

Alchemy 811

Chapter 811: Tournament's End

As soon as the crimson wall was gone, Alex sent a simple slash fly behind him towards one of the many formations' flags and destroyed it so the formation couldn't be put up again.

While Alex knew it couldn't be reused without replacing the True spirit stones in the flags, it was still better to just be careful.

As Fu Tao felt the pressure in his own mind from being pushed back by Alex's spiritual sense, he knew that if he didn't do anything quickly, he would lose very easily.

He immediately took back his attack and just let it permeate like a spiritual sense. Unless another attack came, his spiritual sense wouldn't be able to be interfered with.

Unfortunately for him, another attack was coming.

Alex sent out Heaven's impact directly onto Fu Tao. The crimson-robed man felt his defensive artifact chime a bit to let him know that he was being attacked with a mental attack.

Alex frowned a bit. Heaven's impact alone isn't going to do it, is it?' he thought.

His right hand held the thin sword, while his left hand held a spiritual sword. Neither of the swords could be used to attack with his Qi, but Alex didn't mind.

With zero hesitation, he dashed forward.

Fu Tao saw marble-like textures appear on Alex's body as he came close to him. He immediately used his spiritual attack that sent waves of Spiritual energy crashing onto Alex, but Alex didn't stop at all.

Alex arrived right on top of Fu Tao and swung his sword downward.

Fu Tao moved to his right, but even as he did so, Alex's other arm came sweeping down at him.

Fu Tao's eyes told him there was nothing on his hand, but his spiritual sense said otherwise.

The sword passed through Fu Tao but nothing happened to him at all. The mental attack was blocked by the defensive mental artifact that chimed a lot to warn Fu Tao.

The sound of it was nothing Fu Tao had ever heard from someone that wasn't a saint yet.

Fu Tao realized that between Qi and Spiritual energy, he was better off fighting with Qi. When it came to Spiritual energy, there wasn't even a contest.

He immediately worked toward making Alex's spiritual energy empty up before his defensive artifact broke. If he could manage that, Alex would certainly fall unconscious from having no spiritual energy.

Alex's spiritual energy was already less than half, so he needed to be careful. Every time he swung the spiritual sword and was blocked, he was losing more and more spiritual energy.

He fought against the waves of spiritual energy and teleported next to Fu Tao to hit him with the sword.

Fu Tao activated his movement technique to run to the side, but Alex teleported behind his shadow and appeared next to him.

A palm of yellow energy flew at Fu Tao from close range but between his armor and defensive ability, Alex's attack was being blocked easily.

As the same time, Alex's sword struck him from one side while his other sword passed through from another.

A bit of his spiritual energy disappeared the moment his attack was blocked.

Alex jumped back and activated his movement technique too. He arrived next to Fu Tao and swung from one side, then teleported to the other side and swung again.

He flew back, sent a golden fist at him, then used the time to get back and swing his sword again.

Fu Tao wasn't able to move much between all the attacks he had to defend himself from while also trying to fight against Alex's own spiritual energy.

Alex felt the energy deplete to a quarter, but even then he jumped back in and fought again.

Time after time, hit after hit, he depleted his own spiritual energy while slowly chipping away at whatever remaining defensive capabilities Fu Tao's mental artifact had.

His spiritual energy kept lowering in amount between his own attack and Fu Tao's attacks, however, it wasn't going to be much longer.

His head started burning with mental pain that came from his spiritual energy lowering to almost nothing, but it was just a little long.

Just a little while longer and... the artifact stopped working.

Alex teleported next to Fu Tao the very second and slashed at his arm. The sword went through the arm, and suddenly Fu Tao's right arm was numb and barely usable.

Alex kept away his sword and produced another spiritual sword in his right hand as he slashed at Fu Tao's left hand as that too became too numb to work.

Alex then spun as he landed and swung through Fu Tao's legs, immediately buckling him to the ground.

Alex finally stopped and looked at Fu Tao through his intense headache. A wave of spiritual energy struck Alex right before he was about to attack, and depleted Alex's spiritual energy to almost nothing.

Even then, Alex kept going. He used the sword in his hand and swung it down at Fu Tao's head.

Suddenly, a wave of energy pushed onto Alex, throwing him back as he landed far away.

Alex struggled to get up as his pain didn't even let him open his eyes, let alone spread his spiritual sense, but he still did as he needed to fight back.

He stumbled to his feet and looked ahead to see his opponent. Fu Tao was still on the ground with a face of shock. However, in front of him was the referee protecting him.

'Did... did the referee interfere?' Alex thought when he saw that. If that was the case then...

Relief poured over the anxious Alex as all the fatigue and pain also came along after learning the fact that he had won.

With nothing else to worry about, Alex's final bit of spiritual energy couldn't keep him standing at all, and suddenly he fell down to the ground, unconscious.

Fu Tao kept staring blankly. He couldn't believe that he had just lost. His thoughts drowned as the barrier around the stage disappeared and the cheers of the crowd exploded throughout the arena.

Alex was soon taken to the medical room to treat as soon as possible.

While he was taken away, the next fight took place between Liang Qiu and Guo Chiang.

Helen was worried for her son, but she didn't know if she was allowed to go or not. She went to talk to one of the staff members, and they immediately let her go in.

Helen arrived next to the sleeping Alex and immediately checked what was wrong with him.

Xue Mufan who was standing next to her was surprised to see that she had Spiritual senses as well.

Helen's eyes narrowed in confusion as nothing seemed wrong with him. "Senior, Why is my son unconscious? I can't find anything wrong with him," she asked.

"Don't worry, young miss. Your son is fine. He just used up his mental energy and is unconscious," he said.

"I see," Helen said. Suddenly, she heard a roar of noise from outside and turned to look curiously.

Xue Mufan turned and smiled. "It seems the young man indeed won the tournament," he said.

"oh," Helen said remembering the near-dead young man. She turned to her son and couldn't help but be proud that he had fought against such monsters out there and managed to end up in third place.

"You should take your son and leave," Xue Mufan suddenly said.

"Sorry?" Helen was confused.

"Take him and leave. The award ceremony is tomorrow, so it will be fine if you take him," Xue Mufan said.

"Oh, okay," Helen said. She didn't know why she had to take her son when he was perfectly resting here, but she thought it was maybe because the tournament had ended and the arena was closing for the day.

As she prepared to grab onto her son, Xue Mufan's face immediately soured.

Helen wondered what was happening when she heard footsteps, many of them coming toward them from the hallway

"Take your son home," Xue Mufan said directly to her mind.

Just then, nearly 20 different individuals, all with cultivation base in the Saint realm, entered the room.

Each and every single one of these was at least a few hundred years old at the youngest. The older ones were certainly over a thousand years old.

Helen recognized some of them as they had talked with her after the talisman competition.

She frowned as she understood that these were the biggest figures of the Luminance empire, and as far as she could tell, they were here for her son.

Chapter 812: Saints

The 20 or so people walked into the room, wearing various different robes from the biggest factions of the Luminance empire.

Each of these families and sects was known to be the best of the best.

Helen wanted to take her son away, as Xue Mufan had told her to, but it wasn't something she could do in front of these seniors.

"Huh? Why is he still unconscious?" the husband from the Glory's Edge sect spoke up.

