

Walker 141

Chapter 141 - Embark

A strange scene could be witnessed in the Northern town today. A cart seemed to be carrying what seemed like a large number of clothes. Two men were transporting it, with one pushing and the other pulling it. Just a little distance from the cart, a teenage boy was walking.

If it were not for it being winter and there being fewer people outside, there would have probably been a large crowd to witness this scene. The three people walked for a few minutes and soon reached the town center.

The three came to a stop in front of the town center and looked at the large number of people there. The two men who were transporting the cart were the clerks of the clothes shop from Lin Mu had bought the clothes, while he himself was walking in front of it.

The two clerks were rather shocked by the large number of people that were standing there in front of the town center. All of the people seemed to be armed and were mostly dressed in dark clothes. Some had their faces covered with large straw hats, while others had them revealed.

Most of them had average-looking faces and seemed to be commoners. But the unique aura that was arising from their group was anything but common. Even the two clerks who were not cultivators could feel the vibe in the air.

All the armed people also saw the three people approach the building and were staring at the large number of clothes. Some looked puzzled while others were indifferent. But soon their eyes went wide as they spotted the person that was walking in front of the cart.

Their gazes turned serious as they stared at them with intent. The clerks who noticed this became nervous and wondered what was happening.

"Hey, do you think we made a mistake coming here?" One of the clerks spoke.

"I don't know, but I certainly don't like their gazes." The other responded.

"Me too. It's as if they're going to cut us up." The first man spoke, feeling a little afraid.

Suddenly they saw the armed people approaching them at a quick pace. They became even more nervous and were now holding their breaths. For commoners such as them, even normal warriors were too much to handle and they would not offend them.

The people came to a halt in front of Lin Mu and looked at him.

"Look, I think they're offended by him." The clerk spoke.

"Maybe he did something wrong." The other clerk replied.

But just as he spoke this, the armed people suddenly shouted out in unison.

"Greetings, senior Lin Mu."

Upon hearing the greeting, Lin Mu was once again stuck in an awkward situation. He didn't know how to respond, so just spoke whatever that came to his mind.

"Greetings." He spoke, eliciting silence from them.

"What did they say? Senior?" The clerk spoke, feeling confused.

"Yeah, it seems like it. But why would they do so?" The other clerk responded.

The armed people were none other than the reinforcements of the Hei Corps that had pointed their weapons at Lin Mu yesterday morning. They had turned even more zealous now and had responded more enthusiastically.

"That was a little too much, don't you think senior?" Lin Mu spoke in his mind.

"It does indeed. But I can't really tell much about the human's habits or etiquettes. They vary a lot." Xukong spoke in an unsure tone.

It was at this moment that one of the people came forward to Lin Mu.

"Do you need help in taking this in senior?" The man respectfully spoke.

Lin Mu snapped out of his thoughts as he spoke, "Ah yes! Please do take them inside."

"You all heard what senior ordered! Now get on it." The man shouted.

"YES!" Everyone in the group shouted.

The clerks could only watch as the large entourage of people that were armed like a battalion of soldiers listen to Lin Mu's words and react fast. Within a minute, the entire cart was emptied, as all of the clothes were transported inside the town center.

"It is done, senior." The man who had talked with Lin Mu spoke.

"Oh, thank you for your help." Lin Mu spoke and turned around.

"Thank you for carrying them here." Lin Mu spoke to the two clerks and handed them a silver each.

The clerks simply nodded their heads, unable to speak due to being overwhelmed by the events that had just happened in front of them. They then turned around and walked away.

Lin Mu looked at the reinforcements one more time before walking into the town center. The man who seemed to be leading the reinforcements walked with Lin Mu and accompanied him.

"We placed the clothes in a separate room here." The man spoke as he led him there.

He brought him to the room that was on the ground floor and left him there, knowing not to interfere anymore. After the man was gone, Lin Mu stored all of the newly bought clothes in his ring and felt satisfied.

'I should now go check up on Hei Wan.' Lin Mu thought as he looked around for the man.

He didn't have to look far as he was standing near the entrance.

"Do you know where Hei Wan is?" Lin Mu questioned.

"Ah yes, senior. She's upstairs in the office. Let me escort you." The man replied.

"No, it's fine. I'll go on my own." Lin Mu said, rejecting his offer.

The man cupped his hands in farewell as Lin Mu went up the stairs. He soon reached the door of the office and found it to be open. There he saw Hei Wan and Hei Yingjie standing.

"You're just in time. I was about to send a messenger to call for you." Hei Wan spoke upon seeing Lin Mu enter.

"It's fine, I had some small tasks to take care of on the way." Lin Mu replied.

"I guess we can start now. Hei Bao has already gone to talk with the mercenaries, and the reinforcements are ready downstairs." Hei Wan spoke.

"So how are we going to proceed?" Lin Mu questioned.

"We've talked with the hunter Zhou Ye and have gathered some more information. From this, we have an idea of the location of the cave where the culprits are hidden. Still, they may be moving around, so we are going to split into teams of ten people each. Each team will be assigned an area that they must search." Hei Yingjie explained.

Lin Mu nodded in acknowledgment and tough for a bit before speaking.

"What will I be doing then?"

"You will be accompanying me along with a few other members." Hei Yingjie answered.

"That will be good. Though I also want to hunt some spirit beasts on the way, will that be fine?" Lin Mu replied.

"It's no problem. We will have to kill some anyway, as it's likely we'll be attacked." Hei Yingjie replied.

Lin Mu nodded in acknowledgment and then looked at Hei Wan.

"Alright then, we leave right away." She spoke and walked towards the door.

The three of them descended down the floors and exited the town center. The reinforcements were already ready, waiting for them. One of them called the carriage and the three of them entered it.

While they traveled in the carriage, the others proceeded on foot. Though in a small surprise to Lin Mu, instead of going towards the western entrance, they were instead going towards the northern entrance.

"Why are we going this way?" Lin Mu questioned.

"We will be going in from the northern part of the forest, Hei Bao and the mercenaries will be going from the North-Western part. That way we can meet in the middle and cover a wider distance." Hei Wan answered.

"I see." Lin Mu spoke and went silent.

"They seem wary," Xukong spoke in Lin Mu's mind.

"You think so, senior?" Lin Mu replied.

"Yes, the obvious choice would be to go to the northwestern part directly, but they seem to want to avoid it for some reason, I can't tell why," Xukong spoke

Lin Mu thought over senior Xukong's words but didn't speak anything. He stayed in silence until they reached the edge of the forest. It only took them fifteen minutes to reach it, and not long after the reinforcements had reached there as well.

The trio left the carriage and looked at the reinforcements.

Hei Wan came forwards and cleared her throat before speaking.

"You all have already been informed. Split into your teams and proceed."

"YES LEADER!" They shouted in unison before rapidly rearranging themselves into multiple teams.

A few minutes later everyone had left except for eight people. Lin Mu guessed that these were the other eight members of his team.

Hei Wan then turned to Hei Yingjie and Lin Mu.

"I'll leave this up to you all now. Be safe and avoid any unnecessary danger." Hei Wan spoke with concern.

Her eyes lingered on Lin Mu for a little longer than normal, which he sensed. He felt that it was a little strange, but didn't mind it too much.

