

Alchemy 1481

Chapter 1481: Pill Auction

"Over a hundred thousand Saint Spirit stones with just the Lightning pill, your majesty," Liang Shufen said. "That is amazing. I could have never expected such a pill to get that many spirit stones."

"One can only wonder how much they would pay for a pill with a much higher number of pills veins," Yao Ning said. "I wonder if the order of the final two treasures would be switched around."

"No need to daydreaming," Alex said. "Let's focus on the auction for now. We still have 6 different types of pills left to sell."

The next pill in the sale was the Saint Spirit Immunity pill. He had given them 5 of these as well, so he was excited to see just how much they would sell for.

100% Harmony on the pill alone was something that no one got to seen before, and somehow they were now seeing pills with pill veins in sale. As such, no one wanted to give up on the pills and were ready to place all the money they had on them.

Alex looked at the numbers and quickly realized that there weren't that many people to pay money for this one pill, however.

It had probably to do with the fact that there were artifacts that did the same thing as well. However, while artifacts lost energy very quickly, this pill would last them for hours.

During a fight for life and death, that would be very important.

The very first of the spirit pills were sold for 19 thousand Saint spirit stones, a little less than what he had expected.

However, the following ones increased in sales as the bidding continued.

21000.

21500.

23500.

23800.

While these pills didn't cross the 25 thousand spirit stones threshold as the previous pill did, Alex was fine with that. After all, this was only the 2nd pill.

Getting 100 thousand Saint spirit stones with something whose ingredients weren't even that rare made him not feel bad at the loss in sales compared to the last one.

Alex wondered how the next pill would sell if this spirit pill earned less than the first one.

He had a hunch that it would sell more, but he would have to see.

The main important aspect of the third pill, the Saint Poison Neutralizing Pill, was that there weren't many ways to fend off a poison attack prior to being poisoned.

There were artifacts, formations, and talismans, but they had to be constantly running for them to work. There weren't that many things that would magically spring up from one's body and stop the poison before it affected them.

Even those were mostly to stop the poison from ever entering one's body. If someone managed to bypass them and poisoned the user, then the user would have no choice but to try and eat an antidote in a hurry.

If the poison was ever too strong, they would even die.

this pill averted that exact danger by being an antidote that you ate in advance. Not only that, it also worked with almost any poison out there. Even in the case of the most lethal poison out there, this pill would instantly block them, and that landed a lot better with the many buyers than the spirit pill.

The first pill alone was sold for 27000 Saint Spirit stones, easily breaking the 25000 threshold at the first sale.

The elders around Alex were more excited than he was when the bidding was concluded.

27000 was an amazing price for the pill, with an equally amazing effect.

The following 4 pills sold for even more.

28000

28600

29900

35000

The final bidding was quite intense in what seemed like a battle between two bidders. They each continued increasing the amount by 100 Saint Spirit stones from back at 30 thousand Saint Spirit stones and kept the back and forth going for another 40 times.

It was only when the bidding suddenly jumped by 1000 at the end the other party stopped and the bid was complete.

Alex had made way more than 130 thousand Saint Spirit stones this time around, a rather massive jump.

And it was only the 3rd pill.

There were more pills to come, even better ones.

The Water Root Transformation pill is up next. As soon as it was introduced as the pill Alex had made back in the competition against the emperor, everyone was excited about that pill.

Due to its ability to turn one's regular Spiritual root to Water Spiritual root for 10 days, Alex was sure that it would sell for quite a bit.

While he was correct in assuming that they would earn a lot due to just the bizarre nature of the pill, there was the problem that there were only 3 of the pills, compared to the 5 for the other one.

As such, the total sales of the pills barely crossed the 100 thousand Saint Spirit stones.

"I have hoped it would sell for much more than this," Yao Ning said. "But I suppose having a Water root for just 10 days isn't that attractive for most people."

"But it is useful for people with weak Water Spiritual root, isn't it? With this, they can learn Water Dao more easily thanks to having two different roots," Whisker said softly.

"That is true," Alex said. "But I believe the problem here isn't that the pill has very little usability when compared to say the poison neutralizing pill, but that what usability it does have become irrelevant for people that already know ahead."

"You're right, Your Majesty," Yao Ning said. "Everyone must be looking ahead for the Water and Earth Spiritual Root Improvement pill."

"Yes," Alex said. "Whatever, it still sold for quite a decent amount. That is the price most other items sold in this place."

"That's true," Yao Ning said.

Once the bidding for the pill was over, the auctioneer moved on to the 5th pill that she was selling.

The Soul Trancing Pill.

The Soul Trancing pill was guaranteed to be a hit from the start. A pill that put someone in a trance that only came to someone once in a lifetime was a chance no one wanted to give up on.

Furthermore, putting one in the same mental state one would need to be where one could gain enlightenment regarding the various nature of the world was even more lucrative for many.

Adding on to that the auction house guaranteed the enlightenment of a Dao, so long as one was close to it made it very much popular amongst all the people that were there.

When the bidding began at just 10 thousand Saint Spirit stones, as they had promised Alex it would, it quickly rose high and crossed 30 thousand in an instant.

It continued going up from there, slowly but steadily increasing in amount.

The people here knew that they weren't paying for a pill at all. They were paying for a Dao and would fork out however many Saint Spirit stones as they would have to.

No matter how much they paid, it would all be cheap for them. After all, one couldn't put a price on a Dao.

A Dao was a ticket to Immortality.

A Dao was priceless.

A Dao... sold at 69000 Saint spirit stones.

"Nice!" Alex couldn't help but say. "I would have been sad if it didn't even cross 50 thousand. This is great."

"It was bound to sell for a lot," Yao Ning said. "It is an amazing pill."

The others nodded. "Let's see how the next one sells. I hope it does better than the first one," Alex said.

The next pill quickly crossed the 30 thousand Saint spirit stones in a matter of seconds. It shot up past 40 thousand and only slowed down to around 50 thousand.

From the constant flipping of numbers, it was sure that there were quite a few people gunning for it. More than that, this was the only remaining pill that could help them acquire that Dao that they were so close to.

So, they were more than willing to go broke for it.

They could earn money later on. But Dao? That was not something they could acquire as easily.

The numbers shot past 60 thousand in a matter of minutes and a few minutes later it reached 70 thousand and crossed it

Alex looked at the difference in time before the numbers flipped and looked back at the woman that was in the room. "Is the auction increasing the timer in which the bid must be made? I can feel it going slower than normal," he said.

"They do increase the timer as the amount increases," the woman said. "To give more time for the others to make a decision. Sometimes, they have to call other folks to request money and whatnot, so they need the time."

"Ah, right," Alex said. "Request for money. I completely forgot that was a possibility at all. I'll see if I need it."

He turned around and focused on the pill that was being sold.

The number had slowed down by now, reaching some 73000 when Alex focused back on it. It continued increasing, but it didn't look like there was much left for it to increase.

Dwindling, it stopped at 76200.

