

Thunk!

Alex's mind was thrown into disarray suddenly. It was like he had just received a punch to the head.

Alex's hand went to his butt out of reflex since he felt some pain coming from it.

That's when he felt grass.

'Grass?' Alex thought.

Alex opened his eyes and looked around.

Forest.

This was the only word that appeared in his mind when he saw his new surroundings. Thick pine trees were all around Alex. Alex could hear some birds chirping, and he heard the buzzing of insects. The smell of nature also immediately assaulted him.

'Sure enough, I have been sent somewhere, probably that God's main world or something,'

Alex thought as he looked around.

Alex stood up, and while doing so, immediately noticed something peculiar.

'Standing up is easier than before,' Alex thought.

Alex looked down at his body, and his brows furrowed.

'My big belly is gone,' Alex thought.

As Alex looked at his own body, he noticed that he had a slim build. On top of that, he wore different clothes now.

Right now, Alex wore black cloth pants and a black shirt.

Surprisingly, the fabric felt rather nice.

However, Alex noticed something else that he didn't like one bit.

'I'm smaller,' Alex thought with narrowed eyes.

Previously, Alex had been 187 centimeters tall, but now, he barely reached 160 centimeters, according to his estimations.

Alex touched his face and noticed that it was also rather slim.

'I'm smaller, my unnecessary fat is gone, but my muscles are also gone,' Alex thought. 'This is either the body of someone that only does cardio, or I'm in the body of a teenager. I don't think that this God would send me into a grown body that's only 160 centimeters tall. After all, he wants me to become powerful, and height is an insane advantage in physical combat.'

'So, I'm probably in the body of a teenager. Assuming that I will reach a height of above 180 centimeters in my adulthood, my current height of 160 centimeters means that I still have quite some growing to do.'

'This means that I'm probably in the body of a 14-year-old,' Alex thought.

Something on Alex's head tickled him, and he moved it to the side.

It was hair, and when Alex noticed some strands of his hair, he also noticed a different change.

'Well, seems like my blonde hair is gone,' Alex lamented as he saw his new black hair.

After getting familiar with his new body, Alex looked around himself and noticed two things.

One was a bulging sack, and the other was the black cube the God had given him.

Alex opened the bag and looked inside. These were probably some basic things that the God had prepared for him.

'Clothes, three red flasks, a survival knife, shoes, and some meat jerky,' Alex thought as he looked at the sack. 'Basically, the bare necessities to survive in the wilderness.'

Alex took out one of the three red flasks and looked at it. The color of the liquid in the flask was a vibrant red, and the liquid was rather viscous. 'Could these be health potions? I mean, I kind of am in a fantasy world.'

Alex wasn't sure, but he assumed that he was right.

After checking his inventory, Alex picked up the black cube and put it in the bag.

However, his hand halted as he realized something else.

'Did the black cube become lighter?' he thought as he moved the black cube around a bit.

'Probably not, but it does feel lighter.'

Alex frowned as his mind tried to find the reason. 'My old body was out of shape, but I still had quite some muscle. Yet, this untrained teenage body can easily carry the cube.'

Alex scratched his chin in thought. 'Is this normal? Is this the effect of being in a world that's bathed in this mysterious energy that's all around me in the air? The guy said that most people call it Mana, so I should probably also get used to calling it Mana. I don't want to appear out of place.'

'Possible,' Alex thought. 'I should test that. The guy said that I can't push Mana into my soul, which means that something in my body is different from a normal human body. The inability to do something that everyone else can do basically means that I'm disabled in a certain sense.'

'However, the God wouldn't send me into a body that can't become more powerful. He also said that most of my Mana will end up in my body.'

Alex quickly shook his head. 'Now's not the time to think about these things, Alex! First, you need-'

Alex stopped thinking as his head was suddenly droning. It felt like he had gotten a migraine.

'What's going on now!? Can't you give me a break!?'

However, the headache only increased, and Alex fell to his knees as he breathed heavily. His mind was going through everything that the God had told him, and Alex quickly found the answer.

'Really?' Alex thought with frustration and anger. 'You won't even allow me to think of my true name?!'

No answer.

'Fine, fine. I'm Shang!'

And just like that, the headache had vanished.

'So, it really is like this,' Alex thought with a bitter expression. 'Fuck, this is so annoying!'

Can't even retain my own name!'

However, there was nothing that Alex or Shang could do.

