

Walker 281

Chapter 281 - Void Star Metal?

"Wh-what is that?" Lin Mu muttered in amazement.

The entire process that had happened in front of him was nothing short of world changing to him. This was the first time he was witnessing another aspect of cultivators which was the refinement of materials. The process was obviously very complex, and Lin Mu could not even begin to imagine how much effort it would take to learn it all.

It was obvious that the experience the Old man had was nothing short of world shaking. If Lin Mu knew that what he was witnessing was desired by countless other cultivators, he would be astounded. There would be tens of thousands of cultivators who would start a war just to have the chance of witnessing this and learning from this.

Old man Jing Wei had comprehended a refinement technique that had never existed in this world ever before. If the knowledge of this ever went out, the sects and the empire would pay no small price to acquire it. But to Lin Mu, it was his first experience and thus could not grasp the true value of it.

"That Lin Mu, is a man who is perhaps one of the smartest refiners in this world. What he just accomplished would take even immortal tool refiners decades to learn. Not only that, but he did it without any guidance by simply observing a broken spatial storage ring." Xukong answered.

Lin Mu was amazed at senior Xukong's words and knew how much it meant if the praise was coming from Senior Xukong's mouth. He did not simply praise others that easily as he deemed them to be lower than him. Senior Xukong had seen countless things in his life, and Lin Mu could not even imagine how old he was.

Lin Mu had once asked Xukong that very question, but the answer that he received was rather disappointing. Xukong himself did not know how old he truly was. All he knew that a time arrived when he gained self-awareness and understood who he was. Before that, he was more of a mindless beast who simply lived to fulfill its instincts.

Lin Mu continued looking at the gold ball, which now had a green light bursting from it.

"REFINE!" Jing Wei shouted, with his entire body covered in sweat.

By now Lin Mu could see the exhaustion on Jing Wei's face. It was evident that he had exerted a lot in order to complete the refining process, and even now he was not stopping. Even Duan Ke who was merely restricting the forge was sweating profusely.

In this all, perhaps Lin Mu was the only one who was comfortable watching the entire thing and was the least affected.

Jing Wei let out another shout and started pressing down on the gold ball, making it shrink even more. The more it shrunk, the brighter the green light was getting. The stream of fire that was floating around the room also circled around Jing Wei, extending multiple small tendrