

Walker 131

Chapter 131 - Late Stage Of The Qi Refining Realm

A sizzling sound was heard as the corrosion on the wall spread out for a few centimeters before stopping. Lin Mu heard the sound and felt shocked at this. He didn't know what had just happened and felt confused at that.

He stood up and walked closer to inspect the wall and saw that a depression about half a centimeter was formed and it was about two inches in diameter. The gas that had touched the wall had dissipated and no traces of it could be seen.

The only thing Lin Mu could sense on the wall was the shallow depression and nothing else.

"What was that Senior Xukong?" Lin Mu questioned.

"..."

"Umm, Senior?" Lin Mu reiterated.

"Hmm, I do not know exactly. It seems to be the impurities being expelled from your body, but they shouldn't be this corrosive." Xukong answered.

"What's wrong here?" Lin Mu asked, feeling more confused.

"You see, by tempering your body, not only do you increase its strength and toughness but also improve its quality. This improvement in quality is brought about by removing the impurities from your body." Xukong replied.

"But how do these impurities appear in my body, though?" Lin Mu questioned.

"They are the result of you consuming sustenance. This can be in any form whether it be food or spirit qi. Everything has faint traces of impurities in them. These impurities slowly accumulate in your body over time and hide within it. For mortals, it does not matter as much, since their life span is not that long, but for cultivators, it is very important as it dictates the improvement in their cultivation and longevity." Xukong explained.

Lin Mu finally started to feel like he was understanding it on some level, but he was still confused about the volatility of the impurity that he had just expelled.

"But senior are the impurities really as dangerous as the one from now?" Lin Mu questioned.

"No, while they can be threatening to a cultivator, that is only in terms of hampering and restricting their cultivation but not actually directly harming them. The gas that you expelled was spirit qi impurity, but it seemed to be corrosive. I do not know the reason for this, but know that it's only good for you since it's being expelled." Xukong answered.

"I understand senior." Lin Mu replied.

After this, Lin Mu went back to sitting in a cross-legged position on the bed and continued his cultivation session. He closely observed his body and realized that he was already at the border of the twelfth stage of the body tempering realm.

"Senior, I'm already very close to the twelfth stage of the body tempering realm somehow." Lin Mu informed.

"I think I can deduce the reason, perhaps. It seems to me that the impurity that you expelled may have been restricting your vital energy from breaking into the next stage. The vital energy within your body kept on being stockpiled and only now when it couldn't store anymore did it breakthrough and pushed you to the border of the twelfth stage of the body tempering realm. That impurity was quite likely the barrier that was restricting you." Xukong explained.

"So does this mean that if I want to progress to the next stage, I'll need to expel more of those impurities?" Lin Mu questioned.

"Yes, that's possible. This will also improve your spirit qi cultivation, in fact. You will soon notice the difference." Xukong answered.

Lin Mu inwardly nodded and focused on his cultivation session. He circulated the spirit qi in his meridians and completed a cycle. He then discovered that the speed of his circulation had increased by around thirty percent.

It was as if there were invisible obstructions that he couldn't see before, and now that they were gone he felt free. The spirit qi in his dantian flowed into his meridians and completed a cycle, returning back into the dantian. The cycle thus triggered the fine pores on his body to open up and absorb the ambient spirit qi.

With each subsequent cycle, more and more spirit qi would be added to his dantian. Such was the way of cultivation. In the blink of an eye, it was time for sunset. Lin Mu could not even sense the passage of time, as he was too engrossed in his cultivation.

He only woke up as he was feeling hungry again. In the past few days, he had been restricting his hunger and had been sustaining himself on qi, thus he did not feel hungry back then. But now that he was back to his normal routine, his hunger had returned as well.

Lin Mu thus cooked more spirit beast meat and then ate it. After that, he would assimilate the vital energy from it and once again return to cultivate. Only at midnight would he stop and sleep. Lin Mu had also not slept for the past few days, thus his lessons on the Dao script had fallen behind.

Now that he finally had the chance to learn it again, he didn't want to let it go. He thus laid down on the bed and fell asleep. His consciousness appeared in the Sleepscape, right in front of the spirit apple tree.

Lin Mu looked up and saw twelve spirit apples hanging from the tree.

"Looks like they will continue to accumulate if I don't pick them." Lin Mu spoke to himself.

He then walked towards the tree and plucked the twelve apples before storing them in the ring. After that was done, he called out to Senior Xukong for their lessons. He learned the Dao script from senior Xukong for the rest of the night and only stopped when it was time for him to wake up.

Lin Mu repeated this cycle for six days and only paused it when he was called out. The Hei corps member that had been working as a guard outside, Hei Ping had called out to Lin Mu.

Lin Mu walked outside and talked to him. From his conversation, he learned about the current developments and progress in the investigation. He was informed that they had learned nearly no clues from the culprit they had captured.

Since the culprit was a death warrior, he had kept all information to himself and had instead chosen to let himself die. Lin Mu didn't know how he died, but could guess that it was most likely due to torture. He didn't mind that since he knew that they were deserving of it.

Lin Mu was also informed that the first batch of reinforcements had reached the town and more would be coming soon.

"So am I needed there now?" Lin Mu questioned Hei Ping at the end.

"No. Leader has instead asked that you focus on your cultivation and not to bother with minor matters. She said that she will inform you when something important and deserving of your time happens." Hei Ping answered.

After hearing the answer Lin Mu nodded his head and bid the man farewell.

Lin Mu returned to his routine and continued his cultivation for three more days. On the fourth day, a wave of spirit qi spread out from his body. His eyes trembled, but he didn't open them. His chants were echoing in the room now, resonating with the waves of spirit qi.

If one were to look inside Lin Mu's dantian at this time, they would see that it was completely filled with wisps of spirit qi. There was no more space for additional wisps of spirit qi to enter. Right now, Lin Mu was at a very important point in his cultivation.

He was at the very cusp of entering the late stage of the qi refining realm. In order to enter the late stage of the qi refining realm, a cultivator had to completely fill his dantian with the spirit qi and then needed to refine those wisps into a liquid form.

As soon as the first drop of liquid spirit qi was produced, that cultivator would have successfully entered the late stage of the qi refining realm. But this very step was hard, since refining spirit qi wisps into liquid spirit qi was a volatile process.

One small mistake and the spirit qi could go on a rampage through the cultivator's meridians, causing them harm and regressing their cultivation.

Lin Mu was currently in a deeply focused state. He did not even need to chant the severing heart sutra consciously anymore, as it had become like a second nature to him. His lips would move automatically and the chants would come out of them.

With incredible focus, he circulated more and more of spirit qi through his meridians. He kept on doing it until when finally it had reached a saturation point and his meridians could no longer accommodate more spirit qi.

It was at this point that he kept on pressuring the spirit qi and finally squeezed more in. Bit by bit he kept on adding, and the wisps of spirit qi became smaller and smaller. Eventually, they had become condensed enough to form a small globule.

This small globule flowed through his meridians and finally reached Lin Mu's dantian. As soon as it dropped down into it, another wave of spirit qi spread from his body and spread out in the surroundings.

But this time, the mysterious ring on Lin Mu's hand also started humming along with it. The waves of spirit qi started resonating with the humming of the ring and melded together. It was as if an esoteric harmony was being played and minstrels were singing hymns.

The harmony reached a crescendo, and Lin Mu's body disappeared from the room.

Chapter 132 - The Third Skill 'Phase'

When Lin Mu opened his eyes, he found himself in front of a glowing ethereal altar. It was releasing waves of energy that resonated with the waves of spirit qi from Lin Mu's body. Lin Mu could clearly feel the call of the altar within his mind.

"Am I inside the ring?" Lin Mu questioned himself.

'Wait if I'm here, shouldn't senior Xukong be here as well?' Lin Mu thought.

"Senior Xukong!" Lin Mu called out.

His voice didn't travel far, and it was as if it was dampened by some kind of a barrier. Lin Mu tried to call him out using his mental connection and found out that it was blocked as well.

"Is this the doing of the altar?" Lin Mu muttered as he turned around to face it again.

'Seems like I need to do what it's asking of me before I can do anything.' Lin Mu thought.

Lin Mu thus walked to the altar and placed his hand on it like the last time he did when he came here. As soon as he did, his vision blacked out and streaks of light started emitting from the altar. These streaks of light floated out of it and entered Lin Mu's head.

At this moment, Lin Mu felt as if new memories were being etched in his mind. He could feel that this new information did not seem to be foreign and was instead assimilated into his mind. It was as if he had known it all along.

A few seconds later, the process was completed, and Lin Mu's vision returned. He lifted his hand from the altar and the altar dimmed down to its normal form. The runes on it also became faint and would flicker from moment to moment.

Once this was done, Lin Mu could finally feel the mental connection between him and senior Xukong being restored. Knowing this, his eyes lit up.

"Senior Xukong!" Lin Mu called out again.

This time he finally received a response and soon saw an orb of gray light approaching from far. The orb of light came to a stop in front of him and faded away to reveal senior Xukong. When Lin Mu saw him, he felt a little surprised.

