

Alchemy 631

Chapter 631: Advancements in Sword

The Spiritual Sword, from Alex's observation, did just one thing. It disrupted the flow of Qi through one's meridians.

Alex couldn't tell if it slowed down the movement of Qi or made the meridians squeeze together so that not much Qi to move through it, but it always made what came out in the end vastly weaker than what the opponent was capable of.

This only lasted for a few seconds or so before they usually got back their ability to fight, but that was enough to take care of most enemies.

Alex took out his sword and send a barrage of attacks at the monkey who couldn't put up any defense. Despite the fiery armor, it was still hard to cut the monkey with his strength.

But slowly as more and more Qi was lost, it became easier to cut. The monkey, despite getting back its strength, couldn't produce any of the explosives balls of fire anymore.

A few minutes later, it finally died.

Alex breathed in and out, trying to get rid of the fatigue. He had to use his entire strength to kill a monkey that could barely protect itself, and it still took so long.

He felt a little angry at himself even. He quickly ignored the thought and pulled out some spirit stones.

The spirit stones were all dull and without energy, and were nothing more than simple translucent rocks.

Alex used his golden claws to carve a chunk out of the spirit stones and used that to store the blood of the BlueFlame monkey for now.

Since he had no vials, he had to make do with what he could. Then, he cut the monkey into many pieces, doing a not so good a job in it, and took whatever he could.

Once he took all of the mangoes, he looked at the surroundings and all the destroyed trees.

'There were some ingredients there. Well, it's all destroyed now,' he thought.

Alex put everything into his storage ring aside from his sword. His sword he stared at for a minute.

From being a young man who had never even seen a sword, to being someone who could beat a True Lord 6th realm beast, he had obviously come a long way.

In his journey, he had gone from learning how to use his sword to learning how to use his intent.

However, the journey wasn't over yet. No, it was only beginning. For the next phase of his journey, he would have to advance his sword skill to the point where he could use Sword Qi.

For that, he would have to live and die by the sword.

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A long time passed. As for how long, Alex wasn't sure. A week would sometimes feel like 2 days. A day would sometime feel like 2 weeks.

A fight would end as soon as it started, or it would drag on forever to make him feel completely unable to grasp the passing of time.

Not to mention, cultivation alone would make him lose his sense of time, almost all the time.

During these times, he had done nothing but fight with his sword. He would use his sword to solve any and every problem.

If a fight was easy, he would beat it with his sword. If it was hard, he would run away.

Even when there were times he could easily defeat a beast were he to simply use his Explosion skills or his mental attacks, he still chose to use his sword and make it hard for himself.

If he couldn't beat it, he would then just run away and come back later.

If he couldn't run away, he let the world devour himself and send him somewhere else.

He had to use this technique more than once, and more than once he had ended up in more trouble than not.

One time, he had even entered the lair of a Saint realm snake. Alex was sure he would die at that time, but fortunately, the snake didn't attack him.

It only told him to leave and never go back there again.

'Shen Jing must have given them instruction,' he had thought.

At first, he had been surprised that Shen Jing's words even held value to these beasts given that they were both in the Saint Realm. However, when he realized that the Saint realm, just like the True realm and Self-Tempering realm, must have multiple minor realms as well, he understood why they would do that.

After all, even the Saint realm Emperor had been scared of the Saint realm beasts from the Beasts' realm. So, he didn't think about them for long.

It wasn't the Saint beast he had to worry about, then. It was the True King and True Emperor realm beast. Fortunately, they were just as rare to come by as well.

In the past however many months he had been here, he had seen about 2 dozen or so True King beasts, most of which didn't bother him, and he didn't bother them either.

As for True Emperor beasts, he could count them in his one remaining hand.

During this time, his strength had also grown by a large amount. Since he was only focused on fighting and cultivating, his cultivation had grown to True Master 5th realm.

However, that wasn't what had made Alex happy. The thing that got him happier was his advancement with the sword.

He hadn't yet reached Sword Qi, as that was still elusive to him, but he could feel himself getting closer and closer.

From time to time, while fighting, he could see a sword-shaped Qi or two split off from his white Sword Intent outline. From what Alex remembered, there had to be many more such sword-shaped Qi to be around him for it to be considered having learned Sword Qi.

Also, Du Yuhan had said something about Sword Qi having the personality of the user. Du Yuhan wanted to cut down everything in front of him with his sword, and that had manifested a sword Qi that gave him unimaginable cutting power.

'What is my own personality then?' Alex wondered. He couldn't be sure. If he had to before, he would call himself kind and gentle.

Could that be used to explain the person he had become now? Obviously not. The amount of blood on his hand was not something someone kind and gentle would have.

He was... different. He had changed.

Alex sighed. 'There's no point in thinking about it now, is there?' he thought. He would soon learn it on his own.

Alex opened his eyes on top of a tree crown. He looked around to see the wilted leaves and slightly darkened wood beneath him.

He couldn't help but sigh. Last few months, his body had gotten worse and worse, to the point where his Yang energy couldn't be contained any longer with the Yin technique.

Unless he decided to sit down and cultivate the Yin technique for days on end, there was no way to control his yang body now.

It was also troublesome with how helpful his Yang body was. Most of the beasts below the True Master realm scurried away whenever he came close to them.

True Lord beasts and above were the only ones who seemed to not be afraid of him now. That was helpful. True Master beasts were no match for him after all.

At True Master 5th realm, his attacks dealt about the same damage as his body, if not higher.

As for his sword, it was close to dealing damage about the same as his body too. Very soon, his body would start falling behind.

'Sigh, if only I knew of a way to increase my body's strength too,' he thought.

His master hadn't lied at all when he had told him that most body cultivators abandoned their path after a certain point because cultivating the body became too hard and resource-intensive.

Alex wished he knew what resources could even do such a thing.

As he walked along the side of the mountain, no beasts came up to him thanks to his yang aura.

When he reached the top, the wind blew at him, bringing a sour and pungent smell along with it.

'What is that smell?' he wondered. He couldn't see anything ahead with his spiritual sense that would produce such a smell, so he decided to go ahead and check it out himself.

Just as he was about to walk ahead, a voice drifted to his mind and said, "STOP!"

Chapter 632: Poison

Alex didn't move a step forward when he heard Shen Jing's voice in his head. A moment later, he felt a gust of wind.

Alex turned around, simply out of instinct, to see if Shen Jing had come. However, no one was there.

"That's not the direction you want to go towards," Shen Jing said from right next to him, but Alex couldn't see him at all.

He strained his senses as far as he could to find him, however, the next set of words came from so near him that he felt the breath on his ears.

"I'm right here."

Alex jumped a little, looking in the direction where the sound came from but saw no human standing there. It wasn't until Shen Jing got rid of some sort of technique that Alex finally saw him.

'What was that?' he wondered.

Alex checked his connection with Pearl and felt him someplace far away. "Where's Pearl?" he asked.

"Cultivating someplace else," Shen Jing said.

"Is he safe?" Alex asked as a sense of panic ran through him.

"With me around, there's nothing on this continent that can threaten him. You need not worry about his survival at the moment. You should worry about yours," Shen Jing said.

Alex sent his senses to the slopes of the mountain, wondering if there was some sort of beast down there.

"It's poison," Shen Jing replied, letting Alex know.

"Poison?" Alex asked with surprise, but he couldn't sense it yet. Even after his spiritual sense had grown to about 150 meters in radius, he couldn't see any signs of poison.

"Can you not smell it?" Shen Jing asked.

Alex took a deep breath and a familiar smell of sour and pungent air filled his senses.

"Ah, this was the poison's smell drifting to me, huh?" Alex asked.

"Poisons, Venoms, and Toxins of every kind," Shen Jing let him know.

"So many?" Alex couldn't help but let out a surprise in his voice. Then, a thought came to him.

"Am I... close to the Poison Swamps of the Dreaded Mountain range?" he asked.

"Oh, you know about this place huh?" Shen Jing asked. "Yes, you are correct. It is exactly the site you are thinking of. Down this mountain, there is nothing but plants and animals that will kill you with a single touch."

"Although your physical body might be able to protect you a bit, without antidotes, I suggest you do not go back there," Shen Jing said.

Alex thought to himself. 'Will the poison really hurt me?' he thought. His body was after all evolved from the version that could already destroy most poison.

He had also seen poisons being destroyed by his body during the fights in the last year or so.

Still, there had also been a time when his body hadn't been able to protect himself from the poison.

'That saint realm poison still nearly killed my previous body,' he thought. He couldn't be sure if his current body could save him or not, but his master surely couldn't protect herself.

And she had a body at the same level as his right now.

Alex didn't know what to do.

"You seem to be lost in some thoughts," Shen Jing said, looking at his lost look.

Alex was startled back to reality and bowed a little. "My apologies. I was just thinking about something."

"About what?" Shen Jing asked. "Ask me, and maybe I can help you."

Alex frowned and thought for a moment. 'Should I tell him?' he wondered. He wanted to keep it a secret, but he couldn't be sure if that was the right path to take here.

Shen Jing was an incredible human, with knowledge and experience that far surpassed him. Keeping information to oneself when he could be using it to advance himself really did feel like the wrong approach here.

So, he took a deep breath and told him... some of the information. "Brother Shen Jing," he called him, feeling a little weird calling a Saint realm human his brother.

"It's like this. My body can destroy most poison I come across, but I'm still unsure of the limit of my body. So, I thought it might be a good idea for me to go into that swamp and test it out myself," Alex said.

Shen Jing looked at him with a curious look. "I knew you could gather Qi through beast cores, but I never knew you could survive poison too. Do you have some sort of a rare, heaven-defying bloodline or what?" Shen Jing asked.

Alex flinched. He did have one, but he wasn't born with it, and neither could he use it at all. The only time he did use it was to improve his Metal spiritual root, so... that likely didn't count.

"I'm joking, I'm joking," Shen Jing said. "I don't care if you were the son of God himself. Actually yes, I would care but I wouldn't be jealous or envy you. Actually no, I would be jealous and envy you, but I would never hurt you for it."

Alex didn't know how to respond to that.

"Anyway, are you sure your body can handle poisons?" Shen Jing asked.

"Yes," Alex nodded.

"Have you never been poisoned with something that your body couldn't handle?" Shen Jing asked as if he knew things he shouldn't have.

"I have," Alex said. "But it was a Saint rank poison."

Shen Jing's eyes turned suspicious. "Are you sure?"

"Yes," Alex said. "It came down in the meteor shower some thousand years ago."

Shen Jing's face narrowed with a confused look. "What meteor shower?" he asked.

Alex didn't know what to say. This should have been well known even throughout the Luminance empire. Even the Crimson Empire had some documented events of it happening, but since it was back when the empire didn't exist and everything was the Shattered Kingdoms, most information was lost.

So, Alex went ahead and swiftly explained everything he had learned about the shower until now.

Shen Jing nodded his head in surprise as if this was the first time he was hearing all of this. 'Was he not supposed to have been lived his entire life here?' Alex thought.

"How old are you?" Alex blurted out, before even thinking about it.

"Very old," Shen Jing said, not giving an accurate answer as he thought about the meteor shower.

"How did you not know about this until now then?" Alex asked.

"I only just recently returned back to the continent, so it's obvious I missed it right?" Shen Jing said.

"But you said you've lived here your whole life," Alex said, finding the contradiction in his words.

"Ah, but you see, someone like me can live for a long time. So for me, a thousand years is nothing much," he said.

Alex's face frowned. "Are you an immortal then?" he asked, knowing that was impossible since immortals needed to remain hidden lest the Heavenly Judgment tears them apart.

"What makes you say that?" Shen Jing asked with a curious face.

"Because a Saint realm can only live up to 2000 years at best," Alex said.

"Those saint realm artists are weak. Most saint realms I know can live 10,000 years. I've even met some folks who've been alive for 20,000 years, but those people mostly depend on elixirs and spirit foods, not to mention tons and tons of pills," Shen Jing said.

"Oh," Alex said, fully surprised. He hadn't known that. Was the information in those books incomplete? Maybe the lack of Saint Qi in the air had made the saint realms of this continent weak.

"I have a question of my own actually," Shen Jing said and asked, "how do you know the poison that nearly killed you was saint rank?"

"Because..." Alex searched his brain for a proper answer, but aside from 'my master told me,' and 'what else could it be?', he found no other answer.

His eyes widened. 'Was I wrong about the poison then?' he thought. 'Was the poison I was struck with not saint rank?'

"You see the problem right? How can you mere mortals judge something that fell from the heavens if it did not have a label to it?" Shen Jing asked.

Alex was about to say something, but Shen Jing put up his hands to stop it.

"Actually, there is a better method to find out," he said. Shen Jing became a blur in Alex's senses and he moved out of the range of his vision in a fraction of a second and reappeared back in it a second later.

This time, he wasn't alone. Next to him was a confused-looking snake with 3 heads instead of one, each a different shade of purple.

It hissed and tried to attack Alex, but a golden barrier blocked it. Only then did the beast calm down and started looking around in caution.

"Are you going to act properly? Or should I kill you?" Shen Jing said with a smiling face, but the pressure he created made the poor snake nearly frighten to death.

The snake kept hissing and quickly nodded.

"Do you have an antidote for your poison?" Shen Jing asked the snake.

The snake looked confused, but it nodded.

Shen Jing's face widened into a glorious smile. "Good!" he said. "I want you to go poison that young man."

The snake still looked confused, but it nodded. It looked like it understood words, but couldn't speak properly.

'He's worse than Pea—'

As Alex was thinking, the golden barrier blocking off the snake was removed, and suddenly, in came a terrifying aura that nearly got Alex down to his knees.

This snake was a Saint beast.

Chapter 633: Poison Testing

"Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait!" Alex said, seeing the snake slide, and not slide at the same time towards him.

The Saint realm aura was making Alex very scared. There was no pressure, but it was the incoming poison that scared Alex.

"It's fine, little Brother. He has an antidote," Shen Jing said, and the snake nodded.

Alex gulped down and looked at the snake. It was only now that he was properly taking a look at the snake.

The snake had dark blue scales all over its body until its heads split into three two-thirds of the way into its body.

Each head had about a meter-long neck before the head arrived. It looked like despite having 3 heads, the snake was a single thinking organism.

Spiritual senses escaped from the snake, scanning Alex and a voice drifted into his mind.

"Choose one head," it said.

"What?" Alex asked. He looked at the snake with a bit of confusion.

"My three heads have different poisons. Choose one," the snake said.

'Is this a game?' Alex thought with shock. Still, he didn't dare defy the snake and slowly moved his hand and said, "The middle one."

The snake hissed. "Bad choice."

It moved in a blur, enough to catch Alex off guard and the middle head sprayed purple fog directly at his face.

Alex unconsciously took in a breath, and suddenly his body froze up. Then, he fell to the ground with his entire body writhing in pain.

"AAAARRRGHHHH!!!" He shouted so loud that Shen Jing had to create a barrier with his Qi to keep in the sound.

It burned. Not his body, not his mind, but his meridians. All the intricate channels in his body swelled as poison dared to break them.

His body tried to get rid of the poison, but the poison was in his meridians. Aside from having some influence, the body couldn't really do anything for the poison. Still, it devoured his Qi, trying to heal what was hurt, rather than get rid of the poison.

His body would run out of Qi before all of it could be healed. Even though his reserves were of massive amounts, this was a saint beast's poison. His body couldn't heal faster than the poison could damage it.

The snake hissed at Shen Jing, saying something and after a minute of listening to the scream, he finally spoke.

"Yes, go cure him," he said.

"NO!" Alex shouted. "I can do it."

Shen Jing was surprised. He didn't think Alex had enough wits at the moment to see what was happening on the outside.

