

## Walker 1641

### [Chapter 1641 A Targeted Invitation](#)

Lin Mu took the Saintess's warning seriously and decided to be careful with it.

No longer was he using his old skills that were meant for the spirit Qi realm. He was now using skills that matched up to the immortal realm and even among them they were of the top level. It was now something he could truly wring out the potential from.

"Thank you for the advice Saintess." Lin Mu said with gratitude.

"It's nothing. You would have figured it out on your own too later." The Saintess waved it away.

Lin Mu nodded his head and looked up at the sky sensing some fluctuations there. He found the barrier to be flickering lightly.

"Is that normal, by the way?" He asked.

"It'll go back to normal in a bit." The Saintess replied.

"Why's it happening though? My attack didn't hit it." Lin Mu asked.

"The Tyrant Bull Marrow Secrets doesn't just come with your skills and power. Did you not notice your aura?" The Saintess questioned instead.

"My aura?" Lin Mu had noticed it indeed. "I did, but... that caused that?"

"Of course. That's the Tyrannical Aura of the Tyrant Bull. Its mere presence can cause disturbances and make creatures intimidated. The stronger you get and further you progress with the Tyrant Bull Marrow Secrets, the stronger that aura will get. Eventually it'll reach a point where it can directly harm others." The Saintess answered.

"Huh... that wasn't in the manual." Lin Mu was surprised that Xukong hadn't mentioned that to him.

"Well, it isn't an explicit feature of it. But rather a passive effect." The Saintess replied.

"Ah, I see." Lin Mu now understood.

Some of his other techniques had similar effects too, so he grasped it quickly.

Done with that, Lin Mu looked at Little Shrubby and The twins.

"We're going to go out today." Lin Mu said.

"We are?" Little Shrubby and the twins approached him.

"Yeah, we'll take a look around the city as well as ask about the banquets. They did ask us to visit one before." Lin Mu answered.

"A Banquet?" The Saintess muttered. "Do you mean this?" she waved her hand and a letter drifted over.

"Hmmm?" Lin Mu looked at the letter and found the seal of the Lingering Bamboo Pavilion on it. "From the staff?"

"A servant dropped it off a few days ago, and announced that it was an invitation for a banquet." The Saintess replied.

Lin Mu then realized that the woman manning the desk at the Lingering Bamboo Pavilion knew about him being a contestant in the tournament. And he had asked for no servants to be there, so it made sense for them to simply send the letter this way.

"Let's take a look then." Lin Mu picked up the letter and opened it, finding a rather elegant invitation card inside.

'Dear Contestant,

If you have received this invitation, then you are chosen and have been considered a promising immortal. We are pleased to invite you to the Vibrant Flame banquet. As the greatest of all Pre-Tournament Banquets, we continue our tradition this time too, and will continue to do so for thousands of years to come just like before.

Every week there shall be one Vibrant Flame Banquet held at the Little Glory Palace until the start of the tournament. We will be greatly pleased if you would grace us with your presence.

Yours Faithfully

High Wind Alliance.'

Having read the letter, Lin Mu was a bit surprised as it didn't seem like a normal invite. From what he had heard, the other banquets were basically open invitation for contestants. But this one seemed to be targeted and exclusive.

"Seems like they've picked you." The Saintess spoke.

"Indeed... I think being here might have made them send it to me." Lin Mu concluded.

After all, he was staying in quite the expensive place. As for the majority of contestants, even if they were strong, not all of them had the liquid assets to afford something like this. They would rather spend all their earnings on resources so that they could cultivate more.

"But this High Wind Alliance... who are they?" Lin Mu couldn't recall hearing about them.

Considering the exclusivity of the invitation he reckoned that it was certainly someone important.

"And if you add the Little Glory Palace to that... It must be someone high ranking." Lin Mu guessed.

The Little Glory Palace was one of the many palaces located within the royal grounds and was further from the External Greeting hall that Lin Mu had visited. In a way, its function was similar to the External Greeting hall, meant to entertain and meet guests.

But in the case of the Little Glory Palace, the guests were usually of a high influence or power. And to make use of the Little Glory Palace was not easy, and only a high noble could authorize it.

"Considering its an alliance, perhaps they are not one but several nobles?" it didn't take much for Lin Mu to guess it.

"Are you going to this one?" The Saintess asked.

"Hmm... I'm considering it." Lin Mu didn't know how good it was to enter the palace grounds again, especially since he didn't know who was it that was throwing this banquet exactly.

His past experience had enlightened him enough to the politics of nobles and knew that merely talking with some can offend others. Even if it was just a passing greeting. Lin Mu didn't wish to get embroiled in their politics and the easiest way to do so was to avoid them.

But then at the same time, the banquet was a good chance to assess his potential competitors.

"It's tomorrow night, so you have today to consider." The Saintess said, looking at the dates.

"Yeah, I'll take a walk around first. Maybe look into who this High Wind alliance is first." Lin Mu replied.

"Interacting with other contestants will be good for you. Who knows, you might even have some gains from it." Xukong chimed in as well.

Now that even Xukong had said this, Lin Mu was a lot more positive about it.

"Alright, let's head out then." Lin Mu said to his beasts.

"Yay! I want to get some new ingredients too!" Little Shrubby said with excitement.

"Sure, we'll see what new stuff they're selling." Lin Mu agreed quickly.

With the number of new traders coming to the city, quite a lot of new items were brought. And in them all, materials that could be used as cooking ingredients were plenty too. Lin Mu was interested in it too as there were traders from different worlds arriving as well.

The party of four took their leave with the twins hiding under Lin Mu's sleeves while Little Shrubby sat on his shoulder like usual. In his kitten form, he was seen as harmless and even his cultivation base seemed to be low.

Smaller beasts like Little Shrubby were actually quite popular, especially among the younger female cultivators. Women were drawn to cute things, and the same applied to their taste in beasts.

It wasn't unusual for Lin Mu to see women walking around with small tamed beasts, that looked cute. There were small dogs, some puppies, a few birds, lots of feline beasts as well as a few hybrid beasts.

All this made it easier for Lin Mu to walk around with Little Shrubby as he didn't really stick out.

Though people would find their tamed beast getting silent when Lin Mu and Little Shrubby passed by them. Of course no one knew that the reason for this was the two. Both Little Shrubby and Lin Mu had a passive presence that alerted the instincts of the beasts.

They might not be able to tell that the threat was coming from Lin Mu and little Shrubby, but they could tell that something was around them. Thus they would stay silent until the 'danger' had passed.

Though the twins were relatively hidden, as their aura's were completely concealed. Lin Mu could tell that the Saintess had taken care of that, so that other's wouldn't notice the two as easily.

Otherwise, the effect of fear would have only been multiplied several times. There was a reason why the Yin Yang Twin Serpents were the ancestral serpents of the Serpent Moon Sect. Even in their infant forms, their power was not something to scoff at.

Just their bloodline might alert beasts several times stronger than them.

Of course, Lin Mu and his beasts didn't care about all this and simply enjoyed their time in the city. They bought new ingredients from the merchants who had newly arrived as well as ate some new dishes.

And on top of all that, Lin Mu also took that chance to find out about the High Wind alliance.

He learned that it was a special alliance of over thirty influential people that not only included nobles, but also other strong cultivators from the Dao Wind Empire. Their main function was to gather talents for their own powers and the tournament was a great way to do so.

### [Chapter 1642 What's A God?](#)

Having learned about the High Wind Alliance and its members, Lin Mu realized that this was a lot bigger than he had originally thought.

"If there are so many strong and influential individuals involved in this, they must be expecting some great returns." Lin Mu muttered to himself.

It was clear that the banquet was nothing simple. The number of resources that would be invested in it was quite literally in the high grade immortal stones level. If they were spending this much, it was obvious that they were expecting an equal or even greater return from it.

Lin Mu had seen several banquets and this was supposed to be topping all of them. The invitees were talented people and some with high cultivation bases, thus to entice and entertain them, they would need equally valuable materials.

Food, wine, fruits and a lot more would be given freely, and all of that would have to be something that could benefit the contestants.

A banquet of this level couldn't just be set up by spending ones money. They would also need the connections to gather the needed materials as many would be in short supply or would be exclusively sold to the nobles.

It wasn't a single banquet either, as they were doing this every week end. Calculating the time that was left for the tournament, there would be a total of Five banquets.

'Since they are setting up these many banquets, it is likely that not all of them will be attended by the invitees. Considering that some will be in seclusion they are intending to have it as may times as possible to get the maximum attendance.' Lin Mu analyzed.

~Sigh~

"They surely are spending a lot of effort and fortune on this, huh..." Lin Mu muttered in the end.

"That much is expected. After all, they need to grow their power and their empire as well. Recruitment of talented individuals is a good way to do that. There is a limit to how many they can nurture within their ranks too." Xukong spoke.

"That is true... Normally this should have been something that sects do. But... In their absence the empires have taken over." Lin Mu concluded.

"These are mere labels that the powers take. It doesn't matter whether they be sects, kingdoms, empires, cults, or more. All of them have the goal of growing stronger and gaining more power. All of them need people with talent." Xukong commented.

"Indeed." Lin Mu agreed. "It's just that... it'll be a pain when I have to reject them."

"I don't think they'll be that forceful." Xukong said, much to Lin Mu's surprise.

"Really?" Lin Mu asked in doubt.

"Since they are the orthodox ruling power, they won't resort to underhanded means. Even if they do try to use force in some cases, it won't be good in the long term. Besides, don't forget they have another power keeping them in check. One above all the empires." Xukong explained.

"The Temple of the Four Guardian beasts..." Lin Mu spoke. "Of course, with them watching even the Empire would have to think several times."

"If they try anything overt, it could be taken as a disrespect of the temple. After all, the tournament could be considered a sacred ritual." Xukong replied.

Hearing this, a different thought came to Lin Mu. A thought that he had lingering in the back of his head for a long time. Something that had made him question several times about the world and its truths.

"These guardians... Are they really gods, Senior?" Lin Mu finally questioned. "I mean... What immortals can do right now would be considered godly by the mortals. While the power of the guardians seems high, it isn't unimaginable to immortals. It even seems 'attainable'." He gave his perspective.

Hearing this question, Xukong couldn't help but feel amazed.

'He's finally asking the right questions...' Xukong thought to himself. "Hmm... I can say that who's god and who's not is a matter of where you are looking at it from." He started to speak.

Lin Mu stayed silent and let Xukong continued.

"Take it this way, what's a human to an ant? A human can squash an ant with ease, a single meal for a human would be enough to last the ant for hundreds of days, and the human can make great structures that a single ant wouldn't be able to do.

To top it off, the human would live for several hundred times the life of an ant." Xukong said calmly.

Lin Mu listened to it deeply, finding the focus points in it.

"Thus to an ant... What's a human but a god? A human can shower a handful of sugar and bless the ant for months to come. He can also stomp and crush an ant unknowingly while walking. Then what is he? A god? Or a devil?" Xukong asked.

"The actions would define their title." Lin Mu muttered.

"Indeed." Xukong responded. "The same applies to humans. They take things or phenomena that benefit them as gods. Whether it be natural phenomena or people. A good king could be revered as a god, as he brings prosperity and peace to its people, and similarly he can be regarded as the most heinous of devils if he does the opposite." He explained.

"Then the Four Guardians... They are gods because they bring benefits to the people... no... not just people, they regard the other races as equal too." Lin Mu started to understand.

"Exactly. The Four Guardian beasts started to be regarded as gods because of that. They didn't just help cultivators but mortals too. And didn't differentiate between the races. They spread their influence and tried to bring a balance.

To an immortal, they might be called gods, but they can see that it is something they can understand. After all, they know how the powers work, even if they might be a little beyond their comprehension.

But to the average mortal, these would be miracles beyond their understanding.

Who's god and who's not depends on where you stand." Xukong stated, his voice as if prying into the truths.

#### [Chapter 1643 Heading To The Banquet](#)

Lin Mu could feel that there was a lot more to this than what Xukong had spoken. Fine nuances that were still hidden, but he knew they were something he would understand eventually.

"You might see them as gods when you were mortal, but as you grew, you understood their power.

Some experts who have gone beyond the boundary of the immortals, such as the Saintess would merely see these gods as equals." Xukong added, snapping Lin Mu out of his thoughts.

"I see... So gods are merely stronger cultivators." Lin Mu stated.

"On some level, yes... Though you'll understand more later on. It is something you need to explore yourself." Xukong replied.