"Senior Xukong, Wha-what happened to you?" Lin Mu questioned.

"I just increased in size," Xukong answered.

If Xukong was small enough to fit on a fingertip before, now he was big enough to be compared to the size of a palm.

"But how?" Lin Mu asked, feeling surprised.

The drastic difference was surprising to Lin Mu. While he had seen senior Xukong's real body and knew how massive it was, compared to his previous tiny size, this was still big. In fact, Lin Mu didn't think he had ever seen a spider that was this big before in the real world.

Xukong's current appearance could be described to be as having a pale and bony white body. His abdomen was bloated and was ten times as big as his head. Eight legs sprouted from his body and had ends that were sharp. There were no hairs on his legs or on his body, unlike other spiders, as it was completely smooth. His head had Eight golden yellow eyes on it that glowed with an eerie light. His fangs were a centimeter long and were gray in color.

Overall, if one were to see Xukong outside in the real world, they would be scared because of his form. But in addition to being scary, it also had a certain charm that was hard to explain. It was as if one was appreciating the beauty of a sword. While it was sharp and dangerous, it still had a mysterious sense of beauty hidden in its craftsmanship.

Lin Mu then saw senior Xukong's head and saw the eight eyes on there.

"Huh, senior did your number of eyes decrease?" Lin Mu questioned.

Before since Xukong was very small in size, Lin Mu couldn't perceive the fifth pair of eyes on Xukong's head. They were the smallest pair and were hard to perceive with his small size. They were very apparent on his main body, but on his avatar, they were nearly invisible. Lin Mu had just thought that he wasn't able to see them because of their small size.

"No, they've been the same since I created this avatar. It's because my avatar doesn't have my cultivation base, that it does not have the fifth pair of eyes." Xukong answered.

"So your number of eyes increases along with your cultivation?" Lin Mu questioned.

"Yes, but not exactly. You see, beasts have different changes they go through when they progress in their cultivation. These changes are different depending on the beast and its cultivation base. For me it's my eyes, you could say. Though, I can't tell you when I'll be able to gain my fifth pair of eyes back as that realm is way beyond your scope of understanding." Xukong explained.

Lin Mu didn't question it and simply accepted senior Xukong's words as it is. He then felt as if his body was getting lighter. Lin Mu looked at his hands and saw that they were getting blurry.

"Seems like you will have to return to the real world now. Your body has reached its limit here." Xukong spoke.

"It has?" Lin Mu questioned, remembering his previous visits to the ring.

"Yes, did you forget that this place doesn't have a livable environment? Every time you come here, the ring helps to maintain your body's functions. But the thing is that it can only do it for so long before it will start hurting your body instead." Xukong explained.

Lin Mu went silent for a moment before asking,

"Then will I be able to enter the ring on my own in the future?"

"Yes, when your cultivation base reaches a strong enough level, you should be able to enter the ring at will," Xukong answered.

Just as Lin Mu heard Senior Xukong's words, his body faded away and reappeared in the real world. He looked around and saw the familiar walls and bed. He was currently standing on the floor in the same position, he was back in the ring. He had been transported in the same position.

Lin Mu sat down on the bed and recalled the new memories that he had received from the altar. The new memories detailed the information about a new skill. It was the third skill Lin Mu had received from the ring and it was called 'Phase'.

Unlike before, when Lin Mu had to stumble and experiment to understand the usage of the skills, this time he had senior Xukong to consult with. While Lin Mu had the instinctual knowledge of the activation of the skill, he still didn't know what the skill actually did.

Lin Mu thus informed senior Xukong about the new skill that he had received.

"Hmm, it seems like this skill 'Phase' involves one of the basic manipulation techniques of spatial energy. It allows you to temporarily dissociate your body, which can allow you to pass through objects." Xukong explained.

Upon hearing senior Xukong's explanation, Lin Mu instantly linked it to the first skill 'Flicker'. Flicker also had a similar effect, as it allowed his body to pass through objects as well. Lin Mu couldn't understand the difference between the two skills.

"Senior, is this skill similar to 'Flicker'?" Lin Mu questioned.

"No, while they look similar, they are different on a fundamental level. Flicker actually allows your body to temporarily enter the lesser void. Thus, by virtue of this, you can dodge attacks and allow objects to pass through your body." Xukong took a pause and let Lin Mu digest this information before continuing.

"The third skill that you received 'Phase' allows you to dissociate your body's particles which allows you to pass through objects. You can imagine any object or item in this world to be composed of very small particles called as molecules."

"These particles are bound together by an invisible force. While they appear to be together, they are instead separated from each other, having an empty space between them."

"What this skill does is that it dissociates and aligns the particles of your body in such a manner that they pass through the gaps between the molecules of that object." Xukong explained.

Lin Mu was lost in thought after hearing senior Xukong's explanation but was eventually able to understand.

"It would be better if you just try the skill out first," Xukong suggested.

"Yes, senior." Lin Mu responded while nodding.

He stood up and then recalled the method of activation of the skill 'Phase' and used it. In the next instant, around twenty wisps of his spirit qi were consumed, as his body turned blurry. It looked fuzzy in appearance and seemed as if it was vibrating at an unknown speed.

Lin Mu placed his hand on the bed and watched it pass through with ease. It was a novel experience for him as he waved it around in the bed. Lin Mu also sensed that every second that his hand was inside the bed, a single wisp of spirit qi was being consumed.

He removed his hand from the bed and noticed that while the skill was still active, the consumption of the spirit qi had stopped. Lin Mu walked towards the wall of his house and stood in front of it. He took a deep breath and walked forward, keeping his eyes closed in slight fear.

The feeling of collision he was inherently expecting did not arrive and instead, he appeared outside the house.

Chapter 133 - The Twelve Types Of Elemental Qi

Lin Mu opened his eyes and looked around and saw the backyard of his house. He could see the wall of the courtyard in the distance and the wall of the house itself behind him. He touched his body and ensured that everything was fine before taking a breath of relief.

Although Lin Mu knew that he would be safe, he was still a little bit nervous about using this skill and passing through a wall. Since he had a hard time understanding senior Xukong's words, he didn't know how exactly it worked then, but now that he had actually done it, he understood it.

The feeling of passing through the wall was strange to him. It was as if he was moving through a cloud of mist, such that while he felt the presence itself, but there was no obstruction and he was easily able to move through it.

"That was strange, yet fine." Lin Mu muttered.

'I should try it out a few more times.' Lin Mu thought to himself.

He thus activated the skill once again and tried passing through other things. All of his attempts were successful, as he found out that there was nothing here that he couldn't pass through.

"If I use this while fighting, won't I be invulnerable as all hits will just pass through me?" Lin Mu spoke to himself.

"Not exactly." Xukong interrupted Lin Mu's thoughts.

"What do you mean senior?" Lin Mu questioned.

"While you are able to pass through all the objects here, it won't be possible for everything. For example, attacks that are done with the help of spirit qi skills or techniques will still harm you. These attacks won't be unaffected by the skill 'Phase'. And even in terms of objects, if there are defensive

formations or qi barriers placed on something you won't be able to pass through them either." Xukong answered.

Lin Mu thought for a few seconds after hearing senior Xukong's answer.

"So does this mean that anything that has qi in it will be able to affect me? If so, then is there any way that it can become effective against it as well?" Lin Mu questioned.

"In a broad sense, yes. Spirit qi is a force of nature that affects every object on an intrinsic level, thus you will still be affected. And of course, if your comprehension of spatial elemental qi reaches a high enough level you will be able to use it against qi attacks and defensive techniques as well." Xukong answered.

Lin Mu was lost in thought after hearing Xukong's words. The information was a lot for him, and it took him time to comprehend it. As he comprehended the information, more questions arose in his mind from them.

His mind worked and churned out more doubts and questions that it needed answers to. Lin Mu's inherent curiosity couldn't help but come out.

The thing that had interested Lin Mu's interest was the term that Senior Xukong had mentioned, 'Spatial elemental qi'. While he had heard about it before from his mouth, he was now interested to know more about it.

"Senior, what is this 'Spatial elemental qi' you were talking about?" Lin Mu questioned.

"Spatial elemental qi is one of the twelve types of elemental qi's in this universe," Xukong answered.

"Elemental qis? Do they have different types? But then what type have I been using all this time?" Lin Mu questioned.

"Yes, there are multiple types of Qi. While there are numerous types in the universe, those twelve are considered to be the main types, while all others are either combinations or derivations of those. The qi that you use does not have a type. It is the most basic attribute, less qi." Xukong answered.

"What are the types of qi then?" Lin Mu questioned further.

"The twelve different types of elemental qi are classified into three categories; the five mortal, the four heavenly, and the three primordial. The Five mortal elements are: Fire, wood, earth, metal, and water. The four heavenly are: Wind, lightning, light, and darkness. And finally, the three primordial ones are: Space, Time, and Chaos."

Lin Mu felt as if a new world was opened to him after hearing Senior Xukong's answer. This time he was able to understand the words completely and comprehended them.

"How do I increase my understanding of the spatial elemental qi then, senior?" Lin Mu questioned.

"That is a complex thing to answer. With the abilities that your ring has imparted to you, you should be able to understand and comprehend it, eventually. The more you use it and focus on its workings, the more you'll learn the intricacies and details of it."

There are other ways to learn as well, of course, but they are going to be difficult for you, especially because you want to comprehend more about the spatial elemental qi. If it were something from the five mortal or even the four heavenly elements, I would have been able to suggest you something, but for the three primordial elements, it is difficult.

My own comprehension of the spatial element comes from my bloodline, and even then it took me countless years to master it." Xukong explained.

"If you do want to increase your comprehension of them, you will need special techniques that allow you to do that, unique treasures, or perhaps just a stroke of luck," Xukong added at the end.

Lin Mu was once again lost in his thoughts. Xukong had expected him to ask another question, but surprisingly he didn't.

"I understand senior." Lin Mu simply said.

Xukong was a little surprised as he was ready to explain more to him further, but Lin Mu seemed to be satisfied for now.

'I need to wait for it. When I get the opportunity I'll take it, being impatient will only do me harm.' Lin Mu thought to himself.

Just as Lin Mu was about to return to his room, a voice called out to him.

"Sir Lin Mu!" The voice spoke.

Lin Mu walked to the gate of the courtyard and opened it. The voice that was calling out to him belonged to Hei Ping, who had been standing guard here for the past ten days. Lin Mu looked at his face and saw that he seemed to be slightly nervous.

"What is it?" Lin Mu questioned the man.

"I have a message. Leader Hei Wan has asked you to come to the safe house, the final person from the reinforcements has arrived." Hei Ping replied.

Lin Mu instantly understood what he meant by 'the final person'. It was none other than the core condensation realm expert that they had been waiting for all this time. Now finally they could carry on with their plan ahead.

"I'll set out right away." Lin Mu answered.

Lin Mu then returned to his room and changed his clothes, which he had been wearing for the past ten days. After doing that, he left the house and locked it before leaving for the safe house. This was the first time that Lin Mu was out of his house in ten days.

The first thing that he noticed was that the people in the neighborhood actually seemed to be calm and happy. There was no sort of hidden nervousness and unease that was in them during this time of the year.

"Seems like Hei Wan did well in allaying their fears." Lin Mu muttered to himself.

Lin Mu continued walking and was able to see some mercenaries around as well. This was a new change, as the town head had falsely accused them and shunned them before, which made them avoid coming into the town. Even the common residents had become suspicious of them because of the town head's words, but now that Hei Wan had taken control, it seems to have gone to normal.

Lin Mu reached the safe house after fifteen minutes and knocked on the door. The door was opened by the old woman that ran the shop. She looked at him for a moment before letting him inside. Lin Mu walked in and saw that unlike before, the shop was completely empty and there was no one sitting in the front room.

He followed the old woman to the other room and came to stand in front of the secret entrance. The old woman held out her hand to him, asking him for the identification badge. He gave it to her, and she opened the hidden entrance for him.

Two minutes later, Lin Mu was at the door of the safe house. He opened the door and instantly saw many people sitting in the room. They were dressed in different types of clothes, and some looked no different from commoners. There were also some that were dressed as mercenaries while others that were dressed as merchants.

Overall, it was a mixed crowd of people and Lin Mu felt as if he had walked into the middle of a busy market. but as soon as he walked in though, tens of weapons were pointed at him by these people.

Chapter 134 - Hei Yingjie

Lin Mu became shocked upon seeing so many weapons pointed at him at once. Immediately, his spirit sense spared out scanning each and every person in the room, and along with it, he started chanting the severing heart sutra.

The expression on his face became cold, and he stared at the people with sharp eyes. The people who had pulled out their weapons at Lin Mu felt as if cold water was poured on them. They had thought that an intruder had arrived, and they had pulled out their weapons in response. They had known that every person that was supposed to be here was already here, with the exception of two people: the leader and another ally.

They knew what their leader looked like, thus they knew that the person that walked in wasn't her. The only remaining option was the ally that they had been informed of, but they highly doubted that this was the same person. They had been told that their new ally was a peak stage qi refining realm cultivator, thus they were sure that it wasn't a teenager that Lin Mu looked like.

But when they saw the instantaneous response of Lin Mu and the feeling of being probed by the spirit sense, they knew that they had made a mistake. Additionally, upon that, a very cold and sharp feeling was washing over their bodies. They felt as if blades were pointed at their necks and would slash them apart the second they made any movement.

They could see that Lin Mu's lips were faintly moving, but they could not identify what he was saying. The chants of the severing heart sutra were very faint and could not be clearly heard by them. Even still, their effects were apparent as the three people that were in the front were affected, but the chants and their gazes became dull and they entered a daze.

It was at this moment that the door of the meeting room opened and a voice shouted out from there.

"WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU IMBECILES DOING! PUT DOWN THOSE WEAPONS RIGHT THIS INSTANT!" The voice ordered in a furious yet slightly startled tone.

Lin Mu and the rest heard the shout and turned to look at the source. The people had immediately reacted and lowered their weapons. Lin Mu saw that the person who was shouting was none other than Hei Bao, and there was another person following behind him, this person was Hei Shi.

Lin Mu unlike the others didn't lower his sword and kept it pointed at the people. He still didn't trust them, and even senior Xukong had asked him to maintain his stance and not back down. Thus heeding his advice Lin Mu stayed the same and stared at the people with the same cold gaze.

He was still chanting the severing heart of sutra and had maintained it. The people in front of him finally realized that the cold and sharp feeling they had felt was not fading, and instead now that they had lowered their weapons, the feeling had intensified.

They could not help but keep on staring at the figure of Lin Mu, who was standing in the door way. They now felt as if they were not staring at a person, but instead at a mountain; a mountain that was made of swords.

A peerless sword intent was emanating from the mountain and held their souls hostage. It was as if they were now stuck in a mire of countless blades that would mince them into oblivion.

It was now that Hei Bao walked forward and cupped his hands.

"Please forgive them, brother Lin Mu, for they've made a grave mistake. I assure you on my life that I will take care of this and that you are properly compensated." Hei Bao spoke in a restful tone.

He then turned to his companions and shouted. "What are you doing there still standing?! APOLOGIZE!"

Hei Bao's companions then stumbled and hurriedly cupped their hands before bowing and apologizing in unison.

"Please forgive us senior!"

Lin Mu had never expected this reaction. The most he had thought would happen was that they would just lower their weapons and return to normal. Lin Mu didn't know the effect that he was having on these people.

He had reached the late stage of the refining realm very recently, and his aura was still slightly unstable. This combined with the effect of the severing heart sutra increased the effect of his aura by multiple folds.

Seeing that the people in front of him were regretting their actions and even Hei Bao was apologizing, Lin Mu didn't take the offense to his heart. He stopped chanting the severing heart sutra and sheathed the short sword.

"It is fine, I accept." Lin Mu spoke in a calm tone.

~Huuu~

Simultaneous breaths of relief could be heard as the unsettled hearts of the people in the room calmed down.

~Sigh~

Seeing that the situation had turned normal, Hei Bao let out a sigh as he thanked the heavens for avoiding a big mistake.

Hei Bao looked at Lin Mu and spoke, "Brother Lin Mu, please come with me we will talk inside. Hei Shi, take care of them."

Lin Mu nodded and followed him to the meeting room. A few seconds later he was gone and the door to the meeting room was locked behind them. The people in the room stared at his back until he was gone and then looked at each other.

"Wha-what was that?" One of the persons that were dressed in the clothes of a commoner spoke, building up a little courage.

"Whatever it may be, just know that we have avoided a huge mistake. I doubt we will escape punishment though." Another person that was dressed as a mercenary spoke.

"But how should have we known that the ally who captain Hei Bao was speaking about would just be a boy." Spoke a man that was dressed like a merchant.

"Watch your tongue! You are lucky to just get a punishment. If the senior had not forgiven you, it wouldn't be unjust if some heads fell. People have been killed for far less than this before. Better know your place." Hei Shi scolded in a stern tone.

After hearing her words, everyone lowered their heads and went over some thoughts in their minds.

Lin Mu had just walked into the meeting room. His eyes wandered over to the metal plates that were hung on stands to the side and then onto the person that was sitting on the table that was at the other end of the room.

The person was facing away from Lin Mu, thus he could not see his face. There was a teapot, and some cups kept on the table, so it seemed that the person in question was drinking tea. Hei Bao walked forward and came to stand a little distance away from the man.

"I've brought brother Lin Mu, lieutenant." Hei Bao spoke.

The man who Hei Bao had called as lieutenant stood up from the chair and turned around. Lin Mu finally got a look at the man's face. The man looked to be in his late forties and had a calm look on his face. He had long black hair that was tied in a neat bun, the same way an aristocrat would do. He had a neat and trimmed mustache, but the rest of his face was clean shaven.

He was wearing dark green robes that matched his visage and made Lin Mu think that he was a gentleman. He had no ornaments or jewelry on his body, and neither did he have any weapons on him. Lin Mu felt that this was strange, as he had not expected a member of the Hei corps to ever be without a weapon.

