

Alchemy 851

Chapter 851: Hybrids

"That must be terrible," Alex said. "Does that mean the other senior also has to go through Heavenly Judgment?"

"No," the Tortoise said. "While we are considered one and the same, we are still two different beings. We do go through Lightning Tribulation alone, but that's just because our cultivation bases are entwined."

"I see," Alex said and made a thinking face.

The tortoise slowly looked down at Alex and stared at him for a while. "Did you not know that?" he asked.

"Uh, no. This is the first time I've ever met with a Black Tortoise like yourself, senior," Alex said.

"But you have read about us, right?" the Black Tortoise asked.

Alex thought for a moment and said, "No. Everything I know about you comes from what I learned in the White Tiger's palace, which wasn't a lot."

"You haven't learned about us before? Hah! Where did you come from, young human?" the Tortoise asked.

"From the Western Continent," Alex said.

"No, no. Where do you really come from?" the Black Tortoise asked.

Alex was surprised for a bit. Did the tortoise know that he had come from the Central Continent? No way.

"I came from the Western Continent. Actually, I teleported here from a secret realm of the Demons on the western continent. I teleported over to that mountain," Alex said.

"I see," the Tortoise said as it looked at the mountain. "No wonder the senior's barrier has a hole this time. Maybe that was why he even blocked it in the first place."

"Good to know," The tortoise turned back to him. "So, where did you come from actually? And who let a little True realm cultivator go in an Inter-realm journey?"

"Um, what?" Alex looked at the tortoise with a confused face. "I did n— You think I came from a different realm? Like the immortal realms?"

The Tortoise looked at him. "Of course. Where else would a human come from to these lands?" the Tortoise asked.

"Ohh..." Alex finally understood why the Tortoise thought so.

After the Eternal war was over, the 4 beasts were sent to this realm to look over as the new rulers, and in their rule, the humans and demons lived without much conflict.

Due to this, the humans and demons started getting intimate, and soon enough, they bred and gave birth to a human-demon hybrid, who went on to give birth to more hybrids, and soon enough, the entire world was filled with nothing but hybrids with not a single hint of either the original human or demon lineage.

Alex already knew he had no demon blood in him, but he was still surprised that the Tortoise would think of him as coming from out of this world.

"I'm sorry to disappoint you, senior. But I was in fact born and raised here," he said. He was still debating on whether or not to tell the beast that within the last 5 thousand years, there was now a civilization living in the depths of the central continent.

"Are you? You must be a lucky one then, to not inherit the demon blood," the Tortoise said. "Really lucky in fact. This means that you have a way better chance of becoming an Immortal than anyone else on this realm."

"Sorry? What do you mean by that?" Alex asked.

"You must not be aware. The reason why your world doesn't have many strong cultivators, let alone cultivators who can ascend is because their talent has been muddled as have their bloodline," the Tortoise said.

"The only time you can truly have someone strong is if either their human side or their demon side is suppressed to the point that it becomes irrelevant to you, but that very rarely happens in this world. Most are simply born as hybrids and thus never have great talent, constitutions, or even spiritual roots."

Alex was simply shocked to hear this. People who were hybrids were untalented? People who had a single bloodline were talented? Did he know about this before?

Alex tried to remember what Shen Jing had told him, but he had only mentioned the people being hybrids, and never about them having less talent or opportunities because of it.

'So that is why they are all so talentless,' Alex thought. 'Wait, is that why the players are so talented? Because they are all humans with no demon blood in them?'

Many things were starting to make sense to him, that he would have previously chalked up to just being luck on someone's part.

'Then the creator of the game must have been desperate to see so many talented people be around and not cultivate. Is that why he sent us all out?' Alex thought. That certainly seemed to be a plausible scenario. Although that didn't explain the end goal of doing all of that.

Alex ignored the thought at the moment and looked around. "What are you doing here, senior? This should be a secret realm belonging to demons. why are you here?"

"I don't know," the tortoise said. "The seniors that came before me chose this place to stay in, so I followed them as well."

'Seniors?' Alex looked curiously. "There were seniors that came before you?"

"Of course, as I said, we only come here for every 15 thousand years before going back. Our time ends in a thousand years from now," the Tortoise said.

"Ho-How many such seniors have come to this realm already?" Alex asked. He wanted to know something, but he didn't know if he should directly ask that question.

"Hmm, I should be the 6th one, so 5 before me," the Tortoise said.

Alex's eyes went wide when his mind instantly understood how many years that was.

90 thousand years.

That was how long it had been since the Four Heavenly beasts made a pact to come and rule over the worlds that were won over by the humans from the demons.

That was how long it had been since the Eternal War had ended.

That was how long it had been since the Undying God left behind his inheritance in this secret realm.

That was how long it had been since the Undying God was stuck in the Timeless Palace, trying to find a way to live when his spirit was dying.

"Wait, I think I remember why my seniors stayed here. I believe it was so that the humans at the time wouldn't attack this secret realm as it had been housing some of the only demon resistance at the time," the Black Tortoise.

Alex nodded when he heard that. This was in fact the place where the Undying God and his little squad of demons hid and fought from. As far as he understood now, they would fight in the Northern Continent, get into this secret realm and disappear back to the Demon realm back in the Western Continent.

While humans searched for them here, they were training and preparing back in the other realm.

'They definitely went back, so I should have a chance too if the script on the other side isn't broken, and if the Demon realm opens up. If I haven't found a way to get back in 10 years, I should get back here at that time and see if the script functions at that time,' Alex thought.

"Thank you for explaining that to me, senior. I didn't know any of that," Alex said and bowed.

"It's fine. I'm just helping someone with the tiger's blood understand a few things," the Tortoise said.
"Are you going to return now?"

"Return?" Alex gave a wry smile. "I'm afraid I can't return. The teleportation script doesn't work for some reason."

"Oh, Uhhh... then is someone going to come to get you?" The Tortoise asked.

"No. I don't think anyone has any idea that I'm in the Northern Continent," Alex said.

"Hmm, then how are you going to get back? You can't fly over the ocean yet," the Tortoise said.

"I... don't think I have a way. At least not yet," Alex said. "You can't help me, can you?"

Alex asked. That was a little presumptuous of him, but he didn't have any choice here. He needed to rely on the Tortoise.

"I don't have anything to help you, young man. I'm sorry," the Tortoise said.

Alex sighed. 'Dammit,' he thought. "You don't have any family members? Any vassals?" he asked just in case. Even if it was someone like the Jaguar, that would be a lot helpful to Alex.

"I have no one working under me. Sorry," the Tortoise said.

"No one? Not even family members? Aren't you the ruler of this land?" Alex asked.

"I hold that title, yes. But I don't like ruling. Ever since I arrived here 14 thousand years ago, I have left the people to their own devices. I only pop out whenever they need help, but even then, I haven't left in nearly 5 thousand years," the tortoise said.

Alex looked at the tortoise with a look of incredulity. He didn't imagine he would find a ruler that didn't like to rule.

"I see, then I'm sorry to have bothered you," Alex said.

"It's fine, it's fine. I like having company once in a while. The last time was 5 thousand years ago, so this talk was nice. But now I must return to my sleep and continue healing," the tortoise said.

"Sorry, one last thing," Alex quickly asked.

"Go on," the tortoise said.

"How do I get out of this secret realm?" Alex asked.

"Oh, on the furthest mountain from here, there is a script. If you run it, you will be sent out," the tortoise said.

