

Alchemy 641

Chapter 641: Demon Realm Opens

The pressure was terrifying, and nauseating as if they were being pushed down onto the ground by a massive block of metal.

The saint realm experts quickly broke into a sweat when they felt the aura of the newly arrived young man.

Saint Soul realm.

They were sure that the young man in front of them had reached the Saint Soul realm at a very young age. The implication of that thought terrified them more than the pressure they felt at the moment.

The young man may kill them right now, and that was in fact scary. But if they really did anger him and he did go to find justice with their clans and sects, that would lead to almost all the sects being destroyed.

In a split second, they all immediately understood. They could not anger this young man at all.

"Let's see," Shen Jing walked around, as the True realm cultivators looked at him in surprise. Even a few of the saint realms that were not from the major clan and sect only felt slight, uncomfortable pressure, nothing scary.

However, seeing the reaction of the other cultivators bigger than them, they understood that they were only feeling slight pressure because he wasn't focused on them.

"Uh-huh! I know. None of you can enter the demon realm aside from the younger brother I came with," he said.

Alex didn't like the attention of so many people in the crowd, but fortunately, Shen Jing didn't turn to him and thus nobody realized who he was talking about.

"Fellow Daoist, that is unfair," one of the saint realm cultivators forced out a few words.

"Unfair?" Shen Jing gave the most exaggerated chuckle when he heard that. "Unfair you say. Why didn't you say so when the other unfair rule was put forth?"

"I—" the person didn't know what to say. "I apologize Fellow Daoist. I was only thinking about myself."

"Fellow Daoist, I'm sure we can talk this through," the other saint realm cultivators started speaking.

One after another, suddenly everyone wanted to talk peacefully. Shen Jing snorted at them and lifted the pressure on them.

They all took a collective breath, some taking in more than normal, and immediately thanked Shen Jing for taking mercy on them.

"So, what do you want to talk about?" he asked.

"Fellow Daoist, would you please give us your name?" one of the men asked.

"Shen Jing," Shen Jing replied quickly as if he had been expecting this question.

The man who asked the question quickly turned his head towards a man wearing bluish-gray robes with moving water depicted on them.

The blue-robed man looked towards Shen Jing in confusion as well. "Forgive this junior brother, but I don't recognize you at all, senior brother," the blue-robed man said.

"Oh?" Shen Jing looked curious. "Who are you?"

"This one's name is Shen Liwei, senior brother Jing," the blue-robed man said.

"Ah, I understand the confusion," Shen Jing said. "I'm not from your clan."

"So, let's get on to the point. Why did you guys want to talk to me?" Shen Jing asked

"Daoist Shen Jing, please do not stop our disciples from entering that secret realm. As you must know, we lost a great number of talented young people 2 years ago, and we desperately need to retrain more disciples to replace the ones we lost," the elders said.

"Yes, fellow Daoist. Even if you do not fear our sects and clans coming after you, please do it for the fear of the empire not growing as fast," another elder said.

Shen Jing made a thinking face again, but before he could say anything, the ground shuddered a bit.

Then, a bright light shined from the monument as the runes flared to life.

Shen Jing smiled when he saw that. The Demon Realm was open.

The elders started scampering, wondering what to do now. The other rogue cultivators and smaller sect members wanted to enter, but since Shen Jing said he only wanted one person to enter, they had to look at frustration.

Just when they thought the predator had gone down, a different, bigger predator had come to eat their future.

"Daoist Shen, we cannot wait any longer," one of the elders said frantically.

"There are only 10 days available, Fellow Daoist, please do not waste any more time," another elder said.

Shen Jing's smile hadn't left for a single moment.

"Then I will leave you to make a choice," Shen Jing said. "Either 1 person will enter, or all of them will. What do you choose?"

There was not a single shred of hesitation as everyone immediately chose the 2nd option.

"Good," Shen Jing turned around and walked away. "You may send in your disciples now."

As soon as they got the approval, the elders turned around and made their disciples run toward the monument.

Alex watched as they placed their hands on it and disappeared.

Shen Jing walked up to Alex and said, "you should go inside as well. You will only have 10 days to stay in there, so it might be better to go around searching for natural and material treasures rather than cultivating somewhere."

"Yes," Alex said. "I will leave right now."

"Wait a moment," Shen Jing said and placed his hand on Alex's shoulders. Alex felt warm energy enter his body and disappear somewhere.

"While most of the kids from the big families who went in there won't die. There is still a chance that you will. I don't have any treasures on me that will bring you out when you are about to die, so the best I can do is give you the protection that will save you one time."

"If you ever don't want it to be used, just think of it not working, and you will take the damage."

"However, the moment you take any damage greater than True Lord realm, this protection I put on you will work."

"When that happens, run away," Shen Jing said.

Alex nodded. "Thank you," he said. While he knew that having a treasure that would directly bring you out of the demon realm in case of a fatal threat was better, he also knew that Shen Jing had nothing on him at the moment.

So, this was, for him, better than nothing.

It wasn't like he was planning to antagonize anyone, so he didn't worry much about facing any real threat in there.

"Go now," Shen Jing said.

Alex nodded and left. The rogue cultivators, now incredibly happy, were turning to Shen Jing to thank him before placing their hands on the monument.

Some disappeared immediately, while some took a while.

Alex placed his hands and waited to be teleported as well, but it didn't happen. Then, he noticed the young man next to him pour Qi into the monument.

Alex followed suit and poured in his Qi as well. As soon as he did, he felt the familiar feeling of teleportation take over him.

Alex gave in to the feeling and watched the silvery-white light envelop him. Then, he disappeared.

When Alex reappeared, he found himself on top of a mountain somewhere.

"Where the hell am I?"

Chapter 642: Trekking down the Mountain

Alex was on top of a mountain filled to the brim with trees. In fact, he could see trees as far as he could see.

Although, at a certain point, some sort of chromatic haze stopped him from seeing any further.

'That must be the outer wall of this secret realm,' Alex thought. This was the first time he was seeing a wall for a secret realm. Usually, he was at the center of it all in the beast's realm, so he got to see nothing there.

The overgrown trees stopped him from seeing everything but the other giant mountains that were equally covered in trees.

There were about 6 in total including the one Alex was in. Other than that, the massive secret realm was simply plain ground.

Alex closed his eyes and took in a deep breath. The salty air of the island was gone now that he was in here.

And the Qi... it was so dense in here. A normal person's cultivation speed would surely increase by a couple of times if they were to cultivate here.

Alex was tempted to just sit down and cultivate, but he didn't see the point for himself. He was already capable of gaining as much Qi as he wanted by simply consuming pills and monster cores.

He could even eat spirit stones to gain Qi, but the one time he had done it, he hadn't liked it afterward.

Alex had to reach into his stomach with his Qi and pull out the dull stone. Unlike pills and cores, the stones didn't dissolve.

Besides, spirit stones for him were more helpful in other instances than simply cultivation.

Alex looked around from his mountain top to see where he could go. If possible, he would have wanted to go find the alchemy ingredients immediately.

However, due to the massive forests everywhere that seemed to have grown over the last thousands of years, there was no way for him to recognize any places.

He could see open spots in some places, but they were too far to make out exactly what they were.

"Guess, I will have to go down and see," Alex thought.

"Meow!" Pearl wanted to come out too. Alex didn't want to bring him out, but now that he thought about it, he didn't need to worry about Pearl, did he?

"Alright, you can walk along with me," Alex said, bringing Pearl out of his robes and letting him go around on his own.

"Try to hide your cultivation base, okay? I don't want people attacking you before they attack me," Alex said.

"Okay!" Pearl answered.

"Since we have 10 days to spare, let's start with looking around this very mountain," Alex said and flew off.

Pearl was a step late behind him and was about to fly when he saw Alex drop to the ground face-first in front of him.

"Brother?" Pearl asked, wondering why Alex jumped down like that. "Are you okay?"

"Yeah, I'm fine," Alex said as he stood up and dusted off his robes. He fixed his long hair and looked towards the air.

"Was that a barrier?" he questioned himself. He felt like he had hit something just now that sent him flying down.

He wanted to see what it was and slowly flew again. After reaching a certain height, he suddenly felt an instance of suppression on his body and he was pushed back down.

"Dammit!" Alex thought. "Flying seems to be banned here."

He was a little annoyed that he didn't receive this information before coming here. But, he hadn't received any information, so he should have known to be careful.

But this wasn't something one thought about. 'No wonder I don't see anybody flying in the air aside from the birds,' he thought. It didn't take a genius to realize that only flight using Qi was banned here... somehow.

"Sigh, let's go walking then," he said and walked down the mountain with Pearl.

Of the 6 mountains, Alex wondered if they held something important. From what his senses were telling him, there was nothing important here at all.

The forest had some common Alchemy ingredients and a few True rank ingredients, but they were so readily available even outside that Alex didn't even bother picking them.

Only occasionally when he came across something slightly uncommon did he bother to take it with him.

Alex met a variety of beasts when trekking down the mountain, but those too were very weak.

Even with Pearl in his child form, most were steering away from him. Alex could only imagine what would happen if he were to let his yang energy leak out like he normally did back in the eastern mountain ranges.

As he was about to reach the base of the mountain, Alex saw what he thought was a building of some sort.

It looked like the mountain grew around this building, or as if it was carved onto the mountain itself.

The outer walls were rough, broken at places, and looked like they would crumble at any moment. The walls seemed to be made out of some sort of polished stone, but over time, the polish had vanished all but completely.

Alex looked at the giant opening that he knew was the entrance to this building and walked up to it. There was no door here at all, and everything was open.

However, he could see signs of hinges here, so it was obvious that there used to be one before this.

Meaning... "Someone has been here before us," Alex said to Pearl by his side.

He had already sent his spiritual sense inside and noticed a beast sitting in an open room. It was a True Disciple 2nd realm beast so Alex didn't even bother getting ready to fight.

Instead, he walked up to the door and saw that dirt had filled the cracks on something that was over the arch.

Alex sent out his Qi and got rid of the dirt clumped upon it.

'Library' was what was written on there.

Alex sighed. "So this was originally a library huh?" he thought. He wondered if there had been normal books or cultivation books in there.

Whatever it was, it was no longer there at all. Everything in there had been raided already.

Alex sighed. He shook his head and told Pearl that there was nothing in there at all. Pearl sent out his own spiritual sense which extended to about 50 meters ahead of him and nodded to Alex.

"Let's go somewhere else," he said and went down to the foot of the mountain.

'Since this mountain has nothing, maybe I should check the other 5 mountains as well,' he thought.

From what Alex could tell, the mountains were quite far away from where he was. The closest mountain was to his left, around 10 kilometers away.

If he could fly, it wouldn't even take a few minutes to reach there. But now that he was slowly walking, that would take half a day for sure.

"I could get there faster if I run, but that way I might miss something along the way. There is no guarantee that there is something in the mountains in the first place.

Even this mountain only happened to have a single library that was already looted by the previous comers.

As Alex was thinking that, he saw a woman enter his senses. His sense only extended to about 160 to 170 meters at the moment, and such a short distance was easy for True Realm cultivators to see with their own eyes.

So, the Bluish-gray robe that Alex was wearing was standing out in the woman's eyes which were staring directly at her.

Alex acted like he couldn't see her at all, but the woman was definitely looking at him, and even made her way toward him.

'A True Master 4th realm, huh?' Alex thought and acted like he had sensed someone coming.

He turned around to look at her, with a sword that suddenly appeared in his hand.

'Pearl, get behind me and do nothing,' he said.

"Oh thank god! I finally found someone," the girl said as she sprinted towards Alex.

Alex still wasn't sure if this girl was here to rob him or was genuinely looking for help. He decided to play it safe.

"D-don't come near me," Alex said with his single sword pointed at the girl.

The girl was slightly shorter than Alex and had relatively short black hair that fell to her breasts. She wore a green robe with nothing fancy designed into it.

Her face didn't strike him as anything worth caring about. Her age though... he couldn't be sure if she was so young or if her cultivation base was aiding her.

He looked her all over and even sent his spiritual sense, but he found no weapons or talisman on her. Although, she did have armor beneath her robe, and a few storage bags as well.

'That reminds me. I need an armor myself,' he thought.

The girl frowned for a split second when she saw Alex, but changed it back to a smile as she thought, 'A True Disciple? Judging by his clothes, he must be a rogue cultivator. Not to mention he's lost an arm before this.'

'Can he even protect me?' she thought. She was starting to believe that approaching this young man was a mistake and that she would be better off alone.

But now that she was here, she couldn't back away.

"Fear not little brother, I am not here to hurt you," she said with her palms together in greeting.

"My name is Jiang Zhilan, a disciple of the Spear Stream sect. Will you allow me to journey together with you?"

Chapter 643: The Mountains

Jiang Zhilan was one of the best disciples of the Spear Stream sect. Having learned the Spear Stream technique from a young age, she managed to advance until she had become the top 3 core disciples of her sect.

At the age of 28, she had managed to enter the True Master realm. Now 2 years later, she was at the 4th True Master realm.

She knew that there were strong young men and women out there, but surely they couldn't be stronger than her right? Not unless they were older than her as well.

That thought lasted as long as it took for her to reach the island this morning with her sect master and her two male fellow disciples of the sect.

That was when she met young men and women that were younger than her with a cultivation base that vastly outstripped her own.

She had managed to count nearly 54 True Lord realm disciples and 6 True King realm, and not a single one of them was as old as she was.

'I can't survive in the realm,' she thought as her fear had overtaken her.

She felt guilty when she realized she was happy when they only allowed her sect to only bring 1 disciple with them. If that were the case, she was not going to be their first choice.

Then, that monster appeared out of nowhere. He was so young, younger than her even to her eyes. And yet, his cultivation base was the greatest thing she had ever witnessed.

He was like a tiger standing in front of little rabbits, and that sent deep dread into her heart.

By the time she realized that she was allowed to enter the secret realm, she had only one thought in her mind.

Find someone and have them help her.

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Alex looked at the woman in front of him with a confused face, but he didn't forget to keep a hint of fear on his face.

He hoped that she wasn't smart enough to see through him immediately.

"You want my help, senior Sister?" he asked.

"Yes, would you please help me?" she asked.

"But you are so much stronger than me. What help could this little brother possibly give to you?" he said.

Jiang Zhilan was unsure of what to say to this question. If possible, she wanted to leave him behind. She even thought that she should do just that.

But if she were to come across someone strong then... No, she couldn't leave him. Even if just as a scapegoat, she had to bring him along.

"I'm mostly worried about being overwhelmed by beasts on the way to the Cultivation rooms. If more than a few beasts show up at the same time, it would be better for us to stick together, right?" she asked.

Alex's eyes flashed with an imperceptible shine when he heard that. 'Cultivation rooms?' he thought. It sounded like she knew this place. That could certainly come in handy.

"We can also share the resources we come across. I will give you something if I happened to find it too," she said, seeing that he was still not answering.

"I see. Given how strong sister is, seeing that you haven't attacked me yet, I will choose to believe you," Alex said with a slight bow.

"Good, good!" Jiang Zhilan said, sighing to herself in secret. She was now going to be stuck with a weakling. 'Well, at least I will be a little safer,' she thought.

Then, she noticed Pearl next to Alex's feet. "Oh my god, where did you find this beast?" she asked.

"This is my tamed beast, sister. His name is Pearl," Alex introduced her to Pearl.

"Can I hold him?" she asked, and before Alex could even do anything, she squatted down to grab him.

Alex told Pearl to go with her, and Pearl let her grab him. Neither of them was worried. If a True Master 4th realm woman could hurt Pearl who was in True Lord 5th realm, then there was nothing Alex could possibly do to save him.

"Which way should we go, sister? Please be the guide," Alex said.

"Little brother, I suspect that you want to cultivate right? Then we should head towards the mountain at the center of it all. That mountain has the cultivation rooms. I suspect many of them have gone there already and taken their rooms."

"If we don't hurry, we will miss it," she said and started walking in a certain direction.

They couldn't see any mountain from the dense forest they were in, and yet the girl was walking directly towards the third mountain from what he could see.

So, Alex concluded that she either had been on the mountain top from where she saw the mountain, or she had an artifact on her that told her the direction.

"Sister must know a lot about this secret realm to know about the cultivation rooms," Alex said.

"Eh? No, I just know what is written in our sect records," she said.

"Ah, makes sense," Alex said. "I wish I were from a sect too. I've been a rogue cultivator for quite a while, so I don't know much about the secret realm."

The girl nodded. "Yes, having a knowledge of what is going on and where we are going certainly helps," she said.

The girl took out an interesting-looking circular artifact that looked like a clock. However, it had a single hand, which spun quickly and stopped while pointed at a certain location.

"Yes, we are in the right direction," she said and continued walking.

'That was a compass?' Alex wondered. If it was, then it was quite weird to require Qi to be poured in. 'Perhaps it uses no magnet,' he thought.

Along the way, Alex brought up small talk with the girl, trying to bring out as much information about the world as he could.

He then learned that the 3rd mountain, the one with the cultivation rooms was the mountain at the center of the secret realm.

So, whenever someone entered the secret realm, they would check the direction of the mountain at the center of the realm, and suddenly, the whole map they had with them that was created from previous entries made sense to them.

The Spear Stream sect, being a smaller sect hadn't existed for long enough to have a detailed map and only located a few of the locations on the map.

From what it said, the 2nd mountain that Alex had been heading towards was actually an open training ground with training puppets and such.

Alex did want to check his strength after the training, but he immediately lost interest as soon as he learned what was on the 4th and 5th mountains.

The 4th mountain was a land with plants and beasts of all kinds. Although it was overrun with trees too, apparently there were runes beneath those mountains that gathered a lot more Qi there and thus the beasts and plants could grow to be high ranks.

Alex practically prayed that there was a Blood Spirit Ginseng in that mountain.

He had cursed at himself for so long in the eastern mountains when he had realized that after spending a year there at the very least, there was a chance he could likely lose the Blood Spirit Ginseng that he was looking forward to.

Now that it had been 2 years and some months, he was absolutely sure that the Blood Spirit Ginseng was gone.

He had all but 2 ingredients, and that drove him mad. He didn't want to remain one-handed forever.

The 5th mountain was the one around where the people used to stay, or demons rather.

There were apparently houses all over the mountain and even around it. And most of them had runes around them blocking entry from what Alex heard.

Although that was something he had heard from Shen Jing, who as he had gathered was missing from the Western Continent for the past thousand years. That made trusting his words a little harder due to his lack of credibility.

What if in between that time all the runes had failed and everything had been taken away?

This secret realm was starting to feel more and more useless to him by the moment.

Still, he kept hope in him.

With Pearl in her hands, Jiang Zhilan lead the way forward and Alex followed behind her, waiting for her to lead him to the more interesting locations.

Chapter 644: Change in Direction

The travel to the 3rd mountain took a long time for the two of them.

The mountain itself was about 35 kilometers from where they were, so even when sprinting, it would take them about an hour.

However, Jiang Zhilan was too scared to run away. What if a strong beast was ahead of her and she didn't notice it before it was too late?

What if she met one of those strong disciples from the major clans and sects, and they deemed her an eyesore?

She needed to be careful.

As for Alex, he was torn between wanting to run away and taking his time.

As much as he loved the idea of finding treasures in the houses at the 5th mountain, his attention was primarily on the 4th mountain, which stood behind the 3rd mountain.

If he could enter the mountain and find a Blood Spirit Ginseng...

"No, I can't get my expectations up. That will only lead to disappointment," he thought. "Besides, I might find other treasures while taking my time as well."

Still, he hoped to be a tad bit faster. At the rate they were going, it would take them almost 8 hours to reach the 3rd mountain.

That was just a bit too slow for him.

Just as he was about to ask Jiang Zhilan to speed up, he noticed something in his spiritual sense.

There was a man about 160 meters away from them who was walking in his own direction. His cultivation base was veiled as well as he could and it was hard to tell what his cultivation was exactly.

The man hadn't noticed them, and Jiang Zhilan hadn't noticed him either. But that would change any moment now as the man was walking in a direction that would pass them eventually.

As expected, at about 50 meters away, both the man and the woman noticed each other.

Alex fully revealed his True Disciple realm cultivation base that would be a threat to nobody. The man showed no expression when he saw him.

However, when he sensed Zhilan, his eyes changed a bit.

'He's that weak, huh?' Alex thought. If he was scared of True Master 4th realm then he certainly couldn't be very strong.

The man and Zhilan stared off for a few seconds before Zhilan asked, "Wanna join our group?"

The man shook his head and walked away from the two of them.

Alex was surprised at how easily this was gone. The man didn't want to fight Zhilan right now it seemed.

"Don't worry, little Brother," Zhilan said. "We've only come to the secret realm, so they know we don't have anything valuable on us at the moment. The looting will only begin on the 2nd or 3rd day."

Alex nodded. He understood that. But it was still surprising to see the man not even try. Did he not expect them to have valuable treasures from the outside world?

It was only a few minutes later that a thought came to Alex. They really couldn't take away the items the people in here had.

After all, when they left, they would be outside and at the mercy of the Saints that waited outside.

Unless someone was definitely a rogue cultivator with no backer, no one was going to steal someone else's property.

The treasures from this world, however, that was up to anyone to grasp. So, even if you steal that, no one could say anything at all.

After all, you didn't own it in the first place.

As they continued moving, Zhilan herself brought the idea of moving faster, and Alex nodded.

Zhilan found a weird-looking bird that Alex didn't recognize and wanted to tame.

She brought out a black spear with a green blade on it. As soon as she started using it, her black spear moved like a river while the green blade tried to carve a path out for the river.

Water splashed around with every strike and hurt the bird she was fighting. Her spear art was good. Better than all that he had seen back in the Crimson Empire.

But those were kids with spears, and this was a True expert. The difference in speed and control was vast.

Even if those others had discovered their Spear Intent, seeing actual damage done by a spear was different.

If those kids reached the same cultivation base as her, it was likely they would do so much better than her. But it would take them a long time to do so.

After a couple of minutes of the fight, she realized that it was only different in terms of looks, but was no different than any of the birds that were outside.

As such, she lost interest in the bird and told him to continue moving.

Throughout the journey, Alex went around gathering the uncommon ingredients that he came across.

Zhilan showed some slight suspicions to see if he was lying and doing something else instead. But once he showed her his bronze badge that was in his storage bag, she immediately dropped all suspicions.

In fact, her attitude started changing quite a bit too. The words that sounded fake and hollow were now starting to sound full-on weight and enthusiasm.

"I can't believe you got a bronze badge at such a young age, little brother. You must be a prodigy in alchemy. How does one get better in alchemy as a rogue cultivator? It must be very expensive to you right?"

"Oh, I forgot. You're an alchemist. You folks don't really have a problem with money, do you? You, those formation makers, talisman makers..."

The woman kept on talking about things that basically boiled down to "I'm so jealous of you."

As she spoke, she changed her topic towards the information that she hadn't broken through in nearly 7 months.

Alex frowned. He knew where this topic was going.

"Oh my god, that's right. Little brother, can you make me a pill so that I have an easier way to advance my cultivation base? I would be really happy."

"Oh, and I'm not asking you to do it for free or anything, okay? I'm going to pay you fairly. Let's change our direction and go to the 2nd mountain. There are some artifact forging rooms there, but you should be able to use them the same as Alchemy rooms right?" she asked.

Alex nodded absentmindedly as a thought crossed him. 'Artifact forging rooms?' he thought. She hadn't mentioned that before.

That meant that this woman was keeping more information than he thought.

Also, Alex didn't want to go to the 2nd mountain at all. That would only add time to his travel to the 4th mountain.

That was his main priority right now.

"Sister, I don't have the ingredients to make a pill for you right now," he said. " But if we go to the 4th mountain where there are many plants, I might find some ingredients there."

The girl frowned. It wasn't because of what Alex said, but because if she went to the 4th mountain, then that meant not going to the 3rd mountain, which housed the cultivation rooms.

She desperately wanted to go there. But if she did have a pill before she entered, she would have a great chance at advancing to the next realm.

After all, a single day in those cultivation rooms lasted almost a month.

"Alright, let's go to the 4th mountain," she said, bringing joy to Alex's heart.

From Zhilan, Alex learned that the 4th mountain was about 10 kilometers away from the 3rd mountain. From where they were, at their current speed, it would take them 3 more hours.

Alex was more than happy with this speed.

As the two of them continued walking, in an opening at the front, Alex noticed 2 young women and 1 man fighting against a beast that was double their size.

This beast was an armadillo with a red shell and yellow body. The red shells had spikes growing out of them and it was seriously fighting against the man with the sword.

One of the wounded girls behind her held another wounded girl in her arms.

Ning scanned their cultivation base and it was obvious that they were either from a small sect or normal rogue cultivators.

Aside from the man who was in his True Master 5th realm, the other two girls were in the late True Disciple realm.

Seeing the man fight against an equally strong beast that was focused on defense, Alex knew this match could not be won unless the man had better attacks up his sleeve.