"You will destroy your meridians if you become stubborn here, you know," Shen Jing said.

"I know!" Alex shouted. "But I can get rid of it."

He pushed himself up with a single hand and got into a cultivating position. He took a deep breath, and with a thought, his Qi started moving through his meridians.

The Five Yang Divine Path taught him how to move his Qi through his meridians and he followed it.

As the Yang Qi moved through his meridians, it destroyed the poison on its path, leaving just a slightly swollen meridian along the way.

As it passed through more and more of his meridian, the poison was more and more destroyed.

In the next two minutes, as Alex cultivated, all of the poison in his body was completely destroyed.

Alex opened his eyes and heaved a sigh. For some reason, it felt like his Qi had increased a bit as well.

The snake's eyes were wide open in shock, but it wasn't limited to the snake alone. Even Shen Jing was a little shocked.

He went close to Alex and checked. "If I hadn't seen it for myself, I would have likely never believed it," he said with awe.

'Just how many secrets does this young man have?' Shen Jing thought.

"I'm surprised myself," Alex said. The snake hissed something at him in shock, not even remembering to use spiritual sense to talk.

"That was its strongest poison designed to disrupt the opponent's meridians, it says," Shen Jing somehow translated.

"Forgive me senior, but can you use your other poisons on me too?" Alex asked.

Shen Jing raised an eyebrow in surprise and turned around to nod at the snake.

The snake slid up to Alex and bit him on his leg. Intense pain flared in Alex's body as his blood vessels swelled and became purple in response to the poison.

Alex immediately started using his Five Yang Divine Path and as if it never existed, the poison vanished.

It didn't even take two seconds. The snake was beyond surprised at this point, and Alex too was fairly surprised.

'So cultivating helps quite a lot while removing poison, huh?' he thought. He had never cultivated while he was poisoned, but seeing that it could remove Saint rank poison too, he would make sure to do so from now on.

"The last one, senior," Alex said.

The snake said something to Shen Jing and Shen Jing fell into thought. "The last one is a mental poison. Are you—"

"Please do it," Alex said, getting ready.

The snake had no choice, so it used the technique it had only learned after growing the third head to its left.

A mental attack.

Spiritual energy that was purple in Alex's senses gathered in front of the snake and shot at Alex at a speed that he couldn't even register.

When it entered his mind, he felt another intense pain from his spiritual sea. With a thought, he appeared inside his spiritual sea to see a massive gathering of purple clouds that were starting to corrupt some of the water in the sea.

"Oj, kid! What is happening? You're not dying, right? If you're dying, please send me out first. I don't want to die with you."

The artifact spirit, Godslayer spoke hurriedly from the side, but Alex ignored him.

Alex then flew to the top of the mountain and put both of his hands to the side. With a thought, a massive fog of yellow light emerged from his hands and started spreading towards the purple fog.

It looked like there would be a fight between the two patches of fog for a moment, but a moment later the yellow fog started devouring the entire purple fog.

When all the poison disappeared, Alex brought back his fog into him, leaving a pristine but stormy sky with threads of silver light flying through the air.

He never really could consume those silver threads with anything but his hands themselves.

Once all the poison was gone, Alex ignored the thankful cries of the Godslayer and teleported out.

When he came outside, Shen Jing looked in awe and so did the snake.

Alex got up from his position and bowed toward the snake. "Thank you for letting me test the limits of my body with your poison," He said.

The snake hissed to say something and only later realized that the human couldn't understand it. Then, it repeated the same words again in his mind.

"It's fine."

The snake was too shaken by what had happened to say anything else.

"I am surprised that you managed to survive the Three-headed Hydra's poison too. I never thought it would be possible, but you really did it," Shen Jing said.

'Three-headed Hydra?' Alex thought with surprise and he spoke up.

"Senior, I have a request."

Chapter 634: Coincident?

The snake hissed after hearing Alex. "What's your request?" it asked directly into his mind.

"I need the poison of a Two-headed Hydra for my left arm's recovery. Can you perhaps help me with that?" he asked.

"I can," the snake hissed.

"Alright, that settles it then," Shen Jing. "You can go and happily roam the poison valley where everyone else would die with a single breath."

Alex looked at him with a weird face. "That's very morbid of you," he said.

"Haha, I'm kidding. Most people that come here will know to bring a poison repelling artifact that will repel poison in the air. They will also come with tons and tons of antidotes. So it's unlikely anyone would actually die."

"Unless they end up beating beasts like him," Shen Jing said while pointing to the hydra who hissed.

"I see," Alex said. He didn't know such artifacts existed, but now that he thought of it, he didn't know what sort of artifacts existed exactly.

He was used to seeing weapons, armors, necklaces, and such only, but after coming to the Luminance empire, he had seen a few weird artifacts like the lantern that hurt him mentally.

"You guys should go now," Shen Jing said. "I won't waste any more of your time."

"Brother Shen, wait," Alex said before Shen Jing could leave.

"What is it?" Shen Jing asked.

"Can I get empty vials and wooden boxes from my storage bag? I need them to keep the valuable ingredients from losing energy," Alex said.

"Hmm... Okay," Shen Jing said and brought out 5 of his storage bag at once from somewhere. Then, he looked through them all, and within moments he found all of the empty containers.

It looked like his face lingered for a split second at something, but it quickly changed, making Alex wonder if he was even seeing it right.

At the same time, he also gave Alex a few pairs of clothes to change. The hide of some furred beast he was wearing at the moment could barely be called clothes right now.

Once Alex took the items, he bowed toward Shen Jing and turned to walk away with the Hydra.

Shen Jing turned around to leave, but just as he was about to, he remembered something and his voice drifted towards Alex.

"In less than a year, a demon realm is going to open. Be prepared as I will come to take you there," Shen Jing said and disappeared.

At the same time, the snake got instructed to not help Alex beyond what he had requested.

The snake nodded and continued slithering.

Alex was confused now. "Demons? There are demons here?" he asked out loud, but Shen Jing was nowhere to be seen.

In Alex's mind, demons were horrific beings that were meant to scare children to send them to sleep. 'Certainly, he means something else by demons, right?' Alex thought.

The sour and pungent smell drifted into Alex's nose which he breathed again, but aside from the smell, there was nothing bad about the poison in the air at all.

He actually wondered if his body was cleansing the poison while he was consuming it. 'That must be the case,' Alex thought.

The saint realm snake could probably go back to its habitat immediately if it wanted to, but for some reason, it chose to slowly walk along with Alex.

Alex's senses were still spread out and he could see several plants and animals all roaming throughout the field.

Just as he was looking around, he couldn't believe he found something so easily.

"A Two-colored Poison Lily!" Alex shouted and immediately ran towards it, but as soon as he stepped forward, his feet sank to the ground and he nearly stumbled upfront.

He caught himself while in the process of falling and got back up, this time hovering a few inches above the ground.

'What the hell?' he thought to himself. He slowly let his Qi disappear and drifted back down, sinking both his feet into the wetland down below.

"Oh right," He said after finally realizing what was going on. "It's a swampland. I forgot."

Now that he sent his senses beneath what he thought was the land, he could see it clearly went a bit lower before there was any hard surface.

The poison swamp it seemed was aptly named.

Alex slowly flew towards the Poison Lily and felt a nauseating smell come from just being close to it. Alex didn't know if it was just the flower or the entire swamp, but he could feel that the poison in the air here was more than what his body could handle for the moment.

He was about to use his cultivation technique to make it easier on himself, but then he remembered something about himself that had been keeping away normal beasts.

He wondered if it worked the same for poison in the air too, and decided to give it a go.

With a thought, yang energy spread out of his body, creating a small area around him where poison in the air ignited to nothingness.

'Oh, it worked,' Alex thought with a surprise. His nausea immediately cleared and before even having to cultivate, he was perfectly fine.

Then, he sensed something moving in the water.

Alex immediately reached into his ring and brought out his sword. Despite being in the swamp, he was going to fight with his sword, and sword alone.

