

Alchemy 581

Chapter 581: The Sword

Alex felt a wave of spiritual sense coming from the other side of the corridor that ended at the room with the door, which was the dead end.

'Dammit! How did I stop such little way?' he wondered. 'Is there a seal in this place that won't let me leave using my techniques?'

If that were to be the case, he needed to think of something quick. Concealing himself wasn't going to help him against the spiritual senses, so he needed to do something else.

He sent out his own spiritual sense around him while thinking of what he could do.

Just then, he realized that his spiritual sense wasn't working beyond the door behind him.

'I can hide there,' he thought. He needed to find a way to get inside. From what he remembered of seals from all of these memories, he needed some sort of key to open it.

The key was usually physical, but would sometimes be Qi-related as well. After all, a seal was simply an incomplete locking formation that would be complete after placing the key in.

Alex looked at the seal and realized that it had no place for something physical to attach to. Meaning, the answer to the seal was in the seal itself.

Basically, instead of the door having a padlock with a physical key, it was a lock that would open by a combination on the lock itself.

Alex wasn't that good at formations that he could fix it. He needed other ways.

He thought of teleporting to the other side of the seal, but the seal somehow stopped that too.

"Dammit!" he thought. The beasts were probably going to be close any second now.

Alex started panicking and then started punching, kicking, and using attacks on the door.

None of them did anything to the seal at all, but when he used the Palm attack on in, something happened.

The formations on the seals started moving on their own and reached a correct position. Then, the door opened.

Alex was elated. He quickly ran inside and locked the door, before the seal remade itself.

Alex breathed heavily as that was close. He was confused as to how the seal opened by itself as he didn't really do anything.

The confusion only grew on him as he realized this was the second time such a thing had happened now.

First, he somehow entered the palace using the teleportation formation even though that couldn't have been possible without permission.

And this time, he had opened the seal, even though he did nothing.

'What's the connection between these two things?' Alex thought. Since he had never experienced something like this happening before coming to this place, he wondered if it was something exclusive to this place.

'Is it the White Tiger's blood essence within me?' Alex wondered. That felt like astute guesswork on his part.

"Yeah, that's likely it," Alex thought.

BANG! BANG!

He suddenly heard the sounds of something banging coming through the other side of the door. Either, the beasts had just arrived outside or they had already arrived and were now trying to open it.

Reflexively, he sent out his spiritual sense to see what was happening on the outside. Surprisingly, he could see beyond the seal and it wouldn't stop him like it did the other way around.

He saw the beasts hastily trying to solve the puzzle that was the seal and get in.

Alex felt scared. He had trapped himself in this room with the only way out surrounded by the beasts.

"Is there an—" suddenly he realized that his spiritual sense was looking at things that he hadn't noticed before.

He turned around, facing the room.

The room was mostly empty, with all but 2 things inside it. Alex looked at the first thing in there.

A slender long blade of ebony color with a big hilt laid in the middle of a room. The blade had an imprint on it that depicted a dragon wrapping a sword.

'The Saint rank sword,' Alex thought. This was the Ebony Corundum Stiletto. A sword that held the crest of the Azure Imperium, the sword that killed Pearl's mother.

This was the Saint rank sword that the beasts took away from him by telling that it was too dangerous to be in his possession. And Alex still trusted that they were right, however, he didn't care enough to leave it here with them.

He would take the sword and find the person who owned it before helping Pearl get back his revenge. He would kill that man.

That was what he had thought when he saw the sword. As the dark thoughts moved around in his head, something else sensed the darkness.

Something else took notice of Alex.

"You want to kill someone?" It asked, startling Alex as he had believed himself to be the only person in the room.

"Who's there?" he asked, spreading his spiritual sense to the fullest, yet he still failed to notice anyone.

"If it's killing you want, I can help you," the voice spoke again. This time, Alex saw where the voice had come from.

However, that shouldn't have been possible.

Alex walked forwards and reached the Ebony sword... and went past it.

Behind the sword was another sword. It was stuck on a large piece of stone that was completely black.

From what it looked like, someone had dug around the sword and brought it here.

As Alex got near, he heard the voice more clearly.

"Good, good, come to me," it said. Alex was surprised. That sword was definitely talking to him. Was it directly talking into his mind? That's what it felt like, but he could hear it on the outside as well.

Alex saw the door being nearly opened by the saint beasts. They were very close to solving the puzzle that was the seal.

"Take me, and I can help you defeat them all. I can help you become the strongest."

As he got closer, Alex finally saw the sword. It was a thin sword with a black-colored blade that only had a single edge, instead of the normal two edges that were found everywhere.

The crossguard and the hilt of the sword were completely black as well. There was even a black miasma falling onto the ground.

Something about the sword was very attractive to him. He felt there was some truth in the sword. All he had to do was take the sword and he would become strong.

The temptation was getting to him. Alex slowly reached out his hand towards the sword.

Suddenly, the door opened and the beasts entered the room.

"TAKE ME!" the sword cried out.

"Boy, do—"

Before the beasts could even speak, Alex grabbed the sword and in one quick motion, pulled it out of the stone.

He turned towards the beasts, with the sword in front of him and that was when he noticed it.

The sword no longer looked black at all. It was a silver-colored blade with some signs of damage to the side.

He then noticed the crossguard losing color as well. The black crossguard changed to a bronze-like color.

Soon, the hilt lost the black color as well, revealing the clear white color of the hilt.

All of the blacks that had left the sword was now crawling up Alex's arm.

"Drop it now, human, or you will die!" the beasts shouted. Alex's pupils dilated in fear and tried to let go of the sword. However, he couldn't move his hand at all.

He couldn't even feel it.

As the black miasma moved up Alex's hand, it left behind blackened veins in its wake. Alex could feel himself losing more and more of the control.

He really had screwed up badly.

Alex tried to use his legs to try and get his hand to drop the sword, and he succeeded.

After a couple of hits with his legs, his grip loosened enough for the sword to slip out. However, that made no difference.

The black miasma was already on him now. Soon it reached his neck and started spreading across his whole body.

Alex could only stand there and watch in horror as darkness enveloped him completely.

The beasts watched in horror as well.

Alex then reached downwards to the ground and picked up the sword he had just dropped and looked towards the beasts.

His eyes were now fully blackened, with black veins all over his body, and there was a maniacal smile on his face.

"Hehehe! Go tell them," A voice merged with Alex's voice came out of his mouth.

"GodSlayer has returned."

Chapter 582: Black Slash

Black smoke curled around Alex as it floated down to the ground. His black eyes and skin made him look like he wasn't a human anymore.

Alex's face smiled from ear to ear with an eerie grin, but that wasn't Alex anymore.

It was something else. It called itself 'Godslayer'. The beasts didn't know what that was, only that it was something that had originally been trapped into the metal sword and had been specially kept in this place.

Standing in front of that thing, the beasts felt true fear for their lives for a long time. They were truly scared

The aura the person in front of them was giving off wasn't human anymore either. Alex's aura was nowhere to be felt, only the inhuman aura could be.

And that rang all the bells in the Beasts' head.

Immediately, they turned around and ran away. They knew there was no way they could fight it at all, so instead, they chose to run away.

Not only that, fighting in such a location was not a very good idea either. Not just for themselves, but for Lady Ren's sake as well.

"Hey! Hey! Where do you think you all are going?" It, the Godslayer, asked as it watched the beasts run away.

In the next moment, it launched forward with the sword in hand. It moved at such an incredible speed that it put the saint beasts to shame.

In a split second, it arrived behind the beasts and struck at the puma directly on its back.

The puma went crashing onto the side of the ground along the corridor. He had a giant cut along the side of his back, but he couldn't care about it for now.

"This kid wanted to kill you, so you are going to die now," It spoke.

The Jaguar sent out an attack towards It, which It easily blocked. At the same time, the Leopard helped the puma escape the place.

It stayed where it was, instead of following the beasts, to check upon its new body.