This gave Lin Mu a lot to think about. He went silent for five minutes, staring off into the distance. Thankfully he was sitting in the balcony of a restaurant, thus it just seemed like he was looking at the scenery in the distance.

If he was walking like before when they had started this conversation, some people would have surely gotten creeped out.

Little Shrubby was also on the table, eating half of a fish, while the twins sneaked at the food while peeking out from Lin Mu's sleeves.

~HUU~

Lin Mu let out a breath, as he calmed down his mind.

"What about you senior?" Lin Mu asked with great curiosity. "Are you... Considered a god? The Saintess is already called the Saintess, thus she must have a god associated that is above her." He inquired.

"Me?" Xukong couldn't help but chuckle. "I guess you can say that."

"Really?" Lin Mu raised a brow.

"Though I don't know how many would think of me as a god, and how many would consider me a devil." Xukong said, making Lin Mu surprised.

While Lin Mu knew that someone at the level of Xukong wouldn't have reached that point without killing, he also didn't know just how far it would go. For him to be considered both sides, meant that there were enough people that hated and feared him.

"Both a god and devil huh..." Lin Mu said in a low voice. "Would I be considered the same eventually?" he questioned himself this time.

Lin Mu shook his head and focused on finishing the food in front of him. Though Little Shrubby and the twins had already emptied out the table twice. The waiter was doing his fourth trip with more dishes and couldn't help but look at them strangely.

To the man, the dishes placed in front of Lin Mu would disappear rather quickly. If not for the fact that there were still bones and other waste left behind, he would have thought that Lin Mu was just storing them away.

"Do you want me to bring more, sir?" The waiter inquired just in case.

Lin Mu had told them earlier to keep on bringing food, until he said no. But now that five rounds of food had been finished, even the waiter was feeling doubtful. Not to mention, the kitchen would have to work quickly as some of the dishes took longer time to prepare.

"No... this'll be enough." Lin Mu replied.

While he could have eaten more, he didn't have the mood anymore. He wished to go out into the city again.

"Very well sir. I'll bring the bill." The waiter said before leaving.

Lin Mu turned to his beasts and spoke, "let's finish up."

~Meow~

~hiss~ hiss~

Low cries were heard in response, as the beasts focused on clearing the table again.

A couple minutes later, the table was empty and the waiter had returned with the bill. Lin Mu paid it off and left the restaurant, heading off towards the shopping district again. While he had bought quite a lot of things before, there were still many shops left to explore.

Lin Mu didn't necessarily have to buy things either, as simply looking at new materials and items was a good experience. He got to learn about them this way and even test his knowledge on some level.

And surely, he found more things that interested him.

He bought a few formation manuals, as well as a set of books that taught about runes from different races.

After all, formation creation was something that varied greatly even among humans. While Dao Script was universal, there were still other languages and scripts that could be used for it. These languages would still be useful in making formations and arrays, with some having useful applications.

One of the most basic application was none other than encryption.

If a formation master couldn't read a rune, he would have a hard time telling what the formation was. It was one of the most basic and simple ways of making a formation had to break.

Plus having seen the Shamanic Script of the Demon race earlier, he was now interested in more such scripts. He felt like he could learn and expand a lot more if he knew them.

He ended up spending over fifteen hours just walking around, until finally it was time for the Banquet.

"Just like that I've spent over a day in the city." Lin Mu was surprised at how fast the time had passed.

He turned to Little Shrubby in his arms and spoke, "let's get changed before we head to the banquet shall we?"

"Okay~" Little Shrubby responded.

Lin Mu simply brushed his hands over his clothes and they were switched with better ones. With his control over space improving, storing and retrieving something at the same time was as simple as breathing to him.

The new robes that he was wearing were something that was more suited to occasions like these and looked luxurious. They were a mix of black and purple, with white embroidery on it.

Now dressed in better robes, Lin Mu turned up at the entrance of the Palace grounds.

"What are you here for?" The guards questioned politely this time, looking at Lin Mu's robes.

In response, he simply took out the invitation.

#### [Chapter 1644 Little Glory Palace](#)

The guards merely had to take a single glance at the invitation and knew that it was real.

"Ah! You can go on ahead sir," The guard quickly responded.

Lin Mu was surprised by the sudden change of attitude, but then realized that it might be partially due to his clothes too.

'Should I dress like this more often?' Lin Mu couldn't help but wonder.

It might help him have better service in several places and perhaps even save him time.

'I'd been wearing plain clothes to avoid, too much attention. But then that ends up causing extra scrutiny for me.' Lin Mu pondered on it.



He thought about this while walking in, and soon made up his mind.

"I guess I'll just use the new clothes I got. Most of them are the same quality as this anyways." Lin Mu muttered to himself.

He also had the self repairing robes which he had bought a while back, and they were quite luxurious looking too. Lin Mu had bought a few sets of them but he had left them to be used while traveling or when he would actively be fighting.

Lin Mu continued walking and passed by several buildings on the way. All of them were luxurious and the further he went, the better they got. There were also ponds, and rock gardens along the way, with a long winding stream that weaved between the paths.

Over the stream, there were redwood bridges that gave it an elegant feeling.

He could even see several guests that were standing on the bridges and taking in the scenery.

"Guess this is a rare sight for most people. Not everyone would get to enter this far into the palace grounds." Lin Mu muttered.

He had to admit though, that this was perhaps the best palace he had seen so far. Just the vastness of it was comparable to a few cities of normal size. And this was just the palace grounds alone, with the rest of the capital region being even bigger.

"That should be the Little Glory Palace." Lin Mu soon spotted the location of the banquet.

Little Glory Palace was built in the center of a lake. One of the many lakes that were within the palace grounds.

It was built entirely with wood and had long eaves that extended over the water. There were red and pink lanterns hanging from the eaves, while thousands of fireflies roamed around it.

These fireflies were not normal either and were actually Spirit Light Fireflies. They too, were spirit beasts, despite being weak.

The glow of the fireflies reflected on the lake, making it seem like there were stars on the bottom of the lake too. In the Rust Sky World where stars couldn't really be seen, it was rather mesmerizing to see them on the lake.

Then there were the colorful fishes that swam in the lake. They would huddle around the small music boats that were circling the palace. Each of these boats held a couple of musicians that were playing various instruments.

Some played the guqin, some played flutes and drums, along with several more.

The music was harmonious and melded well with the atmosphere of the Little Glory Palace.

