

Alchemy 591

Chapter 591: Pearl vs Leader

The leader swung his ax at Pearl.

The ax was a two-handed ax, with a meter-long wooden shaft that was so polished that the wood grains were no longer visible, and an ax head that was in a circular shape of half a meter in diameter.

The leader was still a good 20 meters away from Pearl, but the swinging of the ax sent out an earthen-colored illusory ax of the same shape as his own.

Pearl understood this was a strong attack, but he didn't back away. Instead, his right paw glowed goldenly and he swung at the ax-shaped energy.

The energy dissipated as soon as Pearl hit it, with Pearl taking barely any damage himself.

Pearl was a little surprised. Was the human in front of him not strong?

The leader frowned as well. He had clearly sent out an attack that had the power of a 9th Mind Tempering realm cultivator, but somehow the cat had easily stopped it.

It looked like he couldn't hold back at all.

Suddenly, Pearl started running towards the leader. His feet flickered with golden light and before the leader could see it, he split into two.

It was impossible to tell which one was real.

He remembered that it was the left one that was real last time when it had attacked the girl with the arrow, so, he targeted it.

An earth spike rose from the ground right underneath where Pearl was. It struck through Pearl, but then Pearl disappeared into many golden motes of light.

He had chosen wrong.

The Pearl on the right jumped at the leader and attacked with his paw.

The leader didn't move away, however. Instead, his body turned brown and he used it to block Pearl's attack.

Pearl swung his paw onto the Leader's right biceps. The leader was sent back a couple of meters and looked in shock.

There were thin cuts on his arm where the robe had been torn open and he was bleeding slightly.

'I was fully defending it too,' he thought. He was finally starting to feel scared for the fight. It was a good idea he sent the others away. Had they stayed, he realized they would've likely died.

'Good thing I sent them away. Now I will have to fight properly,' he thought.

The ground shuddered around his feet and Pearl sensed it. Immediately, Pearl backed away in caution.

The earth climbed up around the leader's feet and started covering part of his body like it were armor.

He now had an extra layer of security that would also increase his strength.

So, he rushed up ahead and started attacking Pearl.

The 4 of the others looked at the battle from the side.

"Is... brother holding back?" the girl with the saber asked.

"I don't think so," the man that was heavily injured said. He had taken a healing pill by now and was healed enough to stand up. There were still cuts and bruises all over him, but that wasn't something he cared about for now.

The girl with the bow and arrow looked around and asked, "why is it taking so long?"

The other man looked around and asked, "Did brother Yun not set it up properly?"

"He must have," the girl with the saber said.

The 4 of them continued watching the battle unfold for another 5 minutes. Both the kitten and their brother seemed to be fighting with full strength, and somehow neither was winning.

They never expected the kitten to lose, but seeing their brother have a hard time winning, was the most shocking aspect of the fight.

Pearl's body flickered into two as both Pearls ran towards the leader.

The leader had already tried hitting either of the Pearls during the multiple times Pearl had used this technique. So, he didn't choose either of the Pearl this time.

Instead, he sent out multiple earth spikes towards both of the Pearl.

The attack reached the Pearl on the right who vanished into golden motes of light. When it reached the Pearl on the left, Pearl's body glowed a bit, but he a step late and the earth spike hit him.

It didn't manage to pierce him or anything, not even cut him a little, but Pearl still took some damage.

He landed on his feet and looked at the leader. How was the late just now? He was fully prepared to block the attack.

Just then, he felt a sense of weightlessness. As if his brain floated in nothingness before suddenly experiencing gravity.

Pearl stumbled a little to the right and shook his head.

The leader smiled. The formation he had set up while the other 4 kept Pearl busy was finally working.

Usually, the formation would work in just a minute or two for low-level True beasts, but even after 5 minutes, this beast wasn't down.

The leader couldn't help but feel happy about their luck in finding the beast.

He fought for a few more minutes, but it was soon apparent that the beast couldn't keep up for much longer.

Pearl huffed heavily as whatever was happening to him made it really hard to focus. He couldn't even see the enemy properly as his vision twisted into 3 separate images for everything around him.

Even when using his Spiritual Sense, he couldn't keep the direction in check.

The leader threw a net at him and it landed on Pearl. But he easily destroyed the net with his claws.

"Tsk," the leader felt annoyed. He needed to quickly catch the beast before his precious True spirit stones lost their energy in the formation flags.

He had to finish this quickly, and the only way he saw was to knock the beast out.

The Leader dashed forward towards Pearl, with his ax glowing with bright earth color, and swung it onto Pearl.

Suddenly, a flash of gray moved in front of him as his ax came to a halting stop.

Not only did the ax stop, the leader felt pain in his hands from the rebound as well as the skin between his thumb and index finger nearly splitting with the force.

When he looked up to see what had appeared, he saw an almost skeletal man in a grayish robe stand in front of him with a gentle-looking smile on his face.

The leader followed his ax to see how it had been stopped when he nearly lost his eyes when they popped out of his socket with pure shock.

1 finger.

The man in front of him had stopped one of his strongest attacks with a single finger, and there was not a single scratch on him.

"May I ask why you are attacking my brother?" Alex asked.

The leader felt his heart sink to the bottom of his stomach. He immediately let go of the ax, and before it could even fall to the ground, he did.

The leader slammed his head onto the ground and started screaming. "Forgiveness, senior. I— I didn't know the cat belonged to you," the leader said.

"He doesn't belong to me. He is my brother. He belongs to no one," Alex said.

The leader sunk deeper into his fear, not understanding what he should do now.

Chapter 592: Pearl's refusal

The 4 others to the side looked at Alex with a massive shock, as well as a hint of confusion.

They were shocked because to their eyes, Alex had appeared out of nowhere. They were also a little confused as to where he had been before this.

However, as soon as they heard what Alex said, their shock and confusion soon all turned to pure, unadulterated fear.

Not only was Alex strong, but he was also so unbelievably strong that they couldn't even feel his cultivation base at all.

This meant he had a really high cultivation base. Not to mention, given how scraggly he looked, they feared that he cultivated an unorthodox cultivation method.

If it happened to be one that required the blood and bones of young men and women, they would all be in trouble.

"Senior, please forgive me. I really didn't know i— he was with you. Had I known, I would've never thought of kidnapping him," the leader said, his head still pressed to the ground.

Alex looked at him and then at Pearl who was on the ground. He then kicked a stone that was on the ground, sending it hurtling towards one of the trees.

The stone accurately hit a formation flag, knocking it off of the tree. Suddenly, Pearl could see clearly again.

The formation had come undone.

The leader couldn't help but feel awe when he saw that. He had made sure to set up the flags in such a manner that it would be impossible to find in a short time, but somehow the expert in front of him had done exactly that.

This only caused to increase his fear even more.

"Why were you trying to kidnap him?" Alex asked.

The leader couldn't answer. It was not an answer he could give to the brother of an expert like him.

"Answer me," Alex said, his voice booming, shaking the leader to his core.

"We-we were going to sell him to a rich person from the other cities," the leader said.

Alex nodded when he heard this.

He knew these people weren't evil and were definitely not looking to harm Pearl. At least that he had noticed from the very start.

When Pearl had slammed one of those people into the tree he was cultivating on, Alex had already woken up by then.

When he saw Pearl fighting, he was ready to come down to help. However, he also noticed that they likely weren't a threat to Pearl at all.

So, he stayed up, watching him fight. It had been a while, so he wanted to see how much he had grown.

When he used skills like White Tiger's Golden Claw or White Tiger's Golden Body, Alex felt a little proud of how frequently he could use those skills.

When he used White Tiger's roar, Alex had realized that Pearl had another skill up his sleeve that belonged to the white tiger bloodline.

Then, Pearl gave him another shock when he used the White Tiger's steps. The movement technique was meant for short bursts of motion, but... it was so strong.

When Pearl had split into two, even he had trouble finding out which one was the real one despite using spiritual sense.

It was only when he saw Pearl in trouble that he finally decided to come down to help.

Alex looked at the leader still on the ground. "Stand up," he said.

These people were good, but he couldn't let the fact that they tried to steal Pearl slide.

"I will give you one chance. My brother will hit you once. If you can survive, you can all leave," Alex said. "You can even take that... bird over there."

Alex felt a weird sensation. It felt really weird not having the game system tell him the name of things. Without it, he couldn't even tell what the bird's name was.

It looked like he had a lot more to learn.

The leader's eyes narrowed. He didn't believe he could get away so... easily.

"Is that true?" he couldn't help but ask.

"Are you saying I'm lying?" Alex asked.

"No, senior. Forgive me," the leader said again as he bowed towards Alex.

"Get up and take the hit. I don't have much time to waste on you," he said.

The leader looked up and nodded. He got up and moved a little back to get into a stance.

"I'm ready, senior," he said.

"Pearl, go give him your best attack," Alex said.

However, Pearl shook his head. Alex curiously turned around.

"What's wrong? Do you not want to hit him?" he asked.

"Meow!" Pearl meowed. The opponent had used assistance from formations, but he had still won fairly. So, he didn't like the fact that he needed Alex's help in beating the man.

Alex couldn't help but chuckle a little when he heard that, and at some level, even felt a little proud.

Pearl had lost, and he had accepted the loss without looking for help in getting back.

"Alright, since my brother has decided to not attack you, you will have to do something else for me," Alex said.

"Anything, senior," the man said.

"Show me the way out of this place," Alex said.

The leader looked surprised, and a little suspicious too. He looked to the side of the other 4 who looked relieved and sighed.

"Yes, senior," the leader said.

"Take your bird. We're leaving," Alex said.

The leader nodded and walked over to the bird. When he removed the nets, he realized the bird was unconscious. It seemed the bird couldn't handle the nauseating mental stress from the disorienting formation.

Meanwhile, Pearl jumped onto Alex's shoulder and slumped down and purred lightly.

"You fought to protect me, right? Thank you," Alex said softly.

Pearl meowed but didn't say anything else. It looked like he was still a little annoyed that he lost to the leader.

"I saw you fight. You were very strong," Alex said. "If not for the formation, the leader would've never won against you. Also, you are not even in the True realm, and yet you are contending someone on True realm in equal strength. I think that is amazing."

Pearl's face turned a little smug when he heard that. He was indeed great.

"By the way, the techniques you used. Did they teach you that?" Alex asked.

"No," Pearl said.

'I thought so,' Alex thought. This would get problematic soon. Pearl now had about 5 skills that not even a true White Tiger born to the White Tiger family could have.

At most, they would have 2 or 3 according to what Yao Jia had told him.

"Did you use these skills while training?" Alex then asked.

"Yess!" Pearl said.

'That's problematic,' Alex thought. 'I don't think they will stop looking for Pearl then. It's already impressive that they haven't looked for me in the last few days since I left the secret realm.'

'Maybe they are preoccupied with what happened to Lady Rem,' Alex thought. 'They will come soon then. I hope they can't find me here'

"Senior, we are ready," the leader said.

Alex looked to the side and said, "Alright, show the way out."

Chapter 593: Riverweed Town

Alex sent out his spiritual sense to the max to check out the forest while the group of 5 showed him the path out of the forest.

As he looked, he realized that there had been a lot of trees cut around that area. The feeling in his body regarding the ingredients was also a lot more tamer.

It was almost like the area around him was devoid of ingredients aside from a few uncommon ones.

As he walked, Ning slowly plucked the remaining ingredients from all around him as he brought them towards himself. He used this as an opportunity to make sure his Qi worked properly.

'Although I'm not back to my best yet, it's close enough,' he thought. He just needed to cultivate for a month or 2 casually, and he would be back to peak form. Maybe even better.

"What's your name?" Alex asked the leader.

"It's Yun Jiang, senior," the leader said.

"Yun Jiang," Alex said softly as if to see how well he could pronounce it. "So, what are you guys doing here?" Alex asked.

The leader shuddered and slowly turned around to say, "It's the last day of the week, senior."

He didn't explain any further as if that information alone was supposed to be enough of an explanation.

"I... am not from around here. Can you explain a bit more?" Alex asked.

"Oh," the leader looked at him with shock. However, even with shock, he didn't dare get slow in his explanation.

"Every end of the week, the cultivators from the Riverweed town are allowed to enter the northern forest to harvest what they can. Ores, plants,... beasts, we are allowed to take these things back with us once a week," the leader said. "That's our only source of money."

"So you were planning to sell Pearl," Alex said. Pearl purred a little from atop Alex's thin shoulders.

Alex caught Pearl and put him in his robes such that only his head was sticking out. This was likely more comfortable for him than the shoulders.

The leader showed an embarrassed face and said, "y-yes, senior."

Alex turned to the left. Far away, he could see a few other groups of people as well, wearing bluish robes with a white sash around the waist.

"How many sects do you have in the town?" he asked.

"3, senior," the leader said. "Our Thousand Papers sect, Fire Spirit sect, and a Metal Jade sect."

"Those men, which sect are they?" Alex asked.

The leader looked to the side and only then saw a group of blue-robed figures far away.

"Those are the Metal Jade sect disciples, senior. They are an artifact sect, so they must be searching for materials for themselves," the leader said.

"And your sect?" Alex asked.

"Our Thousand Paper sect is mostly focused on the talisman, senior," he said. "Similarly, the Fire Spirit sect focuses on alchemy."

Alex's eyebrows raised a bit when he heard 'Alchemy' but he didn't let the surprise linger for much longer.

"How good would you say your town's sects are compared to others?" Alex asked.

"There is no comparison, senior," the leader said. "Our sect is at the outer edge of the empire, so our knowledge and skill are quite lacking compared to those at the center of the empire."

"But you guys still stay here," Alex said. "Is it because of the forest?"

"Yes senior," he said. "The forest is large and gives us a lot of ingredients. So while we aren't as big or strong as the sects at the center of the empire, we are still doing quite well for ourselves."

"I see," Alex said as he nodded. "What was the last good thing that came out of this place?"

"Last good thing, hmm," the leader thought. "There was a rumor about a True Heaven grade artifact being sold. But, it was done in secret by the Metal Jade sect, so we aren't sure."

The girl with the bow and arrow moved over to the leader and whispered something into his ears.

Alex heard it clearly, but he still waited for the leader to say. "It also seems that not so long ago, one of the elders at the Fire Spirit sect made a 42% Harmony pill. The name of the pill wasn't promoted, but the news of the pill's quality still got out."

"42% huh?" Alex realized that this place wasn't as great as he would've expected. It was just slightly better than an average alchemy sect back in the crimson empire.

'I will likely have to go deeper into the empire to find more,' Alex thought.

As they walked, Alex started noticing more and more. There were so many people wearing so many colors that it became hard to keep track of the different people.

'He did say that cultivators only get to enter at the end of the week,' Alex thought.

"Do your sects control this area of the forest? Or do you have a town lord?" Alex asked.

"We have a town lord senior, but our sects also have a say in what happens in the town," the leader said.

"So the thing about cultivators only being allowed to enter once a week, who set that rule?" he asked.

"Oh, it was a joint rule, senior. At first, there was no restriction, so very soon, the forest started to die so fast that there would barely be any resources in a few years. So, to preserve that, the elders came together and made the rule."

Alex nodded when he heard that. 'No wonder there is barely anything around here,' he thought.

"Are you an elder?" he asked.

"No, senior. This one hasn't reached 30 years of age yet," the leader said with a hint of pride on his face.

"I see. Not bad," Alex said. He realized by the context that one had to likely reach 30 years of age to become an elder in this place.

'It seems cultivation base doesn't matter to them. Or... at least True Disciple realm cultivation base doesn't matter,' Alex thought.

After a while, the group arrived at an open area. They had finally left the forest at last.

In front of Alex, he could see a massive city with newly built walls around it. There were houses outside of the walls too, and they looked newly built as well.

The stone walls let people walk in and out of the city.

'Such a big city and they still call it a town?' Alex thought. He wondered how big the cities of this empire would be then.

"Alright, you guys can leave now. I pardon your offense of trying to attack my brother," Alex said.

The leader and the other 4 looked elated. They quickly bowed and gave their thanks before scurrying away.

Alex looked at the 5 of them walk away and smiled a little.

"It's quite fun acting like an expert, isn't it?" he said while patting Pearl on his head.

"Meow!!" Pearl meowed from his clothes, asking him to pet him more.

"Alright, Alright," Alex said and pet him a bit more.

He then looked at his frail body and said, "I need to put some food in me to gain back my muscles. Without it, I will be stared at by everyone."

With that, Alex walked towards the Riverweed town and walked in through the gate.

The town looked not very different from the cities back in the crimson empire. It was almost as big as the Scarlet city and had sects in it that would qualify to compete against The Tiger sect or the Hong Wu sect.