No one wanted to pay any more than that, and the bidding stopped.

Alex looked at the earning and smiled to himself. Together, he had earned nearly 140 thousand Saint spirit stones from just those 2 pills.

And he knew why they weren't bidding more.

That was because they were saving for the other two pills that were going to be sold next.

Chapter 1482: Final Pill Sales

The next two pills were introduced one after another with no gap in between.

Since the two pills were essentially the same, there was no point in introducing them separately.

"It's a shame really," Alex said, looking at the auctioneer presenting his pills. "I can't see or hear people's excitement from here. That is quite disappointing."

"Is it?" Yao Ning couldn't help but ask. "Don't you just like showing off?"

"Of course not," Alex said quickly. "I just like hearing people say nice things about my work." He smiled a little.

The two elders chuckled a little and looked back at the screen where the auction owner's daughter had stopped to let the guests process what they were about to buy.

She waited for a moment and spoke again. "Yes, you all heard it correctly. This pill does in fact improve the Spiritual root of those who eat it. It was created by the same person who created the previous pill that could give you a new spiritual root, so there shouldn't be any doubt that there is a pill out there that can improve it as well, right?"

She smiled and looked around as if looking at everyone. She waited for a moment or two before speaking again, where she started explaining the importance of a strong spiritual root for anyone that might yet be unaware.

Once she was done, she moved on to the actual bidding.

"First, we will be selling the Earth pill," she said. "To start, the bidding will start at 10 thousand Saint Spirit stones. As for how much you must increase it by, there is no lower limit here at all. You can increase it by however much you desire."

"Please begin."

As soon as she said that, the bidding took off. The numbers jumped from 10 thousand to 20 thousand, and then from 20 thousand to 30 thousand in an instant.

In the time it took for one to blink, it increased to 40 thousand and a second later it had crossed 50 thousand.

Everyone had known that the price of the pill was going to be expensive. As for how expensive, they were testing the waters slowly.

The price of the pill increased by another 10 thousand in just a few more seconds and before anyone knew it, it crossed 70 thousand as well.

Alex watched as the numbers flickered through and easily crossed what the Dao pill had brought him.

"Amazing," Liang Shufen couldn't help but say. "So much money. A single pill from here is going to be enough for an entire month's worth of finances for raising our army."

"That's true," Alex said. Even though the cost of raising an army had reduced by an incredible amount after having alchemists and other production houses that work solely for the army, it still cost them quite a bit with the increase in the number of soldiers.

Now, a single pill that was being sold was enough to earn as much as the army's resources for an entire month. That was quite something.

"And it's still going up," Yao Ning mentioned, looking at the cost as it quickly crossed 80 thousand. It improved even more, increasing slowly but erratically.

Due to the way the bidding had no rules, people were placing as many bids as they wanted to which didn't make the numbers look very fun to look at.

82485

83221

85450

86548

89403

90451

When it finally crossed the 90 thousand range, it started slowing down and the numbers changed less frequently.

Alex and the rest watched as the changes dropped even more around 95 thousand and started to improve only once in a while.

The amount was so high that it would take a while for the bidding to come to an end, so people had time to bid more.

The numbers grew still, but each time it did so, Alex and the others believed it would be the last time.

"97643. Just a little more and we'll reach 100 thousand," Elder Liang said. "Just a little more." She was more excited about the whole thing than Alex was.

As the number continued to grow, Alex felt something in his storage space vibrate. He quickly looked inside and pulled out a talisman.

It was the Emerald King.

"Your majesty, this is your pill, correct?" he asked Alex. "I wish to buy it, but I'm running out of money. Would you mind lending me some?"

Alex was a bit surprised at the message. "It is indeed mine," he said. "I'm surprised you came to me for money. Why not the Crown Prince or the other kings?"

"Because you are the only one right now that isn't bidding on the pill at all," the man said. "You are the only one I can ask."

Alex chuckled a little. "I'm trying to save for the final treasure, though," he said. "Do you have any suggestions?"

"How much do you have?" the man asked.

Alex looked at his elder and asked how much they had. After getting the number, he couldn't help but feel a little bad.

"Close to 70 thousand," he said. "I thought I was saving a lot, but I never realized how high it could go."

"With that amount, I doubt you could get the next item at all, your majesty," the Emerald King said.

Alex couldn't help but nod. "In that case, would you mind lending me your money instead?" he asked. "I might end up needing it now."

"My money?" the man looked at the screen at the growing number that reached so close to 100 thousand."

"I don't have much, your Majesty," he said. "I'm already taking money from the Silver Queen, who doesn't need either of the next two pills. I myself only have about 60 thousand."

Alex thought for a bit. "How about this?" he said. "Don't bid anymore, and instead I will sell you the pill for 50 thousand Saint Spirit stones instead."

"Really?" the excited voice of the Emerald King came through the talisman. "Thank you, your majesty. I will hand over the 50 thousand right now."

Alex nodded. "Thank you," he said and put the talisman back before looking up at the screen.

"What was that about?" Elder Yao asked.

"I got myself an additional 50 thousand Saint Spirit stones. We now have 120 thousand for the next item that will come up."

"Oh!" the Elder couldn't help but be surprised. "Great! I think we'll definitely need it, maybe even more."

"More?" Alex was surprised. "Just what is being auctioned— No, don't tell me."

He looked back at the pill that was being sold and looked forward to seeing where it went from there.

As if gaining new life, the bidding jumped, crossing 100 thousand in an instant. The number changed again, going up to 101 thousand.

"They're dealing in thousands now," Alex observed. "I wonder if they got financial help from somewhere."

"Either that, or they decided that they weren't going to buy the next two items," Elder Yao said. "A few people definitely made a bit of compromise here."

"I think so too," Elder Liang said as she excitedly watched the numbers go up even more.

103

104

105

106

107

The climb was slow but consistent, it only slowed down when it reached 110 thousand. Then, the climb became a little more infrequent.

It increased a few more times, arriving at 120 where the waiting between the bidding got atrociously long.

People had to wait for a whole minute before 120 changed to 121. Then a while later, it went up to 122.

No one knew when it was going to stop at all now. As it increased so slowly.

123 came and people waited for more. When it looked like that was going to be the last one, it changed to 124.

That made the next wait even more excruciatingly long. However, it still changed to 125.

The wait after 125 was just as long, if not longer, making everyone believe that it was the last one, but not being able to confirm that.

In the end, it turned out it was indeed the final bid as the pill sold for 125 thousand Saint Spirit Stones.

Alex's eyes were wide in surprise by the end. He had never expected his pills to sell for so much. This was an incredible amount of money.

And he could only imagine what the next one was going to be sold for.

The next one was the Water pill, which had a different set of people that had waited for it when the Earth pill was being sold.

This had a different set of buyers and as a result, the bidding war for this one was quite a lot as well.

In the end, after nearly 30 minutes of bidding, the pill ended up getting sold for 128 thousand Saint Spirit stones.