"This is a rather open palace." Lin Mu said, seeing its design that had walls that fully opened up.

The walls were basically extended doors that could collapse and give one a wide open view of the lake.

Then there were the people. Hundreds of servants could be seen doing various tasks, bringing drinks, food and snacks to the people. Courtesans that danced on open stages that had been set up along with more musicians.

The number of guests seemed to be roughly around two hundred, making Lin Mu wonder if this was normal if today there were more.

'Despite them being selective, they seem to have invited quite a lot of people.' Lin Mu thought to himself.

"Well with the number of people that are attending the tournament, even having a thousand or so highly talented cultivators would be normal." Xukong said.

"Hmm... that does make sense. And considering the status of this banquet, it wouldn't be out of the normal for them to have ditched other banquets and chosen to come to this one." Lin Mu assumed.

After having taken a good look, Lin Mu proceeded towards the entrance of the Little Glory Place that was beyond a bridge that connected to the actual palace.

He passed through a stone arch that hung over the bridge, a few couplets carved into it. And when Lin Mu stepped onto the bridge, he could already smell the fragrance that was dispersed into the air.

"They certainly use some good incense... Jasmine and Agar wood." Lin Mu identified.

There seemed to be no guards present here at the moment, which made Lin Mu feel a bit strange.

'No guards? They wouldn't be that careless, would they?' Lin Mu was doubtful.

After all, this was a gathering of strong cultivators. Most of them were talented, and of high status, which inevitably also made them stubborn and prideful. In such a setting, arguments were common and a fight breaking out would be expected.

Thus, for there to be no guards, was not good.

"Oh wait... that's not it." Lin Mu finally sensed the arrays that were hidden cleverly.

And these weren't just the typical arrays that one might find, like defensive and offensive arrays.

"They actually set up small teleportation arrays." Lin Mu couldn't help but be surprised.

The entire Little Glory Palace was covered in a set of teleportation arrays. Lin Mu activated his Spatial perception and tried to see if he could find their linking points.

'These are short range teleportation arrays, so their entry point should be close by too...' Lin Mu reckoned.

And just as he had thought, he could faintly see a trail of spatial fluctuations that went over a kilometer away. More accurately, they went to a building that looked like a guard barracks.

"So that's how they are maintaining security... The guards can just teleport into the palace instantly if there is a conflict. They're even keeping the arrays constantly active even though it'll take quite a lot of immortal stones to do this." Lin Mu understood.

Usually, one would only activate a spatial teleportation array when one intended to use it. But in the current case, since it was a short distance teleportation array, the energy needed to keep it active was less.

Of course, for most people, it would be considered a waste to keep it active constantly like this.

"A clever way, for sure." Lin Mu said as he finally stepped onto the threshold of the Little Glory Palace.

Two incense braziers were placed on the sides of the gates, as swaying smoke rose from it. Even the smoke was colorful and would change into different colors from time to time, giving a festive vibe to the banquet.

"WELCOME!" A man loudly greeted Lin Mu, startling him internally.

Lin Mu gazed at the man, finding him to be decent looking. He was also wearing the robes of the nobility and even his cultivation base was good.

'Fourth Tribulation Stage of the immortal realm.' Lin Mu quickly identified.

"May I have your invitation and name, please?" The man asked.

"Sure..." Lin Mu then understood that this must be the greeter for the banquet.

He had seen them in other banquets too before, but none as strong and of a high status as this.

"I'm Mu Lin." He gave his alias as usual.

The man took a look at the invitation as well, which lit up with a name too.

"It actually had my name on it?" Lin Mu hadn't noticed it before.

"It is an authentication for precaution." The man spoke. "There are always a few that try to sneak into our banquets by stealing invitations."

"Ah, I see." Lin Mu replied. "May I know who you are?" he asked next.

"I am Dai He. A second rank official of the Imperial Palace, and one of the hosts for tonight's evening." The man introduced himself.

"So it is Official Dai He," Lin Mu cupped his hands in greeting. "It is a pleasure to meet you."

"The pleasure is all mine." Dai he said with a smile before looking at the kitten in Lin Mu's hands. "And you too,"

~meow~

Little Shrubby too responded, feeling pleased with the greeting.

"Would you like me to introduce you to some of the guests?" Dai He asked.

Since many of the contestants wouldn't know each other, this was one of the jobs of the hosts. They would introduce them to others as a form of an icebreaker.

"Uh, sure." Lin Mu didn't think it would be bad. 'Might even come as rude if I reject him.' He thought.

"Very well." Dai He said before turning around.

Lin Mu followed him on cue and soon walked to the deeper parts of the palace. Even with the hundreds of people that were here at the moment, it didn't feel crowded at all. The palace was after all, quite spacious.

### [Chapter 1645 Insulted Beast Tamers](#)

Dai He took Lin Mu to one of the side areas, that had a few tables set up. There were several guests sitting there, talking to each other. Lin Mu took a look and could tell that all of them seemed to have met each other recently took from their subtle behavior.

"Honored guests, please meet Daoist Mu Lin. This is also his first banquet as well as his first Tournament of the Guardian beasts." Dai He spoke after coming to stand between the tables

A good host would know which guests to introduce to who. After all, even if there were many guests invited that were all promising competitors, there were still difference in their status and belonging.

Thus one had to match them with similar guests, at least for the start. It wasn't obligatory that one must only talk to guests that were similar to them. This was simply so that the guests would find it comfortable to mingle.

For people who had never taken part in the tournament before, a gathering like this would be rather new and they might find it a bit awkward to talk to others. Thus the host had gathered them this way.

First they could get acquainted with each other, and then talk to the other guests. There were no restrictions after all.

"Greetings Daoist Mu Lin." Some of the people greeted freely.

"Hello." Some were a little shy but still greeted.

And then there were a few that simply didn't say anything and looked at him blankly.

Lin Mu didn't mind their actions and simply greeted them the same.

He cupped his hands and spoke, "greetings to you all too. I hope we all have fun today."

"Haha, we sure will." One of the men sitting on the table replied enthusiastically and stood up. "Please join us," he gestured to the empty spot on the table.

"I'll take that up then." Lin Mu said before pulling the chair and sitting down while the host left to attend to the new guests.

Little Shrubby peeked his head out from below the table and looked at the people too. The sight of his head elicited a few reactions from the two women that were sitting on the table as well.