From how bloody he was, it was obvious that he didn't.

However, Alex didn't keep focusing on that. He focused on the three behind those two with fruits that bore strong Earth energy.

One of those fruits almost felt like a Saint Rank fruit.

Zhilan's footsteps slowed down as she heard the sounds of battle. If those that were fighting there were stronger than her, then she definitely didn't need to interfere.

Alex frowned when he saw her cowardice. As if not noticing, he kept walking forward towards the sound.

"What are you doing?" the girl shrieked.

"What? I'm going to see what the sound is all about," he said.

"Are you crazy, what if they are strong?" she asked.

"I mean, I'm just looking. If they are strong, I will run in the opposite direction," he said.

That made sense to Zhilan. So, after a bit of contemplation, she went along as well.

Finally, they reached the opening in the forest where the tree rose and the fight took place below it.

As soon as Zhilan saw that there was nothing to be afraid of here, she smiled and walked ahead.

Alex sighed, but he too walked ahead. However, unlike her, his eyes were only focused on the fruits that littered the tree.

'The Houndbear Berry,' Alex thought as he looked at the fruit that hung on the 3rd branch from the left of the tree.

All the other fruits in this tree didn't seem mature to him at all. He wondered how that fruit remained up there.

However, it didn't take him long to realize that he could only see and sense the fruit because of his talents. With his eyes, that fruit was nowhere to be seen.

'Was it forgotten here and left to grow as big as it could?' Alex wondered.

The girl that was taking care of the other one noticed the two of them coming and let the man know. The man who was fighting to keep them both safe only had more and more stress on him.

At some point, he was going to make a mistake, and all three of them were going to die. If he tried to fight the newcomer and the beast by himself, that was going to be one of the mistakes.

So, he chose not to make it.

"Run!" he shouted and immediately, the girl who had been prepared, carried the other wounded girl and ran away with the man.

Alex commended them on their lack of hesitation to leave the place.

Since the man and the two women were gone, the armadillo turned towards Zhilan and Alex.

Looking at the bloody body of the beast, Zhilan was exhilarated. This beast's body and cores would sell for a lot. Since it was wounded, it would be easier for her to fight it as well.

Alex, who stood to the side and saw her facial expressions, couldn't help but wonder if this girl by his side even realized that the blood on the beast didn't belong to itself.

Its shell was too strong to be bleeding like that. Before Alex could say anything, she tossed Pearl back to him and dashed towards the beast.

In mere seconds, a fight between the two of them took place.

Alex sighed. He didn't care for this fight. He simply wanted the fruit on top of the tree.

So, leaving behind a duplicate of himself, the hidden Alex freely walked to the tree, got the fruit, and walked back to his place.

Then, he leisurely returned back to his spot, at which moment the duplicate disappeared.

He waited for a few minutes to see the two in front of his fight. Zhilan was one realm lower than the beast, but her spear art made up for the gap.

As such, the two of them were on even standings.

Alex sighed at the fact that it was going to take way longer than he imagined, so he decided to interfere.

An imperceptible Heaven's Impact landed on the armadillo right as it was about to roll up again. Instead of rolling up, it fell to the ground in a simple motion.

When Zhilan's spear strike it its head, the force of the stream behind her strike blasted the armadillo's head open.

The girl looked in shock. She didn't expect to win this easily at all.

"Wow, sister. You are so strong," Alex said from the side.

The girl immediately got rid of her shock and looked behind. "Aren't I?" she asked as she slammed the butt of the staff on the ground.

She quickly dismantled the beast, well... more butchered than dismantled, and gave some of it to Alex once he told her he could use some of those bone marrows and tendons as Alchemy ingredients.

He didn't ask for the beast core, however. That would be practically useless to them.

After they split the fruits 50:50, which Alex thought was her trying to get on his good side now that she knew he was an Alchemist, they walked on.

Very soon, Alex could hear a number of people spar in the distance. 'That must be the training grounds of the 2nd mountain,' he thought. Seeing how the sounds came directly from his left, Alex was sure this was the point where they crossed the 2nd mountain.

Zhilan looked a little to the right as they walked along, worried that if she didn't go to the 3rd mountain now, she wouldn't get the chance again at all.

The weaker people that entered this realm would never even think of gaining anything from here, so they would immediately head to the cultivation rooms to improve their cultivation bases.

As for the stronger people, they would go around and search for the treasures. Only after spending a few days in the 4th and 5th mountains, gathering as many treasures as they could would they return.

Since one could only stay there for a day in total during their visit, it was very much possible for her to find the chance to enter on the 2nd day, even if it were already filled.

If she instead waited for Alex to make her a pill, which she wasn't even sure he could make.

She didn't want to take the chances.

"I'm sorry, little brother, but I really need to cultivate. So you will have to go on alone," she said and turned to dash away.

Before Alex could even say anything, the girl was out of his spiritual range. 'Well that was abrupt,' he thought. But he liked this better anyway.

"Shall we head over to the 4th mountain then?" Alex asked.

"Meow!" Pearl gave a response back affirmatively.

Alex smiled at him and the two of them walked on ahead.

Along the way, Alex met a lot of different people. Now that he was getting close to the center of the realm where everything was, he could see more and more people.

Fortunately, no one was stupid enough to steal from him this early on. Although, a few of them did look at Pearl curiously.

Alex frowned, but he didn't take Pearl back. In fact, he dared those people to come and attack him.

Finally, after another hour of walking, he finally came across a mountain that glowed in many colors. Beasts and plants of every type could be found here.

As if sirens blared in his mind, his ingredients feeling gave him an idea of just how amazing this place must be.

Even as he got closer to the Qi the air got thicker and thicker, making Alex wonder why people didn't just come here to cultivate. Surely the cultivation rooms couldn't be better than this place, right?

Alex saw at least 5 people in his vicinity and got a little scared. There were some here that had spiritual senses. Alex didn't want to give away that knowledge so easily.

So, he pulled back his senses and left normally.

As he felt the pull from the different ingredients, Alex walked towards the mountain with a single thing in mind.

Find a Blood Spirit Ginseng.

Most of the ingredients in this location were True rank ingredients, with some even being Saint rank ingredients.

Alex was surprised that Saint rank ingredients were even available here in the first place, but it didn't take him long to realize why that was.

Alex watched a young girl dash along the mountain and reach a tree with a shining fruit on it.

There was nothing protecting this True rank spirit fruit, so she simply jumped up, grabbed the fruit, and stored it in her storage bag.

With a satisfied expression, she walked away.

Alex looked at her with a stunned expression as she left. He went closer to the tree and sighed.

He reached out his hand and an orange leaf that hung at the top of the tree was plucked from the air and drifted down to Alex's hands.

A Saint Rank ingredient.

Unlike flowers and fruits, leaves, barks, thorns, vines, etc never gave off much energy, so people who passed by could never tell how amazing these ingredients were.

Alex couldn't help but chuckle at that thought. That meant that unless a proficient alchemist with great knowledge of ingredients entered this realm, no one would likely take the less noticeable ingredients from this mountain.

Alex had a chance. So, starting at that moment, he went around the entire mountain searching for the best of the best ingredients that were left behind by the ones that came before him.

Most people who saw him carve out barks or cut vines from a tree gave a weird expression, but some of them couldn't help but show shock at his ability to recognize ingredients.

Alex ignored such gazes and focused on finding the Blood Spirit Ginseng.

Pearl followed beside him as well and from time to time, some beasts would come out to fight Alex, but as soon as they got near, Pearl would fight the beast back.

A few times, Pearl would simply roar, and the beast would run with its tail between its legs.

Alex pat Pearl after every fight, and Pearl wanted to show off his power more and more, so he went around finding stronger and stronger opponents.

Night fell into the land, but that stopped no one from searching for treasures. Even at night, sounds of battle rang from all over the mountain.

Pearl sensed someone and Alex sent out his spiritual sense to see who it was.

It wasn't a who, but a what. A Fox the height of Alex and the length of two Alex slept under a very old tree with not a single leaf on it.

Alex didn't want to bother with the Fox, but Pearl seemed to have sensed his cultivation base and really wanted to fight him.

"Are you sure?" Alex asked, to which Pearl furiously nodded.

"Ok, then let's go."

Chapter 646: Sneak Attack

When Alex arrived next to the tree on the slope, he focused more on the tree itself rather than the fox that slept underneath it.