That was another incredible number that surprised Alex. In total, just two of his pills had made over 250 thousand Saint Spirit stones.

If he could only use those Spirit stones in the auction, that would've been incredible. However, he could only use what he had, and nothing else.

As a result, the next and final auction was going to be quite difficult for certain.

The auctioneer smiled at everyone and announced. "Up next, we will be bringing out our final item for the auction. Please look forward to it."

Alex watched the screen as something giant was brought out from inside hidden under a cloth.

Even from the cloth, however, he could see the shape of the item.

"Is that a furnace?" he wondered. "Or... a Cauldron?"

Chapter 1483: Mountain Crushing Sect

Alex looked at the item that was hauled out into the spotlight and saw the image of it floating in front of him.

Seeing that, he frowned a little. "Is this what you wanted me to wait for? A cauldron?" he asked Elder Yao.

"It is not a cauldron," the old woman said.

"A furnace then?" he asked curiously. "That's still not that—"

"It's not a furnace either. Please, just wait for the cloth to come off," the Elder said, looking back.

"Okay," Alex said, waiting for himself.

"I will not waste any more time as all of you will have been waiting for this," the auctioneer said.
"Please, take a look."

The cloth finally lifted and everyone could see what was hidden under it.

Underneath the cloth was a large metal cauldron. Alex was about to comment on it when he noticed that it wasn't really a cauldron at all. It looked like one on a cursory glance, but when given more than just a glance, once recognized that it was just too tall to be a cauldron.

And too narrow as well.

Instead of being wide like a cauldron, it was instead more like a long cylindrical tube. He couldn't tell what that was at all.

The surface of the large object seemed to have a simple design of a golden color with some silver rims. There was a little bulge toward the middle of the metal tube, but other than that, there wasn't much design to the whole thing.

He tried to look inside, and that too had nothing at all.

He wanted to see things like Qi lines or Formation, but the picture didn't show it at all. The inside of it was empty as well, confusing him quite a bit.

"This is neither a cauldron, nor a furnace, but I do believe you have to put something in here... but what?" he wondered. The fact that it was coming at the end of the auction meant that it was no ordinary item for certain. But...

He moved his eyes from the image in front of him and looked at the image of the woman on the screen.

The object they had unveiled had actually been larger than the woman herself. "What exactly could this be?" he couldn't help but ask.

The others around him knew and were busy relishing the moment of his confusion before the item was finally revealed.

"The seller of this item is the Mountain Crushing sect," she spoke and waited for a few seconds.

Alex recognized the pause as an instant for the others to talk about the matter and got curious.

"Mountain Crushing sect? Can you tell me what importance that sect holds?" Alex asked the woman standing by the door.

The woman came forward and a little and spoke. "The Mountain Crushing sect used to be a large sect in the past that could be considered one of the strongest sects to ever exist in the Eastern Continent."

"However, during these days, they are nothing more than a memory. While they do exist, they are no longer considered the powerhouse they used to be," she said.

Alex thought for a bit and nodded. "So kind of like the Snow Immortal sect," he said softly.

The woman didn't understand what he meant and didn't reply. The other woman on the screen began speaking again.

"Yes, this is one of the items from the Mountain Crushing sect," she said. "And most importantly, this is the artifact that gave them the name that they hold today."

"This is the Mountain Crusher," the woman said and waited for everyone to take in this information. "Of course, that is not its original name. The original name it held had been lost to time as this artifact predates every single existence in this world."

"Even the Royal Family did not exist when it existed. It has existed for over a hundred thousand years," she said. "That's correct, this is an artifact that has lasted that long. The Mountain Crushing sect had merely acquired it."

This was new information for many, so the woman slowed down for them all to process. When it was time, she dropped the other news.

"And today, we will reveal for the first time what it truly is," she said. "This, the Mountain Crushing Artifact, is an Immortal artifact that was brought down from the heavens."

Alex perked up when he heard that. "Immortal artifact?" he couldn't help but ask. It wasn't every day that one got to see an Immortal artifact. As far as he could remember, he had only seen a handful of them at all.

He had a few Immortal techniques, but no artifacts. The only one that he had was the Blood God's Manual. There was a high chance that the sword he once had and had lost, the one which he couldn't use the Qi with, the one that Godslayer had come in was one as well.

But since it didn't accept Qi, he really didn't want to count it as once. Not to mention that he had lost it as well. It was probably somewhere around his Soul Space right now.

There was also the Playground, otherwise known as the Sundering Sanctum, but he had yet to make it his own. It would take some time after all.

"Immortal," he said softly and sighed. "That complicates things. How many people will want it will depend on how useful it is for anyone."

"It is useful for anyone willing to use it," Yao Ning said. "Anyone can use it. They wrote what it did in the , just now what it was."

"Anyone can use it?" Alex asked curiously.

"Anyone," the elder said.

Hearing the words, he felt a little strange. He looked at the item once again and turned around to the woman.

"The Mountain Crushing sect. What were they known for?" Alex asked.

The woman was about to answer when the auctioneer started speaking as if answering his question.

"As you all may or may not know, the Mountain Crushing sect was a sect that was known for their fighting strength where they could always defeat someone in their own realm with ease."

"Many of you may also know why that was," she said. "It was because they were not just normal cultivators at all. On top of being a Qi cultivator, they were also body cultivators."

"As such..."

Alex quickly zoned out the rest of what the woman said as soon as he heard the two words. Body Cultivators.

"That's... that's an artifact for body cultivation?" he couldn't help but ask.

"It is," the elder said.

"How does it work?" he asked.

The elder shook her head. "It wasn't explained," she said.

Alex frowned a little and turned toward the woman who was still by his side. "How did the Mountain Crushing sect fail?" he asked. "How did something so amazing lose its grace?"

"I... am not certain, your Majesty," she said. "All I know is that over time, fewer and fewer people from the sect came out as strong as the previous ones, and in time, they could no longer sustain a large sect. Anything that might have been the cause for that is beyond me."

"And now they're desperate enough to sell an Immortal artifact?" he thought. "Very well, I shall buy it then."

Chapter 1484: Flaw

"This artifact is what the Mountain Crushing sect used to cultivate their students to have bodies that were very strong," the auctioneer spoke. "All you have to do is sit inside this artifact, surrounded by a bunch of strong material and let them grind onto you, slowly making your body stronger and stronger."

"The objects you put in there, you will have to find on your own," the woman said. "But, we have been told that for someone with barely anybody's cultivation, even normal stones would be enough as long as you get rid of your Qi before using it."

"For energy, you will have to put your spirit stones right here," she said, pointing at the center of the artifact where the bulge was. She pushed onto something, opening a compartment to show everyone.

"You just have to put your spirit stones here, which will power a formation at the bottom of the artifact. Then, the entire content of the barrel will spin around you, grinding against you, making you spin to its whim as well."

"When you are done, you will have come back a stronger man than you went in," she said. She gave the people time to talk among themselves.

