would a rusting car have?' Alex wondered.

The lady looked to the group and said, "As everyone can see, this is a car. However, the reason this is being kept in a museum is that...this car is over 600 years old."

"What?" everyone was shocked at the revelation.

"No way, miss. Didn't cars only come to existence a little over a hundred years ago?" a student asked.

"Yes. The first car was indeed made 112 years ago, and it was also inspired by this car too. However, the car we currently have and this car is completely different," the lady said.

"We aren't sure how this car works or where the electricity is stored. We don't even think it uses electricity. According to the records we have, it used something called 'Petrol' and 'Diesel', but there is no proof that such a thing even exists."

"Even if they did, they aren't here anymore," the lady said.

The lady let them look at the car for a little longer and took them to another exhibition, A smartphone.

"Once again, the current smartphones were copied from these phones as well. They couldn't immediately make these, so they had to go through other creations first, but in the end, they managed to reach and surpass what existed 600 years ago."

"These clothes used to be worn by people over 600 years ago."

"These are metal utensils made over 600 years ago."

"They used to have plastics over 600 years ago when plastic was only able to mass manufacture some 50 years after the war ended."

The lady kept on walking and showing one exhibition after another.

"Look at this, do you know what these are?" she asked the crowd who turned to look at the next items. Alex looked at the items and frowned.

They were circular plates made up of something that looked like glass and had a hole punched through the middle. 'I know these things. What were they called again?' he tried to remember what he was taught in the computer science class.

"That's a CD, right? They are supposed to store data," somebody said. "They lasted for maybe 4 months after they were made."

The lady smiled and said, "Yes, that's true. However, they didn't make CDs for it to last long. They made it so that they could see what was inside these things."

"Don't tell me... " one of the teachers said.

"Yes. These CDs were made 600 years ago as well," the lady said. "Most of these had lost all of its information. However, we managed to salvage a few."

"These CDs ended up containing movies made 600 years ago. Here is a clip from a movie," the lady said and pointed to the screen.

The movie scene played was a normal one about a man walking in the city. However, the thing that surprised everyone was the world around the man.

It looked just like the current world. They watched the scene until it ended and the lady spoke.

"That was from 600 years ago. Either, the people from 600 years ago were good at guessing what the future looked like, or... the more possible reason, the world 600 years ago was very advanced."

Chapter 376: Globe

Alex was stunned when he saw the movie scene. 'The world from 600 years ago... looks just like now? How?' he couldn't help but ask himself.

The lady continued speaking. "There is only one way the world from 600 years ago could possibly be that advanced. That is... right around 600 years ago, something happened that destroyed everything and humanity had to start over."

"They had to restart civilization all over again, and build themselves until where we are now," the lady said.

The things she said sounded so outlandish, and yet, not a single person there could counter her with all the evidence there.

"Let's move on," she said and walked on.

"These are all helmets and armors worn by warriors when the 17 cities were still countries ruled by different factions. The war at that time destroyed a lot of things that should have been kept safe."

"From what we were able to find out, the experts made an educated guess that the reason more of these cars and vehicles, as well as the other items, doesn't exist, aside from being destroyed in time, is that they were all melted and used during the war," the lady said.

"Once the war ended, they finally started to mine new metals, and the old ones got discarded."

"Um... Miss, why aren't these things public knowledge? Why do we have to come all the way to a museum to learn about these things?" a person asked.

"These are public knowledge. It's just that it's too old, and people don't like reading through history. If you dig deep, you can find these all on the internet," the lady said.

"Now, come along. We have more things to see," she said and took them along. The tour had already been going on for nearly half an hour, and the woman took them for another 15 minutes tour, explaining the various things.

Alex was surprised to see that history less than 600 years ago was quite neatly recorded. Yet the ones beforehand were not.

'That is very surprising,' he thought. While he did hear that the war was one of the major reasons they had lost most of the history, he still wondered why there weren't other things.

'What about the various landscapes that the developer of the game allegedly learned through here? Where are those texts?' Alex wondered. He did hear about some texts that were in the museum and couldn't wait to see them.

"Here we are. This is perhaps the most important piece of the exhibition in the museum, that was the reason for the deaths of hundreds of people," the lady said.

Alex looked in front of him and was a little surprised to see what was in front of him. 'Is that...?'

"Isn't that what is at the top of this building?" a student asked curiously.