Alex was surprised that even a town at the edge of the empire was almost as good as one of the better cities in the Crimson Empire.

That just went to show how great the Luminance empire was. Not to mention, this was supposed to be the weakened continent.

Alex couldn't wait to see the other continents. 'I'm getting ahead of myself,' he thought and walked through the town.

The houses, buildings, shops, all looked similar in design to ones from back in the Crimson Empire. Maybe even a little more outdated.

Alex was surprised. He knew that cultivators didn't like changes and liked to keep things as they were, but... did that really put them further behind than an isolated empire?

A True realm cultivator could live up to 400 years normally, and 500 years if he forced it.

A Saint realm cultivator could live up to 1000 years normally, and almost 2000 if they forced it.

With the number of people alive in this continent likely having been born before most of the people in the Crimson empire, he could see why the development was held back.

He walked through the busy street and came across a looking building that caught his eyes. The building itself was normal, but it was the name that caught his eyes.

Riverweed Branch of the Alchemy Guild.

'They have an Alchemy guild here as well?' Alex thought. He remembered the Alchemy guild in the Crimson Empire, but he never really took part in it.

However, this time, it might actually be a good idea to find himself a place since no one else would back him here.

But first, Alex needed food. Thinking that he left the place. He would come back here later.

Alex walked through the streets, ignoring the curious looks of the people who saw his skinny body.

Finally, he came across a rather grand-looking restaurant called the Three Faction Alliance Restaurant.

Alex smiled and walked in.

Chapter 594: Three Faction Alliance

The Three Factions Alliance was the alliance formed between the three sects in the Riverweed town.

Not only did they have a restaurant that Alex was currently standing in front of, but they also had many other places such as Auction houses, stores, libraries, and security personnel for guarding the town.

Alex walked up the few stairs to go into the restaurant. After he walked in, he finally saw how large the restaurant was.

This was a bustling restaurant with nearly hundreds of people inside.

There were almost 50 different tables in front of Alex, and that was just on the first floor.

Alex could see a staircase at the center of the room that one could use to go up to an open floor above as well.

He wanted to check what it was like up there with his spiritual sense but decided not to on the off chance there was someone that could sense his spiritual sense.

He looked around, but he couldn't find any free tables. So, he was forced to go sit at a table that already had a single person eating his food.

"I hope you won't mind me sitting here," Alex said as he pulled the chair and sat down in front of the middle-aged man.

The middle-aged man suddenly looked like he had seen a ghost and quickly wiped his mouth to say, "Certainly not, esteemed senior."

'Senior?' Alex thought. 'Do I look that old right now?' he thought. He was certainly not giving off a cultivation aura for the man to think he was a senior, so it had to be the face Alex assumed.

Still, he didn't think he looked that old. Maybe 25 years old at best.

Just as he was thinking, a waiter walked up to him. Alex noticed him and took a look at the menu in front of him.

However, before he could even make an order, the waiter asked, "Sir, are you a cultivator."

Alex looked towards the waiter. 'What a weird thing to ask in this place,' he thought. 'Maybe I should release my aura a little.'

"Yes," Alex said, releasing an aura close to Mind Tempering 1st realm.

"Would you mind changing seats then, sir?" the waiter asked. "Cultivators usually eat on the 2nd floor."

"Oh," Alex said and finally looked around. Due to the many people, he hadn't released his spiritual sense and had thus not realized that almost everyone that was sitting on the first floor was all mortals.

"The mortals can go to the second floor, so most are forced to wait even though we have tables empty," the waiter explained as respectfully as he could.

"Oh, I didn't know that," Alex said as he stood up. "I'm sorry to have bothered you." He told the middle-aged man and walked up to the second floor.

Finally, as he walked up the stairs, he saw and felt a cultivation aura from the people around him.

Most of them were in self tempering realm, but a few older folks were in the True realm as well.

However, he couldn't find anyone that either had a high cultivation base or young folks with the True cultivation realm.

He looked towards the left after reaching the 2nd floor and asked the waiter behind him, "what does that set of stairs lead to?"

"That leads to the 3rd floor, senior. Only VIP members and people they invited can go up there," the waiter said.

"Oh, so I can't go just because I want to, huh?" he asked.

"I'm afraid not, sir," the waiter said.

Alex nodded and made his way to an empty seat. On the 2nd floor, there were many.

The seat lied at the corner of the room, unfortunately away from any windows, but he wasn't here for the scenery anyway.

He looked at the menu and quickly ordered some food. He didn't know which was good, but he knew he needed nutrients, so he mostly ordered meat dishes along with a sort of vegetables.

He looked at the names of the dishes and was a little surprised.

'Common rank and True ranks? Foods have ranks too?' he thought. Crimson Empire didn't have it, and the players never really bothered with food as cultivators didn't require it.

He never cared about food enough to go around searching about it.

He looked at the prices and checked his storage bag. He never really had a lot of spirit stones after the other guy kept sending it back home.

He had managed to gather about 1000 True Spirit stones before he left, and he had already spent close to 400 True spirit stones in the capital for the various ingredients and formation materials.

Of the 600 he had remaining, he looked down at the menu and realized, about 50 would be gone today if he wanted to eat the best thing on it.

Alex sighed, but he had ways to earn his money back. So, without hesitation, he ordered 5 dishes that in total cost him 58 True Spirit stones.

The waiter nodded and left.

"I know, I know. Some of it is for you too," Alex said to Pearl in his robes who quietly sent him a message through the spiritual sense that said he wanted to eat some as well.

Alex felt a few watchful gaze falling on him, but they were all simply curious about his sunken physique and his missing arm.

He didn't show attention to these gazes and simply waited for the waiter to return with his food.

It took him about 20 minutes, but the waiter returned with his food. He put down all of the food and bowed a little before leaving.

Alex was left with the 5 different dishes he had ordered. Pearl poked his head out of the robe and looked at the food at the table.

"MEOW!" he said as he pointed towards one of the plates.

Alex took the chopsticks and tried the food Pearl pointed to. "Oh wow, it's good," he said.

"MOEW!" Pearl got angry. He wanted to try the food first.

"Haha, sorry. You can try the rest first," he said and brought out Pearl to place him on the table.

Even though he had grown in the many months since he had been with Alex, Pearl was still less than a foot in length.

His white body disappeared onto the white sheets that were on the table, but people still noticed.

Some were disgusted that a beast was eating on a table meant for humans, but those were in the minority.

Most people didn't care.

As Pearl started eating, Alex did too. The food was incredibly delicious and he could even feel the energy from it directly being absorbed by his body.

Some were certainly turning into Qi like all foods did for him. There was also a certain healing factor in the food, although it couldn't reach the same level as healing as a healing paste or an actual healing pill could provide.

In less than 10 minutes, Alex ate all of the food that was brought to him. Pearl certainly ate a lot, but that couldn't be considered to the amount Alex had ate.

Once he finished, he closed his eyes and looked into his body once more. As he did, he noticed that there was no food left in his stomach at all, and he had indeed gained some muscle mass.

It was a very low amount, but it was certainly something. 'I will have to eat a bit more maybe,' he thought.

He was certain there were pills that could immediately give him muscles, but he wasn't certain how well those would work with his body that had went through body cultivation.

Eating food so that his body could absorb as much energy needed to give him muscle over the course of a few days seemed like a better choice than a single pill that would instantly restore his muscle, but likely not the strength in them.

Alex put Pearl inside his robes and decided to leave. His stomach was empty and he could eat it all twice over, but he didn't think that was a good idea.

Certainly, it wasn't good for his pockets. 'I should take it slow. It's not like I have anywhere else to be immediately,' he thought.

He left the table and went on to pay. As he went down the stairs, he saw a bunch of people walk up past him.

He didn't look in their direction, but he caught an information about an auction taking place in the near future.

Alex thought back to his low spirit stones, and thought that it would be a good idea to get some from here.

As he paid for his meals, the staff couldn't help but look at the cost with wide eyes. Who in their right mind would eat over 50 True Spirit stones worth of food in one sitting? Was this the son of a successful merchant.

She looked towards the skinny Alex and didn't think that was true at all.

"Do you know any place around here where I can learn about the city and everything else?" he asked.

"Learning? Umm... there is a library about 50 paces right from outside the restaurant. You won't miss the building," she said.

"Thank you," Alex said and walked out.

As he was told, he took a right and walked down 50 paces until he saw something and nearly laughed out loud.

'She wasn't lying when she said I won't miss it,' he thought looked at a building across the street whose front wall looked like the cover of a book half opened, with a bookmark hanging from the top left.

The cover had a title written on it which read 'Three Faction Alliance library.'

Alex had guessed what the 'Three faction' meant, but he still wanted to learn more. So, he walked in.

Chapter 595: Geography of Luminance Empire

Alex walked up to the door of the library. The door looked like a small tear on the cover of a book, which was used as a handle.

Alex opened it up and walked in.

As soon as he walked in, Alex realized the building was much larger than he had imagined. He didn't know if the outer section gave the illusion of being small or if the inner space was somewhat stretched using formations, but it was a lot larger for him.

Alex looked straight ahead. The main room of the library was circular. It looked like the inside of a tower as he finally saw the library go up to 20 meters high.

There was a space manipulation going on here with some formation.

The circular room had walls that were stuck with shelves that were filled to the brim with books. There were some ladders along the side to climb up to grab the books, but most people simply flew to get them.

Surrounded by the bookshelves were reading tables all laid out in a circular pattern.

And at the center of the room was a circular reception table sort of location where men and women of green, red, and blue stayed.

Those were the colors of the 3 factions, so Alex guessed they were the disciples of the 3 factions working as a librarian.

He truly realized how large the place was when he finally went past the corridor and into the center of the circular room.

He looked at the few people in the air, searching for their books, and so he decided to do that as well.

Searching for anything related to the world, leaving alchemy and formations for later, Alex flew towards a section of the library that was filled with books about the world.

Some taught about geography, some that taught about plants and animals, some that taught about the history of the world, some that taught about famous peoples, and some that even taught about famous sects and locations.

Alex wanted to learn about geography, so he took out one related to it and flipped it.

However, when he did so, he realized that aside from the cover of the book, there was nothing else written in the whole book.

"What?" Alex spoke a little too loudly and got a lot of 'Shhh' directed at him.

"Sorry," he whispered as quietly as he could. He picked out some of the other books on the shelf and looked at them.

They were blank on the inside too. 'So the first book wasn't a mistake, huh?' he thought.

He kept back the other books and looked at the geography book again. He sent in his spiritual sense to see what it was, and that was when he noticed a seal on it.

A faint, white formation was placed on the book. Judging from the seal, Alex deduced that it was part of a bigger formation that was constantly giving the book's seal the power to continue working.

Very likely, it was the same formation that expanded the space in this building.

'They have quite a bit more knowledge about formations than I would've thought,' Alex said to himself and slowly floated down to the ground.

If there was a seal, that meant he would have to get it opened.

Alex walked to the center of the room towards where the librarians were and quietly asked, "excuse me, how do I get the seal removed from this book?"

The girl took the book from Alex's hands while looking at his robes and said, "it will cost you 150 spirit stones."

"Sorry... cost?" Alex asked with a surprised look. "It costs money?"

"Of course, sir," The girl said. "Books in here cost somewhere from 1 True spirit stones to 10, depending on the book."

Alex was stunned. Maybe because he was getting a little used to the books in the Capital's library being completely free, he didn't expect to have to pay here.

"I see," Alex said. Just then, a man walked up next to him and handed the same woman the book.

The girl removed the seal and noted something in a talisman that was inside the book before replacing the talisman and giving it back to the man.

The man walked away without paying at all.

"He didn't pay," Alex said, pointing to the man that just left.

"If you are a member of the Three Faction alliance, you do not need to pay," she said. "If you are, you can bring out an identity talisman, and you too can take a book a week for free."

"I see," he said and took out 2 True spirit stones. He handed them to the lady who handed him back 50 spirit stones.

She then released the seal and said, "You also can only read the book inside the library. Please don't try to take it outside."

Alex was a little surprised about that too, but he didn't let it show on his face. He understood that it was likely only the disciples and elders from the 3 sects that could take the books away.

Even though the number of people in the library was quite sparse —may it be because of today being the last day of the week, or libraries just not being that popular— Alex still went on to find a relatively less crowded section of the library.

Alex didn't use his spiritual sense to quickly read the book. He had nowhere to go, no need to log out, no need to go eat food or practice alchemy.

He had all the time in the world, so he used it to read and digest the book as he did.

He had paid for the book, and he would read end to end no matter how long it would take.

It took him about 25 minutes to read the whole book. However slow he may want to read the book, he was still a cultivator, one with exceptional mental strength and capacity.

Since there was no 'comprehension' required for the knowledge, he could simply read it all and learn it. And that only took him 25 minutes.

Alex was quite surprised at the information he gained from this one single book.

Alex first saw the map of the Luminance empire. It was about the same as what Yao Jia had shown him, but this was more clear than the hasty drawing on the dirt she had made.

The Luminance Empire was cone-shaped, its northern border nearly 3 times as large as its southern border. There were a lot of islands that floated around the empire too, some that were part of the empire, some that were not.

The land was about 60% plane, while the rest 40% were mountainous. The mountains were clustered mostly along the eastern side of the empire, leaving the western half to be the plane that was home to the experts of the land.

The Radiant City, the capital city of the Luminance empire was located about 400 kilometers away from the western shore, and 2000 kilometers away from the southern shore.

Considering the Luminance empire was over 10 thousand kilometers in length and width, the capital was firmly located in the southwestern portion of the center of the city.

There were other many cities located around the empire, but most were located at the center or western side of the empire.

The eastern side of the mountain didn't seem to have a lot of cultivators willing to go there to settle.

The book read it was partly because of the many dangerous locations on the mountains that spanned from mountains with nothing but True beasts, to poisonous swamps that would even threaten to kill the True realm experts in the True emperor realm.

Alex also read about some mountain peaks that were so cold that most people couldn't even go near them without proper preparation.

Aside from those, there were also other various dangerous spots along those mountains known as the 'Dreaded Mountain range'.

That one book alone gave Alex a lot of information about this land that he would've likely never gained if he were to skip it for the internet if he still had access to it.

He nodded to himself at the information he learned and went back to the librarian to get it resealed and get another book to read after that.

Chapter 596: Fever

Alex continued reading some more books. After Geography, he went for History to learn not just about the land, but also the people that lived in it, the stories that took place in it.

He learned about how the Wei family, the current royal family of the Luminance empire came into existence, how their patriarch at the time used his exceptional poison art to win a war against other factions to become the emperor some 5000 years ago.

It also said that the patriarch then died fighting off invaders from other continents, although records of those fights were rather sparse.

It mentioned how the Families of the 7 colors came into existence. Alex read the name of the 7 great families and recognized 2 of them.

Fu family, a family that mostly used Fire techniques was the same Fu family as the one Fu Tao had been from.

They represented the Red color in the 7 colors, which consisted of Red, Blue, Green, Yellow, Brown, Black, and White.

The royal Wei family donned the color purple, and could also be considered a pseudo-member of the Family of the 7 Colors, but they were far above the others in reputation, so only a few considered it.

Alex went on to read about the other historical events, one of which caught his eyes.

Nearly 1300 years ago, the western continent was shone bright with light from a meteor shower.

People from all over the empire said stories of the meteor striking close to them, and from those crash sites, people had discovered a lot of different types of weapons, artifacts, techniques, and many other things.

Alex reckoned that most consumables such as talismans and pills should have been destroyed by now, but the techniques and artifacts, as well as formations flags, should have been usable.

There were at least 3000 different instances of meteor strikes that were accounted for, and like more that weren't.

Alex wondered if there were some that he would be able to find as well, but he doubted that given how long it had been.

However, he did then read about secret realms popping up out of nowhere around most crash sites, especially in places that had a lot of different items in them, so he still had hope.

He then went on to read about the history of different sects and people that had appeared in the world. Most of the sect information only gave a vague description about the sects and Alex would likely have to find information about them from someplace else.

A few of the historical figures caught his eyes, but aside from them, there weren't a lot of extraordinary figures.

He continued reading for a little longer until the book ended up at the history of about a hundred years ago. Information about the last century would just be considered information and not history.

Alex wondered what he should read next and decided to go with a book that gave information on the various plants and beasts.

He knew most about the plants, but he read it with the hope that it would have more information than what he could find in the Crimson Empire.

As for beasts, with the lack of a game system to help guide him, every single piece of information would be vital for him.

He spent the next 4 hours learning about the plants and animals. After he was finished, he put those books back and decided to leave the library.

In total, he had spent about 22 True Spirit stones on those 4 books. While the one with geography didn't cost much, the others cost him somewhere between 5 and 8 True spirit stones.

Alex had also noticed a bunch of techniques in the library that he could learn from, but he decided not to get them and left.

When Alex walked out of the library, he was a little shocked.

"It's already night?" he thought as he looked around. The daylight had already disappeared, and darkness had taken its place.

The moon reigned high in the sky where the sun previously hung. It wasn't just evening, but actual night.

Alex wouldn't doubt it if someone told him it was close to midnight.

Still, it didn't look like it mattered that it was night. The city still roared and shouted like the lack of sunlight couldn't stop it.

Shops and services still were available everywhere Alex looked towards.

And for some reason, everyone else looked towards him as well. He couldn't walk 5 paces without someone turning their heads towards him.

They wouldn't linger on him for much longer, but he was starting to wonder why they were doing so.

'Am I that skinny looking?' he wondered as he checked his right hand. Indeed, he was skinny as a skeleton, but that should not bring this much attention back towards him.

'I should go cultivate more,' he thought, becoming more self-conscious towards his skinny body.

He could have gone to the Alchemy guild as he had wanted to, but he decided to go look for a tavern instead.

Avoiding the gazes of the people as much as possible, Alex located a place that said he could rent a place to stay.

It didn't look like a tavern, but Alex still went inside.

The moment he entered, the clerk looked towards him with his eyes narrowed.

"How may I help you, Fellow Daoist?" the man spoke.

"I'm looking for a place to stay," Alex said.

"We have places that cost 10 True spirit stones a month to places that cost 100 True Spirit stones a day. Which one would you like, Fellow Daoist?" the man asked.

Alex was a little surprised. The price difference was so much.

"What is the reason for such difference, if I may ask," Alex said.

"It's the facilities, fellow Daoist. As may be required, we have houses with training halls, Alchemy room, formation rooms, and other various rooms all fitted with top of the notch formations for your smooth rests and cultivation," the man said.

"Oh," Alex finally understood. He thought for a moment and realized he didn't need any of the facilities. He was going to spend most of the time outside of his house anyway and was also going to leave this town very soon anyway.

Still, he didn't want one that was completely worthless. So, he asked, "Is there one that costs about 10 spirit stones a week?"

"Of course, fellow Daoist," the man said as he handed Alex a talisman to look over.

When Alex looked at it, he was a little surprised. He hadn't expected the places he was going to rent to be actual houses on the outskirts of the town.

He had just expected them to be rooms in a tavern somewhere.

He looked through the list and chose one. "This," he said and told the man.

The man looked at it and nodded. "How many weeks would you like to stay, sir?" he asked.

Alex thought for a moment and asked a question of his own. "I heard there was an auction that was going to take place here soon. May I know when that is?"

"Yes, the Three Faction's auction will take place in 2 weeks," the man said.

"Then 2 weeks," Alex said and brought out 20 True spirit stones.

Once Alex got the talisman that acted as the key to the house, he was about to leave.

However, just as he turned around the man spoke once again.

"Fellow Daoist, do you want me to send a physician to your place as well? Our Three Faction alliance has the best physicians in town," the man said.

"Sorry?" Alex looked confused. "I don't need any physician."

The man's eyes widened. "My apologies. I didn't realize you were using a technique then. I assumed you had a fever. Please have a lovely stay."

Alex walked out of the location and frowned. Immediately, he drove his senses into his body to look for something he seemed to have completely skipped over.

Yang.

His body was radiating Yang like a man radiating heat when he had a fever. His body was giving off yang a lot more than previously either.

'I thought I had it under control,' he thought, but he had thought wrong. He realized that due to the last many days of constant cultivation, his constitution had gone out of control again.

'I need to go cultivate Yin,' he thought and left towards the new house he had rented.

Chapter 597: Ingredients

The people had stared at him because they thought he had a fever from the head he was radiating.

Had Alex realized that sooner, he would've found himself a place sooner than... midnight? Alex wasn't sure about the time either.

Without the time continuously blinking on the top right corner of his vision, Alex found it hard to gauge time.

'I should learn how to tell the time based on the position of the moon or stars,' he thought. 'Or maybe there were other ways people just knew.'

Alex sat down in a 4 by 4 meters room that was next to an alchemy room of the same size.

The house he had chosen came with 2 rooms, and the one he was in had a Qi Gathering formation that would be great for even someone in the True lord realm, let alone him with his True Disciple realm.

Although, it would be pretty useless since he would never be able to make a full rotation to gather any Qi in the area. The Yin Qi would likely dissolve into element-less Qi after coming into contact with Yang Qi.

Before starting his cultivation cycles, he looked at his body once more to see how much Yang he had been sending out.

Checking for the Yang was a weird sensation for Alex. Unless he was looking for it, Alex couldn't find the Yang anywhere at all on his body.

It felt normal for him like his body had no affinity at all. Fortunately, with his Supreme Yang spiritual root, he had some level of ability to sense his Yang.

'This is getting bad. I can't even tell when I'm releasing it a lot,' Alex thought. He feared that, just like his master, he too would have to spend months on end in closed cultivation to get his body constitution under control.

Hopefully, he was wrong about that.

He started cultivating, and very soon, he could feel the cold Qi lowering his body temperature to what was normal.

The first few cycles, he had to concentrate on it so that it didn't stop, but soon, he could do it without even thinking about it.

It became a muscle memory to him now. Still, he kept an eye on it so that he didn't accidentally start using the Five Yang Divine Path technique, which too had become muscle memory for him.

Once he was sure everything was going to go normally, he started thinking about the things he had to do.

The very first, most urgent thing that Alex needed to do was find a way to heal his arm.

The Saint Body Regeneration pill that could do so had 12 ingredients to it.

Winevein Poppy, Trileaved Periwinkle Leaf, Dried Torenia flower, Saint Blueflame Monkey's blood, Saint Hotfeather Eagle's tail feather, Ghostbane leaf, Two-headed Hydra's poison, Steelfur Rabbit's tendons, Seeking Mouse's whiskers, Blood Spirit ginseng, Azure Thimble twinflower, and finally, Three-colored Poison Lily.

His first task towards healing his arm without having to wait until he reached Saint realm and maybe find some ingredients here and there was to downgrade each of the ingredients to its True rank equivalent.

Thorny Bugloss, Silverstring Diascia, and Auburn Rue's seeds were 3 ingredients that were already downgraded for him by the Royal Alchemist thanks to his book.

For the rest, he was given some idea on how to.

For beast-related ingredients, Alex didn't have to worry much. For beasts that were named Saint before their ingredient, he could just use the True beasts of the same name.

For example, Saint BlueFlame Monkey's blood could be replaced with the blood of a Blueflame Monkey in the True Realm.

Similarly, Saint Hotfeather Eagle's Tail feather could also be replaced with one from a True Hotfeather Eagle.

As for the other two beasts in the list, those being the Two-Headed Hydra, and Steelfur rabbit, they were already in True realms, so Alex could downgrade them to Common realm, but it was better to keep them in the true realm.

Of the remaining 5 ingredients, as far as Alex knew, Ghostbane leaf and Azure Thimble twinflower weren't saint rank ingredients but True rank ingredients.

So, he wouldn't have to convert those either.

That left Seeking Mouse's whiskers, Blood spirit Ginseng, and Three-Colored Poison lily.

Alex had never heard of these three ingredients before today. Meaning, after today, he knew what they were.

Seeking mouse was as he had expected, a beast. But, it wasn't the type of beast he had expected. The thing with Seeking Mouse was that it didn't have a cultivation base and was just a normal mouse.

That wasn't to say its body contained no Qi at all. It wouldn't be an ingredient without any Qi or energy in it.

Seeking mouse, while not rare, were primarily used by people to scout places for them, seeking ruins, tombs, and other treacherous places.

So, they were usually in high demand and cost a lot. Alex was sure he would be able to get them, but, he would have to either go out searching for them on his own, or fight tooth and nail against someone in an auction to bid for it.

Three-colored Poison Lily was a poison flower that bloomed in the poisonous swamps of the Dreaded mountain range.

The number of colors in the flower denoted its potency and rank as well. Three colors meant it was a saint rank ingredient. So, for a true rank equivalent, he would just have to find a Two-Colored Poison Lily to be a True rank equivalent.

Finally, the Blood Spirit ginseng. This one Alex was most stuck on. He had, quite frankly, no idea what it even was. He had read about it in the books, but they weren't very helpful aside from what it was and what it did.

Its main usage was in restoring blood from what the book said. Aside from that, it mentioned nothing of where it could be found or how it could be found.

Alex would have to rely on his luck to find it. And then, he would have to somehow find an equivalent of that.

That was going to be very hard.

He had heard of Spirit ginseng, which was a Common rank ingredient, so it couldn't likely be the equivalent True rank ingredient.

He had also heard of Revitalizing Ginseng, which was supposed to make a Psuedo-Saint pill. While that was likely a True rank ingredient, there was a very high chance that was not the ingredient he was going to need.

Alex sent his spiritual sense into the storage bag to look through his ingredients.

Aside from dried Torenia flowers, he would have to find all the other 11 ingredients on his own.

That meant, he would have to go visit the Alchemy guild tomorrow morning.

He continued cultivating until he could feel a lot of his yang going down. After a full night of cultivation, his body's aura had died down by a significant amount.

It didn't help him heal his meridians though, as that could only be done using his other cultivation technique.

One saw the sunrise up outside with his spiritual sense, he did the final thing he had trained himself to do each day.

That was to go into his mind and collect all the floating silver threads. He wasn't sure why he was doing this, or if it was even of any use.

But, he still did it regardless of if he cultivated that day or not.

After he finished collecting the hundreds of floating threads in the air, that did nothing whatsoever to reduce the size of the silver mountain in his spiritual sea, he moved over to the crystal ball floating next to him.

Tiny amounts of black sludge floated around the crystal, making it opaque. As usual, Ning cleared the black sludge just in case that was what gave the Godslayer his tempting power.

Once he was done, he left his spiritual sea to train for a bit.

His training only involved using his spiritual sense to form a weapon and then try to use it.

He put forth his right hand as an illusory, misty white sword appeared on it that was almost transparent.

Alex looked at the sword and tried to grab it with his hands again, but as usual, that was impossible.

"What is going on? Am I not supposed to grab it?" he thought. The technique he read told nothing about how difficult it would be to grab this sword.

By now, Alex had come to realize that the technique was very much incomplete.

After an hour of training, doing nothing but making spiritual weapons of various other shapes, Alex left his new house and walked towards the Alchemy guild.

The town looked a little busier in the day today. Perhaps because most people had left for the Northern forest yesterday, Alex hadn't seen as many people.

As he walked past the fresh-smelling food, the chatter of the people, and the calls of the salesmen trying to sell others their goods and services, Ning came across a group of people with particularly boisterous voices.

"Fellow Daoists, please donate some spirit stones if you can. It will only go to the mentally challenged cultivators," they shouted.

'Mentally challenged?' Alex was surprised. He didn't know that was even possible for a cultivator who could heal from everything with the right ingredients.

"Please sir, would you like to donate?" the person saw Alex looking at them and directly asked him.

With no choice, Alex walked up to them and asked, "when you say mentally challenged, what are you talking about exactly?"

"Oh, sir must not know. There have been recently a group of people that suddenly forgot who they were and claim to have come here from another world."

"Most of them had integrated into the society, but some just can't work well at all. We are hoping to help them," the man said.

"Ah," Alex understood. They were trying to help the players.

Chapter 598: Hopeless Players

"Ah, are these the people that call themselves players?" Alex asked curiously. It had to be.

"Yes," the man said. "Would you like to help, fellow Daoist?"

"Yes, yes," Alex said, bringing out some True spirit stones. He handed them to the man who looked at him with a hint of shock in his eyes.

People usually didn't donate 40 True spirit stones for their causes.

"Thank you," the man said.

"It's alright. I'm a player myself, so I can understand what they are going through," Alex said.

"Ah, you were one of them as well?" the man asked with a raised eyebrow. "I'm happy to see that you are doing fine."

"Yes," Alex said. "Do most people not deal properly with this?"

The man shook his head. "Breaking down and crying all day long is one of the better scenarios. Given how fast these people breakthrough, it's always a positive if they don't decide to go on a rampage out of their minds."

"They say they just want to go home. Some... even end up killing themselves to do so," the man said.

Alex felt terrible. Knowing that he was the reason for this, albeit unintentionally, wasn't a very good feeling.

"Is it possible for me to visit these people? I just want to speak to them," Alex said.

The man looked towards the lady who was busy calling other people for donations and looked back to say, "sure, fellow Daoist. Come with me," the man said and took him to a giant building behind him.

Alex followed the man and entered the house. Before even entering, he had sent his spiritual sense inside and saw a lot of people, with various levels of cultivation base, ranging from people in Muscle Tempering to people in the True King realm.

Alex entered the house and saw the group of people, huddled around together, all life lost from their eyes.

He wondered if that would have been him as well had he not retained the memories.

The people looked at him, but there was no curiosity in their eyes. They didn't care who he was or why he was here. They just wanted to go home.

"Can I speak to them in private, brother?" Alex asked.

The man hesitated for a bit, not sure if he should let him.

"Please, I'm someone like them and understand their problem. I just want to help them," he said.

The man still hesitated, but gave up in the end and walked outside. However, Alex could sense him listening through the door.

Alex smiled. He brought out a metal plate from his storage and threw it onto the ground, creating a sound barrier around him and the other players.

Finally, the players looked concerned and got defensive.

"Don't worry, I'm not here to hurt you," Alex said. "I'm a player as well, and I want to help you all."

"A player?" the men and women finally stirred curiously.

"Yes, and I am here to bring you... a little information," Alex said. He was about to say hope, but... he wasn't sure the information he was about to give could even give them any hope.

After all, he was going to have to omit the part of the information that did give hope.

"The day you guys regained your control and realized you were in the Luminance empire, a person comes to the city I was to speak to us," Alex said.

The people listened intently, wondering what he was going to say.

"That person was a close acquaintance of the creator of the game," Alex continued. Curiously peaked to levels previously that could be thought impossible amidst these people.

"She gave me a bit of information that I have already spread in the home city, and I am going to give you that same information."

"There is no way back home right now," Alex said, immediately pouring water on everyone that had become somewhat hopeful.

"But there will be one in about 40 years," Alex said. "But in 40 years, the world back home won't be the one you left behind. It would have moved on."

"Home... is not what you should be seeking right now. What you should be seeking is survival."

"You can either stay around for 40 years and go back home, or you can make a new life right here, right now."

"Either way, you will have to get up and get to work. You can't live off of others forever," Alex said.

"Also, do not worry about your family. While... you were stuck here, the person that was previously controlling your body, a clone of yours is back at home, taking care of everyone," Alex said.

"Are you... telling the truth?" the people asked.

"Did the empire send you perhaps?" some other people asked him.

"Nobody sent me. My name is Alex Benton, from Mapleleaf city, currently living in Oakleaf city to study at the Oakleaf university. I have a mother and father who didn't play the game, so like most of you, I worry about them too."

"But then, I remember that a version of me is out there, looking after them, so my worries fade away. I hope yours do too," Alex said.

"Brother," one man said. "I... I have a wife. She plays the game too. So, she should be stuck in the game as well, right?"

"Ah," Alex thought. "What continent was she in?"

"She said it was the Northern Continent," the man said.

"If you want to see your wife, your children, your friends, and families that might be in the other continents, then you will have to get out of here and cultivate to get stronger. If you reach the highest highs of cultivation, you can easily go search for your family members," Alex said. "Do you not want to?"

"Yes, I do," one man said.

"I do too," another woman said.

"Can we reach the peak of cultivation? I... don't think I even understand what cultivation even is really," a young lady about the age of Alex said.

"That I cannot help you in," Alex said. "Everyone had their own path to forge. I have my own. But, you are not alone. Like the people outside, there will be many that will help you on your path."

"Accept the help you receive and help each other. That way, you will surely reach the peak of cultivation," Alex said.

The group started speaking in murmurs and soon one person stood up. "I still have a bit of doubt about your words, but you are right, sitting around doing nothing is not the way to go."

"That's right," another person stood up.

A few people stood up after them, but the majority still stayed down, unsure what they wanted to do.

"No need to rush. You can take your time," Alex said. 'You have so much of it anyway.'

He then picked up the formation plate from below him and got rid of his connection to it.

Suddenly, the sound barrier was destroyed and the person outside finally heard sounds. He realized something had been wrong and immediately walked in.

When he did, he saw the group of people on their feet, their eyes shining with motivation.

"What did you do," the man asked.

"Told them the thing they needed to hear," Alex said and turned towards them once again. "Make sure to spread those words elsewhere too. There should be many people that need it."

Alex left. The working man followed him outside.

"Thank you for what you're doing," Alex said.

"No... the problem," the man was still a little confused as to what had just happened in there. "It's the Royal decree after all."

"Oh, is it?" Alex was a little surprised. "Then can I expect a lot of people to be helped similarly in other cities too?"

"Yes," the man said.

"I see. Still, you have my thanks," Alex said and left. He had helped the players as much as he could while keeping some information to himself.

He didn't tell them that their home was in this world. If the news spread that the fifth continent had people living, who knew what the people from the other continents would do.

He felt it necessary to keep just that piece of information hidden.

Alex walked through the busy streets and finally reached the Alchemy guild that he had meant to come here since yesterday.

He walked into an open hall of people walking in and out of it. There was a reception at the center with 4 to 5 people working on it with a queue on each of those lines like people waiting for their turns at a bank.

Two giant, circular pillars held the ceiling that was nearly 10 meters high. Alex saw two doors on either side of the reception that led to... somewhere.

Alex got into a queue and waited for his turn.

"How many I help you, Fellow Daoist?" the lady at the reception asked him when it was his turn.

Alex handed her a talisman and said, "I'm looking to buy any of these ingredients."

The receptionist looked at the list and compared it to something else she read through using a metal plate that didn't look so different from the nameplate that the Hong Wu sect used.

"We have Winevein Poppy and Hotfeather Eagle's tail feather," the lady said.

Alex smiled. That was 2 more ingredients down.

"I would like to buy them please," Alex said.

"Yes," the receptionist said. "These will be 12 True Spirit Stones in total. You can get some discounts if you have an Alchemist's badge."

"A... discount?"

Chapter 599: Alchemist Guild

"I can get a discount?" Alex asked curiously. While he had enough money, for now, to buy the ingredients 10 times over and not worry about it, he wasn't going to go around spending the most for it.

Every single spirit stone he didn't have to pay, was a spirit stone he could use to buy something else. Perhaps, something more important.

"Yes, Fellow Daoist. If you have an Alchemist badge, you can get a discount," the woman said.

"Oh," Alex's hopes got crushed. "I'm afraid I have nothing like that."

He brought out the 12 spirit stones as asked for and handed them to the woman.

The woman looked into her metal plate again, and suddenly, on top of the counter where Alex hadn't noticed a formation before, two wooden boxes appeared out of nowhere.

"Here you go, Fellow Daoist," she said.

Alex took the box and looked into it to see 3 sets of each of the two ingredients. The poppy and the feather made the same names pop up in his head as well as the age of the ingredients.

The poppy was about 49 years old, while the feather was about 88 years old. They had most likely come from the same plant and bird.

Alex fell into thought as he saw that information. He knew that ingredients with greater age had a higher potency, but he wasn't sure how useful age was in Alchemy beyond that.

He would have to look up information on that later.

"Do you need anything else, Fellow Daoist?" the lady asked.

"Um, yes. Can you please explain to me about this... Alchemist badge?" Alex asked.

The lady nodded and got to explain.

The alchemist badge was something an alchemist would gain after joining the Alchemist guild. With it, the Alchemists would gain a lot of different benefits that a normal Alchemist would just dream of.

For one, Alchemists could forget about gathering ingredients, worrying about finding customers or finding a place to sell their pills.

It would all be handled by the guild. All an alchemist would have to do is take on missions and make the pills.

The other benefit that alchemists would get was less price while buying ingredients. Since the Alchemist guild was the main source of ingredients, aside from the occasional auctions. Alchemists benefited from this a lot.

There was also the factor of security. Hurting or offending one alchemist usually meant offending all alchemists in the guild. If an Alchemist complained about a customer, it was likely that the customer could never get another pill made from any alchemist that was part of the guild.

Alex found all of these benefits to be quite amazing. But...

"I'm planning on leaving this place soon. Will that... create problems at all?" he asked.

"Oh, no Fellow Daoist. Alchemist guild is available in all regions of the land. Where ever there is a city or town, we are available."

Alex nodded. "I see."

'So it's like a bank huh? I won't have to worry about being stuck to a single alchemist guild then,' he thought.

"I would like to become an Alchemist of the Alchemist guild then," he said.

The lady nodded and brought out a talisman for him to fill. "It will cost you 20 True spirit stones," the lady said.

"I have to pay, huh?" he thought and casually brought out another 20 True spirit stones. The benefits of getting in were enough for the price.

Alex took the talisman and moved to the side. He put his spiritual sense to fill the first thing and...

Name.

Alex froze. The first thing it had asked for was a name. What name should he give?

If it was right after he had gained freedom, he would've put in the name Alex without any hesitation.

However, now he wasn't sure if giving out his real name to the world, announcing that he was a player was a good idea or not.

Players were supposed to have lost knowledge of who they were, knowing nothing of cultivation to an extent. If he suddenly showed up like an alchemist that could make high-grade pills, the people would get really suspicious.

He couldn't imagine how many people would come to talk to him. Some may even try to kidnap him if they realize that a lot of the players had above-average body and spirit roots.

"No, I can not put in Alex," he thought and put in 'Yu Ming' as his name. The better he hid, the better his chances of survival.

Besides, he was already used to the name.

He then went on to the rest of the information. It was normal information the guild wanted, like your age, your cultivation base, your affiliations, and your highest pill level.

Alex filled almost everything truthfully. He put 19 for age, True Disciple 3rd realm for cultivation base, and None for affiliations.

However, for the highest pill, he decided to go with a safer choice. While he had made a heaven-grade True pill before, it was more luck than anything.

Still, the best would be above 40%. For a young man that didn't even hit 20, this would likely be an amazing feat even in the Luminance empire.

So, he went with 27% harmony. He would have to make some intentional mistakes, but that would be necessary to stay under the radar.

Once Alex was done with the talisman, he returned back to the reception and handed it over to the lady, along with the payment.

The lady scanned it and showed a hint of surprise on her face. She reached into her storage bag and brought out another talisman.

"This will be the pill you will have to make in the test, senior. You will be given 3 sets to make the pills. Please memorize it by 3 days when the test takes place," the lady said.

'Senior?' Alex was a little surprised to see the lady go from 'fellow Daoist to 'senior'.

'Did she not realize my cultivation base before this?' he chuckled a little.

Once he got what he wanted from the Alchemy guild, he took off towards the Library once more, where he would learn about various other things.

Three days later, on the morning of the day when his Alchemist guild's test was to take place, Alex sat in his room, having just been done with absorbing the threads in his spiritual sea and clearing the black sludge around the crystal.

Once he was done, he went onto the final part of his cultivation, which was the training part.

Pearl was moving around the room, having finally started cultivating with Alex after his Yang energy had significantly died down.

Alex focused on his right hand as energy slowly released from his mind as a formless misty white substance that was only visible to him.

It had taken him a while to realize that the only reason he could even see it was because he was using his spiritual sense to control it.

Pearl had asked him what he was doing the other day, and that was what had led him to this discovery. At the same time, he had also discovered that others could see this energy if they used their spiritual sense as well.

Alex took a deep breath and concentrated. Within a matter of seconds, the formless misty-white energy took the shape of the steel sword he used to own.

He looked at the sword with a wry smile on his face. He had tried to grab it again, but as usual, it wouldn't work.

He tried with Qi as well, but that didn't work either. He was still stumped on how to get it to—

"Wait," he thought as he thought of something. "No way it's that easy."

If it were, he would be a fool to not have thought of it before today.

Alex slowly closed his hand around the handle of the newly made sword, but he made no effort to grab it.

Instead, he moved his hand as if he were holding a real sword. At the same time, he imagined the sword moving along with his hand.

His hand moved away towards the right, while the sword remained where it was. However, as if it was lagging a bit, the sword moved as well and arrived at the place where his hands had come to just a second later.

"Holy Shit! I'm an idiot!" Alex cursed himself. All this time, he had tried using physical and elemental effort to move the sword, but not a single time had he thought of moving it with his mind.

He had been expecting it to be an actual weapon, but he should have known.

He tried moving the sword around for a few minutes, but it was hard. His body wasn't used to thinking of moving something instead of actually doing it.

His hands always ended up moving before the sword did. He tried moving it without using his hands, but that was beyond hard.

Not having something like his hand to guide the sword, he had a hard time visualizing the sword's movement.

Finally, after failing at it for a while, he resorted to using his hand to guide again.

Then, he stopped.

It was about time to go back to the Alchemist guild for his test today. He vaguely remembered the time he had taken the test for the Hong Wu sect.