Yao Ning looked around to ask Alex his opinion about the artifact when she noticed that he was deep in thought.

"What are you thinking, your majesty?" she asked.

Alex stayed quiet for a few moments, taking his time before finally speaking. "There's something wrong with that artifact," he said.

"Something... wrong?" Yao Ning asked in surprise, turning to look at the artifact on the screen. "I'm afraid I don't see anything wrong with it. If you mean that it's old and broken, then I'm sure that's not the case."

"I'm sure the auction house won't sell an artifact without checking that it works prior to selling it," she said, turning to look at the woman. "Would it?"

"Heavens! No," the woman said quickly. "We test anything that is not a one-time use item like pills and talismans. We also don't test skill books just because it is not very possible to do so. Everything else, we test to the best of our capability."

"See?" the old woman told Alex.

Alex shook his head. "When I said that there's something wrong with the artifact, I didn't mean to imply that it didn't work, or that it was a fraudulent artifact. What I meant is that there is fundamentally a flaw in how it works which caused the slow decline in Body Cultivators in the Mountain Crushing sect."

"There's also the thing of how a sect with such strength and popularity could fall from grace so hard without going through something severely wrong that no one knew about."

"Do we know the actual reason why the sect is no longer as good as it used to be?" Alex asked the woman.

"No inside information has come out that is public yet. All we know is that the downfall was gradual," she said.

Alex thought for a moment. "Any chance of outside intervention? Like trade blockade or anything else," he asked.

"I doubt it," the woman said. "King Wan is from the Mountain Crushing sect, so he would have definitely acted if there was anything from the outside that was acting against the sect's will."

"King Wan?" Alex thought with a bit of surprise and remembered the black-robed King he met all those years ago. "Oh! Is the Mountain Crushing sect in the Ebony Kingdom?"

"It is, your Majesty," the woman said.

Alex thought for a moment and got rid of the idea of something from outside hurting the sect. This meant something much have happened on the inside that cost them to lose all the resources.

"Body cultivation does cost a lot," Alex said softly. "The cultivation part itself doesn't cost even that much, but... the healing part costs a lot."

"Or it could be that they gave up because it hurts a lot. But I would doubt it if they could just jump into an artifact and not have to beat each other to near death for it."

"The people in the Northern Continent don't like becoming Body Cultivators because they don't have an easy method of healing due to their relative lack of healing treasures. The people in the Southern Continent don't like becoming Body Cultivators because they don't have an easy method of getting hurt."

"But in the Eastern Continent, healing pills should be easy to come by, and with this artifact, the Mountain Crushing sect should easily get the Body Cultivators coming out one after another."

"What could cause them to stop?" he wondered.

"Could it be that they couldn't keep the artifact running at all times? Like there is a limit on how many times you can use it in a day," Yao Ning proposed.

"Maybe," Alex said. "But I don't see how that could result in their downfall."

"We don't know that it is what led to their collapse though," Liang Shufen. "I don't see why we are treating this as the cause of their collapse."

"It was the cause of their rise," Alex said. "So it should have some hand in their collapse as well. Maybe not to the effect that we are thinking it does, but I guarantee you it definitely does."

"The question now is why," he asked.

The auctioneer spoke a moment later as she brought out something for everyone to see. A red book.

She waved the red book around before placing it on top of the artifact itself so that everyone could see what it was.

Alex saw the book appear in the image in front of him and looked at the book. "Mountain Crushing Artifact Manual?" he couldn't help but say in surprise.

He was shocked to see that it was in fact a manual.

"This here as you can see is a manual," the woman said. "This is something that will come with the purchase of the artifact as well."

"However, that is not why I showed you this," she said. "This manual contains all knowledge about the machine that the Mountain Crushing sect has gathered in its entirety."

"And right here, I am going to tell you all the flaws of this machine. The con that could make you all reconsider buying this."

"I understand that it is a weird thing for an auction house to do, to avert a buyer's wish to buy something," she said. "However, we believe that you deserve to know something about the machine that is its inherent flaw."

Alex perked up. He had realized that was the case, and so had quite a few others. Now he just wanted to see what the flaw was.

"As we have mentioned before, this artifact is originally an Immortal artifact. As such, it was designed for the immortals."

"That is not to say that it doesn't work with us mortals, but the energy it requires to use is not normal," she said.

"To run the artifact alone, you need at least a thousand Saint Spirit stones each time. And each time, it can only run for so long depending on how much weight the inside of the artifact holds."

Alex couldn't help but believe what he was hearing. "The Mountain Crushing sect fell from grace... just because this was a money-draining artifact?"

Chapter 1485: Desire

"So... it eats up a lot of spirit stones? That's it?" Yao Ning asked with a confused look. "It's bad, but... I don't think it matters a lot, does it?"

"Who knows?" Liang Shufen said. "Maybe we don't have all the information? Let's watch."

They all waited for the woman on stage to continue on, and she did.

"You might be wondering how much Spirit stones it eats up," she said. "We have the answer right here."

She took the book and flipped it a bit as she arrived at a page.

"The machine must have 1000 Saint Spirit stones of utmost quality before it can even start. If you do not have that many, add as much as you can to get it started."

"When started, considering the weight of an average person including normal rocks that aren't very heavy, it will run for a single day."

"If you add more weight, the time it will run for will reduce even more. At around a ton in total weight, the 1000 Saint Spirit stones will run the machine for barely an hour."

The girl stopped.

Alex and the other elders were stunned by the revelation.

"1000 Saint Spirit stones just to get it started?" Yao Ning was surprised. "Just how much resources did the Mountain Crushing sect waste to strengthen their students?"

"It's more than 1000 if the spirit stones are not in prime condition, which they rarely are," Liang Shufen couldn't help but say. "I believe we have found ourselves a rather nonsensical artifact."

Alex looked at the artifact and frowned a little. "Why did the Mountain Crushing sect lose fall from their grace?" he still questions. "Is it really because they used up all their resources?"

He found that a little hard to believe.

Unfortunately, he didn't have anyone here that could answer him.

'Not here,' he thought. He would have to ask this question some other time then.

"My apologies, your Majesty," Yao Ning said. "I wasn't aware that the artifact would turn out to be this sort. I don't think we can buy it anymore."

"What do you mean?" Alex asked. "I am going to buy it."

"But it eats a lot of money," she said.

"So? I'll make back that money," Alex said. "Do you know how desperate I have been to body cultivate? I feel like it has been ages since I properly improved my body. I am most definitely going to get this."

"But we have cheaper methods to cultivate back at home," Yao Ning said. "Don't you have those beasts that hit you to body cultivate?"

"I do," Alex said. "But it doesn't work as well. To be able to body cultivate, you need to be hurt from head to toe in every single surface so that it can grow back, stronger."

"The beasts usually just concentrate their attacks on one place, making body cultivation a little harder. It might have worked if they had a normal level of intelligence, but they don't. And I can't always ask Whisker to help me."