"Yes," the lady said. "This is what is called a globe."

The lady spun the globe around and showed it to everyone. "This is supposed to depict how the world of the old people looked like. However, despite how advanced they were at the time; it seems that they believed that the world was round.

"Look at that screen. They even made a map that is totally flat, and yet they turned it into a sphere on the globe. For some reason, they couldn't change their views at all. This continued even after an apocalypse that we assume took place 600 years ago."

"There were many hints to the world being flat. For example, the sun rose and set at the same time everywhere, and yet the old folks never stopped believing. They tried to venture out onto what they believed was the real world," the lady said.

Alex looked at the map of the world that was put up on the screen. There were around 7 large pieces of land on the map, all of which Alex knew were continents.

Unfortunately, there were no names on the map. Suddenly, the map changed, and now the screen had a person in it.

The person on the screen was a middle-aged man.

He had no beard or mustache on his face and his long hair was tied in a ponytail behind him. He looked a little weak, almost as if he hadn't gotten sleep for some days.

Below him was a name that read "Neil Ambers".

"It wasn't until the Neil Ambers proved, through his various experiments, to the world that the world was flat in shape instead of a sphere that they stopped. He proposed the idea that there was a void beyond the forest, and anyone who went there fell through the void to their death."

"The later tests with unmanned planes and drones proved his point," the lady explained and moved a little to the side.

"Over here are old books that contain knowledge, some that are clearly fictions, but some that are hard to know what the intentions of the writers were. You can read snippets of the book on the screen," the lady said and the man's image changed to pieces of text.

Alex read them, but nothing understandable could be found from there. The lady took them to a few more exhibitions, but none of them were as interesting. With that, the tour was over, and the students were sent out of the museum.

"Alright, let's go to the viewing spot on the top of the building now," the teacher said and took the students to a lift.

Even as Alex walked, he kept on thinking.

'So what happened 600 years ago? Did some catastrophic event take place that destroyed the civilization at that time to the point where it needed to restart?' he wondered.

'Also, the current map looks nothing like the old one they used with the continent. So, in a way, I can conclude that it's fake. Then, does that mean that the map from the game is fake too?'

'Which would mean that the game is just a game, right?'' he thought.

Only questions were piled on top of him after coming to the museum instead of them getting answered.

Finally, the door of the lift opened up and Alex saw a massive open space outside. They were at the viewing station on top of the building.

Chapter 377: Festival

"Woah!" Alex thought as everything he had been thinking until now vanished. The sight of the beautiful city line from this high up was a sight that one didn't see every day.

He walked up to the glass and looked down.

"Woah, we are so far up," Alex said.

Emily got curious and walked to the front to see as well. "Aaahh!" she shouted immediately grabbing onto Alex's left hand and didn't let go. People looked at her curiously and laughed it off to go back to their own thing.

She buried her face on his shoulders due to the fear of height and the embarrassment she was facing.

"Hey, it's okay. Look, we can't see anything anymore," Alex said.

Emily slowly opened her eyes and only saw the skyline. She was fine with that. Alex let her keep holding onto his hands and walked around the room, looking at the different things far away.

The buildings were great and all, but the people from the city didn't seem to like it very much. So, when Emily saw that the skyline changed to the trees from the forest that lead to the void, she got excited.

"Look, Alex, it's the trees. I wonder what the void looks like," she said excitedly as she looked at the horizon.

The trees were taller than the buildings before them and continued for forever. As they went further, the visibility got hazy, and at some point, you could no longer see anything.



"Isn't that exciting?" she asked Alex.

Alex smiled and said, "Yes. Very." He didn't have the heart to tell her that he saw the trees on a daily basis since his farm was right next to the forest. Although he didn't see it from above, he still had seen the forest regularly.

Still, this was a new perspective, so he enjoyed it for a bit. He looked around and suddenly saw something before the trees, but behind the buildings.

'I was right,' he thought and smiled. He couldn't wait for tonight.

"Huh? What's that?" Emily asked in a curious manner.

"Hm... what?" Alex asked as he stopped looking at what he was looking at and turned to Emily.

"I... I think I saw...the haze go away for a second there," she said.

"What?" Alex said with a questioning voice. He looked back towards the forest, but it was the same. There was nothing to be seen beyond the haze.

"There's nothing there though," Alex said.