"Tsk, this kid is only at True realms. I will need to find a suitable body soon," It thought.

It was starting to enter Alex's spiritual sea as well as a glob of black goo.

As soon as it entered, the black goo started spreading black mists, slowly corrupting the spiritual sea as well.

It could see Alex, half-conscious, standing on top of the sea with a black look on his face.

"I'm surprised this kid even managed to get a spiritual sea in such a backwater place. Not bad kid, unfortunately, you will die soon," It said.

It was pushing Alex's body beyond his natural limit to bring out so much damage. Soon, it would wreck Alex's body from the inside and force him to die without a doubt.

At that moment, It would have to find a new body.

It was about to go kill the puma again when it noticed something to its right. It turned around and saw the massive mountain floating atop Alex's spiritual sea.

"Hey, hey! What the hell is this?" It got curious and looked at the gigantic mountain.

When it noticed the silver color of the mountain, it suddenly got apprehensive.

"What the hell? No way, this can't be true right?" It thought. It knew of such silver rocks that people could use, but it had never heard of one the size of the mountain.

The largest it had heard of was perhaps the size of a boulder and that alone was quite impressive because of what the silver rock did.

"This kid has such a great potential to make it as someone big. Unfortunately, like most talented youths, he too will die before maturing," the black glob said.

The glob spoke of it as something remorseful, but it wasn't remorseful at all. Instead, it started giggling to itself.

"Hehehe, killing such a talented youth, I can't wait to drain him of his life," It thought. "Hahaha! This kid shall be my stepping stone as I make my return and slay all the gods."

"The first one in my renewed path of killing shall be the beasts!"

Even while the black glob remained in the spiritual sea, it could use Alex's body outside.

It moved through the hallway, looking for the beasts. The black goo couldn't use spiritual sense, so it had to go around looking for the beasts on its own.

It, however, could feel the aura left behind by the beasts and followed it.

Soon, it came outside and in another step appeared behind the beasts that were fleeing from the scene. They were already above the trees, taking the thing away from the palace with them.

"You shall die now," It said as it slashed its blade.

A black slash came out of the sword that held the power to destroyed anything along the way.

The beasts dodged at the last second, and the slash flew in between them before hitting a tree.

The moment the black slash hit the tree, the tree seemed to lose all moisture at once as it crumbled to dust.

The 3 beasts felt scared. Just what the hell was sealed in that sword?

"Hehehe!" It continued grinning as if it was seeing the funniest thing in the world.

It raised the sword towards the sky, getting ready to attack once more. It raised Alex's left arm, as well as a black hand made up of nothing but goo and smoke, appeared from it, holding onto the sword.

"Hehehe. DIE!" Its black eyes opened wide with glee on its face as it used a very strong attack towards the puma.

This attack was similar to the black slash from before, but this time it was incredibly large and incredibly fast.

The puma knew that if the attack hit him, he would die. And yet, there was not a single thing in the world he could do to protect himself.

Suddenly, a brilliant white light exploded in front of the puma that swallowed the black slash. When the light disappeared, the black slash was nowhere to be seen either.

The puma looked in front of him, with its stupidly scared face, and saw someone standing in front of him.

"Lady Ren!" the three of them said at the same time.

The white cat had finally decided to show herself. "Are you 3 alright?" she asked.

"Yes, lady Ren," they said, finally a little relieved to see her come out. However, when they realized what would happen, they got scared.

"Lady Ren, you..." the Jaguar asked.

"Now's not the time to dwell on it. You guys need me and that child needs me," she said. The beasts said nothing further.

Lady Ren turned towards the thing that was now Alex. "Get out of that child now," she said in a low voice. Her face turned to that of an angry cat with her canines showing towards it.

"Ooh, I'm so scared. How will fight against such a strong cat?" It started mocking Lady Ren.

Lady Ren didn't let the mocking register to herself and instead started thinking of how she could save Alex. If she didn't save Alex, she could forget about saving her great-grandchild.

There was also the fact that Alex could absorb the bloodline of the White Tiger without dying. There was definitely something unique to him, and she didn't want someone so unique to die because of this.

"Let go of him or I will kill you," she said.

"Hah! Kill me? Even the old bastard up there couldn't kill me. What can a little cat-like you from a backwater place do to me?" It asked, perfectly certain that it could win.

"Very well, I will have to incapacitate you then," Lady Ren said. Suddenly, her body glowed white and it started condensing down to her limbs and finally her claws.

The one that called itself 'Godslayer' on the other hand simply put the sword at an angle as it got ready to fight as well.

The sword glowed black and it initiated the attack. It slashed at Lady Ren, who dodged it easily and attacked it with her claw.

The Godslayer took the hit but remained standing with an eerie smile on its face. This was not its body, the damage wouldn't stop it.

Lady Ren got a little apprehensive as well. She realized that fighting it normally wasn't the way at all. She needed to stall for time so that she could think of a way to remove this thing from Alex's body.

However, she couldn't take very long either as Alex's body would be overexerted very soon, killing him.

This task felt impossible for her.

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Alex jolted awake as the pain in his body flared. He could feel the attack he received on the outside.

He wasn't sure where he was or what he was doing. He only knew that time had passed.

He remembered grabbing the sword, and... something crawling up the sword. What happened after that? He couldn't remember.

He then looked around and realized that he was in the spiritual sea. Just like he always was when the other Alex was with him.

'Has he returned?' Alex got a depressing feeling when he thought that. He looked up to see if he was there, but no, there was something else.

'That blackness,' he thought as he looked at the black goop that was sending out billows of black smoke all over his spiritual sea.

Alex felt anger like never before. "I finally got my body back, and you think you can take it from me?" he shouted at the goop which hadn't noticed him yet.

"My body is not something you can take as you wish. You will suffer my wrath for it."

Chapter 583: Taking Back his Body

Determination flared in Alex's eyes. He had had enough of others using his body, leaving him to be destitute.

The black fog that was taking over his spiritual sea only served to get him angrier.

Now that he had got somewhat of his mind back, Alex decided to take back his body from whatever that black goop was.

So, he jumped off of the surface of the spiritual sea and flew up to the sky.

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Lady Ren blocked the black slash. While Godslayer's black slashes could easily destroy most things, the white glow her paws shined in was somehow able to stop them.

This got Godslayer really confused. It wasn't that he had never met anyone that could block this attack. In fact, it was the opposite.

Every single one it had fought could at some level block the black slashes. That was even true when it had its actual body to fight in.

So, being blocked wasn't anything new. Rather, the thing that was surprising and confusing was the fact that there was someone out here in the middle of nowhere that could stop it.

"You have gained my respect little missy. I don't know what you are using with that white glow, but the fact that you can block my attacks means that you are quite strong."

"How about you let me take over your body? I can bring you to places you have never been to before. I can show you the strength you can't even begin to imagine," the Godslayer said.

"Hmph!" Lady Ren sneered towards it. "I am the wife of a White Tiger. What can you do that my husband already couldn't?"

Godslayer stopped. "White Tiger?" he looked suspiciously.

It looked around and finally noticed that they were all feline beasts. It spent some precious moments thinking about what he had just learned before coming to a conclusion.

"So this is one of the lands the four beasts sent their folks to, huh?" it asked. "I had heard about them doing these things.

White Tiger. They were fearsome creatures that everyone learned to keep away from because of how strong they were.

They were one of the 4 beasts that were blessed by the first of the 2 gods.

Blessed by the God, they were like gods themselves.

Godslayer smirked. It was born to kill them.

"I will really enjoy killing you all now."

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Alex flew right beneath the black fog. He could feel a deep sense of fear, but his anger and determination overpowered it.

He stretched his hands into the fog, both of them. Being in his spiritual world, he had both of his arms with him at the moment.

Just because he lost his arms outside didn't mean that he now saw himself as an armless man.

He felt a sharp mental pain when he touched the black fog like it was trying to consume him. However, he wasn't going to let that happen.