"He's lost all spiritual energy. He needs to rest for a while," Xue Mufan said.

"Well, feed him a pill or something. We don't have much time," the wife from the Glory's Edge sect said.

"I have suggested that, but his mother doesn't want him to take a pill," Xue Mufan said, pointing to Helen who was caught off guard.

"Ye-yes," she quickly nodded. "Taking too many unnecessary pills will cause pill-poisoning. I don't want my son to go through that."

"Please, do feed him a pill and wake him up. We have something to ask him," one of the gentler-looking elderly men spoke up.

"What is it that you want to ask him?" Helen straightened her back and spoke.

"Do you know how your son is skipping an entire realm to fight people above him?" one of them asked.

"That... I'm afraid I do not know," Helen said. Alex hadn't exactly explained to her how it all worked. She knew it had something to do with his body's constitution, but she wasn't going to say that in front of these random people.

"You see? That's why we need your son. We believe with his knowledge, the western continent can reach a height it has never before," the Jin family's elder spoke.

"Umm... surely you can wait until my son wakes up, right?" Helen asked.

"Actually, we cannot. We have already left our home for half a month, some of us need to return tonight to overlook all the problems that might have come," one of the women with blue robes said.

These guys weren't planning on letting up at all. They were desperate to know Alex's secret.

The Emperor had already warned them against causing trouble, but these old men and women didn't think that was what they were doing. As far as they were concerned, they were just politely going to ask Alex to answer the questions.

Once he did, they would leave without any trouble.

Besides, the Emperor kept saying that Alex had a backing that they couldn't offend at all. But... was that really true? Or was the Emperor trying to keep Alex for himself and not let the other clans and sects improve in worry that it might cause of them to want to have a go at being an Emperor?

That was certainly possible. After all, who exactly in this entire continent could ever make the Emperor feel threatened? There were absolutely none.

The other half of the continent where this Crimson Empire lay was inaccessible, and even if it was, they knew how weak it was. The hegemonies around the southern and western islands were weaker than each of the families here too.

That certainly made the Emperor's words questionable. Most of them were absolutely sure that the emperor was lying to them.

"Brother Mufan, why are you standing there doing nothing? Feed him a pill already," Zhou Tianqiu said.

"Please senior, I don't want my son to eat a pill. He will answer your questions if he wants to after he naturally wakes up from his unconsciousness," Helen said.

She turned to Xue Mufan and bowed toward him. "Thank you for looking after my son. I will leave with him now," she said and grabbed Alex's arms.

However, before she could pull on him, a wave of cultivation aura landed on her, making her unable to move at all.

The lady sect leader of the Glory's Edge sect spread out her cultivation base to stop Helen from doing anything else. "You can't leave with him until we've gotten our answers," she said.

"And who's going to stop her?"

A wave of energy crashed onto the lady, throwing her backward. Her husband immediately went onto the grab her and checked on her.

However, before he could assess what had happened to her, another cultivation aura landed in the room. This time, it landed on all the Saint realm cultivators in the room, including Xue Mufan.

"Who?" the group of saints turned their spiritual sense outside of the room and saw the originator of this cultivation aura walk in.

The Jaguar appeared before them.

Seeing the black beast, with a cultivation base in the high Saint Core realm truly surprised them.

"Who... who are you?" some of the older saints that too were in the Saint Core realm managed to speak up.

"This boy's guardian," The jaguar said before turning to Helen. "Grab him, we're leaving."

"Yes," Helen said and quickly used a talisman to form a barrier around him that gently carried him close to her.

As the people watched the two of them quickly left the arena with Alex, leaving them there all alone.

"Sigh, I guess that's it then. I'm leaving," the blue-robed woman simply left after learning what she did. She understood these were secrets that she was likely not going to learn about, so she didn't bother anymore.

"The Emperor was right. He does have a strong backing," the man in a green robe spoke. "Well, I guess there's nothing more for me here then." He too left the area.

"We should leave," Shangguan Xuan spoke to his sect leader and the two of them left as well.

A few others like the Broken Ravine sect leader and Xue Mufan quickly left as well, as they didn't see the necessity to keep sitting around.

However, the rest of them really wanted what Alex had.

The husband and wife duo of the Glory's Edge sect were very curious about Alex's ability to overcome many realms and fight someone vastly stronger than himself. Even after they knew that the Jaguar was protecting them and the emperor had forbidden them from troubling Alex, they still couldn't get rid of the idea of becoming stronger.

Han Hongqi tried to get his father to leave, but the old man wouldn't budge. Given Alex's body strength, he wanted to learn more about his physique and see if it was better than his own.

The Jin family really only wanted to know more about how one could use something that only Saint Aura provided while having Saint Qi.

The Fu family were certain they were the only ones with the best mental skills and attacks that made use of Spiritual sense and even boasted of having the best of it. However, Alex had proved to them that his spiritual sense was much better than theirs.

The Zhou Family was there to acquire knowledge about Alex's alchemy. They weren't really expecting to get an answer, but they had come there hoping. Now that they had learned of Alex's background a bit and saw that he was protected, they knew that there was no other way to get a hand of his knowledge.

Finally, the Song family matriarch was perhaps the one that wanted Alex the most. She didn't want him for his skill or his body, however. She wanted him for his blood.

Even here, in this room when Alex wasn't even hurt or bleeding, using all of her senses, she had managed to learn that her grandson had indeed been telling the truth.

It wasn't just some random blood that made him lose focus and then lost the match. It was this blood, this vigorous blood that she wanted to get her hands on.

"What do we do now?" Zhou Tainqiu asked.

"I think we back off," Han Hongqi said. "The emperor was correct. We cannot offend him."

"We can't talk with the kid while the jaguar is still with him at the very least," the Fu family's ancestor said.

"Yes, as long as they are together, it will be impossible," Glory's Edge's male sect leader said.

The Song matriarch's eyes brightened a bit when she heard that. "Yes, it will be impossible as long as they are together. But what about when they're not?" she asked.

"How do you suggest we separate them?" Zhou Tianqiu asked.

"Not ourselves," she said. "They will separate on their own in a year, right?"

"In a year?" the Saints' eyes went wide with understanding. "It's opening again soon, isn't it?"

The Song family matriarch's smile twisted with glee. "We'll get him there next year, in the Demon Realm."

Chapter 813: Rewards

Alex woke up not even a few hours later. When he did, Helen explained everything that happened.

"Makes sense," he said as he nodded to himself. "I revealed my true strength, so they would obviously be curious."

"Do you plan on telling them why you are strong?" Helen asked.

Alex mulled for a bit, but he couldn't see any reason to not explain it to them. Explaining would actually help him get these elderlies off his back.

However, at the same time, his explanation wouldn't make sense to them. Would they believe him when he told them that the reason why he could fight those above him was that his Qi was very, very dense? Would he tell them how they had to be born with one-of-a-kind bodies to have these sort of dense Qi?

Or would he tell them that he happened to find a cat that could help his body cultivate without any other aid?

Could he even tell them that the reason why his spiritual sense was so strong was that he had been improving it by not only eating pills but also eating beast cores wherein he absorbed the mental capabilities of the beasts whose cores he ate?

None of these would ever make sense to them and they would only think of him as a liar who was trying to hide something much more important to himself.