"Besides, this will do in an hour what they will take days," Alex said. "It would've been awesome if I got Pearl's blood essence, but it seems that his blood essence is too weak now."

"Unless I take the main blood essence, it won't work, and I'm not doing that," Alex said, petting Pearl's fur on the side.

"Still," Yao Ning spoke. "1000 Saint Spirit stones for a day is... it's a little too expensive. You will lose all of what you earned today in less than 3 years if you use it like that."

"Not to mention, we don't have that many Saint Spirit stones back in the Southern Continent," the Elder said. "Most of our Spirit stones are True Spirit stones, unlike here."

Alex nodded. "I understand your frustration completely," he said. "But I say we buy, so we buy. Even if we don't use it, do you not want our Continent to own an Immortal artifact as well?"

"I..." The elder couldn't argue against that. She did want one quite badly after all. Until their ruler broke back into the Immortal realm, they weren't going to get one any time soon.

Alex had been desperate for body cultivation as well. His Sword aura was quite weak as well, but he could increase it to the appropriate level with just a bit of training.

Since it was Intent that was the most important part of any level of Sword mastery, he only needed some time to change what was already his normal Intent into Intent for the sword.

Given that it was going to be even stronger, it was bound to take him quite a while, but that time was nowhere near atrocious enough in comparison to the speed at which his body cultivation was coming on.

Ever since Pearl's disappearance, his body cultivation has been continuing at a snail's pace and he could not continue like that anymore.

He needed a proper method to body cultivate, and this was it.

"This fulfills a dream I have had for quite a few years," Alex said. "We are getting it, one way or the other."

The elders saw the resolution on his face and said nothing. They agreed at that point and decided to buy it one way or another.

"While the words I have spoken just now discouraged some of you, I had to speak them to warn you all of its major flaw," the woman continued. "However, you will not need to be that scared of the flaw. While the artifact will only last for a day at most even at the lowest setting, a person has to remain no more than an hour in at a time."

"Since they would be wounded quite extremely, they will have to remain inside for an extremely small period of time before they have to come out to get healed."

"As a result, in a single day you can have over 20 people cultivate one after another," she said.

"So, if that has lessened your worries, shall we begin?"

The bidding started at a rather high number, which surprised Alex quite a lot toward the start.

40 thousand Saint spirit stones.

In other words, enough spirit stones to last the machine for 40 days at the lowest possible setting. There was no way it was going to stay at 40 thousand spirit stones for any longer than a fraction of a second.

It didn't even take that long.

The moment Alex turned his head toward the bid counter, it flickered through numbers faster than mortal eyes could see.

Bids from 50,000 through 80,000 were essentially non-existent as everyone realized the big was going to cross 100 thousand without a doubt.

Alex waited for the numbers to slow down before he planned on bidding at all. When he saw it cross 100 thousand, his heart skipped a beat.

"Can you check how much money you have?" he asked the elders and checked his own. After adding each other's Spirit stones, minus the ones that they had to pay for next, the total came to be about 78 thousand.

With the 50,000 that the Emerald King had promised him, Alex was set for about 130 thousand Saint Spirit stones.

However, given the situation, he found that unlikely to be enough. The number was growing too fast and showed no signs of stopping at any moment.

As he watched the number move up from 110 thousand to 120 thousand, Alex knew he could not win this artifact at all. At least, not without a bit of help.

He thought for a moment about who to ask for help. When he landed on who he should ask first, his heart sank a bit in fear.

As far as he could tell, there was a single person in the entire auction house that he could ask for money that he knew could afford the thing.

That was the Crown Prince.

However at the same time, if the Crown Prince wanted this as well, there was not a single person he could ask money from that could have more than the Crown Prince.

Fearing what was going to happen next a bit, Alex pulled out his talisman and contacted the Crown Prince. He simply asked him if he was willing to help him with a bit of financial aid for the bidding.

He hoped the answer that he was going hear was the Crown Prince's agreement to help him. The answer he did not want to hear was that the Crown Prince was against him in the bidding and would thus not help him.

And yet, somehow, the answer he got was neither of the two.

"I am no longer in the Gold Kingdom, Your Majesty," the Crown Prince replied half a minute later. "Something came up with the military, so I left early. I cannot help you with financial aid while I am away."

That was a shame... and a relief.

Alex paused, thinking for a while. Who could he ask?

"Maybe the Gold King?" he wondered and messaged the Gold King.

"I am sorry, Your Majesty," the Gold King said. "I cannot help you. You were a step late."

'A step late?' Alex wondered what that meant. 'Did someone else ask him?'

"I should've asked him faster," Alex thought with a sigh. He then pulled out another talisman and messaged the other person he could think of currently.

The Queen of the Silver Kingdom, Mao Yingtai.

He asked her the same thing he asked everyone. "Hope I'm not too late," he thought with a frustrated look on his face.

The Mountain Crushing artifact was so important to him, to continue growing as a cultivator. If he couldn't have it, it was going to be a sad day for sure.

The queen replied to the message with a short answer. "I'm sorry, Your Majesty," she said.

Alex couldn't help but sigh in disappointment. "Did someone get to you before me?" he asked back and quickly got a message back.

"Got to me?" the woman asked. "Your Majesty, I am bidding for the artifact myself. As the Queen of the Kingdom where lies the Transcendent Martial ground and where takes place the Continental Tournament, I must acquire it."

Alex frowned when he realized that he wasn't late or anything. She was just his competition.

"Did you ask the Gold King as well?" he asked.

"I did," the queen replied. "And King Jin, but he said he had already promised to lend you his spirit stones."

Alex didn't bother replying after that. He looked at the counter in the screen and it had long past crossed 140 thousand and was keeping a steady pace.

"This is going to go far above," Alex said, looking at the screen.

"What do we do now?" the Elders asked. "We don't have nearly enough to get the artifact."

"If only we could use the money I earned," Alex said. However, due to the possibility of the seller never receiving any money from the buyer, they did not allow for sellers to use money they did not yet have.

"Do we give up then?" Elder Liang asked, looking back at Alex.

Alex thought for a moment and said, "Let me try one last time. If that doesn't work, we give up."

He took out a talisman and called for someone he wasn't sure if he could rely on for financial aid or not. He didn't even know if the person was in the auction or not.

He asked the person if they were still in the auction house or not.

He waited for a few seconds and received a message back.

"I am still in the auction house, Your Majesty." Alex heard the voice that came from the talisman.

That was a step forward, but he was still nowhere.

"Are you trying to bid on the final item?" he asked.

"No," the other person replied.

Alex was happy but there was still one more step to go.

"Have you promised to lend anyone any spirit stones?" he asked.

"Not yet," the person replied.

Alex finally smiled as he saw a ray of hope. "Lady Zhan, would you mind lending me some?"

Chapter 1487: A Deal

"You wish me to lend you my Spirit stones, Your Majesty?" Lady Zhan asked from the other side.

"Yes, if you wouldn't mind it," Alex said.