"AAHHH!!" he shouted as brilliant yellow light exploded all around him. Vast amounts of yellow fog appeared around him bringing splendid illumination to the darkened environment.

The yellow fog started getting denser around Alex as it fought the black fog directly.

Soon, Alex was so covered in the yellow fog that he too started looking like he was made up of fog itself.

No, he was the fog itself. Alex lost his physical form and fully transformed into the yellow fog to fight the black fog.

As soon as the black fog came into contact with the yellow fog, it immediately was destroyed.

Alex got more confident. It would only take him a few minutes to clear it all.

The black goop noticed it and was not very happy about it. However, it could not go defend itself at the moment, as there was another fight it was fighting on the outside.

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Godslayer frowned. For the first time since it had escaped from the sword, it lost its smile.

'How the hell is this kid destroying me? What is that yellow fog? And how is it so strong?' it thought. It was definitely going to lose to Alex if it did not do something quickly.

A layer of black miasma floated in front of it, creating a sort of barrier in front of Alex.

A paw strike landed on the black barrier, destroying it. However, Godslayer that was behind it was perfectly fine.

Lady Ren frowned. The attacks she was sending out were enough to turn the area around them into dust. However, the thing that had taken over Alex was easily stopping the attacks.

It went on to show just how powerful the black entity was, but also, it went onto show just how strong Alex was.

The Godslayer couldn't become this strong if it wasn't drawing the potential from within Alex to fuel its power.

If not for that, the Godslayer would never be strong enough to fight her in her current condition.

She thought of going the extra step to deal with it once and for all, but every time she thought so, a deep fear sprung up in her heart, stopping her.

Godslayer started going on the offensive. It sent out multiple slashes at once towards Lady Ren. It was drawing incredible power from deep within Alex, leaving him a little weak at the moment.

All of the 4 beasts on the outside could see how thin Alex's body had already gotten.

Any more and Alex likely wouldn't be able to survive even if the thing left his body.

Godslayer was incredibly angry at the moment. Alex had already destroyed half of the black fog it had been using to slowly take over his mind.

By now, half of the blackness in his eyes was gone, revealing the white part of the eyes.

It didn't know how the boy's spiritual sea was so strong, but it needed to send out some sort of retaliation right now.

For that, it needed to get rid of the beast in front of him first. 'This will put me in a severe situation, but... I have no choice,' it thought before raising the sword towards the sky.

A vortex appeared on the sword as all the air in the surroundings moved towards it. All of the beasts could see wisps of blacklight moving into the sword as well.

Lady Ren's eyes went wide as she saw the aura piling up. This was bad. The attack was starting to go beyond the realm of what was possible in this world.

This was incredibly bad.

Godslayer cared none for what he was doing and simply slashed down towards the white cat. At the same time, it focused on its find in the spiritual sea.

The 3 saint beasts got terrified. This was an attack beyond their level as well.

Lady Ren saw the massive black slash that destroyed air itself as it flew towards her. If she let that attack hit her, she would surely die.

If she dodged it, it would surely destroy half of their realm, and kill almost everything it touched.

Neither of the choices was something she was willing to make. So, she decided to block the sword slash.

A fantastic aura exploded from deep within her. As the aura released, her cultivation base reached sky high and even seemed to go beyond that.

She released her Immortal Realm cultivation base.

The 3 saint beasts couldn't help but bow before her in reverence.

Lady Ren used her newly brought forth power and roared into the black slash.

A powerful sound erupted that could be heard from all over the secret realm, and even a little further beyond. Her sound turned into an attack that traveled to the black slash completely destroying it.

The task had been as easy as beating a True realm cultivator as a Saint realm cultivator.

However, the thing that frightened her the most had yet to come.

She looked up to the sky with terror in her eyes as dark clouds quickly filled the sky.

It was coming.

Heavenly Judgement.

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The more black fog Alex destroyed, the easier it got to destroy the rest of the fog. By the time Godslayer had turned his focus back onto the spiritual sea, his influence on the mind was nearly gone.

"You damn, human," it shouted.

Alex turned towards it. The yellow fogs condensed to become Alex once again.

"You are ruining everything," Godslayer shouted and jumped towards Alex. As soon as it reached Alex, it covered his whole mental avatar and tried to destroy it.

However, Alex didn't worry about it. He had already realized how strong his mental strength was.

With a simple thought, yellow fog exploded from him, destroying the black goop he was touching.

The black goop started to get destroyed under the yellow fog and soon it dwindled to almost nothingness.

When all the fog and goop disappeared, all that was remained was a crystal ball the size of his fists. He tried to use the yellow fog to destroy it as well, but he realized he couldn't.

The crystal was something he couldn't destroy at all. He could feel the thing still alive inside of it, however, he didn't need to worry as it no longer held any strength at all.

Alex finally sighed in relief as he got his body back. He then left his spiritual sea and immediately felt the pain all over his body.

The thing had wrecked his body more than he had thought. He could barely even feel his Qi.

At the same time, something else took his attention. He looked in front of him to see the beasts looking at the sky.

Alex looked up as well and his jaw dropped.

A massive vortex of energy was gathering in the sky. One that was stronger than anything he had ever seen.

Chapter 584: Clone?

Ren Xiao looked up to the sky with a grim look on her face. 'I screwed up,' she thought.

She had been fighting with suppressed strength against the thing that took over Alex exactly because she was afraid this would happen.

She looked up at the sky, her aura barely something that could be sensed. She figured she may have a bit of time to prepare herself.

However, how was she to prepare herself? Revealing the tiniest bit of her true aura would cause the judgement to come down sooner, and surely destroy her.

He looked at the swirling clouds of different color that seemed to gather together to get darker and darker.

'If I had known this would happen, I would've just used my real cultivation base to deal with the thing,' she thought.

She regretted that she didn't get rid of the thing and now, her descendant would have to die, alongside the—

She stopped. She saw Alex, floating in the air in front of her. He was completely shrunken in body mass as if he hadn't eaten anything in months.

The thin bones gave his body a skeletal outline, making him look ghostly. His eyes were shrunken, his body a shade of red that looked closer to purple.

She could only begin to imagine what sort of pain he must've been suffering. Not that different from what she would feel if she was fortunate enough to survive the next few minutes.

She then carefully looked at his body, his sword, his eyes. Not a single shred of blackness from before was there anymore.

'How is that possible? I didn't do anything to it,' she thought.

"Are you... yourself?" she asked softly.

"Yes, I am me," Alex said as he too had looked down from the sky. He looked at the sword in his hand. Now that the black surface was gone, it looked like a pretty decent sword.

Actually, this was very much likely a great sword, given what it had been housing.

Lady Ren gasped when she heard Alex's voice. It was no longer merged with the other voice, making it sound normal.

"Where is it?" she asked, which Alex easily understood to be referring to the black goop in his spiritual sea.

"I destroyed most of it," he said. "It still remains, but it no longer has the power to fight against me."

'Dear god of the beasts! How in the world did this child defeat it?' she wondered. She herself hadn't been able to think of any way to defeat it as she didn't know what it was.

She had found it over a thousand years ago, stuck to the earth. It had come down in a meteor shower, or so her people told her when she went to check what had caused a crater to the east of them.

When she reached the sword, she realized that she was being tempted by the sword. When she touched the sword, the black thing in it had attacked her, and was siphoning off her life to fuel itself.

Ren Xiao had panicked, but the sword had been weak at the time and her mental strength was not its match. She had gotten rid of it before it could fully take over her, and she had realized how dangerous of a sword it was.

So, she had taken it away, along with the land it was stuck on, not daring to touch the sword itself again.

She had locked it away in the empty treasury room, for almost a millenia now. When Alex went to it, she was sure the sword would tempt him, and as she had expected, it did.

She regretted not leaving her room at the time to stop him. She believed shedding off her natural aura to be a more important task for her so as to not incur the heaven's wrath by being outside.