At that point, it was better just to keep the answers to himself.

"I won't tell them. They can find on their own," Alex said.

He spent the rest of the night cultivating to get back the Saint Qi he had used up today. Saint Qi even by itself was so very strong, and given that it was extremely dense as well, he could switch up his Five Yang Divine Path technique and go one step ahead.

Once he entered the Saint realm and his Qi was naturally always Saint Qi, Alex could start using the Immortal cultivation technique among the five techniques.

After the night was over and the sun rose up, Alex stopped cultivation. He went around the city with his mother to view the various things.

Around early noon, he then went to the arena once more.

The old man, from the time when he was accused of cheating, was inside a room, waiting for the top 16 to gather.

Alex arrived and immediately mingled with the elites that were more than welcome to talk to him about various things.

He could see their elder's influence in their voices when they asked how he was strong or had better spiritual sense and stuff. But he mostly played it safe and didn't say anything other than some vague hints at some backing helping him.

With the jaguar's presence known, they would assume that Alex was talking about the beasts.

"Gather up everyone," the old man spoke up a few minutes after everyone had arrived. "First of all, let me congratulate you all on achieving what most would only ever even dream of."

Alex listened to the old man speak, but his eyes were always focused on the group of people gathered behind him with storage bags in a golden tray.

"Those who placed 9th through 16th, please walk forward," the old man said.

8 people stepped forward from the group of finalists and 8 staff members walked forward holding a golden tray with a storage bag on it.

Each one of them was awarded one of the storage bags, the contents of which were not made public at all.

The staff disappeared and 4 new ones appeared with the same thing.

"All 4 Quarter-finalists, please step forward," the old man said.

Alex saw Lu Yan, Han Daiyu, Song Shing, and the princes walk forward and accept their rewards.

"Fu Tao, please step forward," the old man said and brought out a sole storage bag.

Fu Tao walked up and accepted his reward.

Finally, it was time for the Top 3 to accept their rewards. Alex stepped forward and so did Liang Qiu and Guo Chiang.

Unlike in the alchemy competition, none of them were told what the reward for winning the competition would be. As such, Alex was more than excited to learn what they were.

The old man handed them all each their own storage bags and congratulated them.

Alex wasted no time and checked the bag with a speed that nearly matched the other two. His spiritual sense entered the storage bag and... he was shocked.

'So much stuff,' he thought. From what he could see, there were about 40 to 50 thousand True Spirit stones, quite a few talismans, and pills. A few different foods and ingredients that would aid one whether it was for Alchemy or artifact creating.

There was a True armor, sword, and even a defensive mental artifact in there that totally surprised Alex. He hadn't expected to get so many items, but even then he thought something was missing.

'There's no Saint ranked item?' he thought. Even the Alchemy competition had 3 saint-ranked items. Surely something like this tournament didn't miss it, right?

As Alex thought that, the old man brought out a different storage bag and handed it to Guo Chiang.

"Look through them and keep what you like," the old man said. "You only get one."

Guo Chiang nodded and peeped through the bag. Alex couldn't help but wonder what was in that bag, but it would take time for him to see it.

It was most likely Saint-ranked artifacts that Guo Chiang would get to see. However, if Alex wasn't wrong, the bag would then pass onto Liang Qiu before coming to him, in which case, he most likely would not have a choice on what he would get.

'Well, a Saint-ranked artifact is a Saint-ranked artifact nonetheless,' Alex thought.

Guo Chiang's face was one of a dilemma as he stared at the bag for a good while. He couldn't seem to choose anything at all.

Alex wondered what could be in it that he had to be so deliberate about everything.

In the end, he took out a magnificent sword that was dark blue all over and looked at it out in the open.

"I will take this," he said roughly.

The bag passed onto Liang Qiu, whose face changed to delight when her sense entered the bag. As if she understood what she had to take the moment the bag fell in her hand, she quickly took something out and placed it directly onto her bag.

The motion of it was so quick that Alex couldn't even see what she had taken out.

Finally, the bag landed on Alex's arm and his senses hugged it like it was his long-lost child.

As soon as it entered, he saw exactly 3 different things inside.

The first one was a green armor with a talisman attached to it. Alex read the talisman and learned about the armor.

It was called the Gardener's Armor. It was a Wood element-aligned armor that was capable of protecting people from any attacks below the Saint Foundation realm, given that the person wearing had Saint Qi in them.

Otherwise, it was still capable of such protection, but for a single attack only.

In addition to that, when activated, the armor was capable of increasing your movement speed by a lot. The increase depended on the person, but generally, it was always over 50%.

Alex thought for a moment. The armor wasn't bad at all. Ignoring the movement thing, it could block attacks from anyone under the Saint Foundation realm as long as he had Saint Qi, which he was starting to have.

However, when he really thought about it, Alex quickly realized how bad this was for him.

'Wait, the moment I hit saint realm, this armor becomes useless to me,' Alex thought. With Saint realm's saint Qi, Alex's own defensive technique would make him better than the armor.

He shook his head and moved on to the next thing that was in the bag.

His senses fell on a bow and Alex immediately frowned. He read the information for the sake of reading it, but nothing about the weapon appealed to him at all. He shook his head as it was an automatic skip for him.

Finally, Alex's eyes fell on the third and final saint artifact that was inside the storage bag.

A pristine, white mask.

Chapter 814: The Mask

Alex looked at the white mask with no features at all. The only reason he was even sure it was a mask and not some random piece of curved plate was that there were slight carvings on the inside of the mask where one's nose went.

There was a talisman attached to it like everything else that he read.

The mask was called Mask of Spirit's Hell. It was a Saint Earth-grade artifact that was focused on one's spirit. Or more exactly, on one's spiritual sea.

The mask was capable of creating a continuous burden on one's spirit, causing them to weaken over time. Alex couldn't help but wonder what was so good about that, but he quickly learned that the purpose wasn't to suppress one's spirit entirely but to suppress it to the point where one could fight back.

When done properly, the person could slowly increase their mental strength and improve their spirit in the long run.

The mask itself was made up of materials that stopped spiritual sense from entering. As a result, it also obstructed spiritual sense to a certain extent.

Alex tried reading just how much it obstructed one's spirit and came to learn that there were exactly 9 different stages of suppression that one could set up.

It was advised that newly ascended Saints start with the first stage as that itself would be quite difficult for them.

Alex frowned a bit. He had to wait until he reached the Saint realm to even try this out?

His spiritual sense was currently close to about half as strong as that of a Saint realm cultivator. It would likely be a little stronger than half by the time he was in True Emperor 9th realm.

If he was somehow able to break through 3 realms every year and reach the 9th realm in 3 years worth of time, he would still have to wait another few years before he could break through to the Saint realm.

'Well, it won't help me immediately as a weapon would, but it's still quite good,' Alex thought. He knew what to choose now.

He brought out the white mask and handed the storage bag over to the old man.

"Are you all satisfied with what you got?" the old man asked.

The three of them nodded.

"Great. The Tournament of Champions has hereby officially ended. Thank you all for taking part in it and congratulations once again on what you have achieved. Goodbye."

The old man turned around and left with the rest of the staff. The rest of the people slowly started to disperse.

"You chose the mask?" Liang Qiu asked him from the side.

"Yes," Alex said. "There wasn't anything better. What did you get?"

"A spear," she said. "A really good one."

They slowly left while talking to each other. They dispersed once they reached outside the arena, but not before making plans to return back together.

Alex returned to the hotel where they were staying and told his mother about what had gone on in the arena.

Once she learned that they would return back later afternoon today, she quickly decided to go around the city and see if there was something she wanted to bring back with her.

While she was gone, Alex stayed in his room alone with the mask in his hands.

He kept staring at the mask, wanting to put it on. He wanted to check whether or not the stress was really something he should be worried about before reaching the Saint realm.

He slowly brought it to his face, forcing his fingers to be ready to pull it away at a moment's notice, and... nothing.

From what he could tell, the mask didn't work on its own, and he would have to activate it to make it work.

'Good design, I guess,' he thought and slowly poured some Qi before he received feedback telling him the mask was now at the first stage of suppression.

The pristine and glossy white mask was now different. A bit of black, like ink marbled in water, appeared on top of the mask.

The black was a small amount in total, but in a background of white, it was the only thing that was visible.

Alex slowly put on the mask once again and this time, he was extremely cautious.

When the mask fell on his face, at first he felt nothing. However, the very next second a subtle pressure was applied to his mind that only grew with time.

In about 10 seconds, it stabilized at a point where Alex had to constantly use his spiritual energy to protect himself.

The feeling wasn't pleasant, but it was one he had felt before. It was the same suppressive feeling as the one from yesterday when he was in the crimson barrier.

Only, this one was much stronger even at just the first stage of it. He could only imagine how hard the later ones would be.

'And I have to use this continuously to improve my spiritual sense?' Alex thought. With this, it wouldn't even take 10 minutes to fully deplete his spiritual energy.

That made it hard to imagine how it could possibly be improving him at all. Alex took off the mask and deactivated it to return it back to the white form.

Once he was sure it wouldn't help him much at the moment, he placed the mask into his storage ring and decided not to use it very often.

A few hours later, Helen returned from her trip around the capital where she had bought many different things that had caught her eyes and even had Alex take some.

She brought him a black and gold robe that she really wanted him to try. It was a good robe and from what he could see, it was a True rank artifact too that was capable of protecting him against attacks to a certain extent.

The defensive aspect wasn't helpful for Alex, but the comfort the robe provided was still not bad.

He wore the robe and left the hotel with his mother. It was time to return back to Dawnspring City.

Chapter 815: A Purpose

Alex looked at the seed in his hand with a curious look. He slowly laid it on the ground in his room and saw the ground crack from the sheer weight of the seed.

"How is it so heavy?" he wondered.

He placed his palm on the seed again and the name floated back, with nothing else.

Seed of the World Tree.

That sounded great, except Alex didn't know what a World Tree was. He hadn't ever heard of it before.

However, given the lack of information on the seed, he could only assume that this was one of the three plants that were blessed by God, or its descendants.

The Demonic plants.

Similar to the Divine Devil fruit, or the Spirit Cleansing lily, this was most likely something of a treasure as well.

'You cultivate with the Spirit Cleansing Lily, and You eat a Divine Devil fruit. What do you do with a seed of a World Tree?' Alex wondered.

If this was something like the other two, Alex was sure this plant would help him somehow. Only, he couldn't understand how.

"Do I eat it?" he asked himself as he looked at the hard, brown-shelled seed. "No, that shouldn't be the case. Then do I cultivate with it?"

Alex found that option more likely. So, he sat next to the giant seed and started cultivating.

Alex took what little Qi had remaining in his body and started moving it around his meridians in a cycle. As he did, a small vacuum was created around his meridians that started pulling in the Qi from outside.

The Qi flowed towards him, however, when it was about to reach him, something else pulled the Qi with an even stronger force and took all the Qi away.

Alex frowned. "What the hell?" He had only just started cultivating and the seed was obstructing it. At first, he wondered if that was how it was supposed to happen, that he was doing the right thing.

However, as half the night passed away and nothing happened, Alex realized that the seed was stealing away all of the Qi he was trying to cultivate.

"Alright, that's enough," Alex thought and stopped cultivating. He looked at the seed with an annoyed look as even after 4 hours of cultivation, he had nearly recovered any Qi at all.

"You need to go back with the other seed that I don't know what to do about," Ning said and sent the giant seed back into his storage ring.

He sat there annoyed for a few minutes, thinking just what he could possibly do, but once he realized there was nothing he could do at the moment, he let it go and continued cultivating.

Fortunately, after the seed was gone into the ring, it didn't continue sucking in Qi from outside, or else that would've been horrible.

Alex cultivated halfway through the morning to compensate for the time he had wasted last night. After he was done, he decided to leave for the Beast realm.

After letting his mother know about his departure, Alex left and arrived at the northern forest a day later.

Once he arrived at the teleportation platform, he used his Yang Qi to activate it and went in.

The beasts found out he was back the moment he entered, and the jaguar went out to find him.

"You came. I thought you would've stayed back a bit longer. Didn't you say you had quite a few things to do?" the jaguar asked.

"Yeah, I'm done with a lot of things already. There are a few things left, but they can wait. Actually, I'm here early because I needed your help with something," Alex said.

He brought out the seed and placed it on the floor. The marble on the floor didn't crack, but that was to be expected of the palace of the White Tiger.

"Do you know what this is?" he asked.

The jaguar looked at the seed curiously and shook his head. He had no idea at all.

"I see. So, apparently, it's something called the World Tree, or at least it's a seed of the tree. I wonder if you've heard about it," Alex asked.

"A World Tree? That... I might have heard of it before, I might have not. I can't remember," the jaguar said. He was trying his best to remember, but memories from before he reached Saint realm were impossible to remember.

"It might be a demonic plant or a mutant version of it," Alex helped him remember more.

"Huh? What's a demonic plant?" the jaguar asked.

Alex narrowed his eyes. "Do you not know what a demonic plant is?" he asked.

"I... think I've heard the word Demonic plants, but I don't know what they are," the jaguar said.

"Weird," Alex noted. "They're similar to the Heavenly beasts in that they were plants blessed by one of the gods."

"Is that true?" the jaguar's eyes suddenly widened. It was as if some of the conversations his lord had in the past was starting to make sense to him.

"You really didn't know?" Alex asked.

"Information regarding anything that was blessed by the gods is heavily restricted. The only reason we even know about the Heavenly beasts is that we are servants to one and have a little of their bloodline or in your case a lot."

"We would not have told you about the White Tigers had you not had the blood of the White Tiger," the jaguar said.

"So, you didn't know about the demonic plants?" Alex asked.

"I knew there was another god, but I didn't know he had blessed anything. This sort of information... they aren't shared so easily."

"You have to be a very important individual, or belong to an important faction to learn this sort of thing," the jaguar said.

'More important than someone that is one of the strongest individuals of the continent?' Alex thought for a second before he realized what the Jaguar was implying.

"You mean... you have to be an immortal to know this thing?" Alex asked.

"Not necessarily," the jaguar said. "You can be a mortal of an important family and you can learn this stuff. You don't need to be an immortal. On the contrary, even being an immortal won't give you the right to learn this information."

'Even being an immortal won't help? Just what the hell is Shen Jing's background to freely teach me this? He did say he wasn't born on this continent. Could he be from outside of this world?' Alex thought.