"Thank you," Alex replied and bowed towards the beast.

Chapter 852: Burning Eyes

The tortoise returned back into its shell and Alex left the place.

Even as he flew away, the surprise that the giant mound of land was actually a tortoise hadn't left him. 'Can Immortal realm beasts become that big, or is it just the tortoise?'

Lady Ren certainly wasn't this large. But he didn't know if she could get larger, so there was nothing for him to think about her.

'Should I have brought out Pearl?' he thought. That was one of the things he was constantly debating about. The Tortoise certainly seemed nice, but who knew how he would react to seeing Pearl.

Or rather, how he would react to seeing a Heavenly beast bonded to a human.

Alex shook his head and continued flying and the much information he had learned today piled up on him.

So many things.

Undying God's physique, the loots, the techniques, The Blood God's Manual, finding a Heavenly beast, finding out the history of the fight, finding out why the humans were talented.

Not to mention finding out that he was in the freaking Northern Continent? What the hell was that about?

"What do I do now?" Alex thought. His mind was so occupied with everything that he nearly forgot about what had made him stop flying in the first place.

"Ah, the paste," Alex thought and quickly flew down to the 5th mountain, which was also completely empty.

He sat in the empty hallway and brought out the paste that was in his storage bag and the recipe for it.

Once again, realizing that he found the paste for the Demon Eyes, Alex was incredibly happy and couldn't wait to start the procedure.

He remembered the texts on the wall and thought back to it.

"Continuously cleanse your eyes with a vial full of the paste every month for 20 month," Alex read back the words in his mind.

'20 vials,' he thought and looked at the paste. There was indeed about that amount. Maybe even slightly more.

He frowned for a bit when he read about the application method for the paste. He was to apply the paste directly onto his open eyes while completely filling up the front of his eyes with the paste.

Only after the 20 months of cleansing had passed would his eyes be ready to start cultivating the Demon eyes. Even then, Alex wasn't sure how much longer it would take for his eyes to return back.

"I have to go blind for 2 years huh? Maybe even more," Alex thought. "Well, it's not like I haven't done that before. Besides, I have the Undying God's Physique now. Healing quickly shouldn't be much of a problem."

Alex sat down cross-legged and scooped out a vial worth of paste with his Qi. He then separated the Qi into two parts and took a deep breath.

He knew the next part would have to happen, but he was still a little hesitant. Not like it didn't make sense, after all, he was going to have to put the acrid, and definitely spicy paste onto his eyes.

Alex let out a deep breath, and the paste flew in.

SPLAT!

"AARRGHH!" Alex cried out immediately. Even though he was ready for it, the pain didn't lessen at all. In fact, the pain was incredible.

The eyes, having never gone through such pain even during body cultivation sessions, were now fully feeling the pain one would suffer just by themselves.

Millions of lights of myriad different colors flashed in Alex's mind as his eyes told his brain that they were seeing a million different things.

Due to the pain, his eyes kept giving his mind false information about its visual data, and Alex felt like he was seeing millions of tiny cultivators fight in front of him.

That only increased as the paste reached deeper into his eyes, and now even the back of his eyes was starting to burn.

Alex wanted to pour some cold water in immediately to help relieve the pain. In fact, he wanted to dig out his own eyes so they would stop hurting.

However, he understood this was necessary, so he stuck through it. Even so, the pain didn't lessen.

Alex kept hurting and hurting and hurting for a long time before any semblance of relief came to him.

Even that wasn't so much relief, just his eyes growing numb to the pain.

As soon as the pain lessened, Alex immediately sat down and started cultivating. He wasn't able to cultivate the eye skill until his eyes were ready, so for now, he just cultivated his normal cultivation technique.

Alex sat there cultivating for nearly 2 days before the pain lessened to the point of it no longer existing. His eyes were completely destroyed in a certain sense, and now he had to wait for them to be rebuilt.

That would take a lot of time. Most certainly, it would take about 28 or so days if the information on the recipe and technique were correct.

Alex finally stood up and dusted himself off of the snow that had piled on him. Then, he flew out of the mountain and immediately stopped.

"Wait, which direction do I go towards again?" he thought for a second. "I came down at that angle and the hallway was facing that way, then last mountain..."

Because his spiritual sense couldn't read the next mountain which was many kilometers away, Alex had to do mental gymnastics to remember which direction he had to fly towards.

"That way?" he thought but wasn't sure of himself. He wanted to ask Pearl if the direction was correct, but then he would have to bring him out which would let the tortoise know that he had—

"Wait, I don't need to call out Pearl," Alex thought. "Whisker, come out."

From his right shoulder plate where a mouse-shaped tattoo lay, a mouse came out with very long whiskers giving him his current name.

The mouse shivered the moment he came out, his fur standing on its edge.

Alex immediately had a pocket of heat appear around the mouse and finally, it stopped shivering.

The mouse was by now about 7 years old, but he was still as small as the time he was born.

Immediately, the vision of everything around him with flew into Alex. In fact, there was also a lot of different information he received such as the temperature of the surrounding, the energy that was in the surrounding, the pressure, and various other information about the environment.

"This is not bad. I had forgotten how good I could see through your... eyes," Alex turned towards the mouse and saw himself through the mouse's eyes.

The two black patches on his face looked not only silly, but they were also outright disturbing.

"I need to do something about these," Alex thought. He immediately weighed in on the option to use a small cloth to put around his eyes so that they could be closed, but that didn't seem like a good option given it would mess with the paste that was bulging up to his nose bridge.

"What do I do then?" Alex wondered and searched into this storage bag for a moment before the answer presented itself.

"Ah, this should work," he thought, bringing out the white mask.

The Mask of Spirit's Hell was a mental training artifact, but it had to be activated for it to do so. Without activation, it was just a simple white mask, and Alex decided to use it as so.

Once he wore the mask, he turned to Whisker and asked, "how do I look?"

Whisker released a sharp-toned screech that Alex understood as 'not scary.

The moment Alex heard that he was shocked beyond belief.

The words weren't what shocked him. In fact, they wouldn't as he was already capable of conversing with the little mouse since it was a little mouse.

When Alex brought him out from time to time to use his whiskers for the pill, he had talked to the mouse pretty frequently.

No, what did shock Alex was something that was completely unexpected to him. In fact, he had trouble believing it was real, as no Seeking Mouse was capable of such a thing.

But then he remembered that Whisker wasn't just an ordinary Seeking Mouse. He was an Undying Seeking Mouse.

And that was most likely why... he now had a cultivation base.

Chapter 853: Getting Out

The cultivation base was rather low. He was just at Skin Tempering 2nd realm if even that. But that alone sent a shock through Alex's body as it was an impossibility in his eyes.

That was one of the reasons why he never bothered to call out Whiskers for so long because there really was nothing for him to do outside.

Being a Seeking mouse, his only job would be to go to a place where Alex couldn't go on his own for fear of his own life.

Like scouting enemies, or checking tombs and mazes and traps and such. Alex didn't need to train Whisker for such a thing, so he never brought him out.

But now that he had a cultivation base, Alex started regretting it. If he knew this was the case, he would have helped him cultivate so much more.

"Wait, no," Alex's logical mind kicked in and he shook his head. "He couldn't cultivate before surely. If he did, he would have already cultivated while he was in my body for so many years. Why now?"

There was really one answer.

"Undying God's physique?" Alex thought to himself. Why would Undying God's physique help Whisker? Did it have something to do with Undying God's bloodline?