"I don't mind," she said. "But... instead of lending you the spirit stones, would you mind if I buy something from you instead?"

"Buy from me?" Alex asked. "What... do you wish to buy?"

"The Spiritual Root Improving pills recipe and Soul Trancing pill recipe," the woman said.

Alex was a little taken back at the audacity of this woman to ask for something that was so obviously not something she should be asking for.

He didn't particularly mind the attempt though.

"Lady Zhan, you must understand that these pill recipes are quite important to me and they are my secret," Alex said. "I cannot just hand them over. I can hand over normal ones, but not these specific ones."

"I understand," the woman said. " But since Your Majesty needs the Spirit Stones, I was wondering if you would be willing to trade them for it."

"I'm afraid I cannot," Alex said. "The pills for Dao and Spiritual roots are something that I cannot pass along."

"That's... a shame," the woman said. "I was hoping you would say yes. I was even ready to make whatever Oath you would want me to make. In the end... it didn't work out. I guess I will have to be happy with the lower-grade recipes. The Spirit Immunity pill and the Poison Neutralizing pill, would you be happy to sell those?"

"That I am fine with," Alex said since he saw no problem with the two pills when compared to the Dao pill and the Spiritual root pill.

"So you will sell me those two?" the woman asked from the other side. "I will try and buy the other two sometime in the future if I can."

"Yes," Alex said. "I will sell you those two."

"Thank you, Your Majesty," the woman said in a happy tone from the other side. "Should we talk prince then?"

Alex paused when he heard the happiness in the woman's voice. She was a bit too happy for someone who didn't get what she wanted.

'Unless,' he thought as a possibility came to his mind. One that made him know that he had been outplayed.

"Wow!" he couldn't help but be impressed. "She was after those two recipes from the start, wasn't she?" he said softly to himself. "She really tried to lowball me only to make me later think the deal I landed on was much better for me."

Alex knew in his heart that had the woman asked him to buy the two pill recipes, he would have never agreed. However, making him think he was getting a solid deal out of this, she took from him something that he didn't want to but willingly gave.

He couldn't help but chuckle to himself and quickly spoke back in the talisman. "You better have a lot of money or something," he said. "The recipes are going to cost you a lot."

"Oh, let me check how much I have after everything I bought today," the woman said and went silent for a bit.

He looked at the bidding amount go past 160 thousand Saint Spirit stones when she replied back with a message.

"I have about 90 thousand Saint Spirit stones to give," she said. "Would that be enough for the two pill recipes?"

Alex thought for a bit and couldn't help but shake his head. "That's a little too cheap for the recipe itself, given that the recipe is what makes the pill reach over 90% Harmony under the hands of a talented alchemist."

"What if I were to make an oath that I wouldn't randomly sell the pills or the recipes to anyone? I can make an oath that I won't sell the pill recipe at all, and the pills I will only give to friends and families," she said.

Alex thought for a bit, but there wasn't much thinking he needed to do here. He was going to have to accept it if I wanted the other item.

"Very well, I will accept it," Alex said. "So, 90 thousand?"

"90 thousand," the woman replied back.

Alex put down the talisman. "I got ourselves another 90 thousand," he said. "We now have a little over 200 thousand."

"That is amazing news," elder Liang said excitedly. "It's just reached 160 thousand and is slowing down, so it should be quite enough."

"Let's hope so," Alex said and watched the numbers continue moving. He could only wonder how many more, just like him, had yet to start their bidding.

When the bidding started to slow down to around 170 thousand, it improved again as it shot to 180 thousand easily. It continued increasing and at this point, Alex joined in as well.

"So many sects and families would want this," Alex said softly. "We have to get this no matter what."

It continued increasing as the bid reached 190 thousand. As they all waited, the bidding reached 200 thousand.

200 thousand Saint Spirit stones.

That was an unfathomable amount of Saint Spirit stones for something that ate up even more Spirit stones on a daily basis.

The number continued increasing by a random sum, slowly reaching a level that made Alex fear once more.

It took its time, taking nearly 5 minutes to do so, but the bidding reached 210 thousand. Alex couldn't help but frown at this point.

He had less than 220 thousand Saint Spirit stones, so if it crossed that, he wouldn't be able to win at all.

Alex realized that if he truly wanted this artifact, he needed another help.

'But from who?' he thought. He thought about the various people and landed on Tian Honglui. He quickly sent him a message regarding the fact that he needed Saint Spirit stones.

However, Tian Honglui didn't reply at all. Alex couldn't get the last sum of money he would need.

As the bid crossed the 220 thousand Saint Spirit Stones mark some 10 minutes later, Alex knew that it was time to give up.

Chapter 1488: Something Unexpected

"So what?" Yao Ning asked. "Do we just give up?"

"What do we do then?" Alex asked. "We don't have enough money."

"But... to just give up..." Yao Ning couldn't help but frown a little. "Surely we can do something? Maybe Pearl has it?"

"Do you have any money, Pearl?" Alex asked.

"About a thousand spirit stones," Pearl said. "Nearly not enough now."

"See?" Alex said. "We don't have the money."

"I asked General Fan too. He doesn't have any at all," Liang Shufen said.

"What about those painters?" Yao Ning asked.

"I asked Tian Honglui and he was not here at all," Alex said.

"And his senior?" Yao Ning asked. "What was it, Ran?"

"Senior Ran?" Alex asked and wondered for a bit before shaking his head. "I don't have his talisman."

"That's... what do we do then?" Yao Ning asked.

"Well, we just wait and watch as someone else takes it away. Maybe hope along the way that it is the Silver Queen that takes it. If it's her, maybe we can ask her to lend it to us," Alex said.

"That may be all that we can do," Yao Ning said as she watched the bidding cross 225 thousand Saint Spirit stones. At that point, they were truly out of money and had no chance of winning.

The numbers slowed down quite a lot, increasing every minute or so. At this point, the bidding wouldn't end until after a minute or later.

Alex watched the bid slowly increase to 230 thousand. "When is this going to end?" he couldn't help but ask in a somewhat frustrated voice.

The Emerald King called to ask if he was still bidding. He was worried that he wouldn't get the pills he wanted. "I have stopped bidding, but I will still honor our deal, don't worry," he said.

The Emerald King was happy to hear that.

He expected Lady Zhan to be curious as well, but she had already bought the two recipes for 90 thousand Saint Spirit stones, so there wasn't much for her to worry about.

The Silver Queen reached out as well. "Are you still in the bidding, Your Majesty?" she asked.

"No, I have given up a long time ago," Alex said. "I do not have nearly enough money."

"Oh," the woman sounded happy. "I'm actually running low myself. There's some big sects that are slowly pushing their way through and now I don't have enough to win this with a guarantee."

"Would you mind lending some of those Spirit stones to me?" she asked. "I could use them."

Alex couldn't help but sigh. "Maybe I should ask her to lend me its usage for a long time," he said. That could be a good bargain here, and he was ready to do so when he sensed another talisman vibrate in his storage ring, he frowned a little.