From what Alex could sense, the fox was around True Lord 7th realm. While that was something that would be hard for him to fight against using only Sword Intent and his physical body, if he added Qi, he would easily win against that beast.

So, he ignored the fox and looked at the tree. The tree looked like a hurricane had passed through here and had stripped it of its leaves.

However, Alex could tell from how smooth the branches were that there were no leaves here in the first place.

What fascinated Alex about this tree were its roots. From what he could tell, they were incredible Saint rank treasures of Wood and Earth energy.

His senses told him it was also an Alchemy ingredient, but without any recipes, these roots would be useless to him in that aspect. As a treasure, however, they would be priceless.

Pearl strolled forward in his tiny form, but as he got closer to the fox, his size grew.

He was now half the size of the fox and ready to fight.

The fox opened its eyes as well and sensed Pearl's cultivation base. At 2 realms below its own, the fox should have thought it would win, but it still stood up to give its all to this fight.

At double the size of Pearl, the fox towered over him, but Pearl looked straight at it with no fear in its eyes.

The fox had fur brown and white.

"Meow!" Pearl cried towards the fox.

"Awooo!" the fox cried in the night.

With not a single second wasted, the two started fighting each other.

The fox tried to bite Pearl who knocked its head aside with a single paw attack. The fox returned a paw attack of its own that landed on Pearl, but with a golden light on its body, it took the attack without moving an inch.

The fox's eyes shined brown in the night as it jumped towards Pearl. Pearl tried to move aside, but for some reason, his movement got rather sluggish all of a sudden.

Alex's heart skipped a beat, thinking Pearl was in danger, but Pearl took the second attack with his golden body. With how much defense it provided, there was likely nothing the fox did that Pearl could take damage from.

'What was that before,' Alex thought about the time when Pearl had gotten sluggish. He had never seen this type of beast on the outside, so he couldn't know what it was either.

It was likely a beast that had grown to become something else by now, or the attack it had just done didn't pass along with the bloodline.

Maybe that was a power it came up on its own as well.

Alex couldn't be sure, but he would have to ask Pearl after this. He spread out his spiritual sense once more to see if the fox would use that technique again, but instead, he noticed someone approaching him from behind.

The man who was coming made no sound at all, giving Alex the understanding that he wasn't here for a good cause.

When Alex sensed his cultivation base, he frowned. True Lord 4th realm.

This was one of the stronger people he had met until now. What was someone like this doing here?
Sneaking no less.

Still, True Lord 4th realm wasn't that special to him. He sighed as he grasped his left arm which was just a stump.

2 years ago, he had lost this to that woman whose cultivation base was about the same as his now. Had they waited to attack for 2 more years, Alex would have likely been the one to kill her instead.

He put the thought aside to watch Pearl's match while keeping an eye on the man that had stopped now to watch the fight as well.

Pearl fought hard, but not very hard. Even though the Fox was strong it couldn't produce enough force to hurt Pearl at all.

Pearl still fumbled from time to time when the sluggishness returned, but aside from that, there was nothing that could stop Pearl.

Towards the end of the fight, the fox realized that it couldn't beat Pearl no matter what, so it chose to escape away.

Pearl tried to go after it, but a message from Alex stopped him in his tracks.

'Act like you are tired.'

Pearl didn't know why that was as he had been very focused on his battle, so he decided to sit down and take a few breaths. He was actually a little tired, so this wasn't all that bad.

As expected, after the battle finished, the man rushed out of the shadows and swung a hammer at Alex's head.

Alex saw the attack coming, so he jumped ahead and landed a distance away.

"Tsk, I was hoping to kill you right there while your beast was tired," the new man said.

Alex's eyes raged with hidden fury. He hadn't thought that the man would be so vicious as to sneak behind him with a fatal attack.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"Let's forget about introductions, shall we? I'll get straight to the point. I like your beast, so give it to me," the man said.

Alex stared at the man more intently. His cultivation base suggested that he was one of the better younger generation members. The red and green robe with the emblem of a bird perched on top of a deer's antler suggested he was likely from a sect.

Now the only thing Alex wondered was if that sect was big or not. If he attacked him here, would he bring back stronger people?

'Not if he dies first,' Alex thought. He gave no answer to the man's question and instead brought out the normal True rank sword that he had been using for more than 2 years in the forest.

He was used to that sword and could bring out the best Sword Intent with that. After all, the closer you were to a sword, the better your Sword Intent was.

"I see that is your choice," the man said. "But don't think your single beast will be able to defeat me or anything."

The back of his hand, his chest, and the right side of his stomach all shone at once as 3 beasts appeared in front of him.

A Golden Armed Ape of True Lord 5th realm cultivation base.

A Silver String spider of True Lord 6th realm cultivation base.

And finally, a Blue Scaled Lizard of True Lord 6th realm cultivation base.

Along with the man, the 4 of them looked quite terrifying to fight against. If someone normal were here in Alex's place, they would likely run away.

But this was Alex, he yearned for this fight more than he feared it.

"Meow!" Pearl said he wanted to help, but Alex shook his head.

"This is my fight."

Seeing Alex slowly walk ahead with his sword in hand, the young man frowned. He had been sure that Alex would give up on his beast after seeing his beasts, but to think that he would instead come after him.

The man frowned with discernible anger as he shouted, "If you want to die, then Die!"

The Golden Armed ape jumped at Alex from its high ground with both of its hands in the air.

As it fell, it slammed its hands on top of Alex. Alex dashed to the right as the Ape fell and after it slammed the empty ground, he dashed back towards the Ape with his legs that were clad with golden light.

With a single kick, Alex hit the beast so hard that he rattled its brain. The Ape fell to the side, completely unconscious.

"What?" the man cried out in shock.

The spider sent out a white projectile that opened to become a fully formed spider web that would trap him.

A small tongue of fire appeared in front of Alex that exploded with just enough damage to not hurt him. The force of the explosion instead knocked the spider web off its path to elsewhere.

Alex took the opportunity to appear behind the Blue Scaled Lizard and before it could even use any poison on him, Alex kicked the beast with his gold-clad legs.

The lizard flew towards the spider, giving it no opening to attack Alex.

Then, Alex turned toward the man.

In mere seconds since the battle had started, the man had learned that he chose the wrong opponent.

"Y-You... why are you so strong?" the man shouted.

Alex didn't bother giving a reply. His sword shone with a white outline that sprayed white ember from time to time.

Golden light filled the sword in no time as well. Once it was done, he dashed towards the man.

When Alex's sword landed on the man, Alex realized with a shock that he had been blocked.

But it wasn't the man who had blocked him, but rather a barrier that appeared from a talisman.

"No!" the man cried out, but even as he did a silver-white light engulfed him all over.

Alex went back for a second attack to kill this man for sure when he noticed the barrier disappearing, but even as he did, the man vanished in thin air.

Alex looked around in shock as he found no sign of that man anymore.

"Did he... get teleported nearby... or was he sent out of the secret realm without his beasts?"

Chapter 647: Journey to the 5th Mountain

Once Alex dug out some of the roots from the tree, letting the majority be, he left to find better ingredients in the mountain.

The 3 beasts of the man looked awkward and restless as they ran around the mountain like headless chickens.

Alex still couldn't tell from their behavior if the young man was sent outside or not.

Even if he was sent outside, did it really matter? Wouldn't using the monument just send you back inside?

Well, that was one safety net that Alex didn't have, so he had to be careful.

"Do you want their cores?" he asked Pearl.

"Meow!" Pearl said, telling him that they were too weak to be his food and that he wouldn't eat something that he didn't win himself anymore.

Seeing how lacking in will the 3 beasts were, Alex only felt sympathy in his heart and let them be.

As he searched the massive mountain, the sun rose again through the horizon. The chromatic wall to the distance made it hard to see the sun exactly, but the rays of light still scattered throughout the secret realm.

Once it was higher in the sky, it would become clearer.

Alex roamed the mountain throughout the next day as well. He saw more and more people coming to the mountain, so he hid Pearl in his clothes.

He was lucky that a weakling met him last night. Had it been a strong enemy, he would have likely had to flee away.

There weren't any saint realm beasts or even any True King realm beasts in the mountain either, despite the dense qi in this place.

"It seems that after opening every 10 years, not many beasts get to advance fast enough, huh? They get targeted every time," Alex thought.

After plucking a few fruits that others seemed to have missed, Alex sighed to himself.

Night had fallen again, and yet he hadn't managed to find the Blood Spirit Ginseng at all.