Another thought came to Alex at the same time. Was this a similar situation as Pearl and him?

Only in this case, he has taken up the role that Pearl did.

Pearl had the White Tiger's Dominating Physique, while he had White Tiger's bloodline. Of course, in his case, the bloodline itself didn't provide any significant power aside from a stronger blood aura, and a Supreme Metal spiritual root.

However, whenever Pearl did cultivate the physique, he too cultivated alongside it, giving him the body cultivation he had for most of his life.

In a similar fashion, he now held the Undying God's Physique, while Whisker held the Undying God's bloodline. The bloodline helped Whisker come back to life whenever he was dead, so long as he had bonded to another being. Aside from that, Whisker himself didn't get anything.

However, going by what happened between Pearl and him, if he were to cultivate the Undying God's physique, then through their bond, and Whisker's bloodline, Whisker should get something as well.

In this case, he was cultivating the physique alongside Alex, and getting a cultivation base.

So, if Alex kept cultivating the Undying God's physique for a long time, Whisker would have a great cultivation base as well.

"If this is true, then I got more than I was looking for with me coming here," Alex said to himself. He tucked the little mouse with his small cultivation base into his robes and started flying.

Even though he couldn't see himself, Whisker's vision was very clear and as he reached closer to the mountain, he used his own spiritual sense to find it and landed on it.

His spiritual sense had already got to work and he found the script with the teleportation rune on it.

Alex stood before it with a solemn face. Now that he was here, he was going to go out into the Northern continent. He didn't know where exactly in the northern continent he was or what the outside world was even like.

Going by basic knowledge, it would be full of ice and snow, but he wasn't sure if that was really the case.

Alex remembered his mother and how she would be alone for a long time. Then he remembered all his friends, fellow disciples, and master that he had told he would be back not long after the Demon realm was done.

Then he remembered the Jaguar that was stuck in the formation outside. Was he going to be okay on his own?

He couldn't help but imagine the worst case and he had to shake his head to snap out of it.

So what if he was missing? His mother was still a True King cultivator and an Immortal rank talisman maker as well as a Heaven rank Alchemist.

Anyone that came to fight against her would have to fight the entirety of the Alchemy guild and the Talisman guild, not to mention the Flowing Brush sect. Then there was the Emperor who would most likely help his mother, just because he feared Shen Jing.

As for his friends and masters over in the Crimson Empire, yes he would leave them alone for a while, but he had done everything he could for them.

His visiting them again would not result in anything but slight happiness in seeing him. That could wait, surely.

As for the Jaguar, there wasn't even a need to worry. With his cultivation base, if he was injured, then he didn't deserve to be a servant of the White Tiger.

Once the bad feeling trickled away from Alex like sweat on a hot day, a small smile rose on his face and his heart started beating faster as the feeling of nervousness and excitement of seeing a new continent and its people took over him.

Being as protected as he was when growing up, he had always wanted to see a new place, and meet new people. That was something he was quite fascinated about, and now he was going on a whole new adventure.

With a smile on his face, Alex knelt down to the script and powered it up. When the golden light from the runes flashed, both he and Whisker vanished from the secret realm.

As soon as Alex appeared outside, he felt something change. The space around him was... different. Freer, and less compressed.

He had arrived on a cold, chilling night with absolutely no wind at all. The sky was covered with clouds, not letting in any night light.

He had half his leg in the soft snow, but he could only see that with his spiritual sense.

He chuckled a bit when he realized that Whisker wasn't that helpful when there were clouds in the sky blocking the moon.

He spread his spiritual sense all around him and saw a monument behind him. It wasn't that different from the one back in Western Continent, meaning if he wanted, he could enter back again.

'10 years,' Alex thought. 'I will have to return here 10 years later to find my way back.'

After deciding that, he looked around as he needed to find a direction to move it.

With darkness against him and his spiritual sense not reaching very far away, he couldn't see much.

However, Whisker could see a small light in the very distance that Alex couldn't really tell what it was due to Whisker's eyes not being as good as they could be yet.

Still, that being the only choice for him right now, he lifted himself off of the ground and flew in that direction.

The Qi in the air wasn't as strong as the secret realm, but just by a little bit. Compared to Western Continent, it was so much stronger.

If anything, it was just a little worse than the Beast realm, but that was likely only because the Qi was trapped in the beast realm, while here it got to roam free.

After flying for a little while, Alex saw that the tiny glow was actually the magma glowing from a volcano, and not far below the mountain was a settlement of people.

"Let's start my journey from here."

Chapter 854: The Village

Alex stood next to the bubbling volcano, atop the mountain and looked at the village ahead of him through Whisker's eyes. He had already stopped using his spiritual sense to not alert any Saint-ranked cultivator that might be in there.

The village had about 100 different stone houses each with 2 to 3 rooms at most. It was night, so the village itself was silent for the most part.

There were no walls surrounding the village or roads leading anywhere. Even if they were, the roads had already been buried under the snow.

The houses were scattered under the volcanic mountain, on the other side from where Alex had just come.

Alex saw lantern artifacts all over the village glowing in the night, but that didn't say if there were cultivators here. For all he knew, these people could be normal mortals that just acquired lanterns that worked with spirit stones with maybe a person or two to activate it.

The village looked like any normal village that one could find in deep mountain valleys or somewhere a little distant from civilization.

There were gardens to the side growing vegetables, farmland not far away where grains were likely being grown, and animals that slept in their shed at night.

However, there were two things about this village that absolutely stumped Alex, because this should not have been possible at all.

First, there were trees growing in this village. Proper green trees that bore flowers and fruit.

Which led to the second thing that was surprising about this village. There was no snow here at all.

Not a single piece of land in a massive semi-circle around the volcano was covered in snow.

Alex was really curious and wanted to check it out, but he didn't go there at night time. So, he sat by the warmth of the volcano and cultivated for the night.

As his body used the Undying God's physique, Whisker started cultivating as well.

Time slowly passed and it got closer to daybreak. As the village at the foot of the mountain start to wake up, Alex opened his eyes as well.

He couldn't see anything at all, so when he released his spiritual sense to see Whisker, he found out that the little guy had fallen asleep in the warmth of his robes.

Alex chuckled a bit and rubbed Whisker's head a little to wake him up. The mouse opened his eyes and looked around drowsily.

"You can sleep later, we have work to do," Alex said.

He flew the long way around in a circle before slowly dropping down a bit far away from the village.

It was snowing in the morning, and the entire region was cold, save for the brown patch of land near the volcano.

Snow was falling in there, but it didn't remain as snow for much longer. It was melting as soon as it came into contact with the ground.

When Alex entered the unfrozen land, he understood why that was.

The ground was warm, unnaturally warm. Alex wondered if that had anything to do with formations or if the volcano's heat got to this place.

If there were formations, then there must be cultivators living here. But if it was the volcano's heat, that seemed a bit too dangerous to live around.

Alex slowly walked with a white mask on his face and wearing a black robe with golden designs on it.

A few of the men and women looked at him curiously as he looked unequivocally unique.

However, with Alex hiding his cultivation base, everyone believed he was quite weak. At least weaker than them.

Alex didn't move his head, but with Whisker had already jumped out of his robe and onto his shoulder, and had started looking around him.

People slowly gathered up to him, some holding a weapon just in case. They were all wearing the same type of clothes for some reason.

It was a grayish blue robe with white linings. Some of them had fur on them, and a hood to cover their head, but everything was the same color.

Before anyone could say anything, Alex cupped his hands and bowed in greeting.