"I... I could've sworn I saw the haze clear up for just a split second. Maybe I saw wrong?" Emily said.

"What did you see beyond the haze?" Alex asked.

"Um... More trees, I think?" she said.

Alex shook his head. "Let's go check the other things," he said and took her around the entire room.

The viewing place was cylindrical in shape, so one could see the whole cityscape from the tower. After 15 or so minutes of viewing, the teachers herded the students back to the elevator and got them back on the double-decker bus.

Then, they went back to the hotel. It was around 11 am when they returned, so the teachers took the students to the dining area for lunch.

After lunch, the students rested in the lounge area. Some got on their phone, some chatted, some played the games from yesterday.

Once all of the students were rested, the teachers took all of them to see a 3-hour long theater show. Alex didn't think the theater show could be fun at all at first, but once he saw it, he was surprised at how good it was.

"Look, Alex, it says that this was one of the stories they recovered from the old texts,"? Emily said as she showed Ning the pamphlet they were given when they entered the theater.

It included information about the cast, a synopsis of the story, and its origin.

"R-Romeo and Juliet, huh? Those old people really knew how to write stories. I wonder how many good stories were lost during the supposed catastrophe 600 years ago," Alex said.

"I really wish I could see what those times were like," Emily said.

Alex didn't say anything. They came out of the theater at around 4 in the afternoon. The teachers took them back to the hotel to have some snacks.

After they finished their snacks, the teacher spoke once again.

"From 5 till 8, you have free time once again today. I suggest you go to the festival taking place near the forest," the teacher said.

Alex smiled. He already knew this. He had seen part of the festival setup from the tower's viewing spot today.

"Miss Emily," the teacher called her.

"Yes?" she said a little surprised. She didn't know why a teacher would call her directly.

"Remember the thing you won yesterday? Be sure to use it in the festival today," the teacher said with a smile.

"Oh, ok," she said. She then leaned next to Alex and whispered, "How do I use points in a festival? I've never been to one."

Alex chuckled a little and said, "You'll see."

Once it was 5, Alex took Emily and walked out of the hotel. The other students were going to the festival too, so everyone just followed each other and went there.

The festival was about 10 minutes away from where the hotel was, so it was really close. The closer they walked to the edge of the city, the smaller the buildings got.

Finally, they came upon a vast open space that was almost untouched by humanity. That would perhaps be considered true if there wasn't a massive festival set up in this open space.

"Woah," Emily said when she saw the colorful lights strung all around the gate and inside of the festival. "They even have a Ferris wheel. This looks more like an amusement park honestly,"

"Uh... you'll see how they are different once you enter inside," Alex said. "Shall we?"

Emily grabbed the hand Alex put forth with a smile on her face and said, "Yes."

## Chapter 378: Games

"Wow, this is really beautiful," Emily said as she entered the festival area. "Look at all of those lights. It kind of reminds me of my first sect before I died."

"Doesn't it? When I first entered my sect and it lit up just like this, I was reminded of the festival we had near our village too," Alex said.

"Oh, so you are used to going to festivals like this?" Emily asked.

"Oh yes. They take place once every 3 months or so during the change of every season," Alex said. "My father sets up a stall every time to sell some of the homegrown products or find potential customers for a business deal."

"I see. Then you must be quite used to these festivals. What should we do first?" she asked.

"Umm... let's just walk around and see what the stalls have," Alex said and looked through the stalls from the start.

The stalls sold various different things from food to clothes to toys to anything. They came across a stall selling cotton candy.

"Do you want some?" he asked.

"Sure," Emily said. Who didn't like cotton candy?

Alex paid for two large cotton candies and handed one to Emily. She took the blue one and left Alex with the pink one. They walked along with more stalls and tried different foods.

There was candy apple, some dumplings, sweets, fried noodles and many more.

"At this rate, I won't even need to eat anything later tonight," Emily said.

"Me too," Alex said and continued touring.

In another stall, Emily saw a bunch of different types of masks and wanted one. Alex got her a simple mask with a bunny face and ears. For himself, he got a mask that was fully white on the outside with no other design, but he could take it off and wear it inside out.

Once inside out, it would become a fully black mask. Essentially, he was wearing two masks at once. Thankfully, neither his nor Emily's mask obstructed any vision. He looked ahead and saw something that caught his eyes.

"Oh, those are up next," he said.