At this point, Alex was sure that even if there was one, it was already taken away by someone else.

With a sigh, he decided to leave the mountain. He had spent over 24 hours here already and had gathered everything he could, or everything he was able to.

The third day of the 10 days was approaching and Alex couldn't waste any more time here.

So, he left the mountain and headed northeast.

From what Alex could see when he was up on the mountain, the 6th mountain was far to the north, while the 5th was towards the northeast at about 20 kilometers away.

"Let's go see if we can find something interesting there," Alex said. If he didn't, this trip would surely end up becoming a waste of time.

'Although I did get quite a few ingredients for myself so I shouldn't complain,' he thought. 'Also, only 2 days have passed. Who knows what the remaining 8 days will provide me.'

As he walked forward, Alex thought he heard something. Immediately, he extended the spiritual sense he had been keeping hidden for fear of bringing the gaze of the truly strong and noticed three people, a woman and 2 men walking towards him.

From their mismatched robes and lack of a good cultivation base, Alex reckoned those were rogue cultivators that were walking together.

'No, WORKING together,' Alex thought when he noticed their eyes on him. '2 days have passed, people must be going around looting now,' he thought.

Before he could think of anything else, the three of them rushed towards Alex. With their True realm cultivation base, they crossed the 150 meters or so distance in mere seconds.

Surprisingly, they didn't sneak attack. Rogue, they may be, they still held enough honor in them to not attack secretly.

A sword in one of the man's hands, and a spear in the woman's hands pointed at Alex, while the man without a weapon stood behind him, getting one of his attacks ready.

Not a single one of them was a threat to Alex.

"You were quite amazing in the mountain, little brother. I see that you have quite a bit of knowledge about the plants," the man with the sword said.

"I do in fact know quite a bit about plants," Alex said, not moving his eyes from the man while his senses took note of everything else.

The spiritual sense wasn't an omniscient ability. While Alex could see everything around him, without paying attention to the things he could see, not everything would register in his mind.

After the 2 years of constantly using his spiritual sense alone to see, however, paying attention to multiple things at once had become a child's play.

Alex could now pay attention to up to 15 things at once without breaking a sweat, but if he tried to go higher, that drained quite a bit of spiritual energy for some reason.

Just 3 people weaker than him? Paying attention to them was something he could do in his sleep. It was as easy as it came.

"Would you like to share your prizes with us, little brother?" the girl with the spear asked.

Alex smiled. "Do you want to look for yourself, sister?" he asked. As he did, his veil over his cultivation base dropped and the True Master 9th realm cultivation base's aura spread around them like a raging storm.

"Tr-True Lord!" the man behind Alex shouted. That was incorrect, but Alex wasn't going to correct him.

A second later, the aura disappeared, and Alex veiled his cultivation base again. His eyes kept staring at the woman as he said, "You didn't answer me, sister."

The woman immediately dropped to her knees, tossing the spear aside. "Forgive me, senior," she shouted.

The other two men followed suit as well. Alex smirked at them and ordered them, "Get out of my sight."

"Thank you," all three of them said at once and immediately ran away. Within seconds, they were out of his senses.

Alex thought to himself over what had just happened. "Well, that was easy," he said out loud. He wondered if he should show his cultivation base more often. It really stopped a lot of problems.

But then he would lose one of his advantages. Underestimation was one of the best tools he could use against the strong.

In this place filled with the strong, he needed every advantage he could get.

Alex continued walking through the massive forest while talking to Pearl. He asked him how he was trained if Shen Jing took care of him properly and the sort.

Pearl was happy enough to answer everything, and from what Alex understood, Shen Jing had treated Pearl very well. Too well, in fact.

Alex wondered why he didn't treat him like that. Was it because he thought highly of his talents? Why did he even think highly of his talents in the first place?

How exactly did Shen Jing know about his talents? It didn't seem like the creator had told him anything about him.

Alex could only scratch his head in confusion and hope Shen Jing answered his questions after he left the secret realm.

But... Alex had a feeling he simply wouldn't.

He shook his head and continued onwards. Along the way, he met a snake that breathed fire, a lake with pulsing smooth water that healed, a metallic tree with leaves as razor-sharp as any blade.

Pearl easily defeated the snake, eating its core with no hesitation as that was a prize of victory.

Both Alex and Pearl dipped in the water and felt the water smooth out any roughness on him. There were other people in the lake, but most were focused on cleansing themselves.

The water was only capable of healing minor cuts and wounds, but Alex still used it.

As for the metallic tree, Alex trained his sword against it for a while, hoping it would give him some insight on advancing his own sword, but he had been expecting too much of the sword.

Alex took a few of the leaves from the tree and went towards 5th mountain.

Even as he got closer to the 5th mountain, Alex noticed an abundance of people in this place. He wondered if, in the previous 2 days, the number of people in the realm had perhaps increased.

If what he assumed about the secret realm being permanently open for the next 8 days was true, then he could only assume that more and more cultivators might have entered the realm.

In a sense, the big clans and sects that had made the plan to bring only 3 of their disciples had actually shot themselves in the foot with their plan.

As he strolled past a few trees, Alex saw a man enter and come out of a small stone house. As he walked further, he saw more of such houses that were completely open.

Not a minute later, Alex saw the whole mountain that was filled to the top with nothing but houses.

Most of these houses had been open already, and as he would expect, they were empty. Not even pots and pans were left behind.

As Alex moved through the place, he saw more and more people in this location, going up and down the mountain.

He heard the sound of some distance bangs like drums, but he ignored that. For now, he simply went around the place with his spiritual sense completely withdrawn.

As he saw more and more empty houses on the land around the mountain, he could only assume that the ones that hadn't been raided yet had been up the mountain.

So, following the distant banging sound, Alex climbed the mountain.

Chapter 648: House of the Undying

As the distant banging sound got closer, Alex finally started seeing houses that weren't closed at all.

He got curious and went up to one of them, but before he could, another woman came out of nowhere and walked towards it.

Alex didn't stop her at all and simply stopped to see what she would do. As he watched, the girl placed her palm on one of the doors and poured her Qi into it.

The rune on top of the door that looked like a mix of numbers 6 and 2 shined with slightly blue light, and a barrier shone for a split second like a thin film covering the whole house.

Seeing that it didn't work, the girl then took out an Axe from her storage bag and slammed it onto the wall again, creating a loud banging noise.

'Is this what is creating all the banging noise,' Alex thought.

The girl did whatever she could to open the stone door, but she couldn't. So, in the end, she had to leave.

Once she did, Alex finally walked forward to check up on it.

The house looked so poor. The wall didn't look very smooth, instead of like flat stones piled on top of each other. The door to the house was a solid flat rock, that Alex wasn't sure would swing at all.

'Now that I think about it, the other houses were fully open. Did you perhaps have to break it open once the rune stopped working?' he thought.

He was curious how runes worked in the first place, but since no one here had any idea, Alex would have to give up on the door.

'Wouldn't hurt to try,' he thought and placed his palm on the rune that looked like the mix of 6 and 2.

With a thought, he poured in his Qi and the rune glowed yellow.

'Yellow? Not blue?' Alex thought with surprise. He thought something would happen, but after a second, nothing did. The yellow light disappeared and everything returned to normal.

Alex couldn't help but wonder why there was such a difference in the color of the rune between him and the girl. Was it because of his Yang Qi?

That would mean that the girl from before was likely someone proficient in Water Qi.

Alex punched a few times, hoping his physical body would be strong enough, but as expected, something that even the Saint realm cultivators couldn't open, he wouldn't be able to open it either.

He left that house and walked away. The distant banging was getting closer, but it was still a good few hundred meters away. However, by now, he could feel the aura of the people gathering at that location.

"Something big must be going on there for so many people to gather," he thought to himself.

There was some empty house along the way that Alex wanted to check, but without even looking, he could tell that not a single thing inside had been left there when they were raided.

With the closed houses, not budging an inch, Alex had no choice but to go to the very top of the mountain where over a hundred different people were gathered.

The top of the mountain was a plateau with a single house that looked massive compared to the other locations.

The design too looked better than most of the houses he had seen. The stones that made up the walls were uniform and slick. There were wooden frames around the house that had clearly stood the test of time.

And at the center was a stone door with a complicated script that Alex couldn't understand at all.

With not a single tree around them, Alex was surprised at how well kept this place was despite being thousands of years old.

Alex saw disciples of various sects and clans that he didn't recognize as well as rogue cultivators that were curious about the house as well.