"My apologies if I have startled you. I come from far away and know not much about these lands."

"I'm looking for a place to stay and was hoping if you could allow me to remain here," he said.

The group of men and women who seemed not too older than Alex started talking to each other to discuss.

"What is your name, stranger?" one man walked forward to ask. He had a body bigger than Alex's and a cultivation base of Organ Tempering 9th realm.

Alex saw his smooth, long black hair flowing down to his quite handsome face.

"My name is Yu Ming," Alex said.

"Where do you come from?" the man asked.

"My apologies," Alex said. "I come from a place very far away in the west that you have not heard of."

"Try it," the man said boldly.

"It's a city called the DawnSpring city," Alex said.

The man frowned a bit. "To the west? Is it in the State of Bing?" the man asked.

"I don't know myself as the city I come from is rather isolated, but when I left there, the people did indeed say that my city lay on the western edge of the State of Bing," Alex replied. He wasn't aware of what this State of Bing was or how massive it was, but that was all he had to go with for now.

"That's quite far away for someone like you. Mind telling us what you are doing here?" the man asked.

"I... I had to leave my home because some people wanted to hurt me. I couldn't go back, so I ran away for a while."

"But now that I have run so far away, I wanted to rest for a while, and I came upon this village," Alex said. "If you do not want me to be here, I can understand. In that case, please point towards the nearest village or city, and I will leave."

"No, no," the man immediately said. "You can stay, but we are just making sure you aren't here to cause trouble for us."

"Oh, I can promise you I am not," Alex said. "I just want a place to rest in for a while now and cultivate."

The man nodded when he listened and stayed silent for a while. He narrowed his eyes and asked, "can you see me through that mask?"

"I was attacked by my enemies and unfortunately lost visions in my eyes. Which is why I wear this mask," Alex said. "But I can see you through this little guy."

Whisker continuously ran around on his shoulder.

"What's that?" the man asked.

"That's a Seeking Mouse I believe," a woman spoke from right behind the man.

"You know this beast, honey?" the man asked.

"Yes, I took care of some when I was in charge of handling the beasts in the sect," the woman said.

The woman was about 30 years old and had long flowing hair that came up to her waist. She wasn't the most beautiful girl he had seen, not even close to the woman that saved the first Undying god, but she was quite decent in her own ways.

She was wearing the same grayish blue robe as everyone, and it fit her quite well too.

"You can use those beasts for scouts I believe, but he seems to be using them as a substitute for eyes," the woman said.

Alex smiled toward the woman who explained this, but no one could see his smile at the moment.

"I see," the man said and turned towards Alex. "You can stay here, but you will have to know that this place is owned by the Frigid Rune sect."

"Which means, you will have to work for them."

"Work for them?" Alex asked.

"Don't worry, it's little work here and there. Are you good at anything? Even if you are not, we can find you jobs like watering plants and such," the man said.

"Oh, I'm good with plants," Alex said. "I come from a farm."

"Great," the man said. "Come, let me show you around."

The man walked up to Alex and put his hands around his shoulders before getting ready to walk away.

"Ah right, I nearly forgot. My name is Fan Yanshi," the man said. "Welcome."

Chapter 855: Runes

The village didn't have a chief or a leader, but if there was one, Fan Yanshi would be the one.

With Organ Tempering 9th realm, his cultivation base was the highest in the village, followed by only a handful of people Alex had seen with a similar cultivation base.

Fan Yanshi showed Alex around the village, showing the various locations and who did what.

A man worked on formation plates, while another worked on talismans. There was also a woman who made medicinal pastes as well as what could be called Alchemy.

Most other people only focused on beasts and plants.

Since all of these cultivators were in the self-tempering realm, they still needed food to sustain themselves, so there was a massive open land to the side where rice and wheat were growing.

Alex's curiosity was too much and he needed to ask.

"Brother Fan, how are you growing managing to grow these crops in such a cold environment?" he asked. "In fact, why is it not cold in here at all?"

"Oh, that's because of the volcano right there," Fan Yanshi said.

"Volcano?" Alex looked towards it. He didn't know much about volcanoes, but surely they didn't give this much heat, this far away, did it?

"Yes, the volcano," the man said. "Well, to be fair, it's more accurate to say it's the sect's doing."

"What did they do?" Alex couldn't help but ask.

"Let's see, they explained it this way. There was a spirit vein underneath this land, and a long time ago, the sect came and ripped it off of the ground and took it away."

"At the same time, then they let lava pour into the now formed cavity and closed it up from above. After that, the land has been warm from the heat underneath and we don't have to worry about the cold even this deep in the mountains."

"Oh," Alex was surprised. He didn't expect such a unique solution to creating land to stave away the cold.

"Not bad actually," he said and looked around. "No wonder you can have plants here."

"Oh yeah, that is because the land around here is fertile. Once in a while, the volcano goes active and spews out plumes of smoke and ash. Those are apparently very good for the soil and we get to grow so much here," the man said.

"The volcano goes active? Isn't that dangerous?" Alex asked.

"Well, if it gets dangerous, an ancestor from the sect flies off to the mountain and controls it," the man said.

Alex nodded and continued looking around. He looked at the plants that were growing that weren't food. As soon as he looked at them, he knew what the plants were.

However, there was something confusing about those plants. Most of them were common plants, but not necessarily useful for Alchemy.

Those were more useful for...

Alex turned around. "This Frigid Rune sect, I assume it a sect focused on talisman?" he asked.

"Uhh... yes, and no," the man said.

"No?" Alex waited for him to explain.

"Well, it is a sect focusing on runes, so yes they make talismans. But they also focus on other things with runes you know," the young man said.

"Wait, other things?" Alex's eyes went wide. "Like using runes instead of formations?"

"Yes," the young man said.

"How do they know how to do this?" Alex asked. Despite the demon realm being so close by, no one knew how runes carved in stones or wood could be used back on the Western Continent.

However, they were able to do that here. Was the information passed down over the last 90 thousand years? If so how did it not get passed around the world before the western continent was isolated 5 thousand years ago?

"Has the information not reached the State of Bing yet? It's all over the State of Xue by now," Fan Yanshi said. "It was anonymously published by someone nearly a dozen years ago and it's been slowly traveling the continent. I don't know exactly how it works, but you can buy the information from any big city."

"After that information about out, the Frost Talisman sect changed their name to Frost Rune sect, and now they work with everything," the young man said.

'A dozen years ago... a player maybe?' Alex thought to himself. 'I should look into it once I reach Saint realm.'

Alex's current plan was to solely focus his time on cultivation and maybe in alchemy if he could spare it. Given how he would have to cultivate multiple different techniques, he didn't know if he could spare time for alchemy or not.

Besides, he had reached a bottleneck in alchemy that he couldn't just push through.

He was already so good at making True rank pills that the only thing holding him back was the ingredients, the process of placing in ingredients, and the technique to form the pill itself.

Otherwise, he could easily reach 100%.

Of course, there were now Saint rank pills to dip his hands into, but he wasn't still at Saint rank, so it wasn't the best idea to start yet.

Besides, he would just be wasting ingredients if the recipes he had weren't the best.

While he had a lot of ingredients, they weren't enough for him to go all out and fix the recipes like he did with True rank pills.

He would have to change his approach somehow.

"Ah, I need to go help my wife in the garden soon. Let me show you more of the place," the man said and took Alex around.

After a while, they arrived at an empty house with 3 rooms in it. Two of the rooms were inside while one was outside.