He quickly ignored the thought and focused back on the seed. "So, if you can't help me with this, will Lady Ren be able to?" he asked.

"That's... uhh..." the jaguar hesitated.

"What's wrong? Is she still in closed cultivation?" Alex asked.

"Yeah, yeah, that's it," the jaguar said.

Alex didn't show it, but he did get a little suspicious. 'Is she dead?' he wondered. 'Why is the jaguar acting so suspicious.'

"Well, if she can't help me then, can you check the library and see if there is anything about the World Tree? If this is a variant, then there must be some information about it," Alex said.

The jaguar sighed. "Yeah, I guess I can check."

"Oh, and while you're doing that, can you look up another tree for me?" Alex asked.

"Sure, what's it called?" the jaguar asked.

"It's called the Nine Heavens Yang Tree."

Chapter 816: A Seed

Once Alex was done figuring out how a whip worked, he tried it again for a while with the Saint-ranked whip and returned back after the tree was burned to a cinder.

He wanted to go to the beast realm right now, and start searching for the location where the Undying God's inheritance was left behind. But there were a few more things he needed to do before he went on fully focusing on his other goals.

First, there were still pills whose recipes he needed to fully convert. Now that he was starting to see the Saint realm being just a few years away, he needed to be prepared for it since he would be making Saint pills mostly.

Alex spent the next month or so doing that very thing. With the amount of pills he had already fixed, fixing these few pills became incredibly easy.

Not only did he know what an ingredient's powder shape would be, he was also starting to be able to guess it just based on what the ingredient was.

Flower petals for example were mostly of the same density, making each of their shapes similar when put through a similar process.

Similarly, branches, roots, barks, and even beast's muscles and bone powders were in many cases similar.

As such, in just that single month, Alex finished nearly every pill recipe he had left. As for the ones he didn't finish, he decided to slowly do it as there was still quite a while before he reached the Saint realm.

After that, Alex went over to the Poison Valley and got back some parts of the Corrosive willow that he could later grow into another willow tree and hopefully get enough of them to forever have the barks for when people needed to improve their Earth spirit roots.

During the rest of the days, Alex cultivated himself and helps his mother cultivate as well.

He would make Immortal rank pills of the highest qualities to help his mother's cultivation speed up to the point where she would reach True Emperor in just a year or two.

She was already at True King 6th realm by now, so it wouldn't take her much longer.

He hoped he could help her learn some Dao, but that was something each person had to do on their own, and Alex couldn't really aid in that at all.

So, for the rest of it, he focused on his own thing.

Alex made a habit of doing exactly 3 things at night before he would cultivate.

First, he would use up his little Saint Qi he had to try and refine the Flaming Whip. With how it was going, it would take him months before he was able to do that.

Next, he would use the True Qi he had to refine all the other weapons he had.

After winning not only the Alchemy competition but also gaining third place in the Tournament of Champions, Alex was given a lot of gifts from people that wanted to meet him or only congratulate him on his victories.

Alex did go and speak to a few, but the talks were usually about them trying to see if they could rope him in, which never really worked.

Still, he got a lot of different artifacts from the people, of which he took every single sword and cauldron.

He was now refining them just to get them ready for when he would need them.

At the same time, he would also use the first stage of the mask to completely deplete his spiritual energy, which only took about 10 minutes with the mask.

Once he was lacking in True Qi, Saint Qi, and spiritual energy, he would sit down and cultivate throughout the night to regain them all for the next day.

That continued for another month before Alex no longer had any weapons or cauldrons to refine and moved on wasting his Qi with the ring on his finger.

Alex had sort of stopped trying to refine the ring for the most part as he wasn't seeing any improvements on it. No matter how much Qi he was using to refine it, it kept on absorbing his Qi while not doing anything.

At some point, he had simply stopped giving the ring any more Qi. He would still try it from time to time, every couple of months, but that would only result in him being disappointed.

However, now that he needed something to waste his Qi on before cultivating, the ring became the perfect item to do it with.

Or, at least that was what he had thought.

About a month after starting to refine his Whip, Alex was finally successful. Which meant that he now needed to spend his Saint Qi elsewhere.

What better place to do it than the ring?

Alex refined the ring with both Saint Qi and True Qi for about a week or so, when suddenly it expanded again.

He nearly didn't understand what had happened when he did manage to break through the ring's stubbornness to not expand.

"I knew there was more," Alex thought as he quickly took off his spirit-suppressing mask and looked at the ring.

The red ruby still looked the same, but the space inside was much larger than before.

It went from having 20 cubic meters of space to about 25 cubic meters.

'What changed?' Alex wondered and looked through the space. As he did that, Alex noticed something that he did not believe he owned.

It would be hard to forget an object like this that was so big.

Alex quickly pulled it out of the storage bag and tried to keep it in the air. However, before he could realize what happened, the Qi he was trying to use to keep it afloat suddenly wasn't there anymore and Alex was forced to grab the object in the air.

When he did, Alex immediately strained as the giant object he hugged was at least a few hundred tons in weight.

Alex felt his feet sink into the ground as he quickly used his Qi to reinforce his body and lighten the weight a bit.

He tried to float it with his Qi, but for some reason, his Qi didn't work around it.

Alex used his senses to see what it was, but even without them, he was already getting information about the object in his mind. After all, it was a plant.

More accurately, it was a seed from what he could tell. A giant, heavy seed, but a seed nonetheless.

If a seed was this big, Alex could only wonder how big the tree would get.

There was something weird about the seed, however. While Alex was getting the name of the seed, he wasn't getting any information on its elemental alignment or its age.

That was something that he always got with any type of plant. Of course, there were a few exceptions to that, but surely this seed couldn't belong to one of those exceptions, right?

Alex looked at the brown seed that he could barely hug fully, and read out its name that his mind was constantly spewing out.

'A seed of the World Tree?'

Chapter 817: Restricted Information

Alex looked at the seed in his hand with a curious look. He slowly laid it on the ground in his room and saw the ground crack from the sheer weight of the seed.

"How is it so heavy?" he wondered.

He placed his palm on the seed again and the name floated back, with nothing else.

Seed of the World Tree.

That sounded great, except Alex didn't know what a World Tree was. He hadn't ever heard of it before.

However, given the lack of information on the seed, he could only assume that this was one of the three plants that were blessed by God, or its descendants.

The Demonic plants.

Similar to the Divine Devil fruit, or the Spirit Cleansing lily, this was most likely something of a treasure as well.

'You cultivate with the Spirit Cleansing Lily, and You eat a Divine Devil fruit. What do you do with a seed of a World Tree?' Alex wondered.

If this was something like the other two, Alex was sure this plant would help him somehow. Only, he couldn't understand how.

"Do I eat it?" he asked himself as he looked at the hard, brown-shelled seed. "No, that shouldn't be the case. Then do I cultivate with it?"

Alex found that option more likely. So, he sat next to the giant seed and started cultivating.

Alex took what little Qi had remaining in his body and started moving it around his meridians in a cycle. As he did, a small vacuum was created around his meridians that started pulling in the Qi from outside.

The Qi flowed towards him, however, when it was about to reach him, something else pulled the Qi with an even stronger force and took all the Qi away.

Alex frowned. "What the hell?" He had only just started cultivating and the seed was obstructing it. At first, he wondered if that was how it was supposed to happen, that he was doing the right thing.

However, as half the night passed away and nothing happened, Alex realized that the seed was stealing away all of the Qi he was trying to cultivate.

"Alright, that's enough," Alex thought and stopped cultivating. He looked at the seed with an annoyed look as even after 4 hours of cultivation, he had nearly recovered any Qi at all.

"You need to go back with the other seed that I don't know what to do about," Ning said and sent the giant seed back into his storage ring.

He sat there annoyed for a few minutes, thinking just what he could possibly do, but once he realized there was nothing he could do at the moment, he let it go and continued cultivating.

Fortunately, after the seed was gone into the ring, it didn't continue sucking in Qi from outside, or else that would've been horrible.

Alex cultivated halfway through the morning to compensate for the time he had wasted last night. After he was done, he decided to leave for the Beast realm.

After letting his mother know about his departure, Alex left and arrived at the northern forest a day later.

Once he arrived at the teleportation platform, he used his Yang Qi to activate it and went in.

The beasts found out he was back the moment he entered, and the jaguar went out to find him.

"You came. I thought you would've stayed back a bit longer. Didn't you say you had quite a few things to do?" the jaguar asked.

"Yeah, I'm done with a lot of things already. There are a few things left, but they can wait. Actually, I'm here early because I needed your help with something," Alex said.

He brought out the seed and placed it on the floor. The marble on the floor didn't crack, but that was to be expected of the palace of the White Tiger.

"Do you know what this is?" he asked.

The jaguar looked at the seed curiously and shook his head. He had no idea at all.

"I see. So, apparently, it's something called the World Tree, or at least it's a seed of the tree. I wonder if you've heard about it," Alex asked.

"A World Tree? That... I might have heard of it before, I might have not. I can't remember," the jaguar said. He was trying his best to remember, but memories from before he reached Saint realm were impossible to remember.

"It might be a demonic plant or a mutant version of it," Alex helped him remember more.

"Huh? What's a demonic plant?" the jaguar asked.

Alex narrowed his eyes. "Do you not know what a demonic plant is?" he asked.

"I... think I've heard the word Demonic plants, but I don't know what they are," the jaguar said.

"Weird," Alex noted. "They're similar to the Heavenly beasts in that they were plants blessed by one of the gods."

"Is that true?" the jaguar's eyes suddenly widened. It was as if some of the conversations his lord had in the past was starting to make sense to him.

"You really didn't know?" Alex asked.

"Information regarding anything that was blessed by the gods is heavily restricted. The only reason we even know about the Heavenly beasts is that we are servants to one and have a little of their bloodline or in your case a lot."

"We would not have told you about the White Tigers had you not had the blood of the White Tiger," the jaguar said.

"So, you didn't know about the demonic plants?" Alex asked.

"I knew there was another god, but I didn't know he had blessed anything. This sort of information... they aren't shared so easily."

"You have to be a very important individual, or belong to an important faction to learn this sort of thing," the jaguar said.

'More important than someone that is one of the strongest individuals of the continent?' Alex thought for a second before he realized what the Jaguar was implying.

"You mean... you have to be an immortal to know this thing?" Alex asked.

"Not necessarily," the jaguar said. "You can be a mortal of an important family and you can learn this stuff. You don't need to be an immortal. On the contrary, even being an immortal won't give you the right to learn this information."

'Even being an immortal won't help? Just what the hell is Shen Jing's background to freely teach me this? He did say he wasn't born on this continent. Could he be from outside of this world?' Alex thought.

He quickly ignored the thought and focused back on the seed. "So, if you can't help me with this, will Lady Ren be able to?" he asked.

"That's... uhh..." the jaguar hesitated.

"What's wrong? Is she still in closed cultivation?" Alex asked.

"Yeah, yeah, that's it," the jaguar said.

Alex didn't show it, but he did get a little suspicious. 'Is she dead?' he wondered. 'Why is the jaguar acting so suspicious.'

"Well, if she can't help me then, can you check the library and see if there is anything about the World Tree? If this is a variant, then there must be some information about it," Alex said.

The jaguar sighed. "Yeah, I guess I can check."

"Oh, and while you're doing that, can you look up another tree for me?" Alex asked.

"Sure, what's it called?" the jaguar asked.

"It's called the Nine Heavens Yang Tree."

Chapter 818: Breakingthrough

The Ning Heavens Yang tree was the tree that gave him his life back. It was the tree at the northern edge of the continent, whose fruit Alex ate to upgrade his body constitution and whose seed he still had in his storage.

He hadn't thought about the seed for a long time because he didn't want to let anyone know that he had a seed of a tree this important.

However, he desperately wanted to learn about it, so now that he had some free time, he wanted the jaguar to look it up.

He would go to the library himself and check the books out himself, in fact, he even wanted to do so, but the library was still unavailable to him for some reason.

Alex had asked several times half a year ago as to why that was, but they only gave vague reasons, one of which was he hadn't received permission to enter yet.

In the end, Alex stopped asking anymore.

While the Jaguar was off to look up information on both of the plants whose seeds he had, Alex went off to meet Pearl.

Pearl was currently fighting and winning against Yao Jia. Yao Jia's cultivation base had improved a lot over the many years Alex had been gone, but somehow not by much.

She had only reached the end of True King realm and was one step away from entering True Emperor realm.

Comparing that to Pearl who had apparently managed to enter the True Emperor 2nd realm already, Yao Jia was obviously going to lose.

She had likely been spending her days in a room that had a heavy time difference, as such she was spending less time in general in comparison to time outside of those rooms.

It had been nearly 11 years outside, but to her, it had likely only been 2 years at best.

This was why despite being born nearly half a millennia ago, Yao Jia was still less than 65 years old.

The battle between the two similar-sized beasts lasted for a while, which ended with Yao Jia grumbling about the fact that Pearl was able to change his shape so easily.

There were advantages to being able to freely change your body size, especially for beasts who usually fought in close combat.

Since being able to change shape was something only Saint beasts were supposed to do in general, Pearl came off as an anomaly during battle.

"Great fights, both of you," Alex clapped his hands from the side when the two of them were done fighting.

"Brother! You're here?" Pearl came up to him and jumped onto his shoulders in his small form.

"Yeah, I had to come quickly for something. How's your training going? I see you're ahead of me in cultivation again," Alex said.

"It's going great," Pearl said.

"I'm going to go back to the Tiger sect for a little while. Do you want to come with me?" Alex asked.

Pearl thought for a bit and realized he was a little bored from training all the time. "Yes!" he said excitedly.

"Alright, let's leave," Alex said.

"Wait, what about the company? You need to tell my father," Yao Jia reminded him.

"Uh... I just asked him to help me with something in the library. Can you call the leopard senior?" Alex asked.

"But he just went into closed cultivation. He's nearing a breakthrough," Yao Jia said.

Alex couldn't help but frown. "Then I'll have to wait until your father is out of the library?" he asked.

"No, not necessarily," she said. Her spiritual sense broadened to a certain extent and another spiritual sense invaded their area.

Alex looked around with a frown on his face. His spiritual sense widened and he couldn't help but feel annoyed all of a sudden.