The man cupped his hands, and a gentle smile appeared on his face, as he spoke.

"Greetings, brother Lin Mu. I've been looking forward to meeting you."

Lin Mu instantly felt better upon seeing his mannerisms and demeanor. This only made him feel as if the person in front of him was an aristocrat, or perhaps even a noble.

"Greetings, it is nice to meet you." Lin Mu responded in a respectful tone as well.

The man then gestured with his hand towards a chair before speaking, "Come sit, I just made some fresh tea."

Lin Mu took up on his invitation and pulled the chair opposite to him. Hei Bao did the same, and both of them sat down.

"My name is Hei Yingjie and I am one of the lieutenants of the Hei corps working under my lord." He introduced himself.

Hei Yingjie then placed a cup in front of Lin Mu and poured him some tea as the etiquette dictated.

"Please," he gestured.

Lin Mu thus picked up the cup and took a small sip. But when he did, he was surprised as a very faint trace of qi was absorbed by his body.

Chapter 135 - The Reward Arrives

Lin Mu had not expected that he would be getting to taste such an exquisite tea today. More so, it was a tea that was infused with spirit qi. He could only imagine such a luxury in the past, but now here he was experiencing it first hand.

~Haa~

Lin Mu let out a breath of satisfaction as he opened his eyes. He looked at the faint green tea in his cup and took another sip, this time finishing the cup in one go. Another wisp of gentle spirit qi was absorbed by his body and entered his dantian.

This was strange to him as whenever he had consumed food rich in spirit qi, he had to consciously assimilate it. If he did not, it won't be properly absorbed or would just dissipate. He was surprised but this effect of the tea.

Hei Yingjie witnessed every change of expression on Lin Mu's face and could get a grasp on what he was thinking.

"Ah, brother Lin Mu's likes my tea, it seems." Hei Yingjie spoke.

Lin Mu looked at him and nodded.

"Yes, I do. It is indeed quite exquisite." Lin Mu replied.

"As it should be. This is the Frost leaf jasmine tea, and it is a native specialty of the snowy mountains of the Black Dawn kingdom. Even the cultivation sects have a hard time procuring this, I was lucky enough to encounter a tree on my journeys, thus was able to acquire it." Hei Yingjie explained.

Lin Mu was rather surprised with this revelation and now wondered about the abilities of the man in front of him.

"Then I thank you for your hospitality and for giving me this opportunity." Lin Mu spoke respectfully.

"Hahaha, brother Lin Mu you don't have to stand in formality. This is nothing worth compared to your friendship." Hei Yingjie spoke in a flattering tone.

Lin Mu was now starting to feel strange. The man's words and mannerisms with him seemed to be a little too overtly flattering for him. It seemed as if he wanted to become close to him at all costs.

"It is not that he wants to establish a friendly relation with you, but rather that he has to. Your earlier demeanor and acts until now have now helped you establish a dominant presence." Xukong suddenly spoke.

Lin Mu didn't respond to senior Xukong's statement, but instead just nodded. Hei Yingjie thought Lin Mu was nodding to him, thus he let out another laugh, while in reality, Lin Mu had nodded in response to senior Xukong.

"Now then, I hope you didn't face any difficulties these past days." Hei Yingjie spoke, wanting to continue the conversation.

"Ah, no. None in particular." Lin Mu answered.

"Oh, is that so? I thought I heard some commotion earlier outside. What was that about Hei Bao?" Hei Yingjie spoke and then turned to Hei Bao.

Hei Bao felt cold sweat appearing on his back as soon as he heard Hei Yingjie's question.

"Our companions made a mistake and pulled out their weapons at brother Lin Mu when he arrived." Hei Bao honestly answered.

"Did they? Hmm, what should we do about this? What do you bother Lin Mu?" Hei Yingjie asked with the same gentle smile on his face.

"I don't mind it. I already forgave them." Lin Mu answered, not wanting to draw out the matter.

Hei Yingjie stoked the tea cup in his hands a couple of times before speaking.

"If brother Lin Mu deems it, let it be. But still, make sure they know of brother Lin Mu's generousness." Hei Yingjie spoke.

Hei Bao hurriedly nodded in response to Hei Yingjie's words.

"As you command, lieutenant." Hei Bao replied before leaving the room.

After leaving the room, Hei Bao wiped the sweating off his forehead. He knew his subordinates had just escaped a dangerous situation.

'If it were not for brother Lin Mu, heads would have rolled today. Who gave them the intel about him, anyway? Did they not describe his appearance?' Hei Bao thought.

Back in the meeting room, Hei Yingjie had just poured Lin Mu another cup of tea, which Lin Mu gladly accepted, unaware of the thoughts of Hei Bao and how he had just spare the lives of multiple people.

"Brother Lin Mu, I believe you requested certain weapons?" Hei Yingjie questioned.

"Yes, I did. Hei Wan wanted to give me a reward." Lin Mu answered.

"Of course, brother Lin Mu definitely deserves a reward for all the work he has done. You revealed a conspiracy which was hidden for heavens know how long." Hei Yingjie replied.

"So what about it?" Lin Mu further asked.

"Well, the shipment just arrived today and is waiting for you. Hei Wan should be here soon, she will take us to it." Hei Yingjie spoke with a light chuckle.

"Where is she right now? Is she at the town center?" Lin Mu asked.

"Yes she is, she just has some final adjustments that needed to be done before we start our plan." Hei Yingjie replied.

Lin Mu nodded at this reply and just continued to drink the tea. He had just finished another cup of tea when the door of the meeting room opened.

"Forgive me, I've been a little late." Hei Wan spoke upon entering.

Lin Mu and Hei Yingjie turned to look at her and then spoke in unison, "It is fine."

Hei Wan approached the table and stood in front of them.

"I believe we can leave now. Everything is set and done." Hei Wan spoke.

"Good. We will take brother Lin Mu to get his reward first and then we will continue on to the briefing." Hei Yingjie replied while nodding.

"Ah, we won't have to go out for the reward. I already had it put in the storage room." Hei Wan spoke.

"That's better, lets get to it right away." Hei Yingjie spoke as he stood up.

Lin Mu stood up along with him, and Hei Wan guided them to the storage room. This was a different storage room than the one Lin Mu had been to before and was much smaller. It was just past the room where he had rested before.

Hei Wan opened the locked door and let them inside. Hei Yingjie and Lin Mu walked in to see large boxes of weapons kept there. Lin Mu was a little stunned, even though he knew about the number of weapons he had ordered.

'Finally, I can continue practicing the Thousand blade armament scripture.' Lin Mu thought.

"Go on, check them." Hei Yingjie spoke with a smile.

Lin Mu nodded and proceeded ahead. There were around ten large boxes kept in the room, which had individually packed weapons kept in them. Lin Mu opened the first box, and the first thing that came in front of his eyes was a pair of slim swords.

They were sheathed, yet one could still see that they were thin. Lin Mu picked them up and unsheathed them. A pale, gleaming blade appeared in his vision as he glanced over its craftsmanship. He took a look around the room and made sure that there was enough space.

Hei Yingjie and Hei Wan understood this immediately and took a few steps back to give him more space. Seeing that they were accepting of this, Lin Mu held the sword and took a breath as he closed his eyes. He then slashed out in front of him as a faint humming sound was heard.

Even though there was nothing to be cut, the illusion of a cut still appeared in the air. What Lin Mu had just done was use his understanding of the Thousand armament blade scripture to use the slim sword. While he had never used them before, he had been improving upon his understanding for the past month, thus only needed the new slim sword to progress it.

His demonstration only proved to him that the reason he had reached a bottleneck in his practice was due to the lack of the weapons and not because of his own effort. Feeling excited by this, he checked the other weapons in the box and tested out the ones that looked interesting to him.

While most of the weapons in his list were common ones, there were still some that had abstract designs and were considered to be unorthodox. One of such weapons was a long spear that had a scythe like blade attached to it at the base of its point.

Such types of weapons were rather unfamiliar to Lin Mu, thus he didn't try them out here. He had decided that he would check them all out later. In fact, he couldn't wait for night to come so that he could practice with them.

Having decided on it, Lin Mu quickly started storing all of the weapons in his ring one by one. Although the speed of putting them in the ring was quick, it still took Lin Mu over fifteen minutes to store them all.

In total, there were three hundred and seventeen weapons.

But while he was storing the weapons, the expressions of Hei Wan and Hei Yingjie were getting more and more serious. Hei Yingjie gulped and then turned to Hei Wan.

"This... this is way beyond what we thought." He whispered.

Hei Wan was now feeling a little nervous hearing the tone of her lieutenant. While he was stronger than her, she was still their leader because of her skills. She had faith in her subordinates and knew that they wouldn't act like this unless it was dead serious, especially her lieutenants.

"What do you mean?" She questioned in a low voice, making sure to glance over to Lin Mu and ensure that he was not paying attention.