Alex had been taken over, and got most of his life siphoned off of him by the thing, but somehow, he made it back.

'What does that mean?' she wondered. Did it mean he had an impressive mental strength to fight off the temptation? But then where was the thing?

Alex had said he was destroyed most of it. Not got rid of. Destroyed.

He had? But how? It was certainly not his cultivation base. Then perhaps... his body?

Ren Xiao narrowed her eyes. Alex's body surely held a lot of mysteries that she couldn't even begin to understand. Not only was he strong and seemed to have almost infinite potential, he could also absorb the blood essence of a White Tiger.

Just what was his body?

She looked at him with her narrowed eyes when she suddenly noticed something that she hadn't in shock of the black thing disappearing.

Something was different.

"You are whole?" she asked, almost surprised.

Alex looked at himself. He didn't understand what she meant. He was clearly still missing his left arm. Not to mention the horrible situation of his where everything was numb and painful at the same time.

How exactly could this even be considered whole?

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"Your body... it used to always be a sliver away from fusing with your soul completely, but now, it seems you have done something to completely fuse it," she said.

Alex understood what she meant. She was referring to the time when she saw through the other soul being in his body.

This woman— beast had impressive senses.

"Yes," Alex said. "That was my original soul controlling this clone body. I have now gotten my body back."

Lady Ren squinted her eyes at him and looked through him again.

"Why are you lying?" she asked.

"What do you mean?" Alex said. Was his story not believable? Well, not like he could help it. After all, that was the truth.

"You are no clone," Lady Ren said.

"No... I am one," Alex said. "My real body is in the Central continent right now. He used to send his soul into my body to control it, while I remained suppressed in my own mind."

Lady Ren frowned this time. "That's not true. I may believe that there was another soul in your body. That explains why your body and soul weren't united. However, not for a single second do I believe this body is a clone."

"Creating clones is difficult enough. Creating one that can take in the blood essence of the White Tiger and live? Impossible."

"Not even the Divinities and the Celestials can do such a thing, let alone someone from this land with its limited resources. You can refine this entire world, and not be able to create a body such as yours," Lady Ren said.

Alex's eyes went wide. Many thoughts roamed in his head at once, making it hard for him to understand what he was thinking.

"Are you saying that..." he couldn't continue his thoughts. That couldn't possibly be true.

"Yes," Lady Ren said. "Your body is not a clone. Its a real body, one you were born with."

Alex was stunned beyond belief. He lost all sense of the pain and numbness for a brief moment.

"Is it really true?" he thought. "Am I... not the clone?"

Chapter 585: Heavenly Judgement

There were two ways one could make clones.

The first method was where you refined a dead body to become your clone using a piece of your soul.

One's soul couldn't become united with the dead body completely, since that wasn't your body, Alex knew he wasn't that.

Which was why he believed himself to be the second type of clone. One that was made using various resources, that had a soul grown in it, even without using the owner's soul.

This made controlling the new clone very hard, but not impossible.

However, Lady Ren was saying that it was impossible for him to be the second type of clone as well because of the resources that would require to make his body.

Then... was it really true? Was he really... not a clone?

If Lady Ren had exaggerated the requirement for a body such as his by hundreds of thousands of times, it would still fall short of the number of players that would have to be cloned in this world.

And most of them had great talent, constitutions, and spiritual roots.

"Then... am I not a clone?" Alex thought. If he wasn't a clone and was in fact the real Alex, that would mean that everything he got from the start was not luck, but rather something he was born with.

The body, the talent, the spirit roots, everything he thought he was handed without having to work for it, was something he was born with.

Had he really had such an amazing body even when he was on the farm?

He remembered his father's incredible physical body that could easily work on the farm even at his age. He remembered his mother's incredible intelligence and talent at everything she did from being an accountant for his father to cooking every food to perfection to teaching him everything when he was homeschooled.

His aunt, his father's sister, also had a body that remained youthful even when she was as old as his father.

Not to mention his cousin, who had a Celestial grade body to begin with, the only one to ever have it in the game.

'That wasn't all a coincidence, was it?' Alex started to realize and finally believe it. 'This is my real body.'

He looked down on himself with awe at the fact that he had been wrong for the past many months.

He wasn't the clone at all. The other guy was the clone.

'Since he is a clone, his body mustn't be very good, wo—'

Alex suddenly thought of something. His eyes went wide as the piece fell into place from a simple change of thought.

When a player died in the 'game', they would be able to log in once more, but this time they would get a different body from the one that died.

The players called it 'reincarnating' as it was a second chance at life. The players that reincarnated would always be stuck with something very much worse than the last one they had.

But what if that was not it? What if it was simply the real body dying, so the creator was forced to create a clone of them.

However, since he didn't have great resources, all of the reincarnated players would get a really bad body with garbage talents and constitution, sometimes even missing spiritual roots.

If the creator really did make the body Alex currently had, then there was no reason why he would not make a good body for the reincarnators.

Realization enlightened him like dawn's first light after a particularly dark night.

"It's true then," Alex finally came to the understanding, as a swell of emotions stirred within him, causing his drought eyes to moisten up a bit.

"I am not a clone, but the real Alex."

Suddenly, Alex heard a thunderclap. Was it just something he heard because of what he had come to understand? The truth certainly hit him like a thunderbolt.

However, this thunderclap felt a little more... real. Actually, it felt more than just real— it felt terrifying.

Alex slowly looked up, and as expected there really was a thunderstorm here, one that he had momentarily forgotten about.

However, he shouldn't have forgotten about this. This was perhaps one of the most terrifying things he had seen in all the time he had been a cultivator.

In fact, the knowledge he had just gained seemed so minuscule in front of the massive vortex of black cloud with the occasional lightning sparking within it.

The colorful clouds had come together and were just about to do something that scared Alex.

Lady Ren started to wonder at her chance of survival. She wondered how many bolts would fall down from heaven.

One she could survive. Two she could probably survive as well. Three would surely put her on the verge of death, so she couldn't tell whether she would die or not.

Four, she would surely die.

She prayed that it was no more than 2, or at the very least, no more than 3.

"Go take everyone away from here," she ordered the beasts. While she knew that it would only target her, she couldn't take the chances of the force destroying everything around her.

The beasts immediately ran away to save the common beasts around this place.

"It will come down at any moment now," Lady Ren said softly. She started preparing.

"Boy, please do not take Pearl away. This place needs a king, and there is no better choice than Pearl," Lady Ren said.

"And let him die?" Alex asked. "No, I won't do that."

"I understand that there is a chance of him dying. But the chances are low. Besides, if he doesn't go through the ritual, he will never have a chance to reach his full potential," Lady Ren said.

"No, thanks. I would rather have a weak Pearl with me, than a possibly dead one," Alex said.

Lady Ren was feeling irritated. She wanted to simply grab Alex and keep him there.

However, the thing above her head was stopping her from getting close to him.

It wasn't just that she was afraid the bolts would harm him if it came down while she was close, but it was also the fact that it would see him as an accomplice and become stronger when it came down.

At that time, she doubted she would survive even 2 of the bolts.

"Please, don't take Pea—"

Suddenly, a bolt of white lightning dropped from the sky, directly hitting Ren Xiao. The bolt itself was wider than that white cat was, and had a really destructive property to it.

No matter how much preparation she did, it still overwhelmed her.

Alex, who had been moderately far away, still felt the force of the lightning bolt. The immediate force stripped away some of his skin, while the remaining force sent him flying away at a speed that he could never move at with his current cultivation base.

It took him a while to even realize that he was in the air.

As he felt himself tumbling through the sky, he immediately employed his movement technique, making the friction around him more powerful, and quickly came to a stop.

When he finally stopped, he felt the blood drip from all over his body where his skin had been lacerated.

Alex immediately brought out a pill and ate it. He felt the wounds close up and he was no longer battered from the lightning bolt. However, the 'wounds' he had suffered from the black thing weren't healed at all.