"The kitchen is outside. You get heat directly from the magma down underground. Do what you want with the two empty rooms inside. There are beds and sheets already, but do let me know if you need anything else," Fan Yanshi said.

"Oh, this is all right, brother Fan," Alex said. "So when do I start working?"

"Don't worry about that for today. You must be tired from walking throughout the night, so just rest for today. I will take you to see how good you are with plants tomorrow."

"If you truly are good, that will lessen my wife's and a lot of other people's work. They simply force their way through growing plants you see," the young man said.

"I see. Thank you again, brother Fan," Alex bowed a little.

"Haha, it's fine. We're going to be like family soon, so no need to say thanks. Go in and make yourself at home. You can live here as long as you want," Fan Yanshi said and pushed Alex along.

Alex nodded and entered.

While Fan Yanshi left, Alex went into the room and looked around. It was mostly empty aside from the beds and a few chairs.

Alex went over to the other room and saw this one was actually truly empty with nothing in it.

"This should be fine," he thought and brought out a few formation plates before throwing them down.

Formations activated in a small area bringing up a barrier that passed through Alex to cover him.

These were simple formations to cover any fluctuations of energy that might come from here while he was cultivating. In addition to that, there was also a sound blocking formation that blocked outgoing sound so no one would hear what was happening inside.

Alex sat down in the center and took a deep breath of relief. He had found a place to stay now, so he should try and get to Saint realm as soon as he could.

Given how he was already at True Emperor 4th realm, if he continued with this speed, it should take him 2 more years, or 3 if he had to focus on Undying God's physique and the Demon eyes.

Alex reached into his storage ring and brought out something for Whisker to eat. After that, he called Pearl out.

Pearl came out with blood all over his white fur, but he was no longer injured.

"Are you okay?" Alex asked.

"Yes," Pearl nodded and slowly changed his body to become small again. Then he noticed Whisker and immediately started running after him to play.

Whisker ran for his life and Alex could only chuckle at the scene.

He shook his head and activated the first stage of the mask he was wearing. Then, he started cultivating.

Chapter 856: Gardening

Alex didn't leave the entire day he was there and only left when it was deep in the night. He teleported outside his house, already invisible, and directly flew away.

He wanted to look around and see the landscape. Since last night had been cloudy, he couldn't see anything, but tonight it was quite open and the moon shone its silver light on the snow, making the entire place glow white.

Alex looked through Whisker's eyes and saw hundreds upon hundreds of mountains scattered all over the land. He couldn't help but be surprised at just how many there were.

It wasn't just the number either. The mountains were also quite tall compared to the ones that were back on the Western Continent.

Alex tried to tell which direction he was looking at, but it was a little hard without the sun. Even with the sun, it was usually quite hard since the entire land was covered in snowy clouds and thus it was hard to tell where the sun even was.

Alex brought out a small artifact from his ring, a compass artifact, and checked the direction.

"So... the taller mountains are in the north?" he looked towards his left where the mountain looked like they were only continuously growing taller and taller as if they were reaching the night sky.

Alex flew as high as he could and looked for other sources of light in the area aside from just the moon.

There were a few glowing orange locations that were clearly volcanoes. Out of every 20 mountains he saw, at least one was a volcano that was quite active as well.

He continued looking around and saw a yellow or white-ish light coming from somewhere far in the east.

With his normal eyes, he could have seen it clearly, but with Whisker's eyes, he needed to get closer.

Alex flew in the direction for about 10 minutes before he was close enough to see what it was.

A sect.

"Is that the Frigid Rune sect?" Alex wondered.

Surrounded by 3 volcanic mountains, the sect was massive with many buildings scattered all over the other mountains.

He wanted to go closer, but he didn't know what sort of defense formations or scripts they had drawn to ward off intruders, and he definitely didn't want to show himself yet.

For now, his job was to hide and cultivate until he reached the Saint realm.

After surveying the location for a while longer, Alex returned back to the village and went back into his room.

Then, he started cultivating the Demon Eyes technique and let Whisker sleep for the night.

Early morning, before anyone could even come to knock on his door, Alex was already out and about, and on his way to the garden.

"Brother Fan," Alex called out the man from far away.

"Oh, brother Yu, you're up. Come on, let me take you to your task," Fan Yanshi said and took Alex.

They made their way to the garden that Alex was shown yesterday, where a few of the girls were already working on weeding the garden.

"Honey, brother Yu is here to help. Can you show him the ropes around here?" Fan Yanshi said.

"Okay," Fan Yanshi's wife said and walked out of the garden.

"I'll leave you in her hands. Ask anything you want from her," Fan Yanshi said and left.

"Good morning, sister," Alex greeted her. "I believe I do not know your name yet."

"It's Fan Li," the woman said.

"I see. I shall call you sister Li then," Alex said. "So, what should I do here?"

He looked around at the group of people working and he could already spot some mistakes.

"What can you do?" the girl named Li asked.

"Um, I'm quite good at gardening," Alex said. "I can tell you what mistakes you've been making, or how to improve the harvest and such."

The woman's eyes narrowed a bit. "You can?" she asked. "That will be helpful. Can you show us a bit, please?"

"Sure," he said and walked up to the garden where he was introduced to the 4 other girls that were working there.

"Look, first of all, you shouldn't be throwing these weeds away at all. Just pull them out and let them be. They will become fertilizers on their own," Alex explained. "Although, I don't know how helpful that would be as I hear volcanic ashes are quite good at that too."

"It will still be useful," the woman said.

"Right, this plant. This is Bitter Grass. They are quite notorious for sucking up the nutrients in the soil. That alone wouldn't be bad, but you're planting them around this Silken Snake tree, which has long silk-like roots that search all around them for nutrients."

"If you plant these next to Bitter Grass, they won't get the necessary nutrients they need. Depending on which one is more important, you should throw away one of these plants."

"If you have to keep them, I can help you with that too."

Whisker ran across the garden, looking at everything, and Alex saw it all.

"There is another problem there," he said while pointing to a rather large tree at the edge of the giant garden.

He started explaining the problems and solutions to everything that was wrong around him.

The explanations lasted for nearly half an hour, during which not a single woman did any task and just kept listening to the explanations.

Finally, once Alex was done, Whisker returned to his shoulder and he looked at the stunned expressions of the girls. He could only smile.

"If... if everything you said is true, then we have more tasks than we thought we did," Fan Li said.

"Then we should get to work," Alex said and they started working.

Alex explained what to do to the girls while demonstrating it himself. He pulled out plants that were destructive, relocated plants that were contradictory to each other, and put together plants that would only help each other.

Unfortunately, there were some plants that he simply hadn't seen before, so he couldn't help in those cases, but for everything else, he did all he could.

About 3 to 4 hours later, they were all done. Around the same time, Fan Yanshi came to visit to let them know that the food was ready.

"What... the hell are you guys doing?" he asked when he saw everything was relocated to someplace else.

"Oh, honey. Turns out Brother Yu actually knows quite a lot about plants, so he is teaching us what to do and what not to do," Fan Li said.

"Turns out, we have been doing everything quite wrong, some of which were disastrous for the harvest even," she said. "But now that we've fixed it, this time's harvest should be quite good."

"Really?" Fan Yanshi's eyes went wide.

"Well, you will have to wait and see what happens..." Alex looked around and saw that his words had caused the moon to suffer immediately. He sighed, "Yes, they will be good. At least better than what you would have gotten with how it was before."