'Anyway, I should first look around for a safe spot. I don't know where I am, and if I start training now, unwelcome visitors might suddenly appear.'

Alex looked around. 'There are no leaf trees and only pine trees. Does this mean that I'm in a colder climate? Now that I think about it, the sun is high in the sky, but it's a bit chilly. I can still deal with this temperature, but it will probably drop significantly in the evening and night.'

'I have food for about a day in my sack, and I can use my spare clothes for bedding and a blanket. However, I should still find a safe place where I can sleep.'

'Let's check from above,' Alex thought as he looked at a tall tree beside him. 'With this body, I should be able to climb this tree.'

Alex put his sack down and went to the tree, but he quickly stopped.

Then, he slung the sack over his back.

'Animals might smell the jerky in there,' he thought.

After that, Alex went to the tree and slung his arms and legs around it.

'Sure enough, I can easily support my own weight. This body is quite powerful and still pretty light. I don't want to admit it, but this body is probably even better suited for survival and combat than my old one.'

The first couple of meters were a bit difficult, but after Alex reached the height of the branches, it became far easier. The needles of the pine tree were a bit annoying, but they didn't injure him.

Around two minutes later, Alex was relatively high up and could see around him.

'Fuck!' Alex thought with gritted teeth. 'Forest everywhere!'

Alex was on top of a sea of green.

'Well, at least I can somewhat make out the terrain.'

Alex noticed several mountains on the horizon, probably 20 kilometers away or so.

According to his estimations, the mountains were probably about a kilometer tall on average.

Alex turned his head and noticed that the mountains were encircling him from quite a distance.

'Is this a basin?' Alex thought. 'I can't see anything higher behind the mountains, which probably means that I'm probably not below sea level. I'm probably just surrounded by mountains. Quite an interesting starting location.'

Alex got an idea, and a skeptical expression appeared on his face.

'Is this supposed to be some kind of tutorial area or starter location?' Alex thought.

Alex scratched the back of his head awkwardly when he had that thought.

This wasn't a game, but the God sure as hell structured it like one. Alex even got three healing potions.

'I mean, at least this makes things easier,' Alex thought. 'He told me that I should try surviving in the wilderness, and when I no longer feel any danger, I should go further in. I guess he meant this basin.'

Then, Alex noticed something.

'Smoke!'

There was smoke coming from behind one of the mountains! It was hard to notice, but if one looked hard enough, one would see it.

'That's probably a village, and they're living just beyond that mountain!'

This did a lot for calming Alex's anxiety.

At least he knew where he could find humans.

Rustle, rustle.

Alex heard the sound of rustling coming from a distance, and he looked over.

Alex blinked a couple of times in confusion as he tried to process what he was seeing.

Were these trees... moving?

Yes, sure enough, about a hundred meters away, about twenty pine trees were moving from

left to right.

One peculiar thing was that these trees were all very close to each other, even closer than the other trees. On top of that, some of them were slanted at an angle.

Alex squinted his eyes as he tried to see what was going on over there.

Trees couldn't just move like that.

'Wait, are these actually trees?' Alex thought.

After a closer inspection, Alex noticed that these "trees" only resembled trees. They weren't actually trees.

They looked more like green spires with some green spikes coming out from their side.

This picture reminded him of something.

If these spires were straight, had no spikes, and were black...

Alex took a deep breath in shock.

'Is that a green hedgehog!?'

Sure enough, the moving mass of green looked like the back of a hedgehog.

However, just how big was this thing!?

'If that's a hedgehog, it means that it's so big that its needles are nearly as tall as pine trees!'

Alex remained quiet as he watched the mass of green spires moving past the trees. Sometimes, they were caught on a tree and bent backward, but after a while, they simply bounced back to their original location.

If this was a hedgehog, it was probably just as big as an elephant without its needles!

BANG!

Suddenly, Alex heard the sound of something heavy hitting the ground, and it sounded like it came from a long distance away.

Alex looked towards the direction the sound came from and noticed a dust cloud at the bottom of one of the mountains in the distance.

There, Alex noticed a brown lizard biting down on some large, brown animal. Alex wasn't

sure since it was too far away to see it clearly.

However, Alex did notice one thing.

'I can see that lizard from here!' he thought with a deep breath. 'Then, how big is that lizard!?'

For a while, Alex only remained silent as he tried to come to terms with the things he had witnessed.

'Are you sure this is a tutorial area!?'