When he finally saw the beast waiting to attack should he move forward, he frowned. This... was just too coincidental, wasn't it?

In front of Alex was a dark blue beast with 2 purple heads of different shades, hissing at him with both of the heads.

No matter how Alex looked at it, it was a Two-Headed Hydra. Did he fight it now? Or ask the Saint beast next to him for help?

The Hydra was in the True Lord 4th realm, so Alex could easily win it, but he didn't want to offend the senior next to him by attacking a beast of his kind.

"Is this... your relative, senior?" Alex asked.

The snake looked offended at that question actually. It hissed back at Alex, and a question carried by the snake's spiritual sense entered his mind.

"Is every human in this world your relative?" it asked.

"No," Alex said and turned around towards the snake. "Then, please don't mind if I fight a little here."

"The head that is more red than blue," the snake's voice drifted into Alex's mind.

"Sorry?" he asked. 'Head that is more red than blue?' Alex wondered. He could see that the Saint realm Hydra was referring to the head on the left, but Alex didn't understand why.

Was that perhaps a weak spot in the snake? Or was the second head where the monster core lie?

"You said you wanted our poison right?" the Snake asked. "The head that is bluer has poison fog that harms the meridians. You cannot carry that back."

"Then, it is very easily the 2nd head with our fangs," the saint beast said.

"I see," Alex said, finally understanding what the snake was trying to tell him. He hadn't even thought that the two heads would be a thing of confusion for him.

He usually left such concerns for after the fight was done and his life was safe.

Once Alex got the information he needed, he moved forward. As if waiting for this, the Two-Headed Hydra lunged forward at Alex.

It hadn't noticed the tiny Three-Headed hydra slithering in the swamp at all and thus thought of only Alex as the enemy.

No. From the looks of it, it thought of Alex as food.

'Let's see which one gets eaten first,' Alex thought as a bright white outline appeared around his sword.

'Who am I?' he asked himself before proceeding to fight. Ever since he thought of the sword Qi following his personality, he had been asking that question himself.

Who was he? What was he doing? Such questions drifted in his mind for a split second, and when he realized he still didn't know, he ignored the two flickers of white light that jumped out from his sword and launched forward.

He met the snake in mid-air and hit it on its right head with a blow that rang its brain as if it had just hit a mountain.

Had Alex put in his Qi for this attack, the snake would have likely died with just this one attack.

His Sword Intent surely had improved. And it wanted to improve it even further.

Alex jumped back, following the snake that was sent flying away. The yang energy from his body stopped all Qi from entering his body.

The snake caught itself from going any further and looked back at Alex who looked more like a beast here than it did.

A layer of purple liquid seeped out of the snake's body, solidifying to become armor of some sort.

Alex's sword hit it again, but the snake managed to hold itself with just one of its heads.

With its other head, it sprayed gaseous poison onto Alex's face. Without even Alex breathing it in, the poison entered his body, immediately starting to attack his meridians.

Alex took a step back and immediately circulated his Five Yang Divine Path technique and within moments, the poison vanished from his system.

It was so fast that both of the snakes around him looked at him like they were looking at their natural enemy.

Once the poison was gone, Alex jumped back to his fight.

Chapter 635: Poison Swamp

Since the snake was no problem to Alex, after a few minutes of battle, he easily subdued it. Killing it would've taken longer, but in front of the Three-headed Hydra, he didn't want to do so.

Alex grabbed the snake's left head and forced its fangs out, making it pour poison into an empty glass vial.

When the purple, viscous poison barely slid down the vial, making Alex wonder if it was perhaps more solid than liquid.

Alex put the Two-Headed Hydra back on the ground and plucked the Two-Colored Poison Lily flower as well. He then kept both of them in his ring and took out another empty vial before turning around.

"Senior, you've helped me so much, but I would like to request you one more thing," he said.

The snake looked at Alex then at the vial and understood. "You want my poison too?" the snake asked.

"Just a little, if it is not much trouble," Alex said.

"It isn't," the snake said and slid forward to Alex, immediately pouring poison into his vial.

"My task of looking after you ends here. I will take my leave now," the snake said and moved away with such a speed that Alex could barely tell the direction it moved in.

He couldn't even find the time to say his thanks to the snake.

Alex looked back at the even more viscous poison in the vial and couldn't help but be amazed that his body was able to clear such a terrifying poison in just 2 seconds.

That just gave him more proof that the poison he had been struck with back in the Forbidden Fields, the same poison that killed his master had actually been an Immortal grade or higher poison.

Alex wondered if he could have cured the poison in his body back then if he had sat down and cultivated. Even if it did not fully cure, it should have been able to slow down the poison's advance.

Then, his face fell as he realized that his master could've likely survived too had she cultivated during that time.

'But there was no Qi. We were suppressed,' he thought. He couldn't help but feel horrible at the thought that his master would have likely survived the battle with that old man had she only been able to cultivate after being poisoned.

The wounds wouldn't have stopped her at all since she had a lot of pills. It was all because they were suppressed.

Alex's face turned gloomy and his eyes welled up. But he quickly wiped it away and shook his head with a sigh.

"What's done is done. I can only live my life and keep moving forward like my master wanted me to," he thought and walked away from that location.

The swampland, for now, was a valley where every single plant and animal was either poisonous, venomous, or simply toxic.

Everything else that lived here could either survive toxicity or was simply too strong to care about poisons.

Alex kept walking... or floating. He stepped on the water, but his feet never sunk below it.

His yang aura was still flared out to the fullest and he was starting to wonder if that was a good idea or not.

It was helping him keep away the poison in the air, but it was also forcing him to make such yang being flared normality.

He knew he would suffer from this if he kept it for a long time. He was already suffering its effect as his Flickering Shadow technique was starting to perform worse and worse now.

Every time he teleported, he would appear close to where he wanted to, but not exactly where he chose to.

It had taken Alex not long to realize the problem. His body had a Yang constitution, with his Qi having heavy Yang properties. When he tried to create Yin with his body, it was hampered by his yang, and not all of it was made to the technique.

So, when he teleported, he fell short each time.

That was one problem his body was causing, but there were also others. Another problem he suffered was when he made pills. Every time he sat down to make pills, he would have to cultivate his yin cultivation technique for a long time to get rid of as much Yang as he could before starting.

Otherwise, he had a hard time even making pills most of the time if he didn't do that.

'I need to find some yin treasures and consume them. That should be able to help me balance it a bit more,' Alex thought.

With many of the poisons having yin attributes, he was sure he wouldn't have a hard time finding such treasures.

So, Alex went around the swamp, freely as there was nothing that could hurt him or surprise him, and roamed the land.

Every day, he found new plants or beasts that he recognized to be alchemy ingredients and took them. He fought monsters left and right with nothing but his sword.

Most of the time, he would be poisoned, but he didn't need to worry about that. A single circling of his cultivation removed all poison from his body.

Alex was surprised to see that plants here were more toxic than the animals. Most of the time, the animal was just cultivating the toxins the plant gave off, capturing them into their own body.

He was learning more and more about poison and venoms every day.

A few times, Alex even sat down to use the ingredients he had gathered to make some poison pills.

One of the pills he made, a Heart Wrenching Poison pill, even came out to be around 56%. He would have likely gotten more out of the other pills too, but splitting his concentration into igniting a flame under the cauldron without using his formation plates held Alex back quite a bit.

In the months that passed since Alex entered the poison swamp, he had gone nearly 30 kilometers into the heart of the swamp, or so he believed.

A few times, he even saw humans in the poison swamp, walking around with artifacts and talismans hovering in front of them to block the poison. The first time he had seen them, he was surprised. But once he realized that it was a normal occurrence for people to come here and gather ingredients for themselves, he relaxed.

No one really wanted to fight another person for no reason in a place where a breath of the air could likely kill you.

Alex also never tried to talk with those people either. Most left only an hour or two after getting there.

With only about 150 meters of range on his senses, he was sure there were many more humans that came to this place, but he only got to see these ones.