"Thank you, brother Yu. You have no idea how good of a news this is. If we can have a great harvest, the sect will give us a lot more resources than normal," the man said.

"Oh, then I am glad I came by here," Alex said. Whisker looked around and Alex saw some empty land.

"Actually, brother Fan, can I ask you something?" he asked.

"Sure, what is it?" Fan Yanshi asked.

"I see a lot of empty lands just around the garden even. Do you have plans of expanding it at all?" he asked.

"Well, we did have that plan for a few years, but we weren't that good at growing these plants, not to mention there wasn't much seed, to begin with," Fan Yanshi said.

"Well, I have some seeds with me. Granted they're not for making talisman ink, but medicinal pastes, but do you think I can plant some in the empty land?" he asked.

"For medicinal pastes? You have knowledge of medicinal pastes?" the young man asked.

"Yes," Alex said. "I know the recipe for some pastes that are good for healing, poison, and such. I have the seeds too. Of course, I will share with the village."

"Yes," Fan Yanshi said. There wasn't even a shred of hesitation. "Please do plant them. If the village can even get the tiniest bit of what you grow, it will be amazing."

"That's great then, I will get to work over there," Alex said.

"Wait, no," Fan Yanshi said. "This is your first day, we can't have you working all the time. Come, the food is ready so it's time to eat."

Alex wasn't hungry, nor did he need to eat. But since Fan Yanshi had called so sincerely, Alex didn't mind.

He and the other women walked back to the village to eat. Since they had been working all morning, the others had prepared food for them.

Alex ate what he could only imagine was a mix between congee and stew. There were a few chunks of meats in the watery rice, which was quite tasty.

They weren't anything amazing, but they were quite nourishing.

"Where did you get the meat?" Alex asked.

"There are some animals that you can find in the forest about an hour in that direction. We go there from time to time to hunt and bring back meat. The meat stays frozen in the snow, and we return when we are almost done with the supply."

Alex nodded when he heard that. He knew where he was going to go next.

Chapter 858: A Month's Improvement

Alex had a routine and he stuck to it.

Aside from doing gardening and mixing in with the men and women of the village from time to time, he spent most of his time in cultivation.

With so many techniques to cultivate, he really couldn't spare much time for anything else.

Alex continued with cultivating the Undying God's physique and that surprisingly improved Whisker's cultivation speed rather fast.

Just like when Pearl cultivated to a high level and improved his physical body quickly, the same thing happened for Whisker to improve his cultivation as Alex's Undying God's physique improved.

In just a month, he went from having no cultivation base to reaching Meridian Tempering 5th realm. That meant Whisker managed to break through every 2 days.

However, it was slowly starting to slow down, but Alex wasn't worried. He had a long time to go, and all he needed to do was get him to the True realm.

After that, the Winter Moon cultivation technique his master gave him that was suitable for beings with Yin spiritual roots.

Alex wasn't sure if a human cultivation method was really usable on a beast, but Whisker had already started learning one other technique that used Yin, which was also meant for humans, so Alex was confident in his assessment.

He had also been taking Whisker to fight in the forest, and while Whisker had no actual fighting skill, he was starting to not immediately run away from fights.

That was all Alex wanted anyway. He wanted Whisker to slowly remove, or at least have him fight against his instinct to run in the face of any kind of danger.

It took time, but there were quite a lot of improvements.

There was also another improvement for Whisker that Alex was, fortunately, able to provide. Since Whisker wasn't cultivating on his own, he wasn't sure if it would work or not, but when he did hand Whisker a Spirit Cleansing lily and cultivated, he easily absorbed the lily and unlocked his spiritual space.

This was much faster than Alex as well.

Back nearly 2 years ago, Alex had found some Spirit Cleansing Lilies around the forest behind his sister's home in Rubyroad City.

Then when scouring for the secret realm in the Beast realm, he had also found quite a few of them.

He had given one of them to his mother, a few back in the Crimson Empire, and now he had used 3 for Whisker.

He still had a few, but there was no one to give them to just yet. If anything, he was keeping it so that he could give it to his father, if he hadn't already reached Saint realm by then that is.

Whisker's spiritual sense reached about 20 meters in all directions, which was quite low, but it was what Alex had also started with.

Now, he simply needed to make some pills for himself before he reached the True realm.

Aside from that, Alex focused on the Demon Eyes as well. By the time a month had passed and the medicine in his eyes was done soaking, he had tried to open it and look, but all he could see was some hazy white.

For some reason, not even the Undying Physique fixed his eyes at the moment. Alex suspected that while his eyes had already absorbed all the energy from the past, it still would take some time to refine and process them.

But, a month had passed so the next vial of paste needed to go into his eyes again.

This time, his eyes didn't feel any pain as he was already numb to it. He could only wait and see what sort of amazing vision he would get from his eyes.

Aside from his eyes, his mind improved quite a bit too. Although, it was barely noticeable.

With around 20 to 30 meters increase in his spiritual sense over the last year or so, the mask was doing its work, but it wasn't as substantial as Alex would have hoped it would be.

Of course, there were 8 more stages to go, but he wanted to take his time with that.

Early morning, Alex opened his eyes and stopped cultivating. Pearl was next to him cultivating as well, and Alex made him stop.

Whisker was asleep since he had nothing to do, so Alex made him wake up now that the sun had come up.

He opened the door and walked out. It was a snowy morning, with fresh snow falling onto the land. As soon as it fell, however, it melted in the heat of the land.

Alex made his way towards the garden, but everyone was already there, harvesting the plants.

"Oh, am I not needed?" Alex asked when he arrived.

"We're almost done," Fan Li said as she stood up. "You should go check if your little garden is done or not."

"Okay," Alex said and left them. He arrived at his own small garden, which was only small in comparison but was actually rather large.

He spent some time getting rid of the weeds which Whisker helped in as well. He was starting to learn which plants weren't needed here after watching Alex do the same thing over and over, and was starting to help out Alex whenever he could.

Alex smiled as he realized that opening his spiritual sea had made Whisker smarter than normal.

'I should start teaching him how to speak soon,' Alex thought.

About an hour later, just as he was about to finish harvesting some of the ingredients that were ready here, Fan Yanshi came up to him and called him to the village.

"What's wrong?" Alex asked.

"The sect's people are going to come here soon to take the harvest and pay us. I thought you would be wanting to see that," Fan Yanshi said.

"Oh, yeah," Alex said and left the work. He walked back to the village where nearly a hundred people have gathered around.

Alex knew how many people there were in the village, but he had never seen all of them together, so the amount looked a bit larger than normal.

A few minutes into waiting, he saw Fan Yanshi point towards a black spot in the distant snow that was slowly getting larger.

Alex looked through Whisker's eyes, but that spot still looked quite blurry even when Fan Yanshi and a few others could already see it very clearly.

After the black spot got a little closer, Alex finally saw a few people sitting on top of a dark flying boat as they arrived close to the village.

The boat stopped once they were in the village and Alex sensed their aura from them.

Mind Tempering realm.

'Is that... good or bad?' he wondered. Looking at the people's age that had just come in, they were about 20 or so years old, around the same age as what would be considered genius back in the Crimson Empire, and maybe even the Luminance Empire.

However, he wasn't sure what was considered genius here.

'Damn, I really need some information about this world that these villagers just can't give me,' he thought.

"Fan Yanshi!" A man shouted as he jumped off the boat. "I hope you've prepared a proper harvest this time around."