"Don't worry, I'll ensure that we are safe." Hei Yingjie responded.

Hei Wan cupped her hands in respect before entering the carriage and returning to the town. Lin Mu was a little surprised by her gesture, but not that she had left so quick. They had already known that Hei Wan will be taking care of the town while the rest were out investigating.

One of the eight members of Hei corps came forward and spoke, "Should we leave now, Seniors?"

"Yes, it is time. Let's embark." Hei Yingjie declared.

—————End Of Volume 1—————

Chapter 142 - Two Days Later

It was a dull and bleak afternoon. The sun was hidden behind the clouds and a chilly breeze was blowing. The trees in the forest rustled and swayed with the wind. Traces of snow could be seen on the tops of trees and even some on the floor of the forest.

A group of ten people was walking through a path in the Northern forest. These people were none other than Lin Mu, Hei Yingjie, and the other members of his team. It had been two days since they had started their journey.

During these two days nothing significant happened, and they simply traveled. Still, on the second day, the winter had intensified and the temperature had fallen even more. Before, the snow would usually melt in the morning and could not be seen. But now traces of it could still be seen.

Lin Mu knew that this was just the start and it would soon get worse. The first month of winter had just started, and there were three in total. Every month would just mean more hardships and lower temperatures. The final month was the worst and there would not be a single day during it that the snow was less than a foot deep.

They didn't exactly know how long it will take for them to reach the location they were aiming for but knew that it should be within a traveling distance of four days at the maximum. Sure, it would take them more time to actually find it, but it should be within that traveling distance.

~Howl~

The team came to a halt as they heard a faint howl coming from the distance.

"Wait, there's a spirit beast ahead." Hei Yingjie gestured and ordered everyone to stop as his spirit sense detected something.

"I'll scout it out." One of the members offered.

"Alright, but be careful. Retreat at the first sight of danger." Hei Yingjie replied but kept his spirit sense already nonetheless.

The man nodded and then went ahead. He returned five minutes later and seemed to be fine.

"Well, what did you find?" Hei Yingjie questioned.

"There's a small pack of steel back wolves ahead. It seems to have been separated from a bigger pack or is probably a hunting party. It's being led by a steel back wolf that has become a spirit beast." The man answered.

Everyone took a breath of relief upon hearing the man's words.

"This should be easy then. We can take them out." Lin Mu suggested.

Lin Mu had been wanting to hunt there past two days but unfortunately, they had not encountered even a single spirit beast. They had come across some normal beasts, but most of them directly ran away upon seeing their group.

Lin Mu wanted to hunt them for the meat since he was missing the taste, but since they had brought enough supplies with them, he just ate that. But now that he had obtained this opportunity, he wanted to take it.

"Sure, we'll help you out." Hei Yingjie replied.

Hei Yingjie was a little confused on why Lin Mu wanted to hunt the beasts but just attributed it to Lin Mu wanting to battle. He did not know that he was actually hunting them because he wanted to eat them. According to him, with Lin Mu's status, he had no reason to hunt such beasts for that reason.

The other members split out and formed an encirclement. The steel back wolves were currently grouped together in a small area and seemed to be resting. This had just made it easier for them to approach. They paid no heed to the direction of the wind, even though it was blowing towards the small pack.

The steel back wolves would pick up their scent, but this was exactly what they noted. This way the pack would not run away and stay there until they reached there. Lin Mu withdrew his short sword and got ready.

Since he couldn't use his skills in front of other people, he just decided to rely on his own strength. The pack of steel back wolves was now visible to them and seemed to be agitated. They were growling towards the approaching humans.

Lin Mu looked closer and saw that there were only around twelve wolves in the pack. It was definitely much less than that of a proper steel back wolf pack, which usually numbered more than two hundred. Lin Mu also spotted the leader of this pack.

It was a wolf that was one size bigger than the other wolves but didn't look much different than that. This was the second time Lin Mu was seeing a steel back wolf that was at the qi refining realm and had become a spirit beast. The last time he had seen one was five years ago, when a large party of hunters had successfully hunted one.

He had been amazed at that time, seeing that a group of hunters could kill a spirit beast like that, but now here he was, about to hunt one himself. Lin Mu took a deep breath and calmed his excitement.

~Grrrrr~

The leader of the pack growled at the approaching Lin Mu and bared its teeth at him. Lin Mu was about ten meters away from the leader, when it couldn't hold back anymore and sprinted towards him. Lin Mu already had his spirit sense extended, thus could perceive every movement of the wolf as soon as it got within his range.

Lin Mu strengthened his legs and arms with spirit qi as he focused on the approaching wolf. Just as the wolf was about to leap at him, Lin Mu lunged ahead and leaned to the side. Both of them clashed in a diagonal manner as they separated.

~Whine~

A wincing sound was heard as blood spilled from the body of the steel back wolf. Lin Mu had lunged and successfully slashed its belly apart. The wolf let out a few more sounds and struggled to move before it went silent.

"That was easy." Lin Mu muttered to himself as he approached the now dead steel back wolf.

He confirmed that it was completely dead and then looked at the other members of the team. They were casually standing and had already killed four of the steel back wolves. The remainder of the pack had evidently decided to run away to save their lives.

The members of the Hei Corps had also not stopped them and had only killed the ones that were moving towards Lin Mu. For them, killing a bunch of fierce beasts was child's play. Hei Yingjie came forward and stood near Lin Mu.

"I guess we're having fresh meat for lunch today." Hei Yingjie spoke in a jovial manner.

He then looked at his subordinates and spoke, "Prepare the carcasses, we'll take a break."

"Yes, sir." They all spoke.

Lin Mu also picked up the wolf that he had killed and started skinning it right then and there. Hei Yingjie saw this and was about to stop him, but then he noticed the look on Lin Mu's face. It was a look of hidden excitement.

'It should be fine if he wants to do it himself.' Hei Yingjie thought and then went to sit under a tree.

Hei Yingjie sat in a meditative and started cultivating. Some of the other members did the same while the rest went to prepare the carcasses. An hour later Lin Mu was done skinning the wolf and had stored the pelt and the other useful parts away in the ring.

The others were also nearly done with their work. They then gathered the meat together and set up a few fire pits to cook them. In all, they had five beasts worth of meat. Even half of this would be enough for them to fill their bellies.

Lin Mu took out his spices and condiments and started to prepare his own meal. While he was open to sharing the food, he still preferred the meat that he had cooked himself and was up to his tastes. The others saw this but paid it no mind and just did their tasks.

Soon a mouth-watering aroma was spreading from the place where Lin Mu was cooking the spirit beast meat. While the others were also cooking, but the aroma could not be compared. By now Hei Yingjie had woken up and was also ready to eat.

Some of the team members had started cutting apart portions and were distributing them. Hei Yingjie did not go to the others, but instead went to sit with Lin Mu.

Lin Mu saw this and gave out a little smile. He cut a leg apart from the cooked wolf and offered it to Hei Yingjie before he could even ask.

"Here." Lin Mu spoke as he offered.

"Ah! Thank you brother Lin Mu. Eating food prepared by you will be an honor." Hei Yingjie spoke in a flattering manner.

Lin Mu nodded and cut another leg for himself. Both of them started eating and in no time they had finished it. Hei Yingjie looked up and wondered what they were going to do with the rest of the cooked meat, but was then shocked.