Alex's Sword Intent progressed quite a bit and he could now cut a normal True Lord 3rd realm beast in half without even using his Qi.

If he did use Qi, it would reach True lord's 5th realm.

"Can I even progress any further?" he thought, standing next to the corpse of a red-skinned lizard.

Its head and tail were cut in half, and half the scales on its body were gone, likely to Alex's ring.

Alex watched his sword and wondered if he had reached a bottleneck. His progress felt stagnant and while he felt like he could progress, there just wasn't any.

'Maybe I'm supposed to take a break and try again,' he thought, but that didn't feel right. It was like he was reaching the limit of his Intent and was having trouble understanding what he should have done next.

'Dammit! If I had some more time in the library, I would have learned about swords. Now, I'm stuck with doing what Du Yuhan told me to do,' he thought.

Finding your personality and putting it into your own Sword Intent. That was how Du Yuhan told him sword Qi was born.

"I really need to learn who I am," Alex thought. That was the only way forward.

Alex walked forward and reached the tree behind the dead lizard. There hung a fruit on the tree that was shaped like a litchee but was the size of Alex's head.

Even as Alex walked close, he could feel the familiar coldness that his master used to produce. This fruit had a Yin attribute to it.

Alex plucked the fruit from the tree and sat down beneath it to eat it. He opened one of the fruits and tore off a giant piece to eat it at once.

When it reached his stomach, he didn't immediately let his body get rid of it. Instead, he slowly permeated the fruit's energy throughout his body. Wherever the poison reached, the existing yang aura would come to get rid of it.

By the time he ate the entire fruit, it felt like Alex had cultivated his yin technique for a month continuously.

Alex put back the other 2 fruits into his ring as he would use those when the Yang flared back again.

During the next few months, Alex roamed around more of the poison swamp, stealing as many ingredients as he could find.

After nearly a year of being in this place, Alex was starting to get fed up. He wanted to leave, but he knew Shen Jing would be coming any time now, so he didn't leave.

As expected, not many days after, while Alex was fighting with a giant insect, a voice drifted to his ear.

Shen Jing was here.

Chapter 636: Dao of Techniques

"You ready to go?" Shen Jing's voice drifted into Alex's ear. That meant he was close by. However, even with his nearly 170 meters wide spiritual sense, he couldn't pinpoint Shen Jing at all.

"Just after I'm done with this," Alex said as he dodged a poison shot from the insect in front of him.

Alex wasn't even sure if the insect was the right term to be used here. The beast in front of him was a 3 meters tall ant-like beast with a rather thin, circular body, with 8 spider-like legs coming out of it.

Its dark-brown skin with a furry body made it look nothing like any insects Alex knew of. Not to mention the many dozens of small eyes on its head and the straw-like mouth which it used to spit poison at him.

Alex didn't dodge because of the poison, but rather the force behind each shot of the poison.

The insect's exoskeleton was strong enough to handle most attacks, and its poison shots were enough to scrape off his outer skin which gave him a burning sensation that he didn't like.

Alex's sword glowed white, with no hint of any other Qi, and occasionally strayed out white flickers of light as if someone were hammering on a hot piece of iron.

Alex dodged past the incoming poison shot and dashed beneath the insect's massive legs to strike at one of its legs.

However, as if steel hitting steel, his sword only rang in his hands and did nothing whatsoever to the beast.

Its hide was way too strong. "Of course, it would be," Alex thought. "It is a True Lord 7th Realm beast after all."

Alex fought for a few minutes more, trying to find some way to beat the insect, which was clearly a defensive beast when he heard Shen Jing's voice again.

"You might miss the opening if you don't leave now," he said.

Alex started. He didn't know what this Demon realm was but if Shen Jing was talking about it, then he definitely didn't want to miss it.

Aura flared around him as the originally white blade started glowing golden as well.

Alex then zipped past the insect and hit the insect through its underbelly. As if opening a zipper on a jacket, a long gash appeared on the insect's body that opened fully and the entrails of the beast flopped out.

Just like that, the beast was dead. Shen Jing appeared next to him and said, "Not bad."

Alex could finally see him through his senses and turned to face Shen Jing. "How much of a hurry are we in? Do I have time to get some of this beast's parts?" he asked.

"Hahaha, I was joking. Do what you want. There is still a day before the realm opens," Shen Jing said.

Alex was about to frown, but he stopped his face from showing any changes. Instead, he just nodded and started carving out the eyes, heart, and the monster core of the insect.

The eyes alone took him about 15 minutes to carve out as he had to be careful not to pop them.

Shen Jing looked at Alex as he used his golden claw to carve the core out and said, "That's quite a bad technique, you know."

Alex turned around with his monster core and asked, "Sorry?"

"What you're doing right now. That's bad," Shen Jing said. "Always find a meridian path for your technique for maximum efficiency."

"Is that so?" Alex said. "It's a technique I created, so I just randomly bring out my Qi," he said.

"I can see that," Shen Jing said. "Attack me with that claw."

Alex raised an eyebrow with curiosity, but asked no question and instead simply attacked.

As his golden claw scratched against what was clearly flesh, the claws disappeared as if they were made up of sand.

"See? It's weak. Also, I bet it takes quite a lot of Qi to use that," Shen Jing said. "I know you are just making this technique, but try to find a correct path for it and you will find the efficiency increase by a lot."

"Same for your Sun-making technique. I didn't say anything as I needed something to strain your meridians at the time, but now that they seem very wide and flexible, you can try out different paths for it as well," he said.

Alex thought to himself. 'Hm, so that means there is not just one way to form a technique huh? Just like there is not just one recipe for the same pill.'

'However, with each variation, it can be improved upon. A proper path and a proper intent, with these two things, any techniques can be strengthened,' Alex thought.

Shen Jing had a wry look on his face as he looked at the sky. The Worldly laws had stirred again.

"You are in the right direction, but you are mistaken about something it seems," Shen Jing suddenly said.

"Sorry?" Alex asked.

"The thing you were thinking about just now. Whatever you were thinking of, you are making a mistake somewhere," Shen Jing said.

'He can read my minds?' Alex thought with surprise. He didn't know there was such a skill.

"What am I mistaken about, brother Shen?" he asked.

"I don't know," Shen Jing said. "What did you learn just now, tell me."

Alex frowned but still told him what he had just learned about path and intent.

"Ah! I see," Shen Jing said. "So that's what you were learning about. Well, I can see where you are mistaken there."

"Oh," Alex looked surprised. "Where am I mistaken?"

Shen Jing shook his head. "I can't tell you," he said. "I will only be harming your future prospects if I tell you right now."

Alex was confused now. "How would you be harming my future by teaching me something I don't know?" he asked. The words coming out of Shen Jing contradicted themselves.

Shen Jing sighed. "Let's leave, I will tell you on the way."

The two of them started flying, but Shen Jing didn't speed up at all and went along at Alex's pace.

"What you are trying to learn, or actually have already learned, is called a Dao."

"A Dao is a fundamental law of the world that anyone can learn if they contemplate on it enough. However, you also need to have the talent for it."

"The Dao of techniques is what you were trying to learn just now. It's certainly one of the weaker Dao that won't even help you in battle. But if you were to look into making techniques, this would certainly help you," Shen Jing said.

"Dao..." Alex softly said to himself. "I've learned a Dao before?"

"Your explosions. You learned how to do it yourself right? Even the world helps you perform it," Shen Jing said.

"Ah!" Alex realized. "That's a Dao?"

"Yes, and see how strong it is," Shen Jing said.

"So, why can you not teach me about the Dao of techniques? You said I was mistaken right?" Alex asked.

"A Dao only comes down from the heaven when you are enlightened about a technique. The more information you get about a Dao from someone else, the less likely you are to obtain that Dao because you did not earn it yourself."

"Which is why I don't want to explain to you anything. Certainly, there is a chance that you have enough knowledge and understanding of this Dao yourself that my help isn't accounted for much, but if there is the slightest chance that you may falter because of me, I think it's better I just shut up," Shen Jing said.