"AH~ Is brother Mu Lin a beast tamer too?" one of the women asked.

pāndā`nove1~coM Lin Mu looked at her, finding her to be in her mid twenties appearance wise. But from her cultivation base, he was sure that she was at least a couple thousand years old.

'Third Tribulation Stage of the Immortal realm... Hmm, that seems to be the average for a lot of people here.' Lin Mu said having sensed the energy fluctuations in the palace.

While there were some strong cultivators here, the highest was still the fifth Tribulation Stage of the Immortal realm. Lin Mu didn't know if there were some hiding their power, or if they were simply not in attendance.

Despite that though, the number of strong people gathered here was rather huge. After all, these weren't the average immortals, but talented ones. All of them were able to fight those that were a stage above them at the very least.

For the time being though, Lin Mu focused on the woman that had spoken.

She was definitely beautiful and knew that too. Lin Mu could tell this from the hint of confidence she had on her face.

"Yes I am." Lin Mu nodded his head. "This is Little Shrubby, one of my tamed beasts." He didn't forget to introduce Little Shrubby either.

~meow~

Little Shrubby too responded before jumping up on the table.

"Aww! He's sweet and cute." The woman couldn't help but say, while the second woman looked on with an interested expression too.

"Ah! No wonder Daoist Mu Lin's cultivation base is so low." A new person spoke this time.

Lin Mu could feel a hint of arrogance in their voice and found it to be coming from the table next to them. There was a younger man gazing at them now.

"If you are a specialized beast tamer, no wonder you don't cultivate yourself that much." The man said with a calm face, but the intended insult within it was clear.

The others sitting at the table could sense it too and a few of them became irked.

Before Lin Mu could respond though, the second woman spoke up.

"Hah! There are different paths people take, Li Lao. People need to cultivate according to their compatibility."

"Ahaha! Ming Aolian, as peppy as ever." The man named Li Lao chuckled. "That might be so, but even the beast seems to be a little too weak, doesn't it? Look at it, its a kitten suitable for a woman's bosom. Hardly a man would keep something like this." He couldn't help but mock.

~GROWL~

Little Shrubby didn't take kindly to that, his fur flaring up as a low growl escaped his mouth.

"Aw! Look at the little kitten being angry. Still so cute." Li Lao only got more excited.

"Li Lao!" the two women exclaimed together.

Both of them were beast tamers and one of them was even specialized in it. To them, insulting one's tamed beasts was the same as insulting them. They couldn't take this calmly. It also seemed like they knew Li Lao from before and had some enmity too.

"What? I just said the truth." Li Lao didn't back down. "Look, that beast is even smaller than your tamed beasts. Can it even do anything? It doesn't even seem to be an immortal beast, its merely a spirit beast." He continued.

"That doesn't give you the right to act like this!" Ming Aolian responded.

~GROWL~

Little Shrubby was also getting more agitated, as his growl became louder. Not just that, but even his body seemed a bit bigger. People didn't notice this, or even if they did, they would think that it was just his fur puffing up more.

"I can't help if the truth hurts so much for you people." Li Lao said with a nonchalant attitude.

~CREAK~

The two women stood up from their seats, their chairs creaking against the floorboards.

"You!" they were just about to shout again when something happened.

~SHUA~

An aura suddenly spread around them. The ones that felt the aura, shivered unconsciously and soon felt goosebumps after a few moments.

This was felt by those that were sitting along with Lin Mu. But the ones that were on the table next to him, or more specifically where Li Lao were sitting felt something greater. To them, it was as if a great pressure was being applied to them and breathing became difficult.

Li Lao stopped speaking, or more accurately he couldn't speak due to the pressure he was feeling.

"This..." The man who had enthusiastically greeted Lin Mu was staring at him with a bewildered expression.

A Tyrannical Aura was radiating off Lin Mu's body, and could already be seen around him. The more it increased, the difficult it got for others. After a couple of seconds, they even found the flow of Qi becoming troubled.

"And here I thought this was going to be a calm banquet." Lin Mu muttered, his voice only heard by the ones near him.

He turned his head towards Li Lao, making the man shiver.

Lin Mu's expression was eerily calm and yet, the aura rolling off him was anything but that.

'This... this doesn't make sense...' Li Lao thought. 'His cultivation base is merely at the First Tribulation Stage of the Immortal realm. He's two stages below me!' he couldn't comprehend it.

"I think... I should correct Daoist Li Lao." Lin Mu spoke calmly, which only amplified the pressure that others felt. "I am indeed a Beast Tamer, but that is not my specialty." Lin Mu revealed.

By now the others on his table had grasped what Lin Mu was getting too.

"As for my cultivation... it is not focused on a single path." Lin Mu continued and took a step forward.

"But if I were to say, what I am the best at, it would be... Body cultivation." Lin Mu stated, as the Tyrannical Aura rushed over to Li Lao.

The man was drowned in the wave, and fell to the floor.

"You... You... you can't... You can't attack others like this!" one of the people sitting near Li Lao's spoke, apparently a friend.

"Attack? Did I even attack?" Lin Mu pointed to himself and asked the one's sitting at his table. "Have I even touched him yet?" he questioned.

~gulp~

The other's swallowed their saliva nervously.

"Of course not!" the man who had greeted Lin Mu enthusiastically said hurriedly. "I think Daoist Li Lao is simply too weak that he cannot even bear the aura of a fellow cultivator."

"Is that right?" Lin Mu raised a brow.

"Yes! Yes!" Ming Aolian and the other woman did the same while the rest of the tables nodded.

"Daoist Mu Lin has done nothing. It is Daoist Li Lao who has fallen on his own." They quickly accepted.

#### [Chapter 1646 Clarification And Mingling](#)

With the little act that Lin Mu had shown them, the people sitting at the table couldn't help but hurriedly agree.

They had understood a lot more from Lin Mu's act than one might expect. After all, these were all talented individuals that know about the world of cultivation. And what Lin Mu had done in front of them was certainly stunning.

Lin Mu had not only suppressed Li Lao with merely his aura but had even felt the others feel pressured. And this was all when there was no killing intent involved in it either. The power that Lin Mu showed was merely a passive effect.

"You... can't do this! Do you think you can get away acting like this?" but it seemed like the people that were with Li Lao were not convinced.

"Yeah! Your actions were clearly violent! I don't think our hosts will tolerate this." Another person chimed in.