In the time that he had finished that one leg, Lin Mu had not only finished his own but had also devoured half of the cooked meat. Right now he was biting down on some ribs and was eating it with gusto, paying no heed to his demeanor.

Hei Yingjie was shocked by this and felt as if his eyes were lying to him.

"That boy's no less than a beast himself." He muttered to himself.

Chapter 143 - Danger

~Burp~

Lin Mu took a burp and then looked up at the shadow that was kind of covering his face. He saw that he had unknowingly created a small hill of bones.

'Did my appetite increase even more? I didn't even realize it while eating.' Lin Mu wondered.

He then looked up at the remaining amount of meat that was left on the large skewer. Lin Mu had eaten half of the spirit beast and only the upper torso and one of the legs of it was currently left. He touched his belly and figured that he had had enough food for now.

'I'll save the rest for dinner.' Lin Mu thought.

Even though he would not feel hungry for an entire day after eating a meal, he still liked to eat it as it was a habit for him. It just didn't feel right to him when he didn't. Anyways, he still got to absorb the vital energy and the spirit qi from the meat, so it worked in his favor.

Lin Mu touched the meat and stored it in the ring. After that, he took out a gourd and poured out some water from it. He drank some to satisfy his thirst and used the rest to clean himself. In his process of eating he had evidently been a bit messy and had oily fingers and face.

Lin Mu looked around and saw that the others were done eating as well and were cleaning up now. They wrapped the remaining meat and kept it for a later time.

"Everyone ready?" Hei Yingjie asked as he looked around.

"Yes senior!" They replied in unison.

Nodding at them, he spoke again, "Let's continue then. We should probably reach our destination by tomorrow."

They then started their journey again and proceeded deeper into the forest. They were going in a northwestern direction now and would probably meet the other team that was being led by Hei Bao soon.

Eventually, the sky started to darken, and the snow had started to fall. Knowing that it would be more risky to proceed in the night, Hei Yingjie decided to stop for the night.

"We will rest here for the night. We leave tomorrow at first light." Hei Yingjie ordered.

Everyone acknowledged the orders and started setting up the tents. The tents were nothing fancy and were just simple canvas sheets that they propped up with some sticks. Since everyone was a cultivator, they would not be sleeping anyway and would just be cultivating through the night.

They had already had some sleep on the previous day, thus did not need to sleep for the coming two days at the very least. They could get by just by cultivating. A few minutes later the tents were set up, and a fire was blazing at the center.

The tents were arranged in a circular manner, and there were five of them. Two people each to every tent. This way the fire would warm all tents and also provide some light. Two of the men stayed up to keep a watch during the night, while the others rested.

Lin Mu noticed the manner in which they acted and the way they worked, it was almost habitual. It was as if they had done this many times and had been doing it for a while now.

"They are just trained well. Anyone can learn well if given enough time." Xukong spoke in Lin Mu's mind.

"Is that so? They looked quite different before though, but now that they are out here they seemed to be in a completely different character." Lin Mu replied.

"It's just something they learned to hide. We do know that they were disguising as commoners for a few years now and only returned because they were called, so it's obvious why." Xukong spoke.

Lin Mu didn't reply but simply stayed silent as he thought over it.

"But that man, Hei Yingjie, he's different," Xukong added.

"How so?" Lin Mu asked.

"He seems to be putting up a facade, a mask of some kind. He's hiding quite a lot beneath that, I presume. I can sense it." Xukong replied.

"Hmm..."

Lin Mu did not speak further and just took out the remaining spirit beast meat and started to eat it. He had just finished eating when he heard a faint noise. He immediately became alert and his spirit sense spread out.

Lin Mu stood up and walked out of the tent, and just as he did, he saw that Hei Yingjie had walked out as well. Evidently, he had sensed it as well. They looked at each other and nodded in a tacit understanding. The two people that were guarding too saw them leave the tents.

"What's the problem, Seniors?" They questioned.

"Alert the other, we have a large group of beasts approaching us." Hei Yingjie ordered.

The two immediately left to inform the others while Lin Mu looked at Hei Yingjie in confusion.

"A large group?" Lin Mu questioned.

"Yes, they seem to be the Steel back wolves that we killed in the afternoon. Looks like they brought the entire pack for revenge." Hei Yingjie spoke with a serious expression.

'Did he observe that with his spirit sense? How long is his range?' Lin Mu wondered.

"He's in the core condensation realm, so it won't be unusual for his spirit sense's range to be more than a hundred meters," Xukong spoke.

Lin Mu thought for a bit and then spoke, "How far are they?"

"They're around two hundred meters away and their numbers are large." Hei Yingjie answered.

'So his range is about two hundred meters.' Lin Mu grasped.

"How many are there do you know?" Lin Mu questioned again as he tried to use his own spirit sense to see if any were nearby.

"There's more than a hundred and they seem to be spread around. They're sneaking around us to ambush us." Hei Yingjie spoke.

Lin Mu became even more alert after hearing Hei Yingjie's words and unsheathed his own short sword. He knew that if there were more than a hundred steel back wolves then this was probably the entirety of the pack.

"This is going to be a difficult fight." Lin Mu muttered.

Chapter 144 - The Beasts Attack

"I'm afraid it is not going to be that simple. I sense a large number of spirit beasts in them as well. This is no normal pack." Hei Yingjie spoke as he looked at the rest of the members that were now gathered.

"That's why they're taking revenge. No common pack of steel back wolves would dare to attack cultivators that easily." Lin Mu realized.

"Everyone gets ready, we're going to have a tough night." Hei Yingjie ordered.

"Yes senior!" They responded as they withdrew their respective weapons.

Lin Mu then saw Hei Yingjie produce a saber in his hand. The saber had just appeared out of thin air into his hands.

'So he has a spatial storage treasure as well.' Lin Mu thought and looked at the saber.

The saber was slightly longer than a meter in length and was curved. It looked heavy and had a broad hilt. Its blade was gray in color and gleamed under the flames of the bonfire.

"It's a spirit weapon too, a low tier one though," Xukong informed.

"Oh? Well, that is expected as he's a core condensation realm cultivator and the Hei Corps do seem to have good connections." Lin Mu spoke in his mind.

Just as he said this, Hei Yingjie's expression fell.

"Careful, there's a core condensation beast leading them." He suddenly spoke up in an extremely grim tone.

"A core condensation realm steel back wolf? Can they even reach that realm?" Lin Mu questioned as he felt confused.

"It is indeed unusual. But there have been some reports of them reaching the core condensation realm before. But if one of them has, then that means it's the true leader of the pack and the pack has also come from the depths of the forest." Hei Yingjie spoke.

Just as Hei Yingjie spoke, the bushes in the distance started rustling. The wind was not blowing, thus this meant that the wolves were close.

"I'll handle the core condensation realm steel back wolf, while you all handle the rest. Form a circle, back to back." Hei Yingjie ordered.

He then turned to Lin Mu and looked at him with a serious expression.

"Brother Lin Mu, if anything happens to me or something unexpected happens, leave this place and runaway. I'll give you an opening." Hei Yingjie spoke.

Lin Mu felt shocked that he would be willing to sacrifice himself like that.