This was a massive bit of information for Alex. He thought to himself as he flew for a few minutes, letting Shen Jing do the navigating when a question flowed into his mind.

"You said that the Dao of techniques was one of the weaker Daos right?" Alex asked.

"Yes," Shen Jing said. "Anything that doesn't directly influence a battle is usually considered a minor Dao. But it's a ranking that humans gave so you will have to see for yourself how worth it is to have that Dao."

Alex mulled over this information, but his original question still remained in his head, so he decided to ask it.

"If this Dao of techniques is considered a minor Dao, then certainly it's not very useful during the battle itself. Then... does it matter if you teach me the Dao or not?" Alex asked.

"I can see that my Explosion Dao is very strong. So strong that I myself have to fear it, and I doubt I could have learned something this great by simply learning about it from someone else," he said.

"But, the Dao of Techniques doesn't seem like that. If, as you said, it helps me come up with techniques, then won't simply learning have a similar effect?"

"Even if the effect is worse, won't learning about it right now help me way more than learning about the Dao myself many years later?" Alex asked.

Shen Jing couldn't immediately answer this question. "Your words have truth and they do make sense. But you are lacking one bit of information," Shen Jing said.

Alex curiously looked at Shen Jing, waiting for him to speak.

"While a Dao may or may not be useful to now, or learning the information may be more useful than gaining the dao, there is something else a Dao is helpful for," Shen Jing said.

"The more Daos you have acquired by the time you reach the peak of Saint realm, the better your chances of breaking through to the Immortal Realm becomes."

Chapter 638: Demons

Alex slowly drifts down to the grassy land and stands some distance away from the majority of the crowd.

Seeing so many young men and women accompanied by the many Saint realm was very surprising to Alex.

"I thought reaching the saint realm was a hard task for cultivators in the Western Continent," Alex said. "But there are so many of them here."

Alex started counting and he found nearly 20 different Saint realm experts here.

20... that was nearly 7 times more than what he had seen in the Crimson Empire. Given how many more must have been hidden, Alex couldn't help but show shock on his face.

"Only 20," Shen Jing said. "Such a sad fate for the Western Continent."

"It's still 20 you know," Alex said from the side.

"Do you understand how bad of a number that is?" Shen Jing asked. "There should be close to 15 billion humans living on the Western Continent alone."

"Even if 150 of them end up entering the Saint realm, that is still 1 in a 100 Million entering the Saint realm. Do you think that is many?" Shen Jing asked.

When put like that, no, that was not that many.

"By comparison, the northern and southern continent would have around 1 in 10 Million people enter the Saint realm. As for the Eastern Continent with their better Spirit veins and resources, I wouldn't be surprised if there were 1 Saint realm in every Million people."

"Do you still think these measly 20 is a lot?" he asked. There was a sense of sadness and disappointment in his voice that Alex couldn't understand.

"It's all because of the other continents, right? They stole the resources," Alex asked.

"That is correct. From what I hear, all of the saint rank spirit veins were taken away for themselves, lowering the chances of any Saint realm cultivator to improve in this continent," Shen Jing said, shaking his head from side to side.

That got Alex thinking. "If they took away all the spirit veins, then how come there are Saint realm cultivators here now?" Alex asked.

"Ah, they took all, but more appeared." Shen Jing said.

Alex looked curious. "Can spirit veins simply appear?" he asked.

"Well, some appeared from the remaining True spirit veins upgrading to Saint spirit veins," Shen Jing said. "But that was rare."

"When I say more appeared, I am referring to that," Shen Jing said as his fingers pointed somewhere.

Alex followed the point and saw the large, nearly 10 meters tall, yellow column with words written on it.

"That monument?" Alex asked, wondering how a monument could have created spirit veins.

"No, not the monument itself, but what's inside of it," Shen Jing said.

"What's inside?" Alex asked with a confused look. But a moment later he realized what Shen Jing must have been talking about.

"The demon realm?" Alex's eyes changed.

"Yes," Shen Jing said.

"So it is a secret realm?" he asked.

"It's a pocket space created by the demons to hide themselves during the... Eternal War for Dominance," Shen Jing said, slowing himself down on the last words. He seemed to be contemplating if he should be saying those words or not.

"Eternal War for Dominance?" Alex's curiosity was piqued. "What is that?"

"It's... a war of forgotten times. It was so long ago that it doesn't matter anymore," Shen Jing said. "It was a pointless war."

Alex saw that Shen Jing didn't want to say anything about it, so he didn't push any further.

"What's a demon then?" Alex asked.

"Demons are just humans with two small red horns, weird colored eyes, and a slightly better physical body," Shen Jing said.

Alex frowned. "That's it?" he asked. Just two horns and weird eyes... that was enough to get yourself to be called a demon?

"Yes, that's it," Shen Jing said.

"That's not enough to have an entirely different word for you," Alex said.

"Tell that to the people who started that war so many years ago. If you can see how pointless this distinction is, you can likely understand how pointless that war back then was too," Shen Jing said.

"Well that's what I heard at least," Shen Jing said. "I wasn't alive or anything during that time to know exactly how pointless it was."

"What was the war for?" Alex couldn't help but ask.

"What all wars are for," Shen Jing replied. "Land and resources. However, neither the humans nor the demons had ever lacked land for themselves."

"So you can see what I mean when I say it was pointless right?" he asked.

Alex nodded. He understood... to a certain extent. But there had to be something more to it.

Alex changed the topic back to the secret realm. "So that demon's realm, that provided the western continent with Saint rank spirit veins to help produce Saint realm cultivators?" he asked.

"Yes," Shen Jing said. "They never cared for this tiny realm when the Western continent was just as good as the rest of the world, but once it was no longer as good, they all hounded on it until nothing of worth remained to them."

Alex's face narrowed. "If there is nothing of worth there then why am I here?" he asked.

Shen Jing gave a bright smile. "What is not of worth to a Saint realm cultivator is usually treasure to a True realm cultivator," he said.

"Besides, it's been 5000 years or so since the saint realm experts robbed this place. Since then, they have only sent in True realm cultivators to train them, have them cultivate in the rich environment and find what treasures were left behind," Shen Jing explained.

Excitement swelled up in Alex's heart when he heard all of this and looked at the many young men and women that were gathered in the area.

They were all here to train themselves and find treasures as well.

"Wait a second," Alex said. "It's been 5 thousand years since the secret realm opened and people have been going inside all the time. Are we sure that there is even anything worth taking in there?"

"Oh, you don't need to doubt that at all," Shen Jing said. "The realm opens once in every 10 years, so there will certainly be quite a few resources still in there."

"Also... the secret realm is covered in seals all over that are so powerful that even Saint realm experts can't break through them."

"And... it's been so long that every few decades, a few of the seals end up dimming and whatever is behind it opens up. Do you want to guess what the demons were hiding in there with seals that made Saint realm expert return?" Shen Jing asked.

Alex's heart started beating faster and faster as he heard that. He looked back at the monument, unable to wait for it to open up.

However, since there was still some time, according to Shen Jing, he had to wait.

More and more figures came to the island with a cool breeze flowing from the south. Alex could hear the splashing of the ocean against the island from quite far away.

Shen Jing handed Alex back his storage bags, which Alex checked and found that not a single thing in them was missing.

He transferred all the valuables in those storage bags into his ring in a way that only Shen Jing could see, and he noticed Shen Jing's eyes flash for a split second when he put one of the items into his storage ring.

'What was it?' Alex wondered, but he had too many important items to realize.

In the next 6 hours, as the sun began to fall, and everyone started setting up their own tents and stations, Alex had sat down to cultivate with Shen Jing protecting him.

Pearl wanted to cultivate as well, but Alex didn't want to show the wounds that would appear on him to the outside world right now, so he stopped Pearl from doing anything.

Alex circulated a poison flower of yin element in his body as he got rid of the Yang energy that was building up because of his body.