"Hmm... what are those? People seem to be playing there. Are those games?" Emily asked.

"Yes," Alex confirmed it.

"Oh wow, they have games too? Can we go play there?" Emily asked.

"Let's go somewhere first," he grabbed Emily's hand and pulled her through the crowd. Alex had to search for it for a few moments before he found it. He came up to a machine that had a line of people standing in front of it.

Alex got on the line along with Emily.

When it was finally their turn, Alex said, "Put your ticket in there."

"Hmm... oh, ok," she said and put in the ticket she got from winning bingo. Suddenly, the machine started spitting out small, connected papers, one after another.

"Wait, why are there so many?" she got a little overwhelmed.

"Didn't you get a 1000 points ticket? It will now shoot out 1000 points now," Alex said. He helped her in gathering all those that had dropped on the ground.

"Isn't this too many?" she asked.

"If you aren't very good at the games, it will end before you even know it," Alex said. "Let me get some too."

He put a 10\$ bill into the machine and it spat out 200 points.

"Are you fine with that amount?" Emily asked. Compared to hers, Alex didn't have that many points.

"I'll be fine. In fact, even this amount might be too many," he said. "I'm used to the games in the festivals and don't need many turns to win in it."

"Oh, let's see how good you are then," Emily said and walked toward the game stalls with Alex.

The first game she visited was a basketball one where they had to dunk one small-sized basketball after another.

"What do I do now?" Emily asked.

"Oh, just put one end of the ticket in that machine there and it will take in... let's see, 20 tickets per turn," Alex said.

Emily fed in 60 tickets and started playing herself. A person required 60 points in 40 baskets in 60 seconds to win a minor prize and required 60 points in 60 seconds to win a major prize.

Emily tried all 3 times and the maximum she could score was 23.

"Urghh, I'm really bad at it," she said. "Are you good at it?" she turned to Alex.

"I used to play this at every festival, so I can say that I'm good at it," Alex said. He stood in front of the machine and started throwing the baskets.

The basket was about 5 meters away, and Alex was accurately scoring 3 out of every 4th turn. Emily watched from the side and was awed at the result.

49 points in 60 seconds.

She went to the man handing out prizes and took a small palm-sized teddy bear. "You really are good at these games. You more than doubled my result," she said.

Alex gave an awkward smile and said, "Ah, Y-yes."

Internally, he was very confused. 'What's going on? I should have easily done 60. Why did my aim suffer so much?' he wondered.

Back at home, he played these games at every festival. His family was poor, so he couldn't play a lot, but the times he did play, he won them very easily.

'Damn, sleeping in the bed first, and now the capsule all the time seems to have ruined my body. I should really exercise more,' he thought.

"Alex, you coming?" Emily asked. She was ready to move on to the rest of the games.

"Yes," Alex got out of his stupor and followed her. The rest of the evening, the two people went through almost all of the game stalls.

They played the shooting games, the dart games, the dice games, placing rings around prizes, etc. Any game they came across, they would play it.

Emily had a lot of points and she played a lot. Once Alex's points ended, she gave some of hers to him. By the end, Emily had so many prizes that she had to get a bag to hold them all.

Chapter 379: Under the Moonlight and Fireworks

"There are so many," Emily complained as she held the large plastic bags full of toys she won as prizes from the games. Almost all of it had been won by Alex.

It didn't have a single major prize, however.

"I keep telling you to let me carry it. Why are you being so stubborn?" Alex asked.

"But these are so cute. I don't want to let go of them yet," Emily said in a childish manner. She was acting more and more freely around Alex now.

Alex was the same. He had lost a lot of awkwardness he had around her when they had first started being friends.

"How about this? Let's both carry it then," Alex said and reached for her hand holding the prizes. Emily's hand tightened for a second before letting loose. She opened it enough that Alex could slip his fingers through her hand and grabbed it.

Now they were both carrying the prizes.

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

Emily quickly checked and said, "Around 300."

"Hmm, let's go check out the concert then," Alex said and took her around. Thankfully, the festival area was set in a similar way to the one from his village, so he knew the general direction of where he should go to.



There was also the loud music that helped navigate directly to the concert.

The people singing in the concert were local singers and bands that came onto the stage one after another. Alex found a clean place on the ground and sat there with Emily.

They tried to talk a few times, but the sounds were too loud to speak to each other. So, they just stopped talking and enjoyed the show.

By the time they left the concert, it was very dark and was past evening.

"We have half an hour left before we need to return back to the hotel," Emily said as she checked her watch.

"Oh, let's go to the Ferris Wheel then," Alex said.

"Mhmm," Emily nodded.

The lights looked much brighter now that the sun was down and darkness reigned all around. The number of people had also significantly increased.

They finally reached the Ferris Wheel only to find a long line of people waiting for their turn.

"Damn, how long do we have to wait for?" Emily asked. They only had maybe another 20 minutes before they had to start returning back.

Alex looked at the Ferris wheel. "It seems like a 2 person Ferris wheel. We might have to wait for another 10 minutes considering how many people there are," he said.

The Ferris Wheel was quite large and had around 30 compartments. So, in total it held 60 people every ride. It spun around for 5 minutes per person, so Alex deduced that the 100-ish people in front of him would be gone in 10 minutes.

The Ferris Wheel came to a stop and more people got on before it started spinning. It was quite fast for the first 2 minutes then slowed down to replace a few compartments at a time.

"Oh wow, that looks quite scary," Emily said.

"Yeah, I only got on a similarly large Ferris Wheel in the amusement park in the city. Otherwise, I'm only used to small ones that have maybe 10 compartments in them.

"This will be my first time getting on such a large one too," Emily said.

Finally, after 10 minutes, they got to get on the Ferris Wheel. Alex and Emily sat side by side as the staff locked them securely.

They felt a jerk as the Ferris wheel slowly started moving. As it went up, it was slow too from adding all the different people below them.

It took them nearly a minute to start, and by that time, Alex and Emily were high up in the air.

"Woah! We are at least 150 meters high, aren't we? Urgh, I'm regretting it now. I can't look down," Emily said as she closed her eyes.

"Why did you even insist on coming here then?" Alex asked.

"I- I like the feeling of freefall when we go down," Emily said with her eyes closed and her hands holding the bar in front of them really hard.

Alex placed his hands on top and said, "It's okay, just look up. Look at the moon."

Emily nodded and slowly opened her eyes and looked up. "Oh, it's a full moon today," she said as she finally paid attention to it now.

The Ferris Wheel suddenly sped up, and the two were pulled back in free fall.

"Aaaah!" Emily cried out loud. Alex laughed out loud too. Their screams and laughs were lost in the dozens of others that screamed and laughed too.

The wheel reached the top at the same speed and dropped once more. This happened a few times more and then it slowed down again.

People were starting to leave behind Alex's compartment.

He and Emily on the other hand were going to go for a full slow climb and fall before they had to leave for the others.

"This is quite fun," Alex said.

Emily looked towards him and nodded.

BTOOM BTOOM BTOOM

Both of them looked towards the distant sky and smiled. The fireworks were being set off in the distance.

"Such perfect timing," Alex said.

"Yes, we couldn't have gotten a better viewing spot," Emily said.

The sky got bright from all the fireworks and the lights illuminated their faces in the night sky. The multicolored fireworks were a sight to behold.

While Emily had all of her attention on the fireworks, Alex fell into thought.

'It's now or never.'

He lightly squeezed Emily's hand to get her attention. "Emily," he called out.

"Yes?" she said as she turned around.

"Will you go out with me?" he dropped the question.

Emily's face changed emotions like a chameleon. At one moment she looked stunned, at another moment she was surprised, then she was skeptical, and then nervous and happy. Finally, she blushed and said, "Yes."

Alex was elated. He was really happy to hear her accept his proposal. He looked at her blushing face and decided to go for it as well.

Under the moonlight and fireworks, he leaned in towards her. Emily saw him coming too and got nervous, so she closed her eyes.

While Emily had her eyes closed, Alex kept his open. As he got closer, Alex could see the shape of her eyelashes, could see the shade of her skin, could smell the fragrance of her perfume, could feel her breath on his face, and could see her soft lips.

He placed his lips on top of those very lips, and he kissed her.

Chapter 380: Back to the Game

Alex and Emily walked out of the train station at around 2 pm in the afternoon on a Saturday. Alex had a new suitcase with him that he had bought to carry all the prizes and souvenirs he had got from the trip.

Sarah was waiting outside the station for the two of them. When she saw the two of them coming, she walked up to them.

However, before she got close, she stopped. Alex and Emily saw her and walked up to her.

"Hey! did you have to wait for long?" Emily asked.

Sarah didn't answer and instead said, "Something feels wrong. Did something happen on the trip?"

Emily blushed a little but also excitedly said, "Alex asked me out."

Sarah's eyes went wide. "What?" she turned towards Alex, who nodded.

"And you accepted?" Sarah asked.

"Of course," Emily said.

"Wow, finally. Congratulations to you both. Let's get a cake or something for a little celebration," Sarah said with exaggerated expressions.

"Alright, no need to overreact. Let's just go back home. I'm really tired," Emily said. They got in the car and went back.

Hannah was pretty stoked to find out about the news too. She prepared some lunch for the two of them which they ate quite happily.

Once they were done, Alex went to the room to freshen up. Once he got out, he decided to log back into the game.

He opened his eyes back in the formation that was still active. According to Zexi, the formation would last for somewhere between 30 and 40 days, so he still had about 3 weeks of time he had to spend in the formation.

'Did no one really come to find me?' he wondered.

Pearl appeared next to him. After seeing him not move for 3 whole days, he was happy to finally see him walk around again.

"Hey, little guy. Were you bored?"

Alex squatted and started rubbing Pearl's neck with both of his hands. Pearl meowed multiple times in response to Alex's questions.

"You wanna fight?" he asked and started hiding his cultivation base. Then, the two of them fought.

Pearl was getting really good at fighting and so was Alex. He was already good when fighting with techniques, but normal attacks were still a little awkward.

However, the constant fighting without techniques was helping him improve at a tremendous rate.

"Alright, let's stop," he said after 3 hours of constant fighting. He sent Pearl away to do whatever he wanted to. Alex on the other hand fell into thought.

'It's been 4 days since I broke through. Normally, I would've broken through once again, but can I do that now?' he wondered. He hadn't practiced or fought in 3 days so he decided to wait a day more before he broke through to the Meridian Realm.

For now, he would just practice.

"Hm..." he thought. Once the cultivation base came back, he realized that there wasn't any discomfort from his cultivation.

"Now that I think about it, my body is good enough to do a lot of things. It can digest all sorts of Qi, can digest monster cores, and can even digest poisons. So is it really possible that such a body would have the same faults as the other bodies have?" he wondered.

He had been spending time in between breakthroughs because that was what he was taught. However, his masters didn't know about his body.

"Hmm... I do remember being significantly weaker during the time when I had to fight that one snake. Didn't I break through like crazy then? I was in a higher realm than the snake, but we were at the same strength."

"So the thing about stable cultivation base needing to have a high level of strength is true... but would it apply for a single breakthrough though?" he wondered.

He wanted to open up his status page and hit breakthrough to check, but before he even opened the status page, he stopped.

"Wait, I can't mess around at such an important breakthrough. What if I do something that negatively impacts my meridians. Let's wait after I do a normal breakthrough this turn," Alex said.

He took out a sword and started practicing. He sent out attacks everywhere and was very well trained in the different techniques.

It came to the point that he was having diminishing returns from the training.

'The techniques have reached the highest they can without noticeable improvements coming forward. So, I should do something else for now,' he thought.

He looked at the sword in his hand and remembered how good Du Yuhan was with it. The Sword Intent and Sword Qi that he used had blown away Alex.

'Can I be like him?' he wondered. 'I might not have had the time to learn all of that... but maybe I can cheat a little with my talent.'

So, starting today, he decided to simply learn the sword without any techniques. He didn't know how to start with learning about Intents, so he blindly swung his sword around.

After realizing that was fruitless, he stopped and thought of what his master had told him.

'Sword Intent appears when you master the sword to such a high level, that you start imagining the sword as part of your body,' Alex thought.

'Part of my body, huh? That means I need to know just by intuition where the sword is at all times, how fast it is moving, how sharp it is, how much force I'm putting into it, and such.'

He closed his eyes and started moving the sword in his hand. He tried to feel the balance of the sword by measuring its height and weight using his mind as a scale.

He took back any and all Qi and spiritual sense and solely focused his normal 5 senses on the sword. He felt the weight of the sword through the hilt he was holding, he felt the changes in the air every time the sword moved around.

He heard the air being sliced apart by the sword, the minute hint of air whistling past the sharp edge.

He was starting to get attuned to the sword.