Chapter 136 - Hei Yingjie's Apprehension

Hei Yingjie took a deep breath and forcefully calmed down his expression. He then turned to look at Lin Mu, who had just opened the last box of weapons, and then back to Hei Wan.

"We should talk later, it is not the appropriate time. Just know this that we may have to alter our plans again, so be ready for it." Hei Yingjie replied.

Hei Wan didn't speak anything, but just simply nodded in response. She trusted her lieutenant's judgment and was willing to wait for his explanation. It was at this moment that Lin Mu finished putting the last weapon in his ring.

A satisfied and expression appeared on Lin Mu's face as he reveled in the fact that he could now continue his practice. He walked to Hei Wan and Hei Yingjie to discuss the plan with them. He was wondering what they had decided and wanted to see their approach.

"What do we do next?" Lin Mu questioned.

Hei Yingjie glanced at Hei Wan for a moment, which she understood and let him speak.

"I had originally thought that we would be going someplace else to get brother Lin Mu's reward, but now that it is already here, it's no longer necessary. The other members of the Hei corps have already been briefed, so we only have a few minor adjustments to make.

Brother Lin Mu, you can head back to your house for now, it will take us some time to prepare everyone for the mission. Some people will be staying here to make sure that the culprits do not do anything in the town. While the others including me will be traveling to the Northern forest to continue our investigations there." Hei Yingjie explained.

"So you don't need me right now?" Lin Mu confirmed one more time.

"No, you can head on and prepare yourself as well. You can get familiar with the new weapons till then." Hei Wan suggested.

Lin Mu's eyes lit up, as he understood that they were just giving him time to prepare himself.

"Ah well, thank you. I'll head off then." Lin Mu replied.

He then left the room and returned to the front room of the safe house. This time, the people there all suddenly stood up in ceremony and greeted him.

"Greetings senior, Lin Mu." They all spoke in unison.

Lin Mu didn't know how to respond, thus he just awkwardly nodded his head and left the safe house. A few minutes later he had left the shop and was on his way back to his house.

Back at the safe house, Hei Wan, Hei Bao, and Hei Yingjie were in the meeting room. A serious expression was on Hei Yingjie's face, and Hei Wan and Hei Bao looked nervous. Hei Bao didn't know what the matter was, thus was feeling even more nervous.

Hei Yingjie's previous orders had already put him on the edge. Hei Wan looked at Hei Yingjie and waited for him to speak. Hei Yingjie took a deep breath before opening his eyes and looking at the two people.

"On my way to the Northern Town, I took a brief halt at Wu Lim city to pay my respects to the lord." Hei Yingjie spoke.

"I know that." Hei Wan spoke as she nodded in acknowledgment.

"But that was not the only reason why I had gone there. Our Lord had sent me an extra message to come meet with him." Hei Yingjie added.

A panicked expression appeared on Hei Wan's face as she tried to think of any reason on why her lord had not informed her first. Hei Yingjie noticed this and turned to her.

"It is not what you think. He just had some apprehensions about our new ally. Thus he wanted to discuss some things with me. Our Lord wanted me to determine the capabilities of Lin Mu without alerting him or being too overt with it." Hei Yingjie spoke.

"Is that why he approved the shipment of weapons so quickly?" Hei Bao realized.

Hei Yingjie nodded as he spoke.

"Yes, he had seen the reports about Lin Mu having a High-grade spatial treasure, thus devised this method to determine it. And from what I witnessed a few minutes ago, it is way beyond what our lord thought."

"What do you mean? Was there a problem with Lin Mu's spatial treasure?" Hei Wan questioned as she started to link the strings together.

"Yes. We know that the high grade spatial treasures have a great capacity to store items. But the number of weapons Lin Mu just stored would still be impossible to do. You may have not seen a true high grade spatial treasure before but I have. It is not even close to what Lin Mu has." Hei Yingjie answered.

"You mean his spatial treasure is something more than that?" Hei Wan questioned with apprehension.

"It is not that simple. You see, when a person uses a spatial treasure, some spatial energy fluctuations appear. While they are faint, they are still detectable by spirit sense if you are in the core condensation realm. For cultivators in the Nascent soul stage, it is even more easier to detect them.

But when Lin Mu used his spatial treasure, there were no such spatial fluctuations that I could detect. There are only a few methods that can be used to hide such fluctuations. One is that a secondary concealing treasure was used, but for it to hide a high grade spatial treasures fluctuations would require that it is of the same grade, which is incredibly difficult to find even in the top sects.

The second one would be that a Dao shell realm expert would personally restrict the fluctuations using his spirit sense. But here's the problem, the capacity of Lin Mu's spatial treasure is more than at least three high grade spatial treasures combined. Even a Dao shell realm expert would only be able to restrict the fluctuations of a single high grade spatial treasure, any more and the restriction won't be stable enough." Hei Yingjie explained.

Cold sweat had appeared on the bodies of both Hei Wan and Hei Bao by this time. The words of Hei Yingjie had been extremely shocking to them and were completely beyond what they had known about.

"Then this means..." Hei Wan spoke and trailed off.

"Yes, either of those situations are deeply serious. If it's the first, then there's no doubt that he's a disciple of a top sect. But if it's the second then it's even more serious. If he has more than one high grade spatial treasures, as we've seen, then it means that he has at least three Dao shell realm cultivators backing him. Or worse, a Dao treading realm cultivator." Hei Yingjie answered.

"A Dao treading realm, cultivator?" Hei Bao asked with confusion.

It was Hei Wan who answered this time instead of Hei Yingjie.

"Dao treading realm is the next realm after the Dao shell realm." She spoke.

"That... that's a realm beyond our understanding. Which sects even have them?" Hei Bao asked while stuttering.

~Sigh~

"Only the top ten cultivation sects have Dao treading realm experts. And they are either the supreme elders, sect patriarchs, or the ancestors themselves. This means that if Lin Mu has their backing, then he's most likely their personal disciple." Hei Wan explained.

~Gulp~

"Are you sure we should even be involving him, then? It is incredibly risky, I mean if anything happens to him, won't they just come for our lives." Hei Bao asked after gulping.

"The lord did think of that, but we are confused as his past history doesn't match up. From all that we've gathered, Lin Mu was just a common teenager and had no connection to any of the sects, not to mention top cultivation sects." Hei Wan replied.

"No, there is something else you're forgetting." Hei Yingjie interrupted.

"What?" Both Hei Wan and Hei Bao asked in unison.

"The day of the fallen." Hei Yingjie answered in a grim voice.

Both of their eyes went wide as they remembered the incident that happened some week ago. Cultivators all around in the Wu Lim city and its surroundings had fallen unconscious.

"What could the relation be between Lin Mu and the day of the fallen though?" Hei Bao questioned.

"I was not here to experience the Day of the fallen, but the lord had some assumptions and described it to me. I was able to identify it and deduced that it was actually caused by an extremely intense sword intent. But for someone to have such a peerless intent would mean that they would be well known.

I checked the records and there is no such cultivator in any of the sects. This led me to believe that it was hidden expert, perhaps. Though the problem still stands, we don't know their cultivation and unless we are able to determine it, it's going to be difficult for us to know how to proceed." Hei Yingjie explained.

"So what do we do know?" Hei Bao asked, feeling tired.

~Sigh~

"We wait."

Chapter 137 - Preparations - I

Lin Mu had just reached his house and was entering his room, unaware of the conversation that had just happened between Hei Yingjie, Hei Wan, and Hei Bao.

He walked up to his bed and sat down on it cross-legged. What Lin Mu now wanted to do was to refine his spirit sense further. He had been thinking about it and realized that it was one of the flaws that he had that he needed to improve.

While Spirit sense overall was an important ability of his during a battle, he had also understood that it was equally important for using it with his skills. Currently, while he could teleport with the second skill 'Blink' forward for up to ten meters, he could only teleport backwards for up to seven meters as that was the maximum range of his spirit sense.

Lin Mu had gotten another realization when he used his newly acquired, third skill 'Phase'. He realized that he actually couldn't see anything when he was using the skill and moving through an object. The only way he could gain any semblance of perception was with the help of spirit sense.

Then came the second problem with it. Lin Mu's spirit sense could not penetrate effectively much farther into solid objects. Depending on its density and thickness of the object, the range of Lin Mu's spirit sense could be limited to about half or even less than half of his actual range.

Thus, if Lin Mu wanted to utilize the full potential of his new skill, he would have to refine his spirit sense and ensure that its range was as far as possible.

Lin Mu was chanting the severing heart sutra and focusing on the inner space of his dantian. He could see the space that was nearly completely filled with spirit qi wisps. If one were to look at it from far, they would think that it was a sea of clouds formed out of spirit qi wisps.

Usually, spirit qi wisps were transparent or rather close to translucent. But here due to their sheer quantity they now appeared white and looked no different from clouds in the sky. Lin Mu focused deeper, and at the very bottom of this sea of clouds, there was a single drop floating.

This single drop was the very first drop of liquefied spirit qi that Lin Mu had refined when he broke through to the late stage of the qi refining realm. If Lin Mu wanted to reach the next stage, he would have to refine more drops of spirit qi and fill his dantian up to half of its maximum capacity.