The puma arrived in front of him, with a rather nasty scar on his back.

"I see you are doing fine," the puma said.

"No thanks to you," Alex glared at the puma. He still hated it for what it did to him all the way back then.

The puma sighed. "Listen, kid, I'm sorry for what I did back then. I want this problem between us to go away. You already nearly killed me, so you should have had your revenge," it said.

Alex looked at the long scar along its back, which was likely left behind when Godslayer had taken over his body.

He was still angry, but the scar helped him feel a little better. So, he decided to be better than he wanted to be and forgave the puma.

After that, he went to the teleportation platform on the other side of the underground palace and teleported out to the Crimson Empire.

* * * * *

Inside a dark dungeon underground, two figures walked side by side.

Little light was available at this location, but Song Shing and his grandmother didn't have much need for lights as they could see everything clearly even with no light.

Soon, they reached the end of the dungeon that led to an open room that was more brightly lit than anywhere else.

The room was giant, nearly 10 meters wide on all sides. There were also 4 pedestals in the middle of the room, all with edges that slanted towards the center.

"Are we really doing this grandmother?" Song Shing asked. He wanted to be strong, but... was this worth it?

"You don't have a choice. We have already seen how strong the kid is and in a year, he'll be stronger. If you want to have him submit to you, you need to be stronger than you are right now," The old woman said.

"Take your clothes off.

Song Shing took off his red robe without any hesitation and stripped down to nothing. He then moved his hands and the red parts of the robes moved, slowly crawling out of the robe and into his hands.

The congealed blood started flowing again as he quickly turned it into a scythe and cut off all of his long hair.

"Sit there," the woman said.

Song Shing nodded and sat on the floor, where he was surrounded by the slanted edges of the pedestal.

Each of the pedestals had a Saint formation on them, each of which was meant to suppress the cultivation base of whatever was placed on top.

On top, were 4 different beasts, whose cultivation base felt like it didn't exist, but it was obvious what they would be.

The old woman lift her right arm and all the blood on the white robe lifted off, turning into 4 different blades which she sent off.

4 different heads rolled to the ground as the headless torso started bleeding profusely.

The pedestal filled with blood, which then dripped from the side directly onto the Song Shing.

Song Shing bathed in the crimson blood of four saint realm beasts as he started to slowly absorb the blood aura through them.

At first, he felt nothing, but soon, the strong blood aura assaulted his body from all directions. It started hurting immediately, but Song Shing handled it the best he could.

The blood aura was strong, but it couldn't compare to Alex's blood he had felt.

If he couldn't even handle this, then there was no point. So, he closed his eyes and focused once again to use his technique.

Over the course of a few hours, he started feeling his naval area go from opaque to translucent to transparent.

He was starting to break through to the saint realm.

Chapter 819: Surprise

It didn't take long before Alex was back in the Tiger sect.

Wen Cheng, Liu Xun, Luo Mei, and Du Yuhan quickly gathered in the training hall to meet with him as it had been nearly 10 months since he had left the sect for the competition.

When he told Wen Cheng and the rest he won third place in a tournament with True Emperor 9th realm competitors, they were shocked beyond belief.

"How did you defeat such strong opponents?" Wen Cheng asked with a surprised face. "Even if you can advance 4 realms to fight, you shouldn't have been strong enough, right?"

Alex chuckled a bit. It seemed his master didn't know that the days of him jumping only 4 realms were way in the past. Even jumping 7 realms was in the past.

Each time his body changed the constitution, or his Qi got denser, he could jump more and more realms.

Now, he could jump 9 realms as opposed to other people.

He explained to his master and the rest that were there, what he could do now, and that perhaps elicit a greater shock than when he told him he won third place.

Of course, as soon as his master calmed down from the shock, his mind worked to find the inconsistencies in his story.

He saw his lack of Saint Qi and went into that line of question, to which Alex explained he overcame the gap using Sword Qi and Spiritual sense.

Finally, his master and the rest understood how he won and congratulated him.

"Little brother, what sort of rewards did you win?" Liu Xun asked from the side.

"I got a lot of True ranked treasures. Right, I don't need some of these, so you guys should take these."

Alex reached into his storage bag and took out a few swords, shields, spears, armors, and various other artifacts.

"Take what you want," Alex said.

The others were surprised to see so many treasures belong to a single person, but they still hesitated to take them.

"It's yours. You keep it," Wen Cheng said.

"No, master. I have a lot more, here," Alex brought out all the swords he had and hovered them around him.

Seeing the nearly 50 swords fly in the air around Alex shocked the rest again.

"You really are rich," When Cheng said.

Alex did mention that he hadn't just won these things in a single competition. They were also things he had won in the alchemy competition or were given to him later by parties that wanted to get on his good side.

"You got all of these treasures for winning the competition there, huh? Just 3 of these swords are good enough to give to the Top 3 fighters of the annual competition and have them be excited about it. I'm surprised they gave you so many," Luo Mei said.

"Oh, sister, you haven't even seen the real treasure yet," Alex said and brought out the red whip.

Luo Mei's eyes along with his master, brother, and Du Yuhan's eyes fell on the red whip.

"A whip?" Luo Mei looked at the item with a weird look on her face. "How is this better than a sword?"

"Do you even know how to use one?" Du Yuhan asked.

"Well, I don't know how to do any fancy tricks with it, but I did practice for 4 hours, so I can confidently say that I can use it," Alex said and took the whip.

At the same time, he took one of the shields from the pile that was aesthetically bad and threw it in the air. As the shield fell down, Alex poured his little saint Qi into the whip, which immediately went ablaze in a brilliant fire.

The group jumped back in fear, but Alex stood still, watching the shield fall down.

As it reached the proper place, he whipped the fiery whip and struck the shield dead in the center.

The shield broke open into a hundred pieces, each individually burning in the same fire as the whip.

Luo Mei's eyes went in shock for a moment before realizing that she needed to put out the fire before it spread further.

Water released from her hands like a flood as it quickly drowned the fiery bits of the shield. Even then she frowned as the fire didn't immediately go out. Even underwater, it kept burning.

"Of course, it's the fire of a Saint-ranked artifact. You don't expect a True realm cultivator to be able to get rid of it so easily, do you?" Alex asked.

"Saint ranked? That whip is a Saint-ranked item?" Wen Cheng stood up in surprise.

"Yes," Alex said as he slowly walked through the flood and got close to the fire that was still burning.

He poured his Qi into the fire and lowered its temperature drastically. However, since it was quite a strong fire, it took a considerable amount of True Qi to get it to stop burning.

Once it was done, he let the group have their turn with the whip while he watched their fascinated look from the sideline.

Alex held a smile on his face as he imagined something. If a single Saint-ranked artifact was enough to get them this shocked and surprised, what would they do if he brought out another one?

Alex spent the rest of the night in the Tiger sect and only went to the Hong Wu sect the next morning.

He met up with his friends there too, and the same shenanigans occurred as he showed them his winnings.

Instead, this group was more interested in the newly converted recipes that he might have brought back for them. So, Alex gave them whatever new things he had on him.

Seeing these people be so interested in pill recipes, Alex made a mental note to give some formation blueprints to Luo Mei, so she could give them to her sister, Luo Xing.

Lang Shun arrived to meet him a little later and gave him a piece of news he wasn't expecting to hear at all.