As he got closer, he could finally make up the words that were written just above the stone door.

Since it was written in the demon language, Alex could easily read it.

House of the Undying.

'Undying...' Alex thought to himself. He wondered what that was. Was that the name of a person or perhaps an attribute of his? Name of the demons that lived in this realm? A clan? Maybe a sect?

He also wondered if there was perhaps a person inside the house, that hadn't died until now despite how many years had passed. That would truly make them Undying for sure.

As he slowly pushed the sea of cultivators, he reached a location towards the front, from where he could more or less see what was happening in front of the house.

Alex saw about 3 people standing in front of the door while a smaller, but equally important group of nearly 20 people stood behind them.

Of the ones that were going to attack the door, there was a woman with a strong physical body. She wore brown robes and held a large hammer in her hands as if it were weightless.

She ran forward with the hammer and slammed onto the door. A blue film appeared around the door, absorbing all of the damage. Even as it did, it flickered a little, never solid like the ones in the other houses in the mountain.

"Not me either," the girl said and moved away from the door and back to the group of nearly 20 people, standing next to people that wore very

A man stepped forward with golden robes that had a criss-cross pattern all over them. A black sword appeared in his hands which glowed with golden light.

Even as it did, Alex could see white light appear on his sword. Not an outline, but the entire sword was clad in the white light.

Alex couldn't help but feel a sense of envy when he saw that. 'Sword Qi,' he thought to himself.

The man slashed and the golden-white light struck the door. Once again, a blue barrier shined around the place and absorbed all of the damage.

However, still, it flickered a bit like an unhealthy barrier that was just about to end.

The man shook his head. "I told you guys it was useless," he said and went back to the group again.

Finally, the last man moved forward with no weapon in his hands. He wore a red and white robe as if it was originally a white robe that had been ruined by a red rain.

As Alex watched him, the man brought out a vial from his storage bag and undid the stopper. Then, he poured the contents of it out onto his hands.

As the smell of iron drifted across the wind, Alex knew what this was.

Blood.

'The hell?' Alex thought. He couldn't tell why the man was pouring out blood onto his hands. Then, the blood slowly moved out of his palm and floated in the air.

The young man pinched the blood with his thumb and the side of his index finger and pulled on it as he used the index finger of his other hand to aim it at the door.

He stretched it as far as he could, and soon the blood looked like it was taking the shape of an arrow.

With a snap, he let go of the blood arrow, that flew through the air like a normal arrow and struck at the door.

As everyone expected, the blue barrier appeared to block the attack. But also as everyone expected, the barrier still flickered.

"Alright I give up," the young man said and returned back to the group. As the group of 20 or so gathered there Alex couldn't help but look at them in sheer astonishment.

These were the descendants and disciples that defined the young generation of the Luminance empire. These were the strongest of them all.

Alex looked at the big lady with the hammer, the short-haired man with the sword, and finally, the man that used blood.

Every single of these three was in the True King realm. If the target of any of these attacks hadn't been the door, but rather Alex and the others standing here, he had no doubt that the 3 of them could win against them all.

Fear crept up in Alex's heart but quickly overshadowing it was another feeling.

Excitement.

He was excited when he thought of the future when he could reach the same level as these people and fight with them on the same level.

Chapter 649: The Elites

Xu Meirong twisted the pink side of her robe in frustration, leaving the green side be. Her small height would usually be a problem in the crowd, but she had been allowed to stand at the front with the two dozen youths, so she could see the house in front of her without a problem.

Only, she couldn't help but frown when she saw the stone door still unbudging.

House of the Undying was a well-known location in the sect records of the Falling Lotus sect. So, when she heard that its runes were giving up, she couldn't help but come here to reap some benefit.

Now that she was here, she saw that despite everyone attacking the barrier one after another, no one could break through the barrier.

Even the True Kings couldn't break through the barrier, so she, a True Lord 8th realm individual had no chance at all.

She only wished that she could leave and go back to the Life mountain where she could search for alchemy ingredients. She was sure with her knowledge of the plants and beasts, she could make a lot more profit there than what she could make here.

"If no one is able to break through the door then I shall leave," a ghostly sharp-eyed youth of a lanky physique spoke with a deathly voice and started turning around.

"Brother Guo Chiang, you don't have to leave so fast, right? Surely the Broken Ravine sect couldn't have a better place to be than this," Another youth spoke from the side.

"I will be honest, Zhou Ren. I don't like you, so stop calling me brother. As for the rest of you, good luck," the young man said. Then, he turned around and left, his blue and green robes fluttering in the wind.

"Tsk!" the white-robed young man whose sleeves and helms looked like they were burnt with fire said silently.

"He's not really patient, is he?" Song Shing spoke, his blood-stained robes staying eerily still in the midst of the wind.

A girl slammed the butt of her spear on the ground to gather the attention of the group. "I for one, agree with him," she spoke. "There is no way we are opening this door at all. Not in the next 8 days at least," she said.

"Liang Qiu, please stay. You are one of the strongest here, so we would really appreciate your help," Fu Tao spoke from the side.

Fu Tao was in fact the strongest of the people here, but that was only in terms of cultivation base. While cultivation base did help you a bit, in a real fight, he was sure that at least 3 people in here would give him a lot of trouble.

Especially with their unlocked spiritual sense. Since his main attacks were mental attacks, these people would last long enough to fight him.

"And do what?" Liang Qiu asked. "My Heaven's Peak school counts on me to break through to True King 5th realm during these 10 days. If I don't do that, I will have disappointed them."

"I can understand your intention here, sister Liang," He Liwei spoke from the side, his gold and brown robes somehow not catching more attention. "I too am in the same situation and am in a hurry to leave. But let's wait until someone comes soon."

"I believe sister Shen Huan should be bringing him soon," he said.

Liang Qi's eyes shone. "Who's coming?" she asked.

"Tian Ye," Song Shing spoke from the side. Liang Qi frowned when she saw this person. Strong he may be, but she still didn't like how he looked like he would drink blood if given the opportunity.

Still, if Tian Ye was coming, then she would wait.

Suddenly, a loud bang rang the surrounding, and everyone turned to look towards the door. A pale blue light flickered in front of it as it blocked the attack.

Han Daiyu turned around with her giant hammer hefted on her shoulders with her half-sleeved robes showing her big muscles.

She looked to the group who had just turned around and asked, "What? I got bored of waiting. If you guys want to help keep me company, then come along."

"Sister Daiyu... that's... never mind," someone from the Han family wanted to speak up towards their senior sister, but they knew how much she loved challenges.

Keeping her distracted with the door was likely better lest she went around the crowd, randomly looking for challenges herself.

Lu Yan stood in the small group with a green veil on her face and she softly spoke with a man with purple robes.

The purple in the robe started with dark purple at the bottom and as it went up, it lost its saturation, slowly changing to softer and softer purple until it was fully white.

There were 2 other young folks behind this young man but those two were surprisingly acting like guards who protected this young man rather than be his peers.

From time to time, Lu Yan would bow a little as she spoke to this young man.

Fu Tao frowned a little when he saw her speak to the young man, but he couldn't do anything at all. Despite being in the True Lord realm, that man was still a prince of the empire. So, he had the greatest saying in all of this place.

Alex looked at all of this with a keep eye while he waited for whoever this Tian Ye fellow was.

He took what he heard into memory and remembered the names of the ones that were the best of the young generation.

He recognized Fu Tao and Lu Yan from the time they were in Crimson Empire. Aside from them, he only learned the name of the other people.

Song Shing, from the Song clan, with the blood technique.

Shen Huan, from the Shen clan, who was absent at the moment.

Jin Tengfei, from the Jin clan, with the Sword Qi that Alex wanted too.

Han Daiyu with her large hammer from the Han Clan.

Zhou Ren with the white burnt robes from the Zhou clan.

Together with Fu Tao from the Fu clan, and Lu Yan from the Lu clan, these were some of the best descendants of the 7 great families of the Luminance empire.

The 8th honorary great family of colors, the Wei clan was the Royal family of the empire. If Alex had to guess, given their association with the color purple, it was likely the man speaking with Lu Yan.

He also learned a bit about the other sects as well.

The ghostly youth that left at the beginning was from the Broken Ravine sect.

The girl with the spear was from Heaven's Peak school.

The girl in pink and green was from the Falling Lotus sect.

And finally, the guy He Liwei was from the Glory's Edge sect.