Was that him or the other guy? The memories had started to become so vivid that it was hard to tell now.

He felt like it was still him for a day or two during the early days. So, he might have been the one that actually took the test there.

A smile appeared on Alex's face. He was looking forward to this examination.

Chapter 600: Alarm

Alex appeared in the Alchemist guild early in the morning. He sat on the chairs laid around the corner of the guildhall, next to a massive board with moving letters on it, reminding him of the ranking stone, and Contribution hall back in the Hong Wu sect.

Next to him were a few people gathered there as well, all of whom either wore a green robe, marking the, from the Fire Spirit sect or wore either an Iron or a Bronze colored badge around their chest that Alex had come to know to be the Alchemist badge.

Because of this, Alex doubted they were all here for the same thing.

Of the 13 present, including himself, some were here to enter the guild like him but as a Common Rank alchemist, while he was to become a True rank Alchemist.

Others were here to take a test to show their advancements to show that they had advanced enough to make a higher grade pill.

Alex wondered if there were any True-Earth Alchemists that were trying to ascend to become True Heaven Alchemists.

Although, in such a small town, that would likely be impossible. Still, he couldn't deny that this small town would likely be one of the better cities in the Crimson Empire.

He slowly scanned everyone's badge with his spiritual sense and noticed one person with an elderly face that had a silver badge around his chest with the word 'True' written on it.

Iron badges were for Mortal grade alchemists, while Bronze badges were for Earth grade alchemists. Going by the same logic, Alex figured Silver badges would be for Heaven grade alchemists, and Gold for Immortal grade alchemists.

Immortal grade... did those alchemists even exist? Alex thought they had to. After all, he had been one when he was a Common Rank alchemist.

Suddenly, he heard footsteps and stirred. The other men and women that had been there stirred a little as well.

Alex saw two people walk out of the door to the left of the reception.

Of the two, the male wore a green robe with a silver badge hung around his neck that said the word 'Common', while the female wore a light blue robe that didn't seem to belong to any factions.

She wore a necklace of bronze color, that said the word 'True'.

The man staggered a step behind the woman and stopped to let her move forward.

Alex glanced at them and got a general estimate of their cultivation base.

The man that looked to be a bit over 25 years old was in the Mind Tempering 6th realm, while the woman who seem to be of the same age was at True Master 9th realm.

Although, Alex was likely wrong on the woman's cultivation base as he wasn't used to sensing the cultivation base of people whose cultivation base was so high above his own.

The woman took out a list and then turned her head to look at them.

"I am Han Sha, and this is Jin Tiangshen. We will be your examiner for today."

"Those taking the Common Alchemist test, please follow him. Those who are taking the True Alchemist test. Please follow me."

The woman said nothing else and took off towards the right doorway of the reception.

Alex, along with 3 other people followed the woman to an open area.

Once she stopped, she turned around and looked at the only figure among the group of four, without a badge.

"You, is this your first time?" she asked.

"Yes," Alex said, a little surprised that she cared. From how little she spoke until now, he was sure she was only here because it was her duty.

"I'm sorry, but you will have to take a little different test," she said.

"Eh? Why am I being singled out?" Alex asked at the unfairness.

"Since we don't know if you are truly an alchemist, we will have to test you by having you make a common pill first," she said. "We would rather not have you destroy True rank ingredients just in case."

"I see," Alex said. He was a little irritated, but he understood the logic behind it.

4 people walked in front of the side, all of them around the Bone Tempering realm of cultivation base.

Each of them held a box in their hands with a formation carved on the metal lid.

Alex understood what it was. He sighed and brought out his storage bags. At the same time, the other 3 who had been through this process already, brought out their storage bags as well.

A young man appeared in front of Alex and took his storage bags.

"Please use your Qi to lock the box," the woman said. The 4 of them did as they were said.

"These 4 will be your aid in today's test, as well as the invigilators," the woman said. "They already have the ingredients for your test, so you three may go take the test right now."

The 3 of the other examinees left.

Alex stood there and waited for his turn. "Do you have any pill you would like to make?" she asked.

"Any is fine really," Alex said. It was a common rank pill, so he didn't have to worry about it at all.

"Okay, then choose one," she said.

Alex thought of a random pill and said, "Purple Dream Pill".

Han Sha nodded and took out her talisman to call for someone. Moments later, a man rushed to her with a storage bag.

Han Sha took the storage bag and handed it to the aid, rather than him. Alex took notice of that.

"You may go in," she said.

Alex nodded and turned towards one of the rooms on the side of the hall they were in, which was an Alchemy room.

He walked up to the door and saw that it needed a key, which his aid produced from somewhere, and placed it there.

Then, Alex walked in.

RING RING RING

Suddenly, as if alarms going off, a red light flashed in the room he was about to enter while releasing a loud ringing sound.

"Huh?" Alex stepped back. To say he wasn't surprised would be to lie.

"What's this?" he asked.

"Are you hiding a storage bag on you?" Han Sha said with a frowning face. She had already sent her Qi sense to sense his outer body and had sensed no storage bag, so she only got angrier.

"What? No, I don't have any," Alex said, which he was telling the truth.

"No way, you are hiding it somewhere," the woman claimed. "That formation there is meant to find a storage bag."

"But I really don't have—" Alex stopped, but he still finished his sentence, "—any."

He had right at the end of his sentence remembered the golden ring with the large ruby-like gemstone attached to it.

According to Lady Ren, and an implication from Hao Ya, he had learned that the ring was a storage ring.

Was that what had caused the ringing? He was surprised that the formation in the room could sense something even his spiritual sense hadn't noticed when he was in the Mind Tempering realm.

As a True Disciple realm cultivator, all he could notice was 'something fishy' about the ring at best. He felt like commending the formation maker but now was not the time.

"Then why did the alarms go off?" Han Sha demanded.

"I don't know," Alex said. "Look," he said as he stripped the upper robe and placed it on the ground next to him, revealing his skinny body with a missing left arm.

"See? I don't have anything," he said, showing his empty body and empty hands.

The woman looked closely and even used her Qi sense more aggressively to look through his entire body. However, she couldn't find anything and looked confused.

"You really don't have any?" she said.

"Yes," Alex said, picking up robes again. The lady had already scanned the robe, but she didn't find anything there either. Aside from the randomly thrown ring inside of it, that is.

But, that ring gave her no suspicion at all.

"Okay," she said, giving them permission to go back to the room.

Alex nodded and returned back to the room, but once again, the alarms went off.

"See?" Alex said.

Han Sha frowned, but she wasn't able to tell what was wrong.

"I should wear this," Alex said and wore his robe, but didn't put on his ring.

"By the way, Can I open that box for once, brother?" Alex said as he opened the box before the man could say anything.

"What are you doing?" she asked.

"Oh, I forgot to take out my cauldron," Alex said.

"You won't be needing it. You will be using a normal cauldron, like everyone else," she said.

Alex already knew that. He had sensed the cauldron in the other room and knew that was how the test was going to be taken.

"Very well," he said, closing the box. At the same time, he slipped his ring into the box.

"Let's go. I don't have all the time in the world," Alex said and went towards the door.

Without his storage ring, there wouldn't be any probl—

RING RING RING

"What the hell?" Alex was very surprised now. At first, he had it was his storage ring that was causing the alarm.

But now he knew what the cause was.

"This is a broken formation, isn't it?" he asked out loud.

Han Sha's frown deepened. She was an alchemist, not a formation expert, so she couldn't respond to his claims.

She looked at the other rooms and her frown only got deeper. Because there were 4 participants in today's exam, they had only bothered to activate 4 of the Alchemy rooms' exam formation.

She couldn't go and ask them to activate another one as that would take some time. She didn't have much.

She wasn't going to spend more than 2 hours on this exam, and waiting for that would have would cause it to get longer.

In the end, she sighed. "Give me your key," she said to the young man holding the body.

The young man took out his key from around his neck and handed it to Han Sha. Han Sha then handed it to Alex and said, "get it."

Alex wore the metal key around his neck and walked in. This time, the formation made no alarming sound, giving him some relief.

He looked at the small alchemy room with a... surprisingly above average cauldron in the center.

He walked up to the cauldron as he heard the door shut behind him. He sat down and looked to the side, and his face changed a little.

"What are you doing?" he asked Han Sha who held his box and a few storage bags.

Han Sha sat down next to him and said, "To ensure that you do not cheat, I will be working as your aid and invigilator today."