"Is that so?" Lin Mu raised a brow. "Why don't we wait and see then?" he simply said while showing his palms.

The others couldn't speak after that and looked around.

Lin Mu's actions had certainly caught attention and there were several people looking over them. But this was still limited to the immediate area around them. To the rest of the guests, this kind of commotion was nothing, and it seemed like they were used to worse.

They didn't even glance for a moment, simply ignoring them and continuing their chats.

"Why... How?" the people sitting with Li Lao were confused after seeing that there was no response from the security even after five minutes.

"Well... I think there's no use in waiting any longer." Lin Mu said and took his seat. "My words stand proven." He stated.

"Ugh..." The people sitting with Li Lao stood up at that point and changed locations.

They also dragged Li Lao with them, who had a pale and unfocused expression on his face. A few seconds later, they had disappeared in the crowd and could no longer be seen. After all the Little Glory Palace was quite large and had multiple sections.

Once they were gone, the people looked at Lin Mu.

"Daoist Mu Lin... how did you know there would be no reaction?" The people at the table couldn't help but ask.

They too were stunned by this. In fact, the reason they had quickly agreed with Lin Mu's words was to back him up. So that if the security did come, Lin Mu would have little issues. But the reality turned out to be different.

Lin Mu gazed at the two women who were now looking at him with great interest, as well as the other sets of eyes that were watching him from the other table. It was clear that it wasn't just this table that was focusing on him now.

He had attracted the interest of others too unlike the start when they only gave him a perfunctory look.

They waited for him to speak and watched with great interest. Lin Mu didn't let them suffer any longer and decided to speak.

"I just had trust in our hosts." Lin Mu said simply. "I would think they are more than qualified to tell violent intentions." He stated.

"Of course!" The enthusiastic man was the first to speak again. "Daoist Mu Lin was in the right after all."

"Indeed." The others nodded their heads too.

Lin Mu couldn't help but feel a little amazed at how quickly people changed their perceptions. Of course, what they didn't know was that Lin Mu had taken calculated actions from the very start.

'Seems like they didn't know about the Spatial teleportation arrays... They only activate when there is significant violent or killing intent. It won't register mere aura as an offense.' Lin Mu thought to himself.



He had analyzed the arrays that were present in the Little Glory Palace before entering and that had now turned into an advantage here. Lin Mu had remembered the Saintess's words about how the Tyrannical Aura was an additional passive effect of the Tyrant Bull Marrow Secrets.

To Lin Mu, controlling it to intimidate a single person was rather easy.

But to others, the oppression of the aura was great. They couldn't help but feel that Lin Mu could take out all of them at once. This was what the aura presented to them and showed a warning.

It had gone even better than Lin Mu had thought and now he could have a little peace.

"Brother Mu Lin, can you tell us how you did that?" The woman named Ming Aolian asked.

"Yes yes! Tell me too brother." The second woman joined in.

"Ah, before I do that though... perhaps I should get to know your names?" Lin Mu replied.

"Ahah! I can't believe we forget to introduce ourselves." The Enthusiastic man slapped his hand. "Let me start then. I am Lu Xu." He introduced.

"I am Ming Dandan." The second woman spoke, catching Lin Mu's interest.

"Are you two sisters?" Lin Mu raised a brow.

"Ah! We aren't blood sisters but we do share the same master." Ming Aolian replied. "She was the one who took us in from a young age and gave us our names. We also took on her surname." She explained.

"I see..." Lin Mu said before turning to the next person. "Please, you can continued." He gestured.

"I am Qian Wen." The man sitting next to the two women said.

Qian Wen was dressed like a typical soldier and Lin Mu could tell that he was still in active service.

'Someone from the Royal army perhaps?' Lin Mu couldn't help but wonder.

"And I am Luo Liqin." The final person spoke.

He was the shortest person on the table, and perhaps in the entire banquet. He was merely a 150 centimeters tall, with even the girls towering over him. If not for the full grown beard and long brows that he had, Lin Mu might have thought that he was a child.

"It is a pleasure to meet you all." Lin Mu said with a smile. "As for hows I did that, it was simply the effect of a body cultivation technique." He revealed.

"Really?" Qian Wen seemed intrigued.

"I don't think it would be good to ask the details." Lu Xu said. "Everyone has to keep their secrets after all." He added, giving Lin Mu an excuse.

"Still, I must say your body cultivation technique is unlike anything I've ever seen." Ming Dandan said with enthusiasm. "Even when I was in the Holy Topaz Continent, I haven't seen anything of this level..." she added.

"Oh? You're from the Holy Topaz Continent?" Lin Mu was a bit surprised.

"Yes, both me and my senior sister are from there." Ming Dandan nodded her head.

"We are from the Blue Mountain Palace." Ming Aolian revealed.

"The Blue Mountain Palace?!" Lin Mu hadn't expected to meet people from that power.

He had seen several of their people in the Desolate Blood Battlefield before too, but hadn't interacted with them. After all, Lin Mu had a lot to attribute to them. If not for them leaking the information about the Violet Mystic Life Tree, Lin Mu might have been lagging behind at this moment.

"You know about us?" Ming Aolian could tell from Lin Mu's tone.

"Yes... I just came from the Holy Topaz continent too." Lin Mu replied as it wasn't really a secret.

"Whoa!" Lu Xu said with surprise.

"Though I am not from there. I am merely a wandering cultivator." Lin Mu clarified.

"Ah I see... brother Mu Lin must have gone there for body cultivation resources too?" Ming Dandan quickly guessed.

"You are indeed correct." Lin Mu replied. "It was all in preparation for the tournament after all."

"That much is expected." Lu Xu said before turning to Luo Liqin next to him. "You are a body cultivator too, aren't you Daoist Liqin?"

Lin Mu looked at the dwarf man, not having sensed anything from him.

He focused his sense on the man, and realized that the vitality within the man was rather silent. Though the Qi fluctuations could be felt the same as before.

"I am not a specialized body cultivator. I used to be... but I had to give up after reaching the immortal realm." Luo Liqin revealed.

"Why so?" Lin Mu inquired.

"As much as I would have liked to continue pursuing it. I simply was not cut out for it." Luo Liqin shook his head.

~Sigh~

"I should have listened to my father." Luo Liqin let out a sigh. "I had to stop and focus on Qi cultivation again." He added.