His body still remained a stick-like figure with his skeletal figure seen through his body.

He breathed heavily ignoring the pain, as fear appeared in his heart. He had never felt fear like this before.

'What the hell was that?' he thought. He had expected the lightning to be strong, but not this strong.

It had nearly killed him even when he was a distance away. He didn't even begin to wonder if Lady Ren was alive or not. With such a force attacking her directly, she should have died.

"I should leave," he thought.

Suddenly, he saw another lightning bolt drop down far away in the distance, sending roaring sounds throughout the entire secret realm while at the same time sending out a gust of wind that pushed Alex quite a bit.

Alex finally realized just how far he had been thrown away. He was hundreds of kilometers away from the location of the original lightning bolt.

Even at this distance, he could tell how much force the lightning bolt had produced.

Not a single Saint realm expert had ever made him feel such helplessness against pure power. Even Lady Ren herself failed to make him fear as much.

'I can't stay here any longer,' he thought and immediately turned around to run away.

As he flew he realized that he wasn't able to fly very quickly. It wasn't just his body, but rather his cultivation base itself that had been harmed by that black thing.

He would have to cultivate for a while to heal himself.

As he flew, he heard another lightning bolt. For some reason, it felt... weaker. Maybe it was because he was very far away now, or maybe because there was no target anymore since Lady Ren was likely dead.

Alex continued flying. Very soon, he saw something white shine through the forest, while beyond it was a shimmering white wall of nothingness.

He had arrived at the border of the secret realm.

He landed on the formation platform and immediately got to open it. He was afraid the saint beasts would come for him, but with how destructive the lightning bolt was, they probably wouldn't.

He fought through the pain in and out of his body to produce the Yang Qi and concentrated through his fatigue to pour it onto the nodes of the formation.

Once it was done, the formation glowed with white light, and with that, Alex vanished from the secret realm.

Chapter 586: Damaged

When Alex reappeared outside of the formation, he stumbled a little thanks to the many aching parts all over his body.

'I need to get away from here,' he thought. He needed to leave this area before the saint beasts came looking for him.

He looked around, in the direction that was supposed to lead him back to the Cardinal City, however, that was when he realized the location was different.

"What?" he looked confused for a moment before realizing what had likely happened.

He didn't know what to think after coming to the conclusion that...

"I have come to the Luminance Empire, haven't I?" he thought. He wasn't sure where he was when he had found himself in the middle of the forest with Lady Ren in front of him.

The things that the black goop witnessed weren't in his memories, like how the real Alex's soul had left behind.

'No,' he thought. 'I am the Real Alex.'

He didn't know how to feel regarding that knowledge. Should he be happy that he was the real one? Or should he be angry that the real him had been suppressed for so many months?

He felt both emotions and he quickly tossed those emotions aside. Now was not the time to get emotional.

He slowly stood up, the momentary rest making his pain flare higher than he had been feeling until now.

His muscles, if there were even any, felt sore and hard to walk with. His meridians refused to move his Qi.

Only his spiritual sense was fine.

He stepped away from the platform, not knowing where to go to. This deep into the forest, he was sure there would be many beasts here.

Most of them would likely be in the True Realm. Although, he was sure he would have a hard time fighting a Mind Tempering realm beasts too.

He took out a sword. The sword that had been lodged in the stone. Without the black goop, it looked like a normal sword, albeit it was likely anything less than normal.

He slightly regretted not taking the other sword when he had the chance, but mistakes happened.

Alex then slowly breathed in and out, trying to muster as much of his cultivation base as possible to conceal his aura and go invisible.

Once he was sure he couldn't be seen by anything around him unless they had Spiritual sense, he started walking.

He dragged his body through the forest, not sure where he was supposed to go to, hoping that he could find a city up ahead soon.

* * * * *

Alex walked for 3 days, but he still couldn't leave the forest. 'Am I walking in the wrong direction?' he thought.

He remembered learning about the disorientation formations set up around the secret realm to stop outsiders from getting close to the source of the secret realm. However, that was only when he tried to get closer to it, not further away.

Then, there could only be one of 2 reasons, if not both. The forest was big... and he was slow.

Alex didn't know how large the southern end of the southern forest, which he now believed would be known as the northern forest, was. This was something he didn't even think of discussing with Fu Tao as the size of the forest didn't really make a difference for a cultivator.

However, now that he had the slow pace of a mortal, it was certainly important.

Alex's body ached a lot, and it was a pain that a pill couldn't take away. At least, it was a pain that his pills couldn't take away.

This was the pain of your entire body being sucked dry to fight against saint beasts and an Immortal beast.

Alex was even surprised he had such powers.

For the last 3 days, he had continuously been running since he was sure the beasts would come after him to take back Pearl. But it had been 3 days. Where were they?

Were they really not coming?

Alex soon felt that he couldn't care about them. He needed to cultivate, one way or other.

'Should I really bring out Pearl?' he thought. He hadn't brought out Pearl despite his condition due to the fact that Pearl couldn't conceal himself.

However, he didn't need concealment now that he was in an area where he rarely saw any True beasts.

Pearl was only at the last realm of Mind Tempering, but he was sure he would be sufficient to protect him.

So, he called out Pearl.

Pearl came out in white light and landed in front of him. "Meow!" it meowed towards Alex with a wide smile, but it immediately disappeared when he saw Alex's current situation.

"MEOW!" it shouted with a worried look.

"I'm... I'm alright for now," he said. "I just need to cultivate, and I will be fine."

"Meow?" Pearl asked.

"Yes, I'm telling the truth," Alex said.

Pearl finally stopped worrying a little. He then looked around and started wondering where he was.

"Meow?" he asked.

"Yes, I came out 3 days ago," Alex said. "Do you... miss them?" He asked.

"Meow," Pearl said in a somber tone. He missed them a bit, but he missed his mother the most.

"Don't worry. We will come back here someday and you can meet your mother," Alex said.

Pearl nodded.

Alex then looked around for a tree that fit what he had in his mind. A tall tree, with dense leaves that had a large enough crown where he could hide while cultivating.

In such a dense forest, it didn't take him even a second to see multiple of such trees.

"Help me get up there," Alex said and walked towards the tree. With the help of what little cultivation base he could produce at the moment and Pearl, he climbed up the tree to the crown and sat cross-legged there.

"I will start cultivating now, so stand around to guard me okay?" Alex said.

"Meow," Pearl accepted.

"Also, don't cultivate if you get bored. I... I don't know how weak my body is at the moment, so I should better not take risks.

"Meow!" Pearl agreed to that as well.

Once Alex was assured he would be fine, he closed his eyes and sent out his spiritual sense to check up on the damage.

His skin, muscle, tendons, veins, blood. Almost everything aside from bone had been dried to the worst condition they could be in.

Alex could barely differentiate where his skin ended and where his muscles increased. His tendons were very weak, and there was barely any pulse on his weak-looking veins.

Not only that, but Alex also noticed a significant loss in blood as well.

He then checks on his meridians. As expected... they were in a bad condition too. They had shrunken up to a third of their original size.

'No wonder I was having such a hard time using Qi,' he thought. He needed to heal them.

He slowly started moving his Qi around according to the Five Yang Divine Path method, which he struggled a lot to do so.

After a revolution or two, Alex finally got into the hang of cultivating and soon lost himself in it.

Chapter 587: Godslayer

Time passed, but Alex couldn't tell how much. His perception of time had been muddled as he fully focused on bringing himself back to his proper condition.

Slowly cultivating, he had come to understand just how bad the possession had left him with.

Torn muscles, splintered tendons, and even fractured bones seemed to have been a side effect of the possession. Fortunately, he had solved most of the immediate problems with his pills.

However, the latent problem of his body being drained out of itself wasn't something he could fix immediately.

As he cultivated, his meridians slowly started healing. From being a third of the original size, they opened to be half the original size.

If he continued, he would surely bring them back to their proper size in no time.

'I will have to cultivate for a long while now,' he thought.

Once he was well enough that he didn't have to focus on cultivating itself, he decided to go and check the other problem he might have missed in his spiritual sea.

With a thought, he appeared inside his spiritual sea, floating atop the sea, looking at the massive mountain that floated in front of him.

The minute threads of silver light floated all around him, giving him a bit of a shock.

"So many," he thought. "This much amount... has it already been 2 days since I started cultivating? Maybe more?"

Hundreds of such threads floated aimlessly around the giant silver mountain which didn't seem to have lost any of itself at all.

'Just how many threads can this thing even produce?' Alex thought. He was used to absorbing anything in this place to gain more mental strength, but somehow this was the only thing he couldn't absorb at all.

He had to wait for the wisps of light to float away from the mountain before he could absorb it.

"Well, that's not the only thing I can't absorb now," Alex thought and made his way towards the floating piece of spherical crystal that was not far away from the mountain.

Alex went up to it and grabbed it.

He felt something viscous black goop coming out of it, coloring it black again.

He willed a little bit of yellow fog to appear on his hands and burned it away.

Finally, the crystal was clear once again.

Alex hadn't had the time to look at it previously, so he brought it up to his eyes and looked at it.

The crystal was mostly colorless aside from the slight bluish hue to its body. At around the size of his fist, maybe a little larger, the crystal ball looked completely normal.

However, Alex knew it was anything but.

He could feel life inside of it, which was something he hadn't sensed since Zexi had tried to look at the... clone's memories.

'I'm still having trouble coming to terms with it,' he thought. For nearly 7 months now, he had slowly come to terms with the knowledge that he was a clone.

And yet, suddenly learning that he wasn't one and was actually the real Alex was... certainly confusing.

Just then, he noticed something inside the crystal that he hadn't seen earlier.

At the center of the crystal was a small black... flame?

Alex couldn't tell what it was at all. Sometimes it looked like a flame, but then it would change to liquid. Not long after it would turn solid and then suddenly vanish, making it seem like there was nothing in there to begin with.

That... was very weird.

"I can make you strong, boy," a voice came from deep within the crystal ball.

Alex was a little surprised to hear it. He didn't think it was still conscious enough to talk.

"So you are alive," Alex said, after realizing he was correct.

"I can make you strong. Stronger than anything you can think of," the crystal ball said again.

"Don't bother. Your temptation only worked because I was in a desperate situation. Now that I am free, it won't work on me."

"Still, thank you for saving me from that situation," Alex said.

The Crystal ball didn't speak for a while. Alex waited for a while and it finally said, "you really are unique. Your... soul is quite strong. Who are you?"

"Just a normal person on the path of cultivation," Alex said.

"Hah! You are anything but normal," the crystal said.

"Who are you, then?" Alex asked.

"I am GODSLAYER!" the crystal spoke with a really loud sound.

Alex frowned a little. That name was... he didn't like it for some reason. Probably because his constitution contained the word 'God'.

He then asked, "What are you?"

"Hmph! Filthy backwater mortals. They can't even tell what they're looking at," Godslayer said.

Alex suddenly brought out the yellow fog and started burning the crystal again, hoping it would work this time.

It did work... for a few seconds before the black flame-liquid thingy returned to the middle of the crystal.

"HAHAHA! You can't kill me. I'm immortal. All the gods will die before I ever do," the crystal spoke.

Alex was surprised at this. He didn't know if it was because he was currently weak or if the crystal was speaking the truth, but... it really didn't seem like it would die.

"Tell me clearly, what are you?" Alex asked.

"Tsk, you backwater folk won't even know what I am even if I tell you," the crystal said.

"Are you an Artifact Spirit?" Alex asked suddenly.

"What?" the Crystal sounded surprised. "How do you know about that?"

"I guessed," Alex said. He had remembered a conversation with Lady Ren where she talked about the Artifact spirit inside the Ebony sword that belonged to the Eastern Continent.

At that time, one of the saint beasts had asked if that sword was similar to the other one.

Given that this was the only other sword Alex had seen in the storage room, he guessed as such.

"So, Artifact spirits can actually talk and even take over people, huh?" Alex asked.

"Of course not," the Crystal sounded offended. "Only I can do that. I, alone am the greatest Artifact and artifact spirit ever created. I was crafted by the best to slay gods. What other spirit could stand up to me."

Alex narrowed his eyes listening to the crystal. "You call yourself Godslayer, but have you really killed any gods?"

"Of course," the crystal spoke. "I've killed many."

"I killed the Artifact god, the Spear god, the Fire God, the Alchemy god. I even killed the Swift god, although killing him was pretty hard with how fast he moved."

"It was only because the Sword G—"

"Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait! You killed... the Alchemy god?" Alex asked with wide eyes. This was the first time he had even heard someone else use the name 'Alchemy god' aside from the manual he had gotten.

"Of course. Killing him was very hard, but I did it," the artifact spirit said.

Alex's mind started swirling with thoughts he couldn't put together. "Who... was the Alchemy god?" he asked.

"One of the vermin that shouldn't have been alive in the first place," the Crystal said.

"Answer me properly," Alex demanded.

"I don't know who he was. Do you think I care about his name? I just fought with him and killed him because he dared to call himself a God."

Chapter 588: False Gods

Alex took a while to come to terms with the fact that Alchemy god was very much likely dead if what this spirit said was true.

He was a little saddened that he would never get to meet him in this life. He was the one whose knowledge was helping Alex so much after all.

'I should have known,' he thought. 'Why else would I get someone's book if they were still writing it.'

"Did you have some sort of bad blood with the Alchemy god?" Alex asked.

"Of course, why else would I kill him? He was a really bad guy," the artifact spirit said.

"Alchemy God... was a bad guy?" Alex asked. He wanted to learn more about him, and it seemed this spirit was the only thing in the world that would tell him.

"Yes," it said. "Very bad."

Alex felt slightly surprised. He had never expected a god to be a bad guy. 'Did the spirit mean Evil... or?'

"So, he did something evil?" Alex asked, trying to pry an answer.

"Yes, of course," the spirit said, sounding rather haughty at the moment. However, it didn't explain any further than that.

Alex suppressed his anger and asked, "what deeds did the Alchemy God do to call him evil?"

Alex could think of a few things that an Alchemist would do. Maybe he needed the body parts of some beasts, so he went around hunting many beasts who by then would be sentient.

Even trees would be sentient by then. He knew it as he had seen a sentient tree that had given him its leaves and seed by the beach far up north.

"He called himself a God," the artifact spirit said.

Alex waited for more information, but none came. He suppressed his anger once more and asked, "What other evil did he do?"

"I don't know. He probably did something bad when I wasn't around," it said.

"But you said he did something evil," Alex said.

"Yes, he called himself God," the spirit replied.

Alex paused for a moment as a thought came to his mind. "Are you saying that the Alchemy god was a bad guy because he called himself a god?" Alex asked.

"Of course," the spirit said.

Alex took a deep breath. He understood that it wasn't that the Alchemy god was evil, but rather the spirit's skewed understanding of what was good and evil.

"So, did you fight and kill the Alchemy god because he called himself a god?" Alex asked.

"Of course," the spirit said.

This was a disaster. The spirit seemed to kill everything that was named a god.

"Do you know about any Sun God?" Alex asked.

"Sun God? Never heard of him. But if I find him, I will kill him too," the spirit proclaimed.

'Another one that hasn't heard of Sun God at all. I will have to ask Sister Hao's master then. He will likely be the only one who knows,' Alex thought.

"So you really hate gods, huh?" Alex asked.

"Yes, with all my heart," the spirit said and then paused. "Hmm, I don't have a heart."

"Is there a reason?" Alex asked.

"Why would I need a reason to kill gods?" the spirit asked. The little black flaming liquid in the center of the crystal grew slightly bigger.