He assumed that it was Lady Zhan who had contacted him, but when he pulled out the talisman, he couldn't help but be taken aback by the person who had contacted him.

The message was simple. "Do you have some spirit stones to lend?" the person asked.

However, seeing who it came from, Alex was confused a little. "I do have some, sister Hao," Alex said. "May I ask why you require it?"

"Good, good," Hao Ya said back, "I'm eyeing something at the end of this auction I am at and realized that the money I have isn't going to be enough."

"I'm sorry, you need spirit stones?" Alex asked full of surprise.

"Yes," Hao Ya said.

"Where are you at?" Alex asked.

"What do you mean where?" Hao Ya asked. "I'm in Goldheart City, in one of the auction houses. Are you not in this town? I thought you were here."

"No, I am here," Alex said with a confused look on his face. "When did you come here?"

"Like two days after the auction started," Hao Ya said. "We had reserved a place from the Dragon Capital, so I and Jai Heiyun came here. We were a little late though."

Alex couldn't believe it. "You didn't let me know you were coming?" he asked.

"I was going to contact you when I was here, but we were late by a few days, so we didn't contact you. I thought you would be busy with the auction."

"And now you contact?" Alex asked.

"I'm... running out of money buying these various things," Hao Ya said. "I am starting to think that the money I and Jai Heiyun brought isn't going to be enough tomorrow. Are you lending us your money or not?"

"Sure, sure," Alex said. "I have little use for this money anyway. How much do you need? I will send Elder Liang to you right now with the money."

"Oh, I need about... 30 thousand Saint Spirit stones?" Hao Ya said. She herself wasn't sure. "I'm buying a Fan with shadow aura that is an amazing concealing artifact. It's the final item being auctioned and I need to buy it."

"Sure," Alex said. "I'll send 50 thousand Saint Spirit stones right away then. I don't have much need for it here."

"Thank you," Hao Ya said. "Also, you don't have to hurry. The item is being sold off tomorrow, so you can take your time."

"Oh, okay," Alex said. "I will send it after I leave from here..." He paused for a moment as a thought passed through him. "Wait, you said tomorrow?"

"Yes, tomorrow," Hao Ya answered.

"So you don't need the money right now?" he asked.

"No," Hao Ya said.

Alex's eyes widened a little. "Sister Hao, how many Spirit stones do you have right now? Saint Spirit stones," he asked.

"Spirit stones? Well... me and little Jai together have around 30 thousand. Why do you ask?"

Alex's smile grew wide and happy. "Can you lend it to me for today instead?" he asked. "I will send you the stones after I'm done tomorrow."

Hao Ya took a moment longer than normal, but she replied in time.

"Sure," she said. "As long as I get the stones in time."

Alex nodded. "I promise you, you will get it in time," he said. "So that's 30 thousand Saint Spirit stones right?"

The elders, Pearl, and Whisker were already looking at him with weird looks on their faces, expectant of whatever was happening currently.

"Yes, about 35 maybe," Hao Ya replied. "Do you want to come take now, or..."

Alex smiled. "I'll send Elder Liang right away," he said and turned off the talisman before handing it over to Liang Shufen.

"30 thousand Saint Spirit Stones just landed on our footsteps," Alex said excitedly. "You'll have to go meet sister Hao Ya and get the money from her."

"Righta way," the elder said and walked out of the room to get the money.

Alex sensed his talisman vibrate again. The Silver Queen was waiting for his answer. He picked up the talisman and gave an answer.

"My apologies, Queen Mao, but I'm afraid the situation has changed a little," he said. "I cannot lend you any money as I have acquired a bit myself."

"As such, I am back in the bidding war."

He put down the talisman and made his bid.

235,000 Saint Spirit Stones.

Chapter 1489: Maximum Bid

With Alex joining the bidding war, the speed at which the price rose increased once again. However, with how big the bid was, the speed at which it rose was still slow compared to all the other ones.

Alex saw the bid increase ever so slightly and could tell that however it was that bidding didn't have much money. He didn't wait and increased the bid again by the slightest amount.

"Your Majesty?" Yao Ning turned around when she saw how fast he was bidding. "Are you sure we shouldn't wait to see if there are others that can bid before we do?"

"No," Alex said. "Increase the bid by the slightest bit the moment the other person bids."

"Why such a hurry?" Pearl asked with a curious look on his face.

"Whoever it is that is bidding currently is running out of money, so they spend every moment they can to reconsider whether or not the price is worth it for the item they are paying."

"However, that time is also important for them to contact others and gain that tiniest bit of money to improve their bid. We cannot give them time to contact other people and ask for money."

"That's the reason why we must bid at every moment," Alex said as he bid again.

He increased the bid each time someone else bid and started the timer to the auction's end where he would get the item. That forced the others to start either bidding faster or giving up.

Alex watched the number rise and reach 238,000. He shook his head and increased it, sending it immediately to 240,000.

The sudden rise caused a stir amongst the bidders as they couldn't immediately match the bid. They had to take their time considering how much they wanted to spend.

The problem they faced was that the item they were bidding for was already a flawed product known to devour Saint Spirit stones. If they spent hundreds of thousands of Saint Spirit stones, only to have barely enough left to use it, it wouldn't be a very good trade.

They needed to consider both the cost of buying the artifact and the cost of using the artifact after all.

Not to mention, the sects were slightly worried about the fact that the Mountain Crushing sect had most likely fallen due to this very artifact. That caused them to hesitate to bid.

'Don't bid anymore,' Alex hoped. 240,000 was a lot, and he only had about 10 thousand more Saint Spirit stones at best. If someone increased it to reach 250,000, that would be problematic for him.

However, hopes rarely came true. The bids increased again, by a mere 20 Saint Spirit stones, but that gave the others time to search for more money.

Alex increased the bid by 50 and waited again.

Liang Shufen returned a few moments later and gave Alex the spirit stones. Alex looked at the spirit stones inside the storage bag.

He couldn't help but smile a bit when he saw that. "We might have enough now," he said. "Our 76,000, the Emerald King's 50,000, Lady Zhan's 90,000, and now sister Hao Ya's 35,000."

"We have 251 thousand Saint Spirit stones now?" Yao Ning asked.

Alex nodded. "A little more than that, but less than 252 thousand for sure," he said and increased the bid again. They were reaching close to 241 thousand, which meant he only had 10 thousand more Saint Spirit stones for the bid.

"I hope this is enough," he thought.

He increased the bid at his time to reach 241,000 and waited for someone to continue increasing. It took some time, but someone did increase.

Alex couldn't help but frown. 'They aren't giving up,' he thought and increased the bid again.

The Silver Queen contacted him again to ask if he was still bidding. She was getting desperate as well it seemed. She didn't seem to have much.

'Is she the only one that is bidding right now?' he wondered and watched the increment. It was hard to tell, but it looked like there were 2 more people other than him, not just one.