Chapter 859: Harvest Earnings

"Don't worry, Sha Yuan. I have prepared plenty of harvests this time around," Fan Yanshi spoke and tossed him a talisman.

The young man named Sha Yuan, behind whom stood the other 4 men and women, grabbed the talisman and looked at it.

As soon as he did, his eyes went slightly wild. "Did you seriously harvest this much in just a quarter of a year?" the young man looked shocked.

"Absolutely," Fan Yanshi said. "You can check here." He pulled out a storage bag that contained the harvest and tossed it over to the young man.

The young man quickly checked the storage bag and went, "Tsk. You really did it." He then proceeded to calculate the entire thing.

The group of nearly a hundred villagers waited patiently to hear the number as this was the only way for them to earn any money.

"For all of this, you get 300 True Spirit Stones," the young man said and handed out exactly that amount, which he threw next to Fan Yanshi.

Fan Yanshi had never seen this many True Spirit stones at once, but he wasn't surprised as he had hoped to be.

"This is too little," he said. "There are at least 350 True Spirit Stones worth of harvest this quarter. We did really good this time around."

"Yeah, but so did the other little villages under the sect. They also had a good harvest so the prices of ingredients have lowered quite a bit and you only get that much," the young man said.

"Nonsense, how can the price be so low in just 3 months?" Fan Li shouted from the side.

"Just 3 months? The price had lowered 3 months ago already. You guys should have been told, weren't you?" Sha Yuan said.

"What?!" Fan Yanshi and the rest cried out in surprise. "We weren't let know about this at all."

"Oh," the young man made an apologetic face. "I must have forgotten, my bad. Anyway, it's time for me to leave."

"Wait," Fan Yanshi shouted.

"What?" the young man turned around with an annoyed look on his face.

"Where are the resources for this quarter?" he asked.

"Oh, I nearly forgot. I'm getting so forgetful this time around," Sha Yuan said. The small group behind him started giggling all of a sudden.

"Bastard!" Fan Yanshi muttered under his breath.

"Here," the young man tossed the resources to Fan Yanshi and turned around to leave. "Good luck on the next quarter."

The group watched the 5 left.

"He hates you, huh? Is there a reason?" Alex asked from the side.

"Yeah," Fan Yanshi said. "We started the sect together and he fell in love with a girl, but the girl fell in love with me instead. He's hated me ever since then."

"You stole away the girl he loved?" Alex asked.

"No, I didn't even care about the girl. I only had eyes for my wife," Fan Yanshi said as he turned around to smile at his wife.

"Stop speaking nonsense and pick up the stones," Fan Li said.

"Yes, dear."

Alex helped them pick up the 300 spirit stones as well.

Fan Yanshi took the 300 spirit stones, but he did not divide them amongst the people. Instead, he pocketed it and checked the resources provided to them by the sect this time around.

These resources consisted of grains, beast feed, and fertilizers required for the next set of harvests.

"Bastard!" Fan Yanshi cried out. "These are of the worst quality."

"Is he screwing with us?" someone asked.

"We should complain to the sect," another person said.

Alex saw the resources too and shook his head. Nearly half the beast's food was almost rotten, and the rot was spreading to the grains too. The fertilizers seemed like they hadn't been used in a long while and were already losing proficiency.

"Goddammit," Fan Yanshi cried out and made a fist in anger. If only he was stronger, he wouldn't have to go through this.

The people behind him had started getting angry as well and were rallying up to go to the sect.

"Stop," Fan Li shouted back at them. "Do you think the sect cares about us enough to care what we say? Do you think a thousand-year-old sect would rather listen to a bunch of trashes like us, or will they favor their own disciples?"

The crowd quietened.

"Guys, relax. It's alright," Fan Yanshi said. "Look, we got 300 True Spirit stones right? We can now buy a lot of the things we've wanted."

"Everyone, make a list of what you want. We will leave for the city around the evening," Fan Yanshi said, and immediately everyone's mood improved for the better.

"Right, I need a set of talisman papers and inks."

"I need some cosmetics."

"We need some spices for our foods."

"Yes, yes," Fan Yanshi said. "Write down everything we need please."

Alex was certainly intrigued by the notion of leaving for a city. It had been a month since he had come to the Northern Continent, and the most he had learned about this place was that the continent was divided into 5 different states, each of which was governed by an ancient sect that had lasted for nearly dozens of thousands of years.

Alex wanted to learn more about these sects, along with many things about this continent. So, he walked up to Fan Yanshi and asked, "Brother Fan, do you think I can come with you to this city? I've been wanting to visit one without stress for a while now."

"Uhh..." Fan Yanshi didn't immediately answer. "We leave in the evening and will probably have to fight through some heavy snowfall, if not some blizzard. It will be incredibly hard on someone with such a low cultivation base like you, brother Yu."

"Oh, I am fine with being in snow or blizzard. I ran my way through it all before I arrived here, remember?" he said.

Fan Yanshi gave it some thought, and then said, "Sure, why not? If you want to come, you can. Oh right, you should write what you want as well."

"Thank you, brother Fan."

Alex returned to the field to finish what he was nearly done with and helped the others plant the new seeds that came in today.

Aside from that, he also wrote what he wanted, which were just some more seeds for him.

After that, Alex returned to his home and started cultivating, waiting for the night to fall.

Very late in the afternoon, when the sun was starting to burn red, someone knocked on his door.

Alex opened the door and smiled. "Is it time, sister Fan?" he asked.

"Yes, we should leave," Fan Li said.

"We? Are you going too, sister Fan?" Alex asked with a curious look. He had for some reason assumed only men would be going on this trip since that was what they did for hunting meat.

"Of course, I am going," Fan Li said with a soft smile. "The men around here don't know how to ration their money and end up spending it on unnecessary things. If there isn't a woman in the group to keep track of the expenditure, we will end up with a bunch of books on useless skills and nothing else."

Alex chuckled a bit when he heard that. He wouldn't doubt he would do the same if he was lacking some techniques of his own.

The two of them arrived and the other 3 people were already gathered and ready to leave.

Aside from Fan Li's Organ Tempering 3rd realm and Alex's own low cultivation base, everyone else chosen to leave in this group was of Organ Tempering 9th realm.

"Are you all ready?" Fan Yanshi asked, and everyone nodded.

"Very well, let us leave." He turned around and started walking away.

Alex was a little surprised. He had thought that they would be using some flying artifact, but it seemed they were planning on trekking through the snow.

Alex frowned a bit. He was going to act like he couldn't do or didn't understand many things, but this one didn't sit right with him.

He didn't want such good and humble people to walk through the snow, only to go to some city.

"Brother Fan, wait," he said and ran forward.

"Brother Yu? What is it? Are you changing your mind?" Fan Yanshi asked.

"No," Alex said. "I just wanted you to help you out a little."

"Help us?" Fan Yanshi looked confused.

"Here," Alex said and pulled out something from his storage bag.

A boat appeared in the air, capable of carrying about 4 people in total, 5 if they squeezed in, and hovered.

The 4 of them looked shocked as they stared at the boat and then at Alex.

"How did you...?" Fan Yanshi couldn't speak out the entire question.

"I stole from one of the people that tried to kill me," Alex said. He wasn't lying at all. This was the ship that belonged to Zexi he had acquired nearly 10 years ago, or over 12 years ago in actual time.

"It's a True rank artifact, so we might have to spend a bit of the spirit stones we acquired today, but no more than 5 should do it," Alex said. "Also, there are already some in there so we will be fine for now."