"You didn't lag behind though." Lu Xu spoke. "You're still at the Third Tribulation Stage of the Immortal realm, despite re-cultivating."

"Daoist Liqin certainly has talent." Lin Mu praised the man a bit too. "Not many can soldier on and restart like that. And even less can catch up to others after restarting. I would say, that learning from one's mistakes and flaws is a great skill too."

Luo Liqin's expression eased up and he couldn't help but smile a bit.

"Thank you Daoist Mu Lin." Luo Liqin said with a hint of gratitude. "But you are even more talented. You aren't just a Qi cultivator and a beast tamer, but also a body cultivator." He said with true amazement.

"I know right!" Ming Dandan said out a little loudly, before holding her mouth. "I mean... isn't that great? Not many body cultivators take up beast taming."

"Well some just call them beasts too, haha." Lin Mu joked.

"It's not like that." Ming Aolian shook her head.

"It's fine." Lin Mu wasn't minding it. "Though... I do think it makes it easier to understand beasts." He added.

"Oh?" the people couldn't help but look in surprise.

Lin Mu stroked Little Shrubby's fur, and continued to speak. "Many body cultivation techniques are based on the cultivation methods of beasts and were originally sourced from them. So ultimately what we try to do is basically replicate the ancestors of the beast." He explained.

pαndα`nove1`coM "Hmm... our master said something similar too." Ming Aolian said while furrowing her brows. "Though I didn't understand it back then."

"That is normal." Lin Mu replied. "After all, body cultivation has greatly changed over the eons of history. The original methods are now obscure or entirely gone, with the new ones taking on different forms that are different from the beasts. Though at the core, once one ponders deep enough they would realize the truth."

Lin Mu had seen the beasts and how they struggled. While the beasts had their own bloodlines to guide them, that bloodline still came from somewhere. The original beast would have had to practice and figure everything out on its own before reaching the peak.

They didn't have the same teaching advantage as that of the humans, who would often have masters guiding the youth.

Of course, this was the case for the lower ranked beasts. The higher ranked beasts were basically the same as humans and could even taken on humanoid forms.

The people on the table couldn't help but ponder on Lin Mu's words for a bit in silence.

~DING~

And while they were doing so, the chime of a bell was heard. It was light and soft to the ears, but still pulled everyone's attention.

"Honored, guests we shall now be starting the dinner service. Please enjoy to your hearts content!" the voice of hosts could be heard.

~STEP~STEP~STEP~

Soon multiple servants brought trays of food to the tables.

[Chapter 1647 Astounding Dining Manners](#)

In the Little Glory Palace, a rather astounding event was happening.

On one of the tables, a certain young man was sitting surrounded by people who were gawking at him. In any other setting, this would be seen as rude, but in the current situation it would be strange if they were not doing this.

After all, the man they were staring at had eaten enough food that would be enough to stuff a hundred people. And despite that, he was still going.

~CLACK~

Lin Mu finished another plate of ribs and slid the plate to the stack on the side.

By the time he was done with the second plate, a servant came and cleared out the empty plates. Then another servant brought more trays of food.

Even the servants were at a loss as to what was happening. If not for the fact that this was a banquet and all the food was meant for people to eat, they would have never thought there would be someone as gluttonous as this.

'How can he eat that much?'

'Is he even human?'

'His words about body cultivators being close to a beast were rather accurate, seeing him like this...'

The people sitting at the table looked at each other and communicated through their eyes. It didn't take much for them to guess each other's thoughts. It was simply too unbelievable.

They even missed the fact that Lin Mu wasn't the only one eating. Little Shrubby was also consuming food rapidly, despite being in his kitten form. He had already eaten enough food that if it was all gathered, it would be over a hundred times his body weight.

If not for the fact that the tables surrounding blocked the view of Lin Mu, there might have been a lot more people staring at him. The composition would have been a lot bigger too. But right now, Lin Mu was free to eat as much as possible.

Another ten minutes passed by, and Little Shrubby was the first one to be done eating.

By now, the others had grown numb to Lin Mu's actions and were eating on their own too, albeit a bit slowly. Their eyes still couldn't leave Lin Mu as if not wanting to miss even a moment of it.

'I had thought he was joking about his dining manners at first, but this... Is this even considered dining at this point?' Lu Xu wondered.

To him the amount that Lin Mu had eaten was the same as several beasts. But that wasn't all, as the food he had eaten was all high quality food made from immortal ingredients. To any normal cultivator, just a couple of plates would be enough to stuff them.

After all, these ingredients had a high concentration of vitality as well as immortal Qi.

There was a reason why a banquet like this could not be afforded by just anyone. They might be able to buy these immortal ingredients sure, but buying them in bulk quantities like these was not simple.

One needed great connections to do so.

This was exactly what Lin Mu intended to take advantage of.

In fact, he could already feel the effects within his body.

'The Tyrant Bull Marrow secrets is working... I can feel the totem reacting.' Lin Mu thought to himself, as he continued to eat.

Of course the growth of the totem wasn't that great, but Lin Mu knew he was basically stockpiling energy. And when the right time came, it would all burst out together, pushing his cultivation base another step forwards.

'I'll be able to save up on resources this way.' Lin Mu thought to himself.

Even if the food Lin Mu was eating didn't provide any Immortal Essence, the sheer vitality and Immortal Qi it provided was still enough to act as a stimulant for him. Another thirty minutes went by like this, after which Lin Mu finally stopped.

~CLACK~

The final plate was emptied out and Lin Mu let out a breath of satisfaction.

~Haa~

"That was a great meal." Lin Mu said with pleasure.

The others couldn't help but take a second look at the empty plates and the servants with awkward expressions.

"What's wrong?" Lin Mu finally looked at the others who had stopped midway.

"Ah! Nothing! Nothing!" they hurriedly responded and finished eating.

No one questioned Lin Mu's actions, and they didn't know the reason why either. Whether it was simple amazement, or a bit of fear, they just decided to accept it as it is. To them, if Lin Mu could suppress others with just his aura, eating this much was normal too.

"Umm... anyway have you all seen the prospective rankings?" Lu Xu spoke, trying to break the awkwardness.

"Prospective ranking?" Lin Mu raised his brows before thinking of something.

He took out the booklet that had details about the tournament and showed them.

"Do you mean this?" Lin Mu asked.