Alex basically teleported throughout the Hong Wu sect before arriving outside the elder hall and quickly went in.

In one of the rooms, a particularly rejuvenated old man sat doing nothing. As soon as Alex arrived, the old man's face widened into a proud grin.

"Grandmaster!" Alex called out.

"Young man, I heard it was you who came to my rescue." This old man was Alex's Grandmaster, the previous Grand Elder of the sect and Ma Rong's master.

The last time Alex had visited, he was given the news that his grandmaster had entered final seclusion where he would either break through to the True Emperor realm and increase his lifespan by another 20 or so years or die trying.

It seemed that the man did in fact not die trying, and had instead added years to his lifespan.

There couldn't have been better news Alex could've heard after coming back to the sect.

He wiped his tears away before they even had a chance to form and gave a deep bow to his grandmaster.

"I am very happy to learn that you are healthy and well, grandmaster," Alex said.

"Come now, child. Don't be so formal. Besides, I should be the happy one. My disciple struck gold when she chose to make you her disciple that day in the forest," the old man said. "I'm sure she would be very proud of what you have achieved."

Chapter 820: Intent Assault

Alex stood in front of the black stele, looking at it again to try and read it.

From what he knew, from what his mother had told him, the information on the stele was not complete. Or rather, what he could see was not complete.

Alex went around the black stele with an iridescent hue to see if there was something he didn't quite catch. Of course, there was nothing on the back half of the stele, meaning whatever remaining information about the technique was here, it was likely underground.

Alex did think of pulling the stele out, but just the fear of the owner's intent to assault him kept him away.

He went back to the front and prepared himself. He calmed himself and slowly sent out his spiritual sense to 'read' the stele.

Of course, he couldn't actually read it, as being able to read the stele would most likely destroy his spirit. That was why he hadn't even learned to read the human language yet.

He was afraid of the strength of the intent on the stele if he could actually read it.

Since he was only going to scan it with his spiritual sense and depend on his mind to translate it for some reason, he decided to begin.

He closed his eyes and reached the stele with his senses. The moment he did, he could feel the intent carved into the stone itself.

Since he knew what he was up against and what would happen if he lingered on it too much, Alex quickly skipped through the upper part of the stele and reached underground.

Spiritual sense didn't work as well underground as it did overground. The lump of dirt on the ground worked in some ways to resist a spiritual sense.

Normally, if one just let their spiritual sense wander around, it wouldn't even penetrate the ground. However, when one was actually focused on the ground itself, the resistance was surprisingly too easy to fight against.

Even though there was some pushback on his spiritual sense, it reduced its effectiveness by maybe 5% at best, so Alex quickly read through it.

Of course, it would be entirely different if strong formations were laid on the ground or there were spirit veins not very deep in the ground.

Right now, there was nothing to stop Alex's spiritual sense, so it helped Alex see the actual size of the Stele.

He looked in surprise as he realized that it was actually nearly 3 times bigger than what it appeared to be.

Like an iceberg, the bigger part of the stele was hidden from view.

Once Alex got over his surprise, he decided to start scanning the rest of the stele.

He looked over at the very first word that was hidden below the surface and realized he could read it.

Back when his mother was learning the human language, they had realized that the words had to be read backward in the human language to make sense.

To find that information, Alex had to inevitably read a few of the words. One of those words was the word 'Heaven'.

Alex saw that word on the stele at this very moment.

Immediately, an intense pain grew in his mind as he screamed in agony. The spiritual sea's water sloshed around as his entire mental world felt like it was collapsing.

The artifact spirit woke up from its sleep and started scolding Alex for doing whatever it was doing.

In fact, even the silver mountain shuddered under the force of the intent that was entering his mind.

Alex quickly retracted his senses from the stele and went into his own mind.

Yellow fog erupted from all around him that tried to fight off the intent of the owner of the stele.

The intent wasn't something solid or even visible. It was something Alex could feel it in the surrounding, slowly trying to corrupt him.

Alex released the yellow fog to every corner of his spiritual world, but it did nothing from what he could see.

He couldn't help but frown as the intent continued bearing down on his spiritual world while Alex had no idea what he could do to protect himself.

This was the first time the yellow fog that could consume everything was useless.

"What do I do?" he thought worriedly.

Off to the side, Godslayer stared towards the sky. It was just a crystal ball with a small black fire in the middle, but anyone could tell that it was staring into the sky.

Alex didn't see the artifact spirit at first, but he did notice it once he heard the deep growling coming from it.

He turned to look at it and saw a crimson black flame erupt at its center. Alex somehow could feel what it was feeling even without being connected to it in any way.

The spirit's very existence was giving off emotions that were influencing Alex as well. So, he could tell what it was feeling.

Hatred.

"Screw Off!" A deep regal voice, like that born from an emperor, came from the artifact spirit. It wasn't something Alex had ever heard from the Godslayer.

It was as if he was getting a glimpse into the past when the spirit was at its peak. Or perhaps... from even further back.

Alex wanted to think more about the artifact spirit's voice, but the instant relief he felt in his mind immediately took away his attention.

"I'm... free?" he thought.

The intent that was coming to attack him was no longer there.

"You can't fight off someone's intent with that devour technique of yours. The only way to fight one's intent is through your own intent." The spirit's voice had returned to normal, no longer the same regal voice Alex had just heard.

"In a clash of intent, whichever one is stronger, is the one that manages to survive," the artifact spirit spoke.

"You... managed to destroy it?" Alex asked.

"It was just a part of the real intent, whittled down through centuries. If you knew what you had to do, you could also fight against it," the spirit said. "Of course, you won't make it out without harm."

Alex nodded. Having just read a single word in the stele was enough for the intent to nearly destroy his mind. That made Alex wonder just what would happen if he did know the entire language.

He decided not to think about it and looked towards Godslayer. "You... you were angry at the intent. Is there a reason?" he asked.

"Yes," the sword spirit said. "That intent very likely belongs to one of my mortal enemies."

"Your mortal enemy? You mean the gods?" Alex asked.

"Yes... and no," the spirit said as it continued staring into the sky. "It is most likely a god whose intent that is, but... this hatred I feel, it feels more personal. I don't know why."

Alex wanted to ask some more, but he didn't know what to ask. The Godslayer's fire suddenly waned as it got weaker.

"I... I used a bit of energy to use my intent there. I overexerted myself. Would you mind getting me something to eat?" the sword spirit asked.

What the spirit ate in his mind was the remnant spirit of the beasts that remained in their beast core after they died. Whenever Alex ate a core to cultivate, the artifact spirit would be the first to feast on it.

Alex nodded when he heard the spirit wanted something to eat. Since it had helped Alex survive, he wouldn't deny it.

Besides, he was getting closer and closer to a breakthrough. It was about time to eat some of them anyway.

He came back outside and found a group of people hovering around him, worried about him as he had screamed and apparently fell unconscious.

Alex got back up and thanked them for coming to his aid. After telling them he was okay, he left.

Alex felt thankful that he had Godslayer to help him. He was happy that in what could be considered his wisest choice yet, he didn't read the human language.

He had been planning to teach it to his masters and others here, but if he were to do that, he would need to first cover up the stele completely.

He decided to do exactly that and went to talk with the Sect master about it.