"So you kill them because they are gods. No other reason, huh? How did you come about to hate them like that? What could the gods have possibly done?" Alex asked.

"Aren't you listening, boy? They called themselves a god," the spirit said as if it was very obvious.

Alex was stunned. He didn't know what to think of it. The spirit had no reason to hate gods at all, but it still did.

'Hmmm... maybe...' Alex thought of something.

"You are an Artifact spirit, right? So, I assume you were originally an artifact of some sort?" Alex asked.

"Of course. I am a sword, the deadliest one out there," the spirit said.

"The sword you were in before, that's not your body, right?" he asked.

"Of course. My real body is somewhere. Probably with the Sword God. That bitch must have taken away my body when she used the other gods' help to separate my spirit from my body," it said.

Alex was shocked, to say the least. 'So many gods,' he thought. The spirit kept on talking about gods like they were nothing.

Alex couldn't help but ask, "how many gods are there?"

"5? Maybe 100? I don't know. They keep popping up even after I kill them," the spirit said.

"They keep popping up?" Alex asked with a surprised look. "Do the gods reincarnate every time they die?"

"What? No! Someone else just claims themselves to be a god, and people accept it," the spirit said.

Alex had a hard time understanding what the spirit was talking about. It was like he skipped a few steps during the explanation.

"Are gods not almighty beings? How can one just claim to be a god?" Alex asked.

"Hmph! Most of these so-called gods are just false gods. Just because they reached a certain height in their understanding of something, they dare call themselves a god. As far as I know, there are only two True gods."

"One that blessed the 4 Heavenly beasts, and the other that blessed the 3 Demonic Plants."

"And one day, I will kill those gods as well, no matter who they are and where they are," the spirit proclaimed.

Alex finally came to understand that the Alchemy god wasn't a god at all. It was just a normal cultivator whose understanding had reached the peak of what was possible.

'Is that why the technique stops at level 5, in the Divine realm?' he thought.

"What was the Alchemy god's cultivation realm when you killed him?" Alex asked.

"Divine? Maybe Celestial?" the sword spirit thought. "I couldn't really tell at the time. My vessel at the time was quite strong, so I was able to draw out quite a bit of his strength."

"Your vessel? What's that? The sword?" Alex asked.

"What? Obviously not. Why would the sword be my vessel when I am the sword?" the spirit asked. "I am talking about the human I was using."

"The human you were using..." Alex came to an understanding. Just like he was being used through his temptation, the sword likely got someone like that too.

"How were you able to tempt someone so strong to work for you?" he asked.

"It was very easy. I was very strong," the spirit said.

"You... don't seem very strong," Alex said.

"That's only because you are weird," the spirit said. "Also, I was weakened when I was taken away from my body and sealed onto that sword. Not to mention... I am being somewhat suppressed in this place."

"I see," Alex said. "But... you said you killed many gods right?"

"Yes, quite a few. Some I even killed multiple times because they kept coming back," the sword spirit said.

"If you were that dangerous then... why didn't the Sword God kill you when she defeated you?" Alex asked.

"She didn't defeat me. THEY defeated me. She had help," the spirit made sure to let that be known. "Also, they can't kill me. Unlike them, I am immortal in both body and spirit."

"I see," Alex said as he looked at the crystal on his hands. "Who can make something like you that is so strong?"

"I—" the spirit stopped. It waited for a few seconds before saying, "I don't remember. I don't need to remember. It's fine as long as I kill gods."

It shouted like Alex had hit a nerve. "Now leave me alone," it shouted and stopped talking.

Alex waited for it to return back to talk, but it didn't. After a while, he understood that he had likely talked about a sore topic. Alex checked his surroundings one last time and left his spiritual sea.

He continued focusing on his body to heal it better, while constantly thinking of the things that he had learned.

Gods were just normal cultivators. There was no majesty to them in the way Alex had imagined until now.

Furthermore, they could be killed. And within him was something that had killed multiple of them.

Only now did Alex come to realize how scary the situation was.

'I will need to get rid of him when I can,' he thought. For now, he would have to regularly go into his spiritual sea to remove the black goo from around it in hope of containing the temptation.

After thinking that, he got back into cultivating. He needed to heal his body as fast as he could.

Chapter 589: Azure Silverbeak

Alex continued cultivating with the same sense of time as he had before, which was none.

How many days had it been? 3, maybe 4? He had never cultivated for this long before, but he knew that this was something common amongst the cultivators. So, he should start doing this more often as well.

Some cultivated for weeks on end, maybe even months. His cultivating for a few days was nothing.

However, there was one problem with his cultivation that took him a while to figure out.

Since he was so focused on healing himself, the cultivation hadn't really helped towards his cultivation base.

At least, his healing had been better. By now, everything that was torn or broken was healed. His meridians were three-fourths of the way back to normal.

The only problem was he was still very skinny, almost skeletal. It seemed his muscle mass wouldn't return from simply cultivating.

If it did, he would have to do it for a really long time. So, Alex went on to continue cultivating for a while longer.

* * * * *

5 men and women walked into the forest, a hint of hurried walking in their footsteps. They wore reddish-brown robes, tied in the waist by a yellow sash.

"Brother Yun," one of the 3 men called the other man that looked like the leader of this small group.

"What is it?" the man asked.

"That," the man pointed to something in the trees.

The leader and the rest of the group looked in the direction he pointed at and saw something up in the tree.

It was a bird. Not a simple one either. It was an Azure Silverbeak. Silverbeaks came about in many colors that ranged from red to purple. However, one with pigment that looked blue was rather hard to find.

"Woah! Good job, little brother, you found a fortune for us today," the leader said and propped up his ax to fight.

He had a cultivation base of the 1st True disciple realm, the strongest of the group.

2 of the other men held swords in their hands and had a cultivation base around the 8th Mind Tempering realm.

The 2 girls held a bow and a saber with them, and have a cultivation base of 7th and 9th Mind Tempering realm.

"Alright, slowly fan out, and get your nets ready. Make sure not to hurt it too bad. We don't want to spend money on pills to heal the bird," the leader said.

The rest of them nodded and slowly moved around the bird. Once they were in position, they got their nets ready.

The four of them looked towards the leader for the sign, and as they did, the leader nodded.

At once, all 5 of them threw their nets at the bird on top of the tree. The nets flew through the air, reaching the bird.

However, just then, the bird dived down from the tree and escaped the nets.

"Follow it!" the leader said, and the 5 of them started running towards it.

The Azure Silverbeak was a Mind Tempering realm beast, likely in the 8th or 9th realm. However, due to the fact that it wasn't very good at fighting, it had instead come to become very fast at flying.

The bird zipped through the air at such a speed that only the leader could even keep track of where it was going.

Even then, the leader was slowly falling behind.

The bird flew in between the trees, zigzagging its way through the branches high above.

The leader started to worry that he would lose it. The bird would fetch him at least 20 True spirit stones, if not more.

That, spread among the 5 of them, would mean he would get at least 5 True spirit stones.

5 True Spirit stones a week was far more than anything the 5 of them had earned in the last months.

He couldn't let that bird get away. He decided to employ his speed to the highest, maybe even using his blood essence for it.

However, just as he was about to do that, he saw something white flash from ahead of the bird and move towards it.

As the leader kept watching it, the bird flew down to the ground, with something else on top of it.

The leader stopped when he got close and saw the thing that was atop the bird.

A little white cat was licking its paw, while the other paw held the Azure Silverbeak to the ground. The bird was still alive, but it seemed to have something broken in it from the attack.

'What the hell?' the leader thought. The other 4 members of his group arrived not long after to see the scene as well and were equally shocked.

"Oh my god! So cute," the two girls said the moment they saw the little white cat.

The other two men didn't say it, but they nodded it as well.

The leader kept on looking at it with a confused look. "Have you guys ever seen a cat beast before?" he asked.

The group looked confused as well and realized that they had indeed never seen one before.

"Maybe it's a mutant feline beast. It should be very rare," one of the men said.