As soon as it exceeded more than half of its capacity, Lin Mu have been said to have reached the peak stage of the qi refining realm.

~Sigh~

"So am I supposed to refine my spirit sense with my spirit qi wisps or with the spirit qi drop now, senior?" Lin Mu questioned senior Xukong in his mind.

"You can continue refining it the same way you have been until now. Do not touch that spirit qi drop for now and make sure that you never use it unless it is a dire situation. Because if you do and if it's the final drop of the liquid spirit qi remaining in your dantian, then you will regress back into the mid-stage of the qi refining realm." Xukong answered.

"I should refine more spirit qi drops then, shouldn't I?" Lin Mu asked.

"Yes you should, of course. But since it's your first time, it will take you some time. Better to further refine your spirit sense first." Xukong suggested.

"Yes, Senior." Lin Mu inwardly nodded in response.

He then started his process of refining the spirit sense. He drew out a single wisp of spirit qi from his dantian and into his meridians. From his meridians, he controlled that wisp to move towards the surface of his body and then let it exit it.

The invisible wisp of spirit qi was now floating outside of Lin Mu's body. Lin Mu now directed his spirit sense tendril and tried to link it with it. The spirit qi wisp traveled from the very start of the tendril to the other end, but just as it was about to reach the very tip, the spirit sense tendril destabilized and dissipated.

~Huu~

Lin Mu let out a breath as he refocused his attention. This was a normal part of refining one's spirit sense and was something every cultivator would go through. Once the spirit sense tendril was dissipated, he would have to completely refine it from the start once again.

But unlike before, the speed of refinement would be faster this time. The more times that Lin Mu repeated this, the more he improved and his speed of refinement increased. Reforming the spirit sense after dissipation up to its previous length was much easier in the subsequent attempts.

Lin Mu repeated this process over and over again. Sometimes he would be successful in increasing the length of his spirit sense by a small amount and other times he would fail and the spirit sense tendril would dissipate.

Four hours passed by and Lin Mu had increased the length of his spirit sense by half a meter. But in exchange, his spirit qi stores were depleted by half. Lin Mu decided to take a break and restore his depleted spirit qi stores.

~Rumble~

Just as he was about to start his cultivation session, he heard his stomach rumble.

'Guess I'll eat first.' Lin Mu thought as he stood up from the bed.

He walked to the kitchen and prepared some of the spirit meat that was stored in his ring. It was now that he realized that he was soon going to run out of it. He took out all of it and estimated that it was enough for two more meals.

"Just in time, too. It's good that I'm going out to the Northern forest with the Hei Corps tomorrow, anyway. I'll take this opportunity to hunt some spirit beasts while I'm out there." Lin Mu spoke to himself.

Fifteen minutes later, his food was ready to eat. He finished the meal and returned to his room to assimilate the vital energy and spirit qi.

On the tallest peak of the sky precepts sect, within a golden palace, a white-robed man was sitting upon a throne. His eyes were closed, and he had his chin resting on his hand. If one was to look at this scene at this moment, they would think that what they were looking at was a painting.

The man had his hair tied up with an elegant looking silver hairpin and had a short and well-groomed beard. With a serene aura surrounding him, he let out faint breaths. The breaths were silent, yet if one were to focus on them, one would realize that they were harmonized.

It was as if they corresponded with the nomological laws of heaven and earth themselves.

The door of the great hall opened, and in walked a black robed elder. This black robed elder had faint gold etchings on the sleeves of his hand and had long white hair along with a similarly long beard. He was old, yet did not have a single wrinkle on his face.

This old black robed elder was none other than Head elder Han.

He came to stand in front of the white robed man at a distance of two meters and cupped his hands in a salute. He did not speak anything and simply stayed silent for over thirty minutes. It was as if he did not dare disturb the serene scene that was in front of him.

Another half an hour period passed by when finally the white robed man's lips moved.

"What do you have to report Head elder Han?" The white robed man questioned.

"Greetings patriarch, it seems you have progressed in your comprehension. Your talent is indeed impeccable and peerless amongst the billions of beings of this world." Head elder Han flattered him in ceremony.

"Spare me the formalities Head Elder Han, you know that they don't matter to me. Now... tell me what you are here for." The patriarch of the sky precepts sect spoke without opening his eyes.

"Patriarch, today I am here to report about our progress in the investigation and also the recent findings." Head elder Han replied.

"Go ahead." The patriarch spoke.

"After the ascension of the hidden expert, we continued our investigations into it. While we are still unable to gain any idea about the identity of the hidden expert, we did find out something else." Head elder Han spoke and took a pause.

"We found out that another incident happened in one of the counties of the Shuang Qian kingdom of the Northern lands. At this moment we do not know if it is related to the hidden expert, but it seemed too much of a coincidence for it to not be related to it." Head elder Han continued.

"Oh? What kind of incident was this that it could even be compared to the ascension of the hidden expert? And how was it that we did not detect this when it happened?" The patriarch questioned.

"Unlike the ascension of the hidden expert, there were no major spatial disturbances anywhere in the empire that happened during that period. Thus we were unable to detect it. And also, the condition of the Start catching peak is still not optimum. The new disciples are still being trained and will take some time to gain the necessary skills." Head elder Han spoke and let the patriarch ponder on it for a bit.

"The incident, I'm afraid, was caused by another hidden expert and this time it was the outburst of a peerless sword intent, strong enough to knock out nearly all cultivators in the entire county."

Upon hearing these words, the patriarch's eyes opened.

Chapter 138 - Preparations - II

~Huu~

Lin Mu opened his eyes and let out a breath. He had been refining his spirit sense for the entire day and now it was nighttime. He extended his spirit sense and saw that it had now reached a maximum range of eight meters.

In this entire day, Lin Mu was able to increase its range by one whole meter. He also failed multiple times, which caused him to lose a certain amount of spirit qi. But he didn't falter and was able to replenish it rather fast.

Now that he had reached the late stage of the qi refining realm, Lin Mu's speed of replenishing his spirit qi had increased two-fold. Previously it would take him over four hours to replenish the entirety of his dantian. But now it only took him two hours to do the same.

Feeling satisfied and a little happy, Lin Mu stood up and walked to the window. He gazed at the sky outside and saw the waxing moon in the sky that was close to half its maximum size. Looking at the position of the moon, Lin Mu determined that the time right now was probably close to midnight.

"Hmm, I should rest now, this was enough for today. I still have to resume my practice with the new weapons in the Sleepscape." Lin Mu muttered. to himself.

He thus returned to his bed and sat down. Just as he was about to lay his head on the pillow, he suddenly remembered something.

"Wait, don't I have that bolster I got? I should use it, it's surprisingly better than this pillow." Lin Mu spoke to himself.

He then withdrew the white bolster from his ring and placed it down on the bed. He touched it and compared it with the pillow that was already there.

'The bolster is indeed much better.' Lin Mu thought.

He pushed the other pillow aside and laid his head down on the bolster to sleep. Lin Mu's choice trend out to be for the better, since it didn't even take him a minute to fall asleep. His consciousness faded for a moment and then appeared in the Sleepscape.

Lin Mu opened his eyes and saw that he was back in front of the spirit apple tree. He looked at it and saw that it had five more apples growing on it.

"Oh? Did the number increase again?" Lin Mu spoke, feeling a little surprised.

He walked forward and saw that out of five of the apples, two were completely ripened and the other three were still raw. He plucked the two ripe ones and left the others hanging on the branch.

"Seems like their number increases by one each time you progress in your realm." Xukong's voice came from behind Lin Mu.

Lin Mu turned around in shock as he saw him floating behind him.

"What? How did you come out senior?" Lin Mu questioned.

"It looks like your increase in cultivation is also increasing the development level of the Sleepscape. It actually allowed me to enter on my own here." Xukong answered.

"Oh, that will be convenient. But wait, can you come here when I'm awake?" Lin Mu questioned again.

"No, I don't think so. The basic requirement is still that you should be here for me to access it." Xukong answered.

Lin Mu nodded in response to senior Xukong's words and began his training with the new weapons. He took out the booklet of the Thousand armament blade Scripture and glossed over it once again before starting his practice.

He withdrew the first weapon, which was a pair of slim swords. The swords were identical in shape and size and looked quite light. Lin Mu held each of them in his hands and executed the moves that were mentioned in the manual.

Lin Mu practiced for around four hours, after which Senior Xukong interrupted him.

"It is time for your Dao script lessons," Xukong spoke.

"Ah yes, senior." Lin Mu replied hurriedly.

He was too engrossed in his training and had completely forgotten about them. Lin Mu had already learned enough of the characters so that he could read the nameless technique that was created by the lost immortal.

This lesson was the last one that he needed in order to be clear about the contents of the technique. An hour later Lin Mu was finally done and took a breath of relief.

"You should be able to read the wooden slip now," Xukong spoke in a content tone.

"Yes senior, I've been waiting for it too." Lin Mu replied.