After a round of cultivation that lasted somewhere until midnight, Alex stopped once his Qi was full again. That was when he looked around the humans that were spread throughout the island, and wondered if more Saint realm experts had appeared.

As if on cue, Shen Jing told him that there were 27 Saint realm experts on the island now.

Shen Jing also told him that there were likely going to be about 200 or so, maybe even more young people that would enter the secret realm from what he could sense.

Alex didn't dare release his spiritual sense amongst these crowd of Saint realms. It was scary enough doing that with just a few around.

"Oh, interesting," Shen Jing said.

"What's going on?" Alex asked, curiously.

"I am just surprised that a lot of the disciples here are quite talented. I have found at least 5 people other than you that have unlocked their spiritual sense," Shen Jing said.

"Although, it seems that they unlocked it later than you, so their senses are much weaker than your own," he said.

"Woah!" Alex thought. He was surprised, but he shouldn't have been.

Compared to the Luminance Empire, the Crimson Empire was like a children's playground. A beginner's town for users in a game to level up before they went out to venture into the real world.

Alex had come to this real world, and he was starting to see just how terrifyingly difficult the real world was going to be.

Chapter 639: Runes

The sun rose back again, and according to Shen Jing, there was still a couple of hours before the realm would start.

So, everyone was just staying there, waiting for it to be open.

So, Alex was quite bored and decided to ask Shen Jing something that had been in his mind for a while.

"Brother Shen, what happened to the demons?" he asked. If there was a demon realm here, then there had to be demons living on this continent, or more likely all 5 continents.

Why was there no information about demons anymore in this world?

"Oh, nothing bad," Shen Jing said with a glowing smile. "Once the war was over, they left the secret realm and went out to live with humans in harmony, happily ever after."

Alex stopped his face from frowning. "Please be serious, brother Shen," he said.

"Oh but I am serious," Shen Jing said. "When the war ended, the demons had no longer any reason to stay in that realm, so they left it and went on to live on the main continent with the humans that had now occupied most of the land."

"And where are these demons now?" Alex asked, half expecting Shen Jing to make up something else to continue his lie, and half hoping that he was telling the truth and that there really were demons, but he simply had not seen them.

"Well... there are no demons exactly so to speak," Shen Jing said. "Since the war, I am talking about happened so long ago that records of it are hard to find, the demons that lived together with the humans started really living together."

"As in they got into relationships and even had children of their own. Those children had their children and those children had their children."

"Slowly, the pure demon bloodline diluted to the point that it is nowhere, and yet everywhere."

Shen Jing looked at everyone in-crowd and slowly said, "Each of these humans here has some level of demon blood in them. But it is so diluted that their physical properties, like the horn, eyes and superior body usually don't manifest at all."

"I see," he said. "So... in a sense, we are all at some part demons too huh?"

Shen Jing looked at Alex with a smile that looked like it was keeping a chuckle from showing through.

"Everyone, please gather here for a quick meeting," a man with no hair called out to the people in the crowd.

He wore a white robe that had burnt edges that were fully black. Next to him, stood 2 other people.

One of them wore a white robe that was nearly filled with red all over as if the man stood on in a blood rain while wearing white.

The other one, a woman, wore a fully purple robe with multicolor linings on the inside.

Of the 3, only the bald one had spoken.

"Let's go see what it is," Alex said to Shen Jing, who half-heartedly stood up and walked to the crowd.

Finally, as Alex got closer, he was able to sense more and more cultivation base of the people that were on the island.

Even while they tried to suppress their aura, the Saint realms could still be sensed from a kilometer away.

But these True realm cultivators were harder to sense from where Alex was, at least without sending out his spiritual sense.

So, now that he was sensing them, he looked surprised. 'So strong,' he thought.

These normal-looking disciples ranged from the True Master realm, all the way up to the True King realm. Amongst them, Alex ranked somewhere in the middle, he thought.

"You will have a hard time in the secret realm, but it's also a good opportunity to see where your training has brought you," Shen Jing said.

Alex nodded. It wasn't a competition that he needed to be afraid of True King participants. All he needed to do was walk aside when they were around.

As Alex was looking through the crowd, watching the Myriad people in there, his eyes fell on a young man —well, young for his cultivation base— standing next to two elder figures wearing the same fully red, almost crimson robe.

His eyes flashed as if to sense someone watching him, and he turned around towards Alex and looked at him.

Alex gave a smile and a nod to this young man, confusing him if he had even seen Alex before.

However, as he searched through his mind, he quickly remembered where he had seen him before.

"Brother Yu Ming?" a shocked voice entered his mind, surprising Alex. 'Spiritual sense? He didn't have it last time,' Alex thought.

The young man rushed towards Alex, while the rest of the crowd was focused on the older men that were still in the process of gathering everyone.

"Sorry for startling you like that with my spiritual sense," the young man said.

"It was a pleasant surprise, brother Fu Tao," Alex said, bowing a little in greeting.

"My surprise on the other hand is undeniably shocking, brother Yu," Fu Tao said. "You really did come to the Luminance Empire."

"I did, and it was all thanks to you," Alex said.

"Right, right, don't worry about that. I remember you talking about wanting to save someone, right? Did...you..." Fu Tao slowly asked.

"Yes," Alex said, pushing Pearl a little until his head popped out of his robes.

"Meow!" Pearl greeted. After Alex's insistence that he only meows from now on to strangers, Pearl remembered not to say 'Hello' even if he wanted to.

"Oh, it was a cat huh?" Fu Tao said, with almost all of his interest in the conversation disappearing slowly.

He turned to the side and looked towards the older bald man and said, "Something seems to be happening, we can talk later."

Then, he walked back to where he had been before.

"True King 7th realm?" Alex softly asked.

"8th," Shen Jing replied while staring at Fu Tao. "He sure doesn't know how to hide his disinterest, does he?"

"I think he's a good guy, but I wouldn't trust myself to judge a person," Alex said.

"Better to be careful," Shen Jing said.

Alex turned around to look at the front where the people were gathering and by coincidence looked at the monument to the side of them.

The monument was rectangular in shape and had something carved onto one of the faces that Alex couldn't see from where he had been before this.

'Are those... writings?' he thought. He read the word 'Demons' at the very top of the monument, but other than that, he could read nothing else.

It didn't even look like the other languages that the beasts and immortals used.

"Brother Shen, what does that say?" he asked, looking at the carving.

Shen Jing looked at Alex, then turned to the monument, then looked back at Alex, then turned to the monument and looked back at Alex for the final time.

"You do remember that I cannot read, right?" he asked.

Alex stopped his urge to laugh out loud. He really had forgotten. "I'm sorry. I read the word Demon at the top, but other than that, I couldn't read anything," he said.

Shen Jing turned around to look at the monument once again and said, "Ah, I do know what those are."

Alex looked at him with narrowed eyes.

Shen Jing gave a bright smile back. "I do," he said. "Did you forget that I've been here before? I simply remembered what they are."

Alex's suspicions disappeared and he asked, "So, what do they say?"

"Nothing," Shen Jing said, keeping his bright smile to himself.

"Brother Shen, please don't joke around," Alex said.

Shen Jing chuckled a little and said, "I'm really not joking. That thing might say demon at the top, but other than that, it's all just runes carved into the block."

"Runes?" Alex asked with a confused look.

"Yes, runes," Shen Jing said.

Alex frowned. He looked at the monument once again and carefully looked through each of these 'runes.'

'Oh my god,' he thought.

"They really are runes," Alex said out loud.

"See? I told you I wouldn't lie," Shen Jing said.

Alex was genuinely surprised to see runes carved on the monument's wall. After all, as far as he knew, runes were only used in talismans.

"Why are there runes on the wall?" Alex asked as he looked at the monument again.

The perfectly carved runes flowed artistically in all sorts of geometrical figures as well as curves, making designs in the monument that was intrinsic, artistic, and most of all... Symmetric.

Alex couldn't help but wonder what all of these runes did or meant. He desperately wished to know anything about talismans right now.

But, he didn't, so he had no idea.

"Of course, you would find runes here. It's a demon's realm after all," Shen Jing said.

Alex turned his head to look at him. "What does that have to do with anything?" he asked.

Shen Jing gave him a curious look and asked, "Do you not know?" only to immediately say, "Ah right, you only learned about Demons today after all."

Alex's curiosity was obviously piqued by this statement.

"What do I not know?" Alex asked.

"That it was the demons who created the runes in the first place," Shen Jing said.

"What?" Alex asked in surprise.

"Well, created is a wrong word. Discovered is more like it," he said. "While the humans discovered pills and formations, it was the demons who discovered runes and medicinal pastes."

Chapter 640: Right of Strength

Alex was a little surprised, but it didn't last long. He instead thought to himself about what he had just learned.

"So these runes do something even when carved on rocks, but no one knows how it works now, huh? I assume so since I haven't seen it being used anywhere in this place," Alex said.

"Yeah... well, over time things change a lot. Some information disappears, while others get adopted," Shen Jing said.

"The demons forget how to use the runes on anything other than talisman after mixing together with the humans, while humans forget their own language," Shen Jing said with a sigh.

"Their own language?" Alex narrowed his eyes. "The language we use currently is demon language?"

"Yes," Shen Jing said. "Although I can not read, I am told that the language used currently is the demon language, while the human language is now very hard to find."

Alex felt shocked to his core. 'Those two languages,' he thought, referring to the language he could read, and the one he simply understood. 'Those languages are the Demon language and the Human language?'

Alex couldn't believe that he had learned a language belonging to the demons this entire time. Although, that didn't matter much anymore after learning that he was in some part a demon himself.

Everyone in this world was.

'I guess humans with no demon influence must live in the heavens then,' he thought. 'They must be the immortals.'

Shen Jing said nothing further as he stared forward towards the old man in the white robe with burnt-up sleeves.

By now, the majority of the people here had already gathered around the old man, so he started speaking.

"Thank you for coming here to listen to me," he started. "As many of you might have learned, 2 years ago, our empire suffered an incomparable damage in the form of losing almost all of our disciples and young talents inside the secret realm to the north."

"So, we currently need to find ways of major improvements for the young generations. Thus, along with brother Song and sister Wei here, we have planned to put a limit on the number of people that can enter," the bald man said.

Immediately, people started whispering amongst themselves. Many saint realm folks looked around themselves, saying nothing. But from what Alex could see, it looked like they were communicating amongst each other but only using their spiritual sense.

"What do you propose exactly, Zhou RenKong?" one of the Crimson-robed elders from next to Fu Tao spoke.

"It is simple, Fu Shun. Those from the big Clans and Sects get to send in 3 disciples each. Those from the small ones get to send 1 disciple each."

"And unfortunately, those without any affiliations, we will have to stop you from entering this time around. Please wait until the demon realm opens in 10 years for your next chance," the bald man finished speaking.

Not a moment passed, and chaos erupted on the island.

"What do you mean we only get to send one?"

"I have waited 15 years for this event."

"I need to find a rare ingredient inside to save my sister. You cannot stop me."

As expected, people immediately protested. The only ones who didn't protest were those of the big clans and sects that were happy with getting 3 spots each.

"I for one think that is an excellent idea," one of the female saints experts in golden robes with a sword hovering next to her spoke.

"I think that's a brilliant idea too," Another man in green robes with stitches that looked like leaves spoke as well.

People once again erupted into voices of anger and unfairness. They claimed that neither the Jin clan nor the Lu clan suffered from these rules, which was why they were accepting it in the first place.

In the people's protest, Alex heard the names of all of the 8 great clans in the Luminance empire, as well as some big sects.

He heard names such as Broken Ravine sect, Heaven's Peak school, Falling Lotus sect, and Glory's Edge sect amongst many other names of sects and schools.

Alex tried to look around to recognize who was who, but with how little information he had about the status of the Luminance empire, it became hard to tell.

Still, he looked at the faces of those who approved this and saw no sign of surprise or amazement. 'They must have planned it all from the start, even before coming here,' he thought.

Alex counted the number of people that looked satisfied and it was easy to tell how many of them would get to send 3 disciples inside.

From Alex's count, it was about 15 of them. Meaning 45 spots for entry was already set.

If 1 from the remaining sects and clans were to enter, and even if that number happened to be a massive 50, that would still be less than half of the True realm cultivators that had come here today.

A man wearing dirty brown robes walked forward. From what Alex could sense, the man's cultivation base was weak. He realized that it must have been a rogue cultivator that reached this current realm on his own.

"I beg your pardon, Elder, but what gives you the right to block me and my fellow peers from entering the realm? We might be rogue cultivators, but we are still hardworking people. Do we not deserve the chance to enter?" he asked.

The bald man's face twitched a little when he heard the young man speak.

"It was a collective decision between us three and since so many have already agreed today, it only makes this rule even stronger," the bald man said.

"I have eyes, elder," the man said. "We all do. You don't have to lie and say that you just happened to come up with the idea and others happened to agree."

"We can all see that this was your idea from before you even came to this place. It can't be that you all happened to bring only 3 disciples each, right?" the man asked.

"So, I still ask you. What gives you the right to—"

Before the rogue cultivator could finish speaking, a tremendous aura appeared around him that made him kneel to the ground, with his knees buckling.

The man strained to speak, but he couldn't even breathe at the moment.

"What right you say?" the bald man's furious eyes looked at the rogue cultivator.

"Strength! My strength is what gives me the right to do whatever I want to," he said.

"You, a mere rogue cultivator, dares to talk back to me? The only reason you are even alive at this point is that killing you is beneath me," the bald man said.

The other Saint realm cultivators from the big sects and clans simply shook their heads, not in disdain towards the bald elder, but in pity towards the rogue cultivator.

The saint realm experts, who were likely patriarchs and sect leaders of other smaller sects and clans were frowning and protecting their disciples from the bald man's aura.

As for the rogue cultivators, while they weren't the direct targets of the bald man's aura, they were still struggling to keep themselves up.

Alex too was feeling the aura of the old man press on him, but mere aura no longer worked to stop him in his place.

He stared at the old man with hidden disapproval. However, he couldn't do anything about it at all. If the saint realm cultivator wanted to do something, what could he, a mere True realm cultivator do?

"Do any of you have any more complaints?" the bald man asked with heavy disdain in his voice.

None of the crowd moved as they didn't want the full fury of a saint realm elder from a massive clan. They were all too scared to even think o—

Suddenly, a hand went up. Everyone looked around in shock as if they were looking at a dead man.

The young man who raised his hands walked a little forward so everyone could see him.

The young man had blonde hair that ended in black and came down to his shoulders. He wore a white robe with no other colors and held a brilliant smile on his face.

Alex sighed as the young man who had walked forward was obviously Shen Jing.

"Dear brother, do you think it is fair to stop all of these young men from gaining a chance to improve themselves?" Shen Jing asked.

The bald man gave a strange look at Shen Jing as if surprised that he was able to stand his aura.

"Of course It is fair. If I decide that is fair, then it is," the old man said.

"I see, you did say that your strength gives you such right," Shen Jing said.

"Of cour—" the old man was about to say when Shen Jing continued.

"Then, I say it is only fair that none of your disciples get to enter as well," Shen Jing said.

"What did you say?" the old man was about to walk forward when a cut appeared on his cheeks out of nowhere.

Then, he buckled onto the floor, his right leg twisting towards the side, clearly broken.

At the same time, massive pressure landed on the whole island, targeting only the Saint realm cultivators.

Even amongst them, only those from the big clans and sects felt the real, horrifying pressure.

Their eyes opened wide in horror at sensing a pressure that only their sect leaders and patriarch could likely summon.

Shen Jing smiled looking at the crumpled Saint realms and said, "Since I hold the strength now, I suppose it's only right and fair that I make a new rule."