'Seems like they really don't want you to die now.' Xukong spoke with a chuckle.

Lin Mu did not reply and just nodded simply. Hei Yingjie then turned to the forest and stood in a fighting stance. His saber wielding arm was pointed downwards in a diagonal angle towards the right and his left foot was forward.

Lin Mu took a deep breath and was ready to use the severing heart sutra. Soon the rustling sounds turned to growls as the wolves started appearing from the bushes. Some appeared from behind the trees and some from behind them.

They had completely surrounded their team. They were now in the range of Lin Mu's spirit sense, so Lin Mu could observe the closest ones easily. With the help of the light of the bonfire, he could also see in the distance vaguely and spot their figures.

While he could not sense that far, Lin Mu could still tell from the sizes of their bodies, which cultivation realm they belonged to. There were currently twenty-four wolves surrounding them at the closest range and out of these thirteen were spirit beasts while the rest were normal fierce beasts.

~Howl~

A howl sounded from the distance and soon a steel back wolf that was larger than any other appeared. Its fur was gray and had seven stripes extending from his forehead going all the way to its tail. These stripes split on its back into four more which went towards its four limbs all the way up to its claws.

Its fangs were about two inches long and looked gruesome. The Alpha steel back wolf was about one and a half meters tall and looked like a giant among its kin. A strange wave of energy was emitted from its body and spread over to all the people.

Lin Mu instantly sensed it and understood what it was.

"Spirit sense! The beast has developed its spirit sense?" Lin Mu muttered in surprise.

"Of course, beasts can also develop their spirit sense. They can do so because they have an innate knowledge of it that's hidden within their bloodlines." Xukong explained.

Lin Mu wanted to observe the cultivation base of the Alpha steel back wolf, but could not since it was staying beyond the range of his spirit sense. Pushing these thoughts aside, Lin Mu just focused on the other steel back wolves that were in front of him.

Lin Mu didn't attack first, as that would mean that he would have to break their formation. No, he stayed there and waited for the wolves to make the first move. He knew that while he would be able to deal with the wolves with ease, the others may not be able to do the same.

Lin Mu had checked their cultivation bases and knew that out of the eight members, three were at the mid-stage of the qi refining realm while the rest were at the early stage of the qi refining realm. For Lin Mu dealing with a peak stage qi refining realm beast or cultivator would still be easy, if he used his skills.

A few seconds later the group of steel back wolves lunged at them. Lin Mu dodged to the right and slashed at the steel back wolf that had jumped at him. The wolf fell down dead, and Lin Mu spun around to slash two more wolves.

The rest were also killing the other wolves and had already killed some. Lin Mu did a quick scan with his spirit sense and saw that out of the twenty-four wolves ten were already dead. He had killed two spirit beasts and one normal beast while the others had killed three spirit beasts and four normal beasts.

They continued fighting and soon killed the rest of the steel back wolves. But they didn't get much respite after this as the next wave came nearly instantly and this one had even more wolves. This time there were around thirty wolves.

Lin Mu took a look around and spotted Hei Yingjie fighting with the Alpha steel back wolf and three other wolves. He seemed to be fine for now and was putting up a good fight. There were already four other corpses of wolves lying around him.

Lin Mu didn't get to watch for long though as the next wave of steel back wolves attacked soon. Returning to the fight, Lin Mu kept on slashing, chopping, and cutting. He didn't stay completely injured though, he still got a few minor cuts and grazes here and there while fighting.

The other members were doing worse than him as they were getting deeper injuries. But since they had good teamwork, they were still able to push back the steel back wolves. Lin Mu would assist them whenever he could, but it was still getting difficult now.

Chapter 145 - The Beast's Awakening

They had been fighting for nearly Thirty minutes now. The injuries had piled on and the members of the Hei corps were getting tired. Even if they were cultivators, they were still fighting spirit beasts and were using their spirit qi.

Although they were not using any qi skills, they were still using spirit qi to strengthen their body and amplify their attacks. Thus their spirit qi was still being consumed. In addition to this, their spirit qi was also being used to suppress their injuries.

The team was severely out-manned and had only survived until now because of Lin Mu and Hei Yingjie. Lin Mu would assist them whenever they were in a pinch and Hei Yingjie would also spare a little attention to slaughter a few stray steel back wolves in addition to the Alpha steel back wolf that he was fighting.

Still, even Hei Yingjie had gotten some injuries now. The most severe being the one on his saber wielding arm. A large bite wound could be seen, from which blood was dripping. It looked unusual for a wound as big as that, since the bleeding should have been severe.

It was evident that Hei Yingjie was using some kind of unknown skill to suppress the wound from excessively bleeding. But even that was now taking its toll on him, as the Alpha steel back wolf was not backing down at all.

Hei Yingjie had expected that the alpha steel back wolf would retreat once it saw that many of its kin were killed, but the reality turned out to be the opposite. Instead, the Alpha was now intensifying his attacks and was actually getting faster.

Lin Mu had also borne some injuries, but he was still well compared to others. He was especially lucky as he had been able to block two dangerous attacks to his torso. He was saved because of the multiple layers of leather armors he was wearing.

While the leather armor only covered his chest and not the other parts of his body, it was still five of them being stacked on top of each other. This made them thick enough that they were able to stop a claw attack of qi refining realm steel back wolf and the bite of another one.

But as a result of that, Lin Mu's clothes were now torn in multiple places and his outer robe was completely gone. Now the shredded stack of leather armors on his body could be clearly seen.

"We can't let this go on, the others won't be able to last long." Lin Mu shouted to Hei Yingjie.

Lin Mu did a quick scan of the surroundings and observed that the number of steel back wolf corpses had reached more than seventy and yet they were still coming. Hei Yingjie also had sweat dripping down on his forehead now, as he swiftly glanced around.

'This is much worse than I thought. This steel back wolf is abnormally strong, it's as if it has the strength of late stage of the core condensation realm even though it's clearly at the early stage.' Hei Yingjie thought.

"If their numbers don't start reducing soon, we'll retreat. I'll try to make an opening." Hei Yingjie shouted.

But as soon as he said this, the Alpha steel back wolf as if having understood his words started growling. It retreated a short distance, giving a slight chance for Hei Yingjie to rest. Taking this chance, he killed five more steel back wolves that were troubling the members of his team.

Hei Yingjie refocused his attention on the Alpha steel back wolf and saw that it was acting strange. It had its limbs tensed up and was growling to itself as if in pain.

~HOWLLLLLL~

The Alpha steel back wolf suddenly raised its head and let out an ear piercing howl. Its body started trembling and veins bulged out of its skin. Its eyes turned red and saliva started dripping out of its mouth.

Hei Yingjie couldn't tell what was happening and why it was doing this. Lin Mu instinctively turned around because of the ear-piercing howl.

"What the hell was that?!" Lin Mu exclaimed and looked at the Alpha steel back wolf.

Even the other steel back wolves seemed to be affected by the howl of the Alpha wolf and seemed to be startled. Some of the weaker ones even seemed to be scared and were whining in fear. Lin Mu looked at the conditions of the others and felt confused.

"What's happening?" Lin Mu wondered.

"The Beast, it has awakened its bloodline ability! You have to be extremely careful, you may have to run as Hei Yingjie may not be able to handle it!" Xukong spoke with urgency.

Lin Mu's eyes went wide with shock as he heard Senior Xukong's warning. He had heard about the bloodlines of the beasts and knew that they had their unique abilities. Not every beast had it, but all had to potential to awaken one.

The steel back wolves were relatively low in the hierarchy of the beasts thus were not as likely to awaken it. But since this Alpha steel back wolf had reached the core condensation realm, it had awakened one.

"Do you know what ability it is senior?" Lin Mu questioned.

"No, there are far too many similar abilities and it could have awakened any one from its bloodline. The range is too far wide. All you can do right now is closely observe." Xukong answered.

Lin Mu heard Senior Xukong's words and gritted his teeth.

"Careful, it has awakened its bloodline ability!" Lin Mu shouted for everyone to hear.

Hei Yingjie felt cold sweat appear on his back after he heard Lin Mu's warning. He knew of bloodline abilities but would have never expected that a steel back wolf would awaken one. He immediately retreated some distance away and locked his sight on the Alpha wolf.

~Howl~

The Alpha steel back wolf let out another howl and was now looking at Hei Yingjie. Its muscles that were bulging before had now reduced instead. While it was the same height as before, it was now slimmer. Whatever process it was going through had completed, and now it was ready.

Hei Yingjie looked at the now changed Alpha steel back wolf. While one would think that its presence should have reduced now that it was smaller in size, it was not so. Instead, its presence and aura had multiplied and were now bigger than before.

Hei Yingjie could feel the hair on the back of his neck stand. He had been in many life threatening situations before and was very experienced. He had not felt a feeling like this in a long time. Even when he was disguised deep into enemy territory, he never flinched. But now, here in front of a beast that had a lower cultivation base than him, he was feeling fear.

'Something very unnatural is happening in the northern forest. First the bear beast and now this? Is the invader the cause of this too?' Hei Yingjie thought as he gripped his saber hard.

Hei Yingjie then withdrew a pill from his storage treasure and popped it in his mouth. In the next second, under the effects of the pill that he had just eaten, the wounds on his body started to heal.

Hei Yingjie looked dead in the eyes of the Alpha steel back wolf, before he spoke, "Run. I'll stop it."

Lin Mu heard his words but did not react at that moment. He was too engrossed in fighting the foes that were currently in front of him. Still, even if Lin Mu had not heard the words didn't mean that the other members of the Hei Corps had not.

While most of them were fighting and holding off the steel back wolves, some of them still heard the words of Hei Yingjie. Their expressions turned strained and they gritted their teeth in frustration. Frustration that they were weak and were now suffering under the attack of mere beasts.

They looked at Lin Mu, who was fearlessly fighting against the steel back wolves without even flinching and then at their companions. They felt ashamed at the fear and doubt that they were feeling. They felt as if the resolve that they had while joining the Hei corps was no more.

They felt as if they were disappointing their lord, who had helped them in their toughest times. Times in their life which they preferred to forget and were not proud of. It was in those times that their lord had come as a savior and saved them from desolation.

"I am incredibly sorry Senior, but I cannot obey your orders." One of the members spoke.

Seeing that one of them had spoken up others made up their mind as well.

"Me neither Senior. I shan't leave you here."

"We came under the lord together and together we shall perish." The last of them spoke together.

In the few moments that Hei Yingjie had, he didn't know what to think of his subordinate's words. On one hand, he was frustrated that they were not listening to his orders and saving their lives, and on the other, he was proud and overwhelmed that they were willing to bet their lives on his.

Hei Yingjie had not spent much time with these people and barely knew them. But the one thing they had in common was that they were all dedicated to the same Lord. They were saved by the same person and for the same person shall they perish.

'So be it.' Hei Yingjie thought.

"I shall end it or end myself."

Chapter 146 - Desperation

Hei Yingjie did not let the alpha steel back wolf initiate the first attack. Instead, he sprinted forward and attacked first. He swung his saber with an intense speed and slashed at the Alpha wolf.

"Haa-!" Hei Yingjie shouted.

The Alpha steel back wolf did not flinch from Hei Yingjie's approach but instead looked at him closely. It stared until the very last moment when he was just a meter away from it. Then just when the attack was about to reach it, the Alpha steel back wolf disappeared.

"Huh, What?!" Hei Yingjie exclaimed as he saw his foe disappeared.

"Where did it go?" he spoke as he looked around.

But just as he was about to move, Hei Yingjie suddenly felt danger from his back. His spirit sense immediately spread around and he saw what was approaching him. It was none other than the Alpha steel back wolf.

The Alpha wolf had increased its speed exponentially and was now coming towards Hei Yingjie. Reacting at the very last moment, Hei Yingjie leaped to the side to avoid the attack. The Alpha steel back wolf missed its target and flew ahead.

It landed on the ground and dug some trail marks as it exerted force to stop itself.

~Growl~

The Alpha steel back wolf turned around and growled at Hei Yingjie. Deep malice could be seen in its eyes and one could tell that it was incredibly infuriated. It lunged at Hei Yingjie once again, but this time he used his saber to block its attack.

~Clang~

A loud clanging sound was heard as the tough body of the Alpha steel back wolf hit the saber of Hei Yingjie. The man in question was pushed back several meters due to the force of impact and could not help but stabilize himself by digging in his feet into the ground.

Lin Mu and the rest of the membered witnessed the encounter and were incredibly shocked by it. They had never expected the fight would turn direction in such a manner. Before, Hei Yingjie was at least able to keep up with the alpha steel back wolf.

But now that the Alpha steel back wolf had awakened its bloodline ability, its strength had increased and it became hard to compare it with that of Hei Yingjie. Its speed had already increased by a lot, while its strength had also increased due to its muscles compressing.

The Alpha wolf and Hei Yingjie kept on clashing and exchanged blow by blow. Lin Mu was able to watch it in the few moments that he got between fighting the other steel back wolves. Their numbers seemed to have finally started reducing, and they had killed ten more of them.

Lin Mu did another scan of the area and saw that the remaining amount of steel back wolves was around forty.

"We have to end this quick, Hei Yingjie won't be able to hold it back for long." Lin Mu uttered.

By now, he had heard the words of the other members of the Hei corps and knew that Hei Yingjie was going to force himself to end the fight. Lin Mu kept on fighting the steel back wolves and was trying to kill as many as he could so that he could then help Hei Yingjie.

Lin Mu did not want to let Hei Yingjie die here. He felt as if a bad taste would be left behind in his mouth if he escaped and let Hei Yingjie die.

"Dammit! I'll kill you all." Lin Mu cursed.

Lin Mu now started chanting the severing heart sutra and targeted as many steel back wolves as he could. Before he was not using the severing heart sutra as he had to interrupt himself and help the other members. But now he was just focused on killing the beasts.

The effects of the severing heart sutra took place and three steel back wolves were now affected. Lin Mu's target range for the severing heart sutra had now increased to three from the previous two. His regular use of the sutra had increased his proficiency.

The steel back wolves became dazed and were now slow to act. Lin Mu took this opportunity and quickly killed them.

One...

two...

three...

five...

ten...

Twenty◆◆◆

One by one the steel back wolves started dying under Lin Mu's blade. Finally, the time arrived when no more wolves were coming forth to attack them. Lin Mu looked around and saw that only a couple of the steel back wolves were now left fighting.