"It's a little kitten too. The rich folks would pay a fortune for it if we can get it. Not to mention it's so cute," one of the girls said.

"9th Mind Tempering realm... we should be able to," the leader said. "Alright, get your nets ready."

The group got into their stance, ready to capture the cat in front of them.

Pearl looked at the 5 people with a confused look on his face. Just moments ago, he had been sitting comfortably —well, maybe not very comfortably, given how hot it was— on top of the tree branch, when suddenly a bird flew its way.

He knew that Alex couldn't be distracted right now as he had been ordered to protect him, so Pearl took down the bird.

However, now these 5 humans had appeared out of nowhere.

Humans, they are good people, right? He thought. He had only known humans that loved him and cared for him, so he assumed they were the same.

However, when he saw them get into a fighting stance with weapons and other things in their hand, he couldn't help but cock his head in confusion.

"ENIMI?" he asked, pronouncing the word as well as he could.

The group of 5 froze. They looked in awe and surprised, at Pearl and then at each other.

"IT TALKED!" one of the men whispered as loudly as possible in a slow cadence.

"HOLY SHIT! We will be so rich if we get it," one of the girls said excitedly.

The leader looked towards Pearl and numerous thoughts ran through his mind.

"Alright, let's hurry and capture it. We will be in trouble if someone stronger comes here," the leader said.

The group nodded and got ready.

Seeing that they were really trying to fight him, Pearl understood that they were his enemy.

Claws slowly came out of all 4 of Pearl's paws as he too got ready to fight.

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"Now!" the leader shouted.

Aside from the leader and the woman with the saber, everyone else threw their nets at Pearl.

Pearl understood what was happening and immediately jumped backward such that not a single net landed on him.

The Azure Silverbeak tried to stand up and leave when Pearl let go of it, but it was instead caught in the nets the Pearl dodged.

"He's quick," one of the men said, readying his sword. But then, he dropped it a little.

He couldn't harm a product. What was he thinking?

Now, he was confused. He could sense the kitten's aura, and it told him that it was just as strong as he was, maybe even stronger.

This was going to be a tough battle. They might even have to use a few more resources than normal. The cat was worth it.

Suddenly, an arrow flew through the air, hurling behind it a wave of green energy.

Pearl moved to the side and let it fly past him, but when the arrow struck the ground, it exploded in a gust of air that pushed him towards the woman with the saber.

The woman had kept her net, while the other three had thrown it, so when she saw Pearl helpless mid-air, she threw it to capture him.

However, Pearl suddenly moved to the right, dodging the net once again.

"It can fly?" the girl shouted in surprise. Mind Tempering beasts that flew weren't rare, but they weren't readily available either.

Also, the girl had only seen older beasts that were able to fly. Not this cute little kitten that looked like it was born yesterday.

One of the men with the sword ran forward with his sword and slashed at Pearl.

Pearl also swung his paw at the same time, hitting the sword as it dropped.

The other's heart skipped a beat when they saw that, but when they then saw the kitten not only block the sword but actually push it back without any injury, they were shocked.

"You could've hurt it!" the girl with the bow screamed at the man who just attacked.

In response, the man simply looked back at her and said, "it's nearly a True realm beast. It's not a clay vase that will break into a million pieces if you hit it. Stop letting the cuteness distract you from its strength."

The three of the others aside from the leader finally woke up from their image of the cat they had put in their mind.

This wasn't a house cat. It was a beast, and they couldn't be too careful with a beast.

"Also, be careful. It's really strong," the man said. The rebound he felt from the attack just now was abnormal for him.

Pearl was angry this time and he got on the offensive. He jumped towards the people, but the girl with the bow shot her arrow once again.

Pearl knew not to dodge it this time, so he sought to destroy it. However, right before it touched him, roots sprouted from the arrow that wrapped around Pearl.

At the same time, the other men and woman jumped at Pearl, hacking at him with their sword and saber.

They didn't put as much strength as they could muster, just enough to hurt him a bit.

Suddenly, Pearl's body turned golden as the weapons landed on him. It was a direct hit, yet Pearl didn't feel anything.

The White Tiger's Golden body was a very strong defensive technique that normal people wouldn't be able to break past within the same realm as Pearl.

Pearl then swiped at the roots around him, destroying them. He then turned towards the man on the right and swung at him.

The man put the flat side of his sword in front of him to stop the attack, but he underestimated Pearl's strength.

He felt the pressure of the attack at his body was lurched backward and was sent flying through the air until it hit a tree in the back.

The man fell to the ground and coughed up blood. He had been badly hit.

The remaining men and women looked in shock. Pearl was too strong.

"Brother Yun, are you ready or not?" the remaining man asked.

"I need just 1 more minute," he said.

Pearl was about to turn around to attack the woman to his right, but just then, another arrow came flying his way.

This time, he neither hit it nor dodged it. Instead, he took one step back, took a deep breath, and roared.

A deafening sound was released from Pearl that didn't seem like it belonged to him.

Before the arrow could come anywhere close, it was sent flying back, all the energy in it disappearing as it did so.

At the same time, Pearl ran towards her. He realized that he needed to take out this archer before he concentrated on the other enemies.

Golden light glowed in a flickering pattern as he started running forward.

The girl readied an arrow once again to target Pearl, but suddenly something interesting happened.

The Pearl that was running towards her suddenly flickered once more and 1 Pearl... turned into 2.

The girl was surprised when she saw the 2 Pearls coming towards her at the same time.

She looked at the two Pearls and didn't understand which one was real. She hesitated for a bit and chose the one on the right.

She chose wrong.

The one the arrow hit flickered into a bunch of golden light and disappeared.

The Pearl on the left jumped on her and threw a paw attack at her.

"AAH!" the girl screamed and brought out a talisman to protect herself.

The reddish-yellow talisman burned up and an illusory barrier of the same bronze-like color appeared in front of her.

Pearl's attack shattered the barrier in a thousand pieces, but it still managed to kill a lot of his power and when his paw hit her, it wasn't strong enough to hurt her a lot.

Just enough to send her flying backward and tumble multiple times on the ground.

The girl felt scared. If she hadn't produced that talisman, she would've likely been fatally hurt there.

Pearl saw her slowly stand up and was about to go for her when he noticed the girl with the saber attack him from behind.

Pearl jumped to the side to dodge her, but the girl expected that and suddenly blasted a massive fire attack at him.

Her eyes went wide when she saw Pearl not dodge that attack. She was worried that Pearl was hurt, but then Pearl flew through the fire, directly at her.

Not a single hair on his body was hurt.

The swordsman appeared out of nowhere, slashing towards Pearl.

As if there were a footing below Pearl, he suddenly changed direction upwards to dodged the incoming attack, then again pushed the air above him to jump downwards and swung his paw towards the newly arrived man.

The man was caught off guard and would die if he did not move. However, he couldn't change his position at the moment, and the girl couldn't help him either.

Suddenly, an ax came flying through the air that slammed into Pearl who was sent flying back towards the tree.

Pearl flipped midair and landed on the side of the tree with all 4 legs before looking straight towards the leader of the group.

He had finally entered the battle.

The leader put his hands forward, and the ax came flying back to his hands.

"Leave it to me. You are not its match," the leader said.

The 2 of them nodded and went to get the other man that was hurt beneath the tree.

The leader watched as his juniors got away to the side and then finally stared at Pearl.

"Do you understand my words, beast?" he asked in a solemn voice.

"Meow!" Pearl meowed, but the leader got no information from it at all.

"We don't plan on hurting you. Just come with us quietly," the leader said.

"MEOW!" Pearl meowed loudly as he dig the ground slightly with his paws as if he was getting ready to attack.

The leader saw that and frowned. He really didn't want to hurt the cat since that would cost him more to heal it later.

However, with how strong the cat was currently, he couldn't catch it without hurting it a bit.

So, he put up his ax and got ready to fight.