Some sect master was most certainly taking part. There were so many large sects in that Eastern Continent that Alex didn't even know which one it could be.

Nearly an hour passed in which the bids increased very slowly it took an hour for the bid to rise from 241,000 to 243,000.

"They aren't giving up, huh?" Liang Shufen asked.

"No, but I do think one of them gave up. It's only one other person and they are trying to save as much money as possible," Alex said.

"Should we increase by a large chunk and see how they respond?" Yao Ning asked.

"That might work, but they might also think that we're bluffing and continue increasing in small increments again," Alex said with a thoughtful look. "Oh, what the heck! Let's just do it."

He increased the next bid to jump directly to 245,000 Saint spirit stones.

The people around the auction house were no longer participating in the bidding, but they couldn't help but be extremely excited about the current bid. They had never expected the prices of items they bought here to cross 100,000 Saint Spirit stones, and yet they were looking at a number that was getting close to 250,000.

One could only imagine how happy the Mountain Crushing Sect was right now. The spirit stones they would obtain from this auction would be a fortune for them, which would be enough to raise themselves from the ground once again.

The auctioneer on the stage was equally excited as well. Given how much commission she would get from the auction her incredibly happy about the current price of the artifact.

She could only hold her breath and hope that it increased even more.

And it did. It jumped up by another tiny amount, but increase it did.

Alex frowned and increased it slightly again, only for the other person to increase it slightly again.

"That was fast," Yao Ning commented at the speed of the last bid.

"They're speeding up," Alex said with a frown. 'Did the Silver Queen find some help?'

That would be a bad turn of events if that were true.

Alex increased it immediately again and the other person increased it as well. When Alex increased it again, the other person increased the bid directly to 247,000, which surprised everyone present.

"What's... going on?" Yao Ning couldn't help but ask.

"Hmm, I think it's a bluff," Alex said. "They're running out of money like us, so they're increasing it by random numbers to scare us. There is no need to be scared at all."

He called their bluff and increased the bid to 248,000.

He waited for the other person to give up, but instead, they increased it to 249,000. He couldn't help but frown at that increase.

Alex increased it a little, jumping to 249,500. There was a long pause where it looked like Alex had won. However, at the very end, the other person increased it directly to 250,000.

At this point, he couldn't help but frown. He felt like he had no choice at all.

"Well," he said. "Here goes nothing."

He increased the bid to 251,000.

Chapter 1490: You Win Some, You Lose Some

At 251,000 Saint Spirit stones, there was barely any more that Alex could add. If his opponents added a few Saint Spirit stones, he may be able to add a little, but that was it.

Any more and he would lose.

252,000... and he would lose.

He wasn't the only one that knew so. Everyone in the room knew so. They had talked about it and thus they were all patiently, but anxiously waiting for the bidding to hopefully end.

They hoped to the best of their abilities that it did not increase at all.

Seconds passed that lasted as long as minutes for them. The sound in the room became so quiet that they could hear each other's breathing. Every flicker of light from the floating images made their heart sink a bit as they feared it was the number changing.

And yet, the number never changed. It remained the same for an entire minute and more.

There was no indication of when the bidding was going to end at all. They were still not aware of what the ratio of the time was in comparison to the current bid. As the bid it was now, it was minutes.

One thing became clear in this wait, however. Their competition in this bid was also in a bit of trouble.

It was as if the 250 thousand they put down was the final straw and anything more than that was simply idiocracy to spend on a money-spending machine.

Alex was the only one willing to spend more for it. Alas, he didn't have the money for it.

He didn't want to get any more happy, but it appeared as if he was on his way to winning the whole thing. As time passed by, each one of them grew more and more hopeful.

And when the hopes gathered to reach a crescendo, it shattered.

The number flickered and it went up to 252,000 Saint Spirit stones.

The bid increased.

They lost.

Alex slumped on his chair, defeated, dejected. This was not how he wanted to lose. With enough money to start an empire, and yet not enough to even buy an item in an auction bid.

The one that beat him to it was most likely the Queen of the Silver Kingdom too.

The Southern Continent had lost to a single Kingdom of the Eastern Continent. It wasn't fun being reminded of just how weak his own Continent was when compared to the Eastern Continent.

And somehow, his enemy was the Royal family of this very continent.

No one said anything to Alex for a while as they were all staring at the screen where the bid number had changed.

After a minute or so, Pearl finally moved. He placed his paws on Alex's shoulder. "Brother," he called out to him.

Alex tapped his paws without looking back. "It's alright," he said. "You win some, you lose some."

"No, brother," Pearl called out to him again.

"Your Majesty," the others called out as well.

"No, no, it's alright," Alex said as he sighed a little. "It would've been great to get it, but—"

"BROTHER!" Pearl shouted at him after he didn't respond the first two times.

Everyone there was a little surprised by the sudden shout, including Alex. Alex turned around to look at Pearl with a confused face. "What?" he asked.

"Did you count mine?" Pearl asked.

"What?" Alex asked, his mind barely understanding the question.

"My spirit stones. I have a thousand of them. Did you count mine earlier?" he asked.

Alex paused for a moment. His eyes moved around as he tried to recalculate everything in his mind. When he was done with it, his eyes went wide.

"No," he said with a weird look on his face. "I didn't."

1000 Spirit stones. That was the amount of spirit stones that Pearl had in his bracelet at the moment. And it was such a tiny amount in comparison that Alex had completely forgotten about it as well.

The 1000 spirit stones might as well not have existed when the bids were for HUNDREDS of them. And yet with this thousand, they had one more chance.

With this thousand they could bid again.

They didn't have enough for 253,000. But they damn certainly had enough for 252,500. And so, Alex did it.

No one was sure how long had passed since the bid had changed. None of them were sure if they were close or far from the bid ending.

However, none of that mattered now.

They did it and the timer reset.

Now, they sat there and watched.

Emotions from before riled up all of them once again. Hopes did too, but they sealed them. They had been disappointed the last time already, and they didn't want to go through it again.

And yet, that tiny bit of hope always trickled out no matter how much they tried to put a seal on it. No matter what they tried to do with their hope, they still hoped.

They hoped that the number wouldn't change.

They hoped that their opponent didn't have enough spirit stones.

They hoped that their hope wouldn't hurt them again.

And after suffering from those hopes for minutes, they saw the number flash again.

Only this time, the number didn't flash to change. This time, it flashed to note that 252,500 was the amount that had become the final bid.

This time, their hopes were answered.

They won the bidding.

They won the auction.

The auctioneer on the screen smiled wider than she had ever before. "The Mountain Crushing Artifact has been sold!" she shouted for everyone to hear.

"Yes!" Liang Shufen was the first to get up and shout.

"We won!" Whisker jumped second. "Brother, we won."

Yao Ning turned around from her seat with a smile to look at Alex. "Congratulations, Your Majesty," she said.

Alex slumped back on his chair once more. Only this time, it wasn't from being defeated at all.

This time, he had won.