Most of them had fallen under his hands, while the rest had been handled by the members of the Hei corps. They were covered in injuries from head to the toe and were extremely exhausted. Everyone except for Lin Mu was now nearly out of spirit qi.

"Aargh!!"

Just as Lin Mu was looking around, the sound of a painful shout was heard. He looked to the side and saw that Hei Yingjie now had a large claw wound that extended from his right shoulder over the abdomen all the way to the left side of his waist.

The diagonal injury was caused by the Alpha steel back wolf and could be evidently seen as its claws were dripping with blood, Hei Yingjie's blood. Hei Yingjie flinched in pain and was knocked back. The Alpha steel back wolf took advantage of this vulnerability and lunged at him again.

Hei Yingjie rolled to the side but dropped his saber in the process.

"No!" Lin Mu shouted as he sprinted towards them.

The distance between them was now far though, as they had moved away while fighting. They were over a hundred meters away from each other. Lin Mu knew that he won't be able to reach Hei Yingjie before the wolf attacked him.

Lin Mu gave up on hiding his skills and just decided to use them. He thought that it will be worth it even if he ended up exposing himself. Lin Mu thus used blink and moved forward ten meters in a second. During this period the alpha steel back wolf had attacked Hei Yingjie again.

Chapter 147 - Spirit Control

Hei Yingjie had barely scraped by and dodged the attack, but still endured a scratch from the beast's claws. Another wound opened on his arm and he had moved even more far from his saber. The Alpha steel back wolf got ready and braced for another attack.

Lin Mu was getting more and more desperate by the second. Even while using the skill blink, he was still too far. He had already used Blink five times in a row, but the speed of the alpha steel back wolf was too high.

Lin Mu feared that he would not be able to reach Hei Yingjie in time. Quickly thinking, he let ideas flow through his mind as he finally decided on one. He kept on using Blink to teleport forward and when he was within twenty meters of the alpha steel back wolf, he threw his short sword forward.

~Swoosh~

The short sword shot forward and soared through the air. In the blink of an eye, it was already near the Alpha steel back wolf. But just as it was about to hit it, the beast reacted with a monstrous agility and tilted to dodge the short sword.

The short sword overshot and missed the alpha steel back wolf by mere inches.

"NOOOOO!!!" Lin Mu yelled as his eyes turned bloodshot.

The beast turned around and refocused its attention on its prey that was Hei Yingjie. By now, Hei Yingjie had become too injured to be able to move with his previous speed and could not react fast enough. He closed his eyes in acceptance as his body became stiff.

Lin Mu's shout was still echoing as he dreaded what was about to come. His emotions were a mixture of anger, frustration, guilt, and regret. He kept on watching as the Alpha steel back wolf was about to end the life of Hei Yingjie.

But just as he was about to give up, a miracle happened.

The short sword that had missed and had gone ahead, suddenly turned around. It was as if it had suddenly come alive and was now flying back. Everything happened in an instant and could not be explained in a short time.

Just as the beast's fangs arrived at Hei Yingjie's neck, it stopped moving.

Hei Yingjie opened his eyes once he sensed that his impending doom had somehow not arrived yet. He was expecting pain and suffering, but somehow it had stopped midway. His eyes opened to a sword tip being pointed at him.

Hei Yingjie's eyes went wide as he flinched backwards. Only after moving a few inches to the back did he see what had happened. A short sword had pierced the head of the Alpha steel back wolf and come out of its mouth.

It was this very short sword's tip that was pointed at him when he had opened his eyes.

"Wha-What? What happened? How?" Hei Yingjie questioned as he felt incredibly confused.

He had actually seen the short sword miss its target that was the alpha wolf, so he wondered how was it stuck in its skull now.

Lin Mu was standing in his place as if he was dumbstruck. He had clearly seen what had happened a few seconds ago.

The short sword that had missed its target and was flying ahead, somehow turned back and pierced the head of the Alpha steel back wolf. Somehow the short sword had sensed the desperation within his heart and had responded.

A strange new connection was formed between them, and the sword responded to his thoughts. At that moment, Lin Mu wanted nothing more than to kill the Alpha steel back wolf. Thus that was exactly what the short sword had done.

It had fulfilled his most intense desire.

A few more seconds passed as Lin Mu contemplated. Suddenly an intense wave of exhaustion washed over him as he felt his strength leave him.

"Wha... What's... happening... to me?" Lin Mu muttered between breaths.

Lin Mu could no longer hold on and collapsed onto the ground.

"You unconsciously used spirit control on your short sword. Your spirit qi has been exhausted greatly due to it and that's why you are feeling such a great fatigue." Xukong suddenly spoke in Lin Mu's mind.

"Spirit control?" Lin Mu questioned in his mind as he laid down on the ground helplessly.

"Remember what I told you about controlling and using spirit swords. Normally you would have refined your spirit sense to an extensive range and would have then used that to control a spirit sword. A spirit sword that's controlled in this manner can be used to attack or to fly."

"But what you have done is much different than that. Since you don't have a spirit sense that's long enough, the short sword instead used its own ability to establish a connection forcibly. This resulted in it draining most of your spirit qi." Xukong explained

Lin Mu was finally able to understand a part of what had happened. He would have been able to completely understand it, but his fatigue was making it difficult for him to think clearly. The exhaustion was forcing him to close his eyes, which he was barely able to resist.

With great difficulty, Lin Mu propped himself with his hands and turned around to look at Hei Yingjie. The man was safe for now, but his injuries had worsened. Whatever pill and techniques that he was using to restrain his injuries were no longer having any effect.

Some of the members of the Hei corps were now approaching Hei Yingjie to check up on him, while the rest were rushing towards the collapsed Lin Mu.

"Seniors!" They shouted.

Two of them pulled away Hei Yingjie from the Alpha steel back wolf, while two others checked on the beast. Once they ensured that it was dead, they let out breaths of relief.

"The beast is dead!" They shouted with elation.

The others then too shouted with joy after hearing their words.

"YEAH! They did it!"

The men that had approached Lin Mu took out a small glass bottle. They then opened its cap and took out a pill from it. The pill was white and looked very plain.

Chapter 148 - Spirit Qi Core

The man that was holding the pill kneeled down and held out the pill towards Lin Mu.

"Here, take this pill, Senior. It's a healing pill." The man spoke.

Lin Mu didn't take the pill instantly, but instead looked at Hei Yingjie and saw that the others had given him a pill as well. Taking a breath of relief, Lin Mu took the pill from the man. He popped it in his mouth and swallowed it.

It was surprisingly bland, and Lin Mu did not taste anything when he ate it. But when the pill was swallowed down into his stomach, he could feel a strange warmth radiating from it. The warmth soon turned into intense qi that was absorbed by his body.

The medicinal effects were absorbed and Lin Mu's injuries started to visibly heal. Even the men that had given him the pill were shocked by the quick effect.

"Does this pill work so fast?" One of the men asked.

"I don't know either, the Leader gave us a few of these pills before we left. She didn't explain much but just said that they were healing pills." The man answered.

Lin Mu moved with difficulty and sat in a cross legged position. He circulated the remaining amount of spirit qi he had and assisted the effects of the healing pill. A few minutes later he was completely healed, but the exhaustion of spirit qi was still there.