He then took out the wooden slip from the ring and opened it to take a look. The twenty-five individual wooden strips glowed for a moment before the characters appeared on it. Unlike before, when Lin Mu was unable to read anything, this time he could clearly understand the words.

While the entire technique was contained within those twenty-five strips, the sheer amount of information condensed within it was astonishing. With each character of Dao script that Lin Mu read, he was able to devise multiple meanings and could find multiple derivations.

By combining and utilizing these characters in a complex manner, one could explain a lot of information in a small space. The more Lin Mu read, the more his expression changed. Sometimes it was confused, and sometimes it was enlightened.

Another hour passed by and Lin Mu had finally finished reading the entire technique. A perplexed expression now dressed his face as he looked to be bothered and troubled. Xukong saw this and wondered what had happened.

"What's the problem? Were you unable to understand something?" Xukong questioned.

Lin Mu gently shook his head in response and thought for a moment before speaking.

"It's not that senior. I understand the technique in its entirety, but it doesn't seem to be of much use to me."

"Oh, is that so? What does the technique describe, though?" Xukong asked.

"The technique mentions a special method that allows one to eat as much as they want." Lin Mu answered.

Now even Xukong was feeling perplexed upon hearing Lin Mu's words. While he had heard about the lost immortal's story and his objective behind making the technique, what Lin Mu had just said didn't seem fully right.

"Is that all it describes?" Xukong asked, wanting to gain a better understanding.

"No, there are a few bits of information there that bother me. There are also some warnings on it." Lin Mu replied.

"And what are they?" Xukong spoke.

"The warning states that since it is an incomplete technique and hasn't been cultivated ever before, the exact effects of it will be unknown. The technique says that it was made to ensure that its user would never starve, but it doesn't say how it will exactly do that, except for that fact that it will allow me to eat a lot more." Lin Mu explained.

After hearing Lin Mu's explanation, Xukong could understand his apprehension a bit more. Xukong knew about the risks and dangers of cultivating an incomplete or an unknown technique. He knew that whenever a new cultivation technique was made, it had to go through rigorous testing and trials.

The creator of the technique would usually spend many years just testing out the aspects of the technique before even starting to cultivate it. Even when a technique had been successfully created, there were still some hidden risks that wouldn't present themselves easily.

Especially for a technique like this whose creator was dead and never had the chance to test it, the risks could be unbearable.

"I understand you. There are indeed a lot of risks in practicing such a technique, especially when even its creator put warnings in its description." Xukong spoke.

Lin Mu nodded in response and wondered what he should do now.

"Still, whether you want to cultivate this technique or not, I'll leave this up to you. The final decision is yours to make." Xukong added after thinking for a bit.

After hearing senior Xukong's words, Lin Mu felt a little content.

"You're right, senior. I've decided that I won't cultivate this technique right now. I will first learn more about it and gain more understanding of it. The lost immortal left his life's experiences in the wooden slip as well. I think I will definitely find some insights in there, that will help me judge and make the right decision." Lin Mu replied.

"Yes, you should check the memoirs that are recorded in the wooden slip." Xukong agreed.

Lin Mu nodded and went to sit against the spirit apple tree. He opened the wooden slip again, but this time flipped over to the other side. The wooden slip faintly glowed once again, and some new words appeared on the strips.

The wooden slip had the nameless technique recorded on one of its sides and the memoirs on the other side. Lin Mu took a deep breath before he started reading the memoirs.

The first part of the memoirs described the early life of the lost immortal. This was back when he was a mortal child. He was an orphan and didn't know who his parents were. Ever since he could remember, the lost immortal knew that he had always lived at an orphanage.

The orphanage he lived at was located in a rundown building that was part of the slums. The orphanage was actually one of the many orphanages of the kingdom that the lost immortal had been born in and was located in the very capital of that kingdom.

The divide between people was great and one could easily see this. The slums were poor and dirty, while the main city was well developed and luxurious.

Chapter 139 - The Lost Immortal's Memoir - I

The Lost immortal lived in the orphanage till he was of eight years of age. At that time, the orphanage was shut down and nearly all the children living there were left with no choice but to leave. Only the very young children were able to get transferred to other orphanages.

The lost immortal was one of the unfortunate ones that had to leave the orphanage. He didn't know what to do, thus he just begged on the streets. Years went by and when he was thirteen years of age, he accidentally offended one of the officials of the kingdom when he came in front of his carriage.

He was punished with imprisonment and was beaten up harshly. His body was already weak and malnourished thus it was with great fortune or perhaps misfortune that he survived it. While in the prison, he was forced to work as a slave and did various jobs and tasks.

One of the most dangerous tasks was the task of mining. Hundreds of prisoners would die every month, and it was nearly considered as a death sentence. The lost immortal was lucky to not get selected for the job since he was too weak and scrawny to do it.

Even in the prison, he would have to bear the beatings of the guards and the other prisoners. He didn't fight back and just bore with it. He had seen what happened to others that fought back and anyway he was not strong enough to resist.

More years passed by and the lost immortal was now seventeen. By now he had grown a lot and had surprisingly built up some muscle. Ironically, he was getting better food in the prison than he did when he was a beggar or back when he was at the orphanage.

But with his better condition, the lost immortal came to the notice of the guards and was selected for the mining job. He had nearly given up hope at that time and knew that this would be the end for him. Still unable to resist, he was forced to do it.

A month later he was shifted to the mines and started working there. The conditions were worse than the prison there, and he had a tough time at the start. He would get small injuries such as cuts and scrapes every day.

In just his first week, he had witnessed around a hundred prisoners die. Watching the process over and over had made him numb, and he became closer to a doll than a person. Eventually, a year passed by and there came a day when a large collapse had happened in the mine.

Something had destabilized the ceiling, and rocks had started falling from the top. All the prisoners ran towards the surface to escape their imminent death and pushed others in the process. The lost immortal was lucky enough to reach the halfway point when he suddenly saw a large boulder shifting from the walls of the tunnel.

He saw that the boulder was about to hit an old man. He didn't know what happened to him, but he lunged forward and pushed the old man aside, saving his life in the process. But unfortunately for the lost immortal, his own leg got crushed under the large boulder.

He was pinned and screamed in pain. The tunnels were still collapsing, so no one paid any attention to him and neither tried to save him. All except the old man that he had saved. The old man looked to be eighty years old and was bald.

Wrinkles covered his face and body, which was only accentuated due to his thin stick-like body. The old man was at first stunned and couldn't move after being pushed down to the ground. But a little time later, when the nearby people had moved away and the sounds of shouts had calmed down, he came to his sense.

The old man couldn't believe that someone would be willing to save his dog of a life in a place like this. And the person that saved him was even a young man that perhaps had some life ahead of him. Unable to bear the gratitude that was rising within his heart, the old man tried to pull out the lost immortal from under the rock.

But it took him far longer as the lost immortal kept screaming in pain and the old man was not strong enough either. The collapsing tunnel had finally stopped shaking, and the rocks had stopped falling. At the very last moment, by a stroke of luck, another falling rock hit the boulder that was pinning the lost immortal and set him free.

The old man pulled him out and dragged him to the surface after a rough two hours. By now, the lost immortal had screamed his throat hoarse and had passed out unconscious. The overseers of the mine didn't pay any heed to the injured and dead prisoners. For them, they were just expendable slaves.

Still, because the lost immortal was injured, he couldn't work and was most likely crippled for the rest of the life.

The old man who he had saved took care of him in this period and gave him food. In a surprise to him, the old man underwent a complete change in the coming few days.

The old man no longer looked as haggard and even the wrinkles on his face reduced. The other prisoners paid no attention, so these changes went unnoticed for everyone except for the lost immortal. Every day

the old man would change the bandages that he had on his leg and would give him a strange kind of treatment.

It seemed like a massage, yet different. The old man would tap on certain places on his leg and the pain that he had would decrease. During this period, the lost immortal never talked and even the old man didn't say anything.

A few months passed by and finally, the lost immortal's leg was completely healed. He was shocked, as he knew that this should have been impossible. The only people that could heal from injuries were the cultivators, and he knew for sure that he wasn't one.

Finally, one day he made up his mind and spoke. He asked the old man if he was a cultivator and received the answer that he indeed was. Shock filled his body as he would have never expected this. To him, cultivators were people beyond his understanding and were people that belonged to the upper echelon of the world.

He couldn't understand why a cultivator would be here as a prisoner. A cultivator would have been strong enough to escape the prison, anyway. The old man then told him of his story and how he was crippled and thrown in the prison.

He was betrayed by his fellow disciples of the sect and was left to rot here. His fellow disciples then bribed the officials of this kingdom to put him in the prison. Unable to fully get over the betrayal, the old man lost his will and simply slaved over the years at the mine.

He stayed the same and had lost all hope in life similar to the Lost Immortal until he saved him. He thought that he now finally had a purpose in life again and which was to ensure that his savior was saved.

It was this drive that allowed him to regain his talent as he found out that he was able to cultivate again. The injuries that had been restricting him had actually healed over the years, and it was only his own mental demons that had been restricting his cultivation.