"That's outdated now." Lu Xu shook his head. "They update the rankings every week now." He replied before taking out a small jade slip.

He placed it on the table and tapped it.

~SHUA~

A formation screen appeared from it, and information rolled in.

"This is the latest ranking that was updated yesterday." Lu Xu spoke, making everyone look at it deeply.

"The first position is still unchanged. Feng Baxing is still at the top." Luo Liqin said with a stiff expression.

"The second did change though." Ming Dandan pointed out. "Childe Wildfire fell to the fourth position."

"Who's that in the second position though? They certainly weren't in the top ten before." Qian Wen questioned.

"That is Dugu Shanhe... He's the black horse this time." Lu Xu answered. "Before this he wasn't in the ranking at all, but then he had a dominating appearance in one of the other banquets and took over the second position. His cultivation base is also at the Fifth Tribulation Stage of the Immortal realm." He explained.

"What did he do?" Ming Aolian couldn't help but ask.

#### [Chapter 1648 The Prospective Rankings](#)

Ming Aolian wasn't the only one who wanted to know more. Lin Mu and the others at the table were the same.

Dugu Shanhe challenged Childe Wildfire, of course. They had a short spar of three moves. Each would take three moves from the other, and if they couldn't take it, they would lose." Lu Xu explained. "They tossed a coin and Dugu Shan won it. But despite that he went first, taking the disadvantage. He withstood all attacks from Childe Wildfire, sustaining a few injuries."

"Isn't that bad? Why would he pick the disadvantage after winning the toss?" Qian Wen couldn't understand.

"Probably to make his victory unquestionable." Lin Mu spoke, guessing the man's reasoning.

"Indeed." Lu Xu nodded his head. "When it was Childe Wildfire's turn to take the attacks, he was knocked out in just a single attack!"

"W-what!?" Ming Dandan was stunned. "How's that possible? Isn't Childe Wildfire at the Fifth Tribulation Stage of the Immortal realm too?" she was doubtful.

"He is indeed. But Dugu Shanhe's skill was too strong... and mysterious. No one understood what he did, but a mere wave of his hand was all that was needed for Childe Wildfire to faint." Lu Xu said with a serious expression.

"Just a wave of his hand? What did he slap him unconscious?" Qian Wen chuckled.

"No... he didn't even touch him." Lu Xu said, much to everyone's surprise.

"What? No contact made?" They were stunned.

"A hypnotic skill?" Lin Mu threw out a guess.

"We don't know. People have been guessing since last week, but no one has been able to figure it out." Lu Xu stated. "But it was enough to get Dugu Shanhe sponsored by the Fourth Minister." He added.

"What? The fourth minister directly sponsored him?!" Qian Wen was astounded. "That man rarely sets any bets like this."

"Indeed. This is also why Dugu Shanhe jumped so quickly and why Childe Wildfire fell to the fourth instead of just the third position." Lu Xu replied.

Lin Mu felt rather intrigued by this all.

'I should definitely get to know the top contestants. Who knows, I might end up fighting them,' Lin Mu thought to himself.

Luo Liqin was staring at the third position with a slightly angry expression in all this. Lin Mu noticed it and asked, "what's up with the third ranker?"

"That's Yao Changying..." Luo Liqin was the one who spoke this time.

His voice held a hint of anger that didn't go unnoticed.

"That bitch." Ming Aolian cursed.

Lin Mu raised his brows at the open aggression. Thankfully, Lu Xu noticed Lin Mu's confusion and decided to explain.

"Yao Changying is the daughter of Princess Meifen... The blood sister of the Holy Topaz Emperor." Lu Xu revealed.

"The Holy Topaz Emperor is her uncle, then?" Lin Mu could somewhat start understanding.

"Indeed." Lu Xu nodded his head.

"Why does she have a different surname though?" Lin Mu asked. "Don't most of the women marry into the royal family itself? And it is the men that take on the surnames of the women they marry?"

"That is true for most of them, but in the case of Princess Meifen it's a bit different." Lu Xu replied.

"Princess Meifen married the heir of the Flourishing Flower Sword Sect." He revealed.

Lin Mu tried to recall if he had heard about the Flourishing Flower Sword Sect, but couldn't. 'Since it's a sect, it's certainly not from the Rust Sky world.' He reckoned.

"The Flourishing Flower Sword Sect is one of the top sects of a nearby world, the Zhenzui World. It is also an immortal world, and is ranked just below the Rust Sky world in terms of progress. But the strength of their people is almost comparable to our world. Their sects are quite mysterious too." Lu Xu explained further.

"So since she married outside, she took on her husband's surname." Lin Mu now understood. "But that also means she left the Holy Topaz Dynasty." He added.

"She did indeed. But she still has a lot of privileges in our world and they apply the same to Yao Changying." Lu Xu replied.

Even if Lin Mu heard all this, he couldn't understand the hostility that Luo Liqin and Ming Aolian had shown before.

"Has Yao Changying done something bad?" Lin Mu couldn't help but ask.

"Bad? Bad would be an understatement..." Ming Aolian shook her head.

"Yao Changying had gathered several immortals on an expedition about fifty years ago." Luo Liqin started to speak. "It was an expedition into an inheritance ground located on an abandoned world."

Lin Mu listened carefully, a few thoughts popping up in his mind.

"But the expedition was merely a ruse. Yao Changying knew exactly what was going to happen and she even know what the inheritance ground was. It was a sacrificial temple!" Ming Aolian exclaimed. "She tricked the members of the expedition and got them to die, reaping the final rewards for herself. That is also how she managed to reach the Fifth Tribulation Stage of the Immortal realm so fast. A hundred years ago, she was merely at the second Tribulation Stage of the immortal realm."

Hearing this, Lin Mu pursed his lips. To him, this seemed like a classic method that several cultivators would use. It wasn't unusual for people to back stab each other on such kinds of expeditions.

"There's more to it, isn't it?" Lin Mu asked. "If this was openly known, there would be more opposition."

"Yes... unfortunately Yao Changying claimed it was all an accident. We only know this because our own people went on it too." Luo Liqin replied. "My master."

"One of my senior sisters went on it." Ming Aolian replied.

"I see... so it is personal for you two." Lin Mu spoke.

"Yes... the position she has taken has come at the cost of our loved ones. There is no way we can bear that." Luo Liqin stated with a fire in his eyes.

Having heard all this, Lin Mu took note of them.