Lin Mu chanted the severing heart sutra and peered inside his dantian. He observed that he barely had fifty wisps of spirit qi left in his dantian from the previous 1500. The single drop of liquid spirit qi was also there at the very bottom of the dantian.

Previously it was hard to spot due to the sea of spirit qi wisps, but now that his dantian was nearly empty it was rather easy to see it. It would slightly gleam every so often and look like a drop of morning dew.

Lin Mu withdrew his attention from his dantian and opened his eyes. He saw that the men were no longer near him and were now cleaning up the battlefield. Some of the ones that were more injured had also taken some pills and were recuperating.

They had put on bandages and could be seen piling the steel back wolf corpses in a corner. There was barely any space left to freely walk, since you would stumble on a random corpse. Lin Mu looked for Hei Yingjie but couldn't find him anywhere.

'He's probably in a tent.' Lin Mu thought.

His sight was then pulled towards the massive corpse of the Alpha steel back wolf. It was still lying where it was before, and his short sword was still stuck where it was in its skull. Evident the other people had not touched it or had tried to move it.

"Senior Lin Mu!" One of the men shouted.

Lin Mu turned his head to the side to look at the person calling out to him. It was the same man that had given him the healing pill. The man was laking towards him and came to a stop in front of him.

"Senior Hei Yingjie is in the tent, if you're looking for him." The man spoke.

"Alright, take me to him." Lin Mu replied.

The man nodded and gestured for him to follow. He then brought him to the previous tent that Hei Yingjie was in. Lin Mu entered and saw the unconscious Hei Yingjie. He was still injured, unlike Lin Mu and his wounds were not completely healed.

Lin Mu extended his spirit sense and observed the condition of Hei Yingjie. He saw the internal injuries that numbered in the tens. There was blood pooled in his viscera and there were tiny clots that were hampering his circulation.

Lin Mu then checked Hei Yingjie's meridians and saw that while they seemed to be fine for the most part. There were still some areas where there were cracks and fissures. The meridians were also rather dry and barely had any spirit qi circulating through them.

Lin Mu then checked Hei Yingjie's dantian and saw something different. There was no spirit qi wisps in his dantian, instead what was inside his dantian was a small sphere that was pale white. It was about the size of a pea and was suspended in the center of the dantian.

'So this is the spirit qi core of a core condensation expert.' Lin Mu thought as he closely observed it.

"Oh? This is a rather small core." Xukong spoke in Lin Mu's mind.

"It's small? Is the core supposed to be bigger?" Lin Mu questioned.

"Not always. The core of an early stage core condensation expert usually starts off like this. But from what we've seen, Hei Yingjie was at the middle stage of the core condensation stage. His core should have been at least twice this size." Xukong answered.

"Umm, did he regress perhaps?" Lin Mu suggested.

"I thought so too, at first. But from what I see, it does not seem likely. Even if a core condensation realm cultivator's cultivation base regresses, the overall size of their core wouldn't decrease. It's just the density of the core that would decrease. Instead of a solid sphere that you can see right now, it would instead become translucent." Xukong explained.

"That what happened to him?" Lin Mu asked.

"I can't tell exactly. We need to observe the core of other core condensation realm cultivators. Only after seeing a few more samples will I be able to determine the problem." Xukong replied.

"Ah! The Alpha steel back wolf. It's at the core condensation realm too, we can maybe check it." Lin Mu suggested.

"Yes, we can do that. Although the results won't exactly be accurate as it's a beast and not a human, I can still guess somethings from it." Xukong spoke.

Lin Mu was about to turn around and go outside the tent when Xukong spoke again.

"I think you should recuperate your spirit qi first. Also, this man's condition seems to be worsening."

Chapter 149 - Qi Deviation

"What!?" Lin Mu spoke out loud.

All this time, Lin Mu had been talking in his mind and the man that had brought him was standing at the side. But now that he had exclaimed, the man listened to it with wide eyes.

"Is there a problem senior Lin Mu?" The man asked with concern.

Lin Mu looked at Hei Yingjie again and saw that his face had become slightly pale. Without answering the man, Lin Mu extended his spirit sense and checked Hei Yingjie. What he saw had surprised him. The spirit qi that was faintly flowing was now raging.

The spirit qi core that was within Hei Yingjie's dantian was now vibrating and leaking out wisps of spirit qi. Faint grunts were even coming out of his mouth. It had only been a couple of minutes between Lin Mu checking him for the first time and now. The man that was stable before had suddenly worsened.

"What happened to him in these few moments?" Lin Mu wondered.

The man who had heard Lin Mu's words now understood the context. He too turned around and saw the change in Hei Yingjie's condition.

"What's happening to senior Hei Yingjie?" He asked, feeling afraid.

"It's bad, he's having a qi deviation." Xukong answered.

Lin Mu had heard about qi deviation from senior Xukong before, thus knew what it meant. He knew that when a cultivator's cultivation base became too unstable or underwent damage, it could lead to qi deviation.

But what confused Lin Mu was the rapidness of it. Hei Yingjie while being injured was still relatively stable before.

"Seems like you probing his dantian with your spirit sense probably triggered his defensive instincts. But because he was injured and unconscious, it resulted in this." Xukong spoke.

"So it's my fault?" Lin Mu asked, feeling guilty.

"No, do not blame yourself. This should not have normally happened, I think this may be related to why his spirit qi core is so small." Xukong replied in a stern voice.

"Alright, what do I do to help him then?" Lin Mu questioned.

"For something like this there are special alchemical pills, but we don't have that option right now. You can only try to stabilize the raging spirit qi for now." Xukong answered.

"Do I use the same method I used on Zhou Ye?" Lin Mu asked, feeling nervous.

"Yes, but it is still going to be difficult for you to do it alone. You will need the help of others, but first, you need to recuperate your own spirit qi quickly in order to help him." Xukong replied.

Upon hearing Senior Xukong's words, Lin Mu immediately thought of the spirit stones that he had. He had never used them and they were just lying in the ring. Using them would be the fastest way he could replenish his spirit qi.

"Tell the others to come to help you. They will need to supplement you with their spirit qi as well. If they rotate and do it in turns, you should have enough to maintain the supply." Xukong added.

"Yes senior." Lin Mu replied in his mind and turned to the man who was with him.

"Call everyone quick, Hei Yingjie's condition had gotten worse and now he is having a qi deviation. I'll need everyone's support to help him." Lin Mu spoke with urgency.

The man's eyes went wide as cold sweat appeared on his forehead.

"R-Right away senior." The man spoke and stumbled out of the tent.

While the man went to gather the rest of them, Lin Mu sat down and took out the damaged mid-quality spirit stones he had gotten from the hidden safe that was in the town head's office. Since they were damaged and leaking out spirit qi anyway, Lin Mu decided to use them first.

Lin Mu held one of them in his hands and then started to absorb the spirit qi from it. He started chanting the severing heart sutra and in an instant, the spirit qi started being absorbed from the spirit stone into his hands.

The spirit qi entered through his palms and flowed into the meridians. It then traveled through the meridians and finally came to settle inside the Dantian. He kept on absorbing it for about a minute before the spirit stone crumbled in his hands.