Released from his restriction, the old man had sworn to return and also help his savior. The old man finally asked the lost immortal a question he would have never expected. It was an opportunity he would have never imagined in a hundred years.

The old man asked him if he would want to become a cultivator. To this question, the lost immortal didn't even spend a second waiting as he answered 'YES' right away.

And so the lost immortal's journey began.

~Sigh~

Lin Mu let out a sigh as he finished reading the first entry that was recorded in the wooden slip.

"Compared to the lost immortal, my struggles are barely worth considering." Lin Mu spoke to himself in a pitying tone.

Xukong was a little surprised upon seeing the change in Lin Mu's tone, but knew that he had probably read something that had moved him.

"So, what did you learn?" Xukong questioned.

Lin Mu then explained what he had learned to Senior Xukong, who too went silent after hearing it all.

"You do not need to compare yourself with the lost immortal or even anyone else. Your fate is yours to navigate through. The karma that you will sow will be yours to reap and deal with. If you go on this path, you will only lose yourself." Xukong spoke in a sagely tone after thinking for a minute.

After hearing his words, Lin Mu pondered on them for a bit before speaking.

"Yes senior."

"You can read the records as much as you want, but ensure that you simply learn from them and do not think that everything will be similar for you. The workings of fate are hidden by the will of the heavens and are not easy to pry into.

I have heard of such legacy records and memoirs before that have been left by cultivators before. Not all of their inheritors were fortunate enough, as they would often be mistaken with them and overestimate their own knowledge and wisdom.

While the guidance provided in them is priceless, it will still be detrimental for you if you don't utilize them properly." Xukong added.

Lin Mu simply nodded and pondered on.

Chapter 140 - The Clothing Dilemma

More time passed by and it was finally the time for the morning. Lin Mu opened his eyes and took a long stretch to relax his body. He had learned a lot of things in the Sleepscape and there was a lot more that was to come.

But for now, he needed to go to the Hei corps and help them in their mission. Before leaving, he decided to eat and finish the last of the spirit beast meat, so that he could hunt more later on. The taste of the meat was also getting a little old for him since it had been in the ring for a while now.

Although things wouldn't rot inside the ring, there was still an inexplicable change in taste that he could perceive now. While it didn't bother him as much, he still felt better when the meat was fresh and new.

'I should still have some time left.' Lin Mu thought as he looked at the sun that was at the very edge of the horizon.

He entered his kitchen and started preparing the meat. Lin Mu also realized that he was actually about to run out of the spices and condiments he had too.

"Another thing to add to my list. I especially don't want to forget this. Eating plain roasted meat in the forest would get pretty boring after a while." Lin Mu muttered to himself.

Fifteen minutes later, his meal was cooked, and he finished it in the next ten minutes. Another half an hour later, Lin Mu had assimilated all the vital energy and was now ready to leave. He walked outside and looked at his house one last time before closing the gate of the courtyard and locking it.

Lin Mu didn't know how long they would be out in the forest, thus he just wanted to be sure beforehand. A few seconds after he locked the gate, a person called him out from behind. He recognized the voice and turned to see that it was none other than Hei Ping.

"Sir Lin Mu, are you heading out now? It's still a little early though." Hei Ping asked.

"Yes, but I still have some extra tasks I need to do. It's better for me to complete them now." Lin Mu replied.

"As you wish, sir. Farewell." Hei Ping said as he cupped his hands.

Lin Mu nodded and left to be on his way. He headed towards the marketplace as he wanted to get the things on his list first. Not only did he need the spices and condiments again, even the clothes that he had were getting rather damaged.

The multiple fights and the cleanup of blood he did beforehand had only made it worse for him. Right now he only had two pairs of clothes left for use. Lin Mu now knew that he would be getting injured and damaging his clothes in the future, thus wanted to get them right now.

Just as he was thinking of this, an unusual question popped into his mind.

"Senior, the cultivators that battle a lot, don't their clothes get damage?" Lin Mu questioned.

Xukong who had been engrossed in his own cultivation was a little thrown off because of Lin Mu's question. Usually, the questions he asked were related to cultivation and such, but this time it was related to a much more mundane matter.

"Yes, they do get damaged. So?" Xukong replied.

"Then what do they do with their clothes? Do they just replace them?" Lin Mu questioned.

"They..." Xukong trailed off.

Xukong now realized that he actually didn't know what they did. He himself was a beast thus had no use for human clothes, and getting injured just meant getting his own skin hurt. Beasts technically had no use for clothes, thus this question had stumped him.

Beasts had their fur, feathers and scales which protected them from most of the things, thus they had no use for them. Only humans and other humanoid creatures needed to use clothes to cover themselves.

Xukong tried to rememberer but realized that there were far too few cultivators that he knew of that were of a low level such as Lin Mu. The others that he knew of or was acquainted with were seldom, if never injured enough to get their clothes damaged.

Some of them had peerless techniques to defend themselves, others had their Armour's, while some were skilled enough that their clothes were actually not made up of normal materials but rather from their understanding of the laws which was then condensed into forming their clothes.

That final method was simply something that was beyond most of the people in this world, thus he didn't even tell Lin Mu about it.

"Senior?" Lin Mu questioned again upon seeing that he hadn't received any response.

"Umm, actually I don't know?" Xukong admitted.

"What? Really, you don't know? But why?" Lin Mu asked, feeling surprised.

"I've never had enough interactions with common cultivators. The ones that I did know were never injured enough that their clothes would get damaged, or it was that their clothes were made of unique and strong materials that couldn't be harmed by normal means." Xukong answered honestly.

"I see. I guess I'll just buy multiple sets and keep them with me." Lin Mu replied as he made up his mind.

'I have plenty of money now, anyway. Even a couple of gold coins will be enough for me to buy a hundred sets of clothes.' Lin Mu thought to himself as he kept on walking.

A few minutes later he had reached the marketplace and could see the residents of the town wandering around in warm and thick clothes. While Lin Mu himself was not wearing any warm clothes, the sheer number of armors he was wearing under his outer robe was enough to make it look as if he was.

The first place he went to was a vendor that sold the spices and condiments. He bought plenty of them for about twenty silver coins and completely emptied out the stock of the small vendor. The man was extremely happy and even gave him some extra items as complimentary gifts.

The vendor also sold some miscellaneous goods, thus Lin Mu actually able to get some items he had been missing over a few days. He got some rolls of rope, writing supplies, storage gourds, and barrels. The shop keeper packed the items into a sack and gave them to Lin Mu.

Lin Mu simply told the shopkeeper that he'll pass these items to his friends and come back as an excuse. The shop keeper didn't mind it at all and let him leave.

Lin Mu slung the sack on his back and carried one of the barrels with his free hands. He had bought the barrels as he felt like sorting out the meat in them would be a better way to keep it. Lin Mu left the shop and walked into an empty alley where he stored all the things into his ring.

He then returned to continue the process until he had stored all five of the barrels in his ring. Done with this task, he continued on to a clothing shop and walked inside. It seemed as if the shopkeeper had just opened the shop as well since the clerk was still wiping down the door and the counter.

The clerk saw Lin Mu enter and welcomed him inside.

"What would you like today?" The clerk asked.

Lin Mu thought for a bit and wondered how he should frame his question.

"Hmm, I would like clothes that are my size." Lin Mu spoke.

"Very well, please come here so I can measure you." Another clerk spoke and took his measurements.

After being done with it, the clerk then asked again.

"What kind of clothes would you like and how many?"

"Umm, bring me all of them. I would like... two hundred sets." Lin Mu answered.

The clerk was left stunned and didn't know how to respond. He felt as if he had heard it wrong or something.

"Did you say that right? You want two hundred sets?" The clerk repeated.

"Yes, I do." Lin Mu affirmed.

"Wait, let me talk with the shop owner first. I can't do such a large transaction on my own." The clerk spoke and left to get the shop owner while the other clerk looked after Lin Mu.

The clerk scanned Lin Mu from top to bottom and took note of a few things. He saw the clothes that Lin Mu was wearing of were good quality and that he looked rather well built. The eyes of the clerk then went towards the short sword that Lin Mu had on his waist.

The clerk then silently nodded in approval and waited for the other clerk to return with the shop owner. Two minutes later the shop owner appeared and spoke to Lin Mu.

"Are you sure you want that many clothes? It will cost a lot."

"Yes, I'm sure and the money is not a problem." Lin Mu replied.

"Alright, bring in the clothes." The owner ordered.

The clerks then brought out all the clothes that they had in the shop that were of Lin Mu's size. They counted all of them and found out that they actually only had around 150 sets of clothes that were of his size.

The shop owner tallied the cost and spoke to Lin Mu, "It'll cost you 1 gold, 9 silvers, and 20 copper coins."

Lin Mu nonchalantly nodded and took out slightly more than the specified amount from his pouch and passed it to the shop owner.

The shop owner was actually doubting his eyes and had not expected that he would truly buy all of them.

Lin Mu then looked at the shop owner and thought for a bit.

"Can you deliver all these to the town center? I'll come along."

The shop owner and the clerks finally believed now.