"Brother Yu... this... thank you. You have been truly helpful," Fan Yanshi bowed a little, and the rest followed to bow as well.

"Please, you don't need to thank me. I should thank you instead for letting me live here," Alex said.

"Also, we should leave now. We don't want to waste any more time."

Chapter 860: Harvest Earnings

Alex and the other four flew in the True rank boat, surrounded by white snow that was marred crimson by the setting sun.

It didn't take long for the sun to set around these parts. Sun would usually set even as fast as 4 pm in the afternoon because of some of the tall peaks around here.

Alex scanned the area as they flew. There were leafless trees and frozen boulders, yet there was not a single sign of human life anywhere.

Alex looked to his left, the east, where storm clouds were starting to move into their location. Within the hour, they were going to have to fly through a snow storm if they were lucky.

If not, it would be a blizzard, or even worse, an ice storm with pieces of ice falling sideways so fast that most self-tempering realm cultivators wouldn't even be able to come out unharmed.

From what he had heard, even early True realm cultivators didn't dare walk out in an ice storm because of how quickly it chipped away their Qi, leaving them with nothing but artifacts to protect themselves.

"How much longer?" Alex asked Fan Yanshi. They had only left about an hour or so ago, so they shouldn't have come much further, but if possible, he would want to escape the storm, just for the sake of the people behind him.

"Hmm, I think we are a third of the way there," Fan Yanshi said. "We will know if we see the villages around the Rockless peak."

About 10 minutes later, Alex saw a small hill that was completely submerged in the snow with a massive icicle stuck at its center.

He saw small sets of villages around the place that fully embraced the winter.

"Are they cultivators? How do they survive?" Alex asked.

"Oh, merchants walk through these paths from time to time to get to and from the sect. They pass through here and sell what they can to these people," Fan Yanshi said.

Alex looked at the village with no possible source of income and wondered just what they could even do to earn money for themselves. In fact, he was so confused that he asked.

"You see that peak over there?" Fan Yanshi pointed way beyond the village. "There's a glacier that flows down from there. It's opened up the path and allows these people to dig into the earth around here and bring it out."

"Surprisingly, there are a lot of golds and silvers underneath those glaciers, which they craft into jewelries and sell for a living. If that wasn't the case, they would have already moved onto warmer locations for sure," Fan Yanshi said.

"Ah," Alex understood and kept looking around.

"Are there no beasts around here?" he asked.

"There are, but not very dangerous ones. If you want to find dangerous True beasts, you will have to either go all the way to the north where they live in the tall mountains or to the south where it's very warm and comfortable for them to live," Fan Yanshi said.

"I see, so there is no danger of beasts here, huh?" he understood.

They continued flying, passing past many villages and even a few smaller cities. Apparently, they were going to a major city in the south that sold everything they wanted, so they wouldn't have to worry about not finding what they wanted.

Alex liked it better that he was going somewhere he could easily find what he wanted.

The group kept flying as the storm got even closer.

"We would have to find shelter in one of the villages along the way if we didn't have the boat. You really have been quite the help, brother Yu," Fan Yanshi said.

"Don't count on that yet, we still have to outrun the storm," he said.

About half an hour before they reached the city, the storm caught up with them, but fortunately, it was only a snowstorm.

Heavy snow fell on them, covering them up even when they were traveling on the boat very fast. However, fortunately, they didn't get blasted by heavy winds, or that would cause more problems than anything.

"Are you not feeling cold, brother Yu?" Fan Yanshi asked. The group in the back were already feeling the chill enter their body despite their cultivation base, and somehow Alex wasn't showing any signs of it.

"Oh no," Alex shook his head. "This black robe of mine was something my mother bought for me at quite a steep price. It blocks off a lot of heat and cold."

"Is that so? Maybe we should buy something like that too," Fan Yanshi mused to himself.

"We don't have the budget for that," Fan Li said from the side, barely managing to keep her teeth from clattering as she spoke.

Alex chuckled whenever the husband was chided by his wife. Suddenly, he saw something in the distance.

A bright yellow light shone in between the snowstorm. Whisker who was in his robes focused to try and see what it was, but before he could tell, Fan Yanshi had seen it too.

"Woah, that's the Snow Road city. We're here already?" he asked in surprise. The snowstorm was beginning to pick up, but they had already made it.

"What is that yellow light? Is that coming from the city?" Alex asked. Whisker was still incapable of showing him images from long distances clearly.

"That must be the barrier formation," Fan Yanshi said. "They activated the city barrier to stop the snow storm most likely."

"Ah, that makes sense," Alex said.

The storm picked up even further, slowly changing from a snow storm to a blizzard. However, the group didn't care as they were here and had landed.

The boat stopped in front of the city, and the 5 of them got off immediately and ran to the city gates.

There were no massive walls here that surrounded the city as there would be in the Western continent. Instead, the city was just a bunch of buildings clustered in a location, not unlike the cities back in his home.

The guards took the 5 of them in without even checking them just to get them away from the snowstorm. As soon as they got in, the group felt the incredible warmth of the city radiating around them.

"Is that formation or is there a volcano around here?" Alex asked. He looked around, but the large buildings stopped his view of the surrounding. Even if there was nothing, the snowstorm and darkness probably wouldn't let him see anything.

"I believe it's the formation," Fan Yanshi said.

After paying a small fee for entry, Fan Yanshi directly went to the market to buy everything that was on the list the four of them.

Alex followed them and walked through the city. Despite it being nighttime, the city was ablaze with light from all around, and the stores were all open.

Alex could feel cultivation bases of every kind walk past him. Most of them were Self-Tempering realm to his surprise, but a good chunk of it were also True realm cultivators.

Alex tried to feel for Saint realm cultivators, but he simply couldn't. Even if they did walk the common road, they most likely restrained their cultivation base to the point where someone like Alex would have an extremely hard time looking through their concealment.

Another thing that took Alex's attention was a group of people he saw from time to time. They wore robes of royal blue color and were True realm cultivators that walked around with spears in their hands.

They were the only ones that Alex could see that were openly walking around with weapons.

When he asked Fan Yanshi about them, it turned out that they were the guards of this city, and were most likely disciples belonging to the Heaven's Frost sect, the ancient sect that governed the State of Xue.

Not long after, they arrived in a massive building that sold almost everything a mortal or a low-level cultivator would need.

It reminded Alex of the store back in DawnSpring city where he had acquired his pill-making technique and his fake arm.

Seeds, spices, minerals, talisman papers, inks, formations plates, ingredients, cosmetic items, clothing items, and every other little thing that was written on the list as to be bought here.

As the group started looking for it all, Alex needed to go out on his own to look at the various things in the city.

"Brother Fan, how long do you think it will take for you to be done with the purchases?" Alex asked.

"Hmm, I can't be sure, brother Yu. Why do you ask?" he asked.

"I was thinking of going around the city to look at various things and see if I can buy some things with the little money I have," Alex said.

"Oh, uhh... how about you wait for us by the northern gate after you are done? Or we will wait for you after you are done," Fan Yanshi asked.

"That works fine for me," Alex said. "See you tomorrow morning then."

With that, he walked out of the store and left. Alex walked through the streets while thinking in his mind where exactly it was that he wanted to go.

There were a few things he needed for sure. For example, if he could, he would want to buy some beast cores around here.

"No, that has to be the first place," Alex thought and started looking for it. Not long after, he arrived in front of what he was looking for.

A bookstore.