All the spirit qi from the spirit stone had been absorbed, thus the spirit stone turned into dust. Lin Mu observed his dantian and saw that he now had around seven hundred wisps of spirit qi in his dantian. The damaged mid quality spirit stone had provided him with nearly six hundred wisps of spirit qi.

"The next one should be enough." Lin Mu muttered.

And just as Lin Mu muttered that the flap of the tent opened and in walked the man he had sent to call for the rest.

"Everyone is ready, senior. What are your instructions?" The man spoke, feeling nervous.

Everyone here was a cultivator, thus they knew how dangerous a qi deviation was. They were even more scared since it was happening to someone that was part of the higher corps and was a lieutenant in the Hei corps.

"Tell them to come in one by one and inject their spirit qi into you. Once their spirit qi is depleted, another person should immediately replace them and the previous one should go recuperate." Xukong told Lin Mu.

Lin Mu inwardly nodded and turned to the man.

"I need them to supply me with spirit qi, while I help stabilize Hei Yingjie. They will switch after they run out." Lin Mu spoke.

"Yes, senior we understand!" The others shouted from the outside. Evidently, they had listened to his instructions.

"I'll be the first them." The man that was in the tent spoke.

"Alright, let me finish replenishing my spirit qi first." Lin Mu spoke.

The man felt a little confused at Lin Mu's words as he thought that he needed them, as Lin Mu had no spirit qi of his own. But then his eyes went wide in shock as Lin Wu withdrew another mid quality spirit stone and started absorbing spirit qi from it.

In a minute he was done and spoke,

"Let's start."

Chapter 150 - Helping Hei Yingjie

Lin Mu sat down beside Hei Yingjie and placed his hands on his heart and abdomen. The man who had chosen to help him first sat behind him and put his hands on his back with palms wide open.

"I'm starting, be ready." Lin Mu spoke one last time before starting.

"As you command, senior." The man replied and focused.

Lin Mu guided out the spirit qi wisps from his dantian and channeled it through his meridians and out into his hands. He then pushed the spirit qi into Hei Yingjie's body and followed the method that senior Xukong had taught him.

Lin Mu was also observing Hei Yingjie closely with the help of his spirit sense. He wanted to ensure that he wouldn't miss something and make a mistake. Soon his spirit qi started to flow through Hei Yingjie's meridians and merged with his own raging spirit qi.

Lin Mu felt pressure on himself as his spirit qi started merging with Hei Yingjie. His spirit qi was very strong and threatened to destroy his. Lin Mu had to put all his focus into it by chanting the severing heart sutra.

With great difficulty, Lin Mu was able to complete one cycle of circulation. But even then he could not see any difference in Hei Yingjie's condition. His spirit qi was still raging and damaging his meridians.

"Don't stop and continue doing it. He's at a higher cultivation realm than you, so it will take a while for his body to respond." Xukong spoke.

Lin Mu silently nodded and repeated the same process. He would pour his spirit qi into Hei Yingjie's meridians and tried to slow down the raging spirit qi. For over ten cycles, Lin Mu did not see any results or a difference in Hei Yingjie's condition.

But when he completed another twenty cycles, he finally saw the difference. The raging spirit qi had finally slowed down by a tiny fraction.

'Alright, now I just gotta keep this up.' Lin Mu thought with determination.

Lin Mu sensed his dantian for a moment and observed that he had depleted nearly forty percent of his spirit qi in just this time. Knowing that he won't be able to keep this up and now needed support, he spoke up.

"Now's the time. Inject your spirit qi into me." Lin Mu spoke.

The man didn't say anything and simply started pouring his own spirit qi into Lin Mu. This man was also at the mid stage of the qi refining realm, thus had a maximum capacity of a thousand wisps of spirit qi. Currently, he only had seven hundred wisps of spirit qi as they hadn't had the proper time to recuperate.

Still, this would be enough for Lin Mu. The man guided out the spirit qi wisps out of his dantian and injected it into Lin Mu's back. From there, the spirit qi flowed into Lin Mu's meridians and joined the spirit qi that was being channeled into Hei Yingjie.

In this manner, Lin Mu was able to supplement his own spirit qi with the other man's. Lin Mu completed another thirty cycles and observed a little more improvement in Hei Yingjie's condition. But his spirit qi stores had also reduced to seven hundred spirit qi wisps.

Even with the support of the man, the loss of spirit qi was still occurring. Lin Mu did not move his eyes from Hei Yingjie and just used his spirit sense to observe the condition of the man that was supporting him. He observed his dantian and saw that he had barely a hundred wisps of spirit qi left.

"Switch, get the next person." Lin Mu spoke.

"I'm here." Before that man could even get up, another one of the members of the team walked in.

They switched and the process started again. This time Lin Mu was able to last for ten minutes before they had to switch again. They kept on rotating one by one and hours passed by. Lin Mu was now feeling incredibly tired.

Even the members of the Hei Corps had become exhausted. Their speed of recuperating spirit qi was not as fast as Lin Mu, thus they could only make do with whatever they recovered. The sky was now starting to brighten up and the faint outline of the sun could be seen in the distance.

Snow was already falling, so it would take a while before it got sufficiently bright. The clouds were thick and spread densely in the sky. Cold winds were blowing and from time to time the flap of the tent would flutter.

Hei Yingjie's condition had greatly improved and was very close to being stable. The raging spirit qi in his meridians had smoothed over, and his core was no longer leaking any spirit qi. Lin Mu continued helping him for another hour and only stopped when his own spirit qi had fallen below a hundred wisps.

~Huuuu~

Lin Mu let out a breath and lifted his hands from Hei Yingjie's body. He was no longer grunting in pain, and the color of his face had returned to normal. Lin Mu did another check and observed his internal condition. While the qi deviation had been alleviated to a certain extent, it was still not completely gone.

For the rest, they would have to leave it up to Hei Yingjie. His internal injuries were still present and would need some more time before they could be healed. Though the injuries that he had on his skin had now completely healed as a result of Lin Mu's help.

The members of the Hei corps that had been supporting him all this while were barely holding themselves together. When the person that was currently supporting Lin Mu saw that he had lifted his hands from Hei Yingjie's body, he knew that they were done.

"It's fine now, we have done all we could. The rest is up to him." Lin Mu spoke as he stood up.

Lin Mu left the tent and stretched his body. He had been sitting in the same position for a long time thus felt as if his body was all tensed up and there were knots in his muscles. Even with his eleventh stage body tempering realm physique, it was still harrowing for him to do such a task.

Lin Mu had effectively used the equivalent of the spirit qi of four hundred qi refining realm cultivators. With eight people rotating in shifts for a total of over fifty rotations, the qi that he had used in this night was the most he had ever used.

Lin Mu wanted nothing more than to sleep now and that's what he had decided to do. The other members of the team had seen him the instant he had walked out of the tent, thus understood that they were now done. Lin Mu looked around and saw that most of them were recuperating their spirit qi and were sitting cross-legged in a meditative pose.

~Sigh~

Lin Mu let out a sigh, rubbing his forehead and thought for a bit.

"I'll go to sleep now. Inform me if anything happens." Lin Mu spoke and entered his tent.

He withdrew the soft white bolster from his ring and put it down on the bedroll before he fell asleep.