Aside from that, there were other sect disciples or disciples of those same sects and clans as well, and Alex put their information in his head as well.

However, he didn't bother giving much thought to their information.

Even as everyone waited, instead of the crowd dispersing, more and more added to it.

Soon, there were nearly 200 of them here. Alex even saw disciples from the big sects and clans in the group now, but they didn't dare to go mix in with the elites at the front.

'Did those saint elders from the elite sects and clans go to get more of their disciples?' he wondered. That had to be it. If everyone was getting a chance to enter, they would be stupid to let this opportunity go by only sending 3 each.

Just as he was thinking that the crowd parted as two figures walked ahead.

The elite group turned their head around and suddenly relief appeared on their faces.

The woman that strolled upfront was wearing a blue robe that looked like water splashing across each other. She had a casual expression as she walked back to the elite group.

Behind her, a young man walked with a thunderous roar on every step. It felt like the ground shuddered as he appeared.

Alex looked in shock as he watched the young man in cyan robes walk forward and join the elite group.

Even as he did, a single question ran through Alex's mind.

'How the hell can a cultivator be this fat?'

Chapter 650: Test at the Door

Alex looked at the fat young man walking up to the front crowd. The young man in the cyan robes was about 170 cm tall but looked like he weighed nearly 120 kg.

He was unquestionably fat, which for a cultivator was a hard task given that most didn't have to eat at all after entering just the Organ Tempering realm.

The Qi they cultivated on a daily basis alone was able to sustain them.

So, Alex couldn't help but wonder why this young man was fat at all.

Tian Ye's round, chubby face stared at the lot in front of him. "Have you all been waiting for me?" he asked.

Alex was surprised to see that he was able to be so direct, despite only being in the True lord 5th realm. 'What gives him such confidence?' he wondered.

"Brother Tian, you're here," He Liwei said from the side and went out to greet Tian Ye.

Tian Ye gave a slight nod to everyone and didn't say anything. The only one he gave a more than a passing glance was the young man in the purple robes.

To the one who Alex suspected was from the Royal family, he gave a deep bow.

"Fellow Daoists," Tian Ye spoke. "I'm sorry, but I have some other tasks to perform, so let's hurry this up okay?"

He then brought out 3 talismans from his storage bag and turned to the crowd.

"I need someone to help me hit the—"

Before he could say anything, a loud bang appeared from behind him. He slowly turned his head to see Han Daiyu's hammer resting on her shoulder and a blue shield on the surface of the door.

"Aah! I needed to record that," he shouted suddenly. "Sister Daiyu, can you hit it again?"

"What?" Han Daiyu had not been paying attention to Tian Ye at all.

"Can you hit the door again?" he asked.

"Oh, you didn't have to ask me. I was already going to do it again," she said and raised her hammer before slamming it onto the door at full force.

At the same time, the young fat man used the talisman as if he had done this a million times.

The talisman took in his Qi and flew to the wall right where the hammer hit it.

The talisman did nothing to stop the attack at all. At the same time, the young fat man once again sent out his second talisman to the wall of the barrier a little far away from where it had been hit.

Finally, he used the last talisman in his hands to record the visual of what he had seen.

"Sister Daiyu, step back please," Tian Ye said. He knew how she was. Everyone did. If left alone, she would try to hit the barrier again.

Being a body cultivator, she thought of every physically taxing task as training and kept doing it as long as he could.

"Why do you want me to stop?" she asked.

"For test purposes, sister," Tian Ye said.

He quickly grabbed the two talismans on the wall and looked at them. These were one-time-use talismans that noted the strength of one's attacks, and the strength of a barrier.

He didn't do more than look at it once though. For now, they were very useless as there was nothing to base this reading off of.

It was hard for him to stop Han Daiyu from attacking the door again, but with the help of others, he did.

Han Daiyu grumbled a little as slowly an hour passed.

Finally, Tian Ye stirred up. He took out 3 other talismans and sent one flying to the door, another to the side, and finally kept one for recording.

"Sister Daiyu, can you do exactly the same attack you did last time?" he asked.

The girl nodded and attacked. Once again the blue barrier flickered.

Tian Ye immediately grabbed the two talismans and compared their reading with the previous ones.

From what he could see, the strength of Daiyu's attack was practically the same.

However, the strength of the barrier... was very different. He looked at the reading between the two and did some mental calculations.

"Woah!" he said out loud, catching the attention of everyone here.

"What is it?" Liang Qiu asked from the side. Her attention was entirely on him.

"If... if my calculations are not wrong... then this barrier will open in 10, at most 11 days," he said. "The barrier is continuously weakening even as time goes on and surely in the next 10 days, it will be gone."

Instead of being happy, every single one on the plateau frowned. 10 days... they didn't have 10 days.

The third day was already half done. At most, they had maybe a bit more than 6 days.

"Can we not weaken it ourselves?" Jin Tengfei asked.

"I don't know. That's what I'm going to test now," he said and turned around to Han Daiyu.

"Sister Daiyu, can you do me the favor of hitting that door the same way for 60 times in the next hour?" he asked.

"One attack every minute?" she asked. "I can do that."

She held her hammer tight in her grip, and once again attacked the door again.

As the blue light flickered and died down, she held it up again and was about to attack.

"Sister Daiyu, wait. Not right now. Spare a minute or so in between," Tian Ye said.

"What? I can't do it all at once?" she asked.

"I want a close to normal environment of how it would go if we were to need to do this," he said.

"Sigh, alright," she said and let her hammer fall to the floor. With a small bang, the hammer sent off dust into the air. Only then did Alex realize just how heavy the hammer was.

'I should be able to carry it, right?' he thought.

As they waited for the hour to pass while Han Daiyu hit the wall once every minute, Alex wondered if he was wasting time here.

But since he was so close to getting more answers from this Tian Ye guy, he decided to wait the extra hour. If there was something that would help him enter this place and get some sort of benefit, then it was better to wait.

The hour finally passed and they did the test one more time. This time, after being beaten with the hammer for an hour continuously, Tian Ye wanted to see how much worse the barrier had become.

"Hmm..." he said as he looked at the readings.

The whole crowd looked quietly as Tian Ye closed his eyes and calculated the reading.

"The attacks do have an effect on it," Tian Ye said as a passing remark. However, everyone who heard it suddenly had their breathing come to a halt.

"It... it helps?" Fu Tao asked suspiciously.

"Yes," Tian Ye said. "It does."

"By how much?" Xu Meirong asked curiously.

"If... if we were to do what Sister Daiyu just did for as long as we can, then we can likely get the stone door to open in 4, if not 5 days," Tian Ye said.

"5 days?" everyone was immediately shocked.

That was a lot better than the 11-day estimate that had come prior to this.

Immediately, everyone started getting happy. The Elite group cheered loudly, and the emotions passed to the rest of the crowd as well who quickly cheered.

"Stop, stop, stop," Zhou Ren shouted and the entire celebration came to a staggering halt.

"What's wrong, Zhou Ren?" Liang Qiu asked.

"I had one question that I hope brother Tian Ye can help settle," he said.

"Uh, sure. Ask," Tian Ye said.

"You said that it will get weaker as the time goes on, right?" Zhou Ren asked.

"Yes, I did," Tian Ye said. "Ah, I see where you are going with this question. You want to ask me if I calculated the weakness of the barrier as a factor of the days required, don't you?"

A collective gasp rang through the crowd as not many had thought of this in their immediate celebration.

"Ah, that is exactly it, brother Tian. You are incredible to have thought that far," Zhou Ren said. "So, does that mean you calculated it, or should we expect a faster time for the opening?"

Everyone from the group looked intently at Tian Ye, waiting for the answer.

"I didn't calculate that into the estimate I gave just now," Tian Ye said. He immediately added, "Not because I forgot, but rather because it's useless."

"I'm not sure how runes exactly work as they are still a mystery when not used through a talisman paper, but as far as I know, it works similarly to a formation."

"Meaning, these runes on the door are directly connected to a power source, which I believe is a miniature Saint rank spirit vein underneath it."

"That means the barrier itself is at Saint rank. So, no matter how much it takes hits, you are never going to affect it with your current cultivation base," Tian Ye said.

"What is actually happening to the runes right now is that since it's not properly maintained, the runes' connection to the spirit vein is slowly decaying."

"It's already on its last leg, but if you do continue to hit it, you can make the gradual decay faster, thus opening the door in about 5 days," Tian Ye finished.

Han Daiyu looked at the door and said, "So... I just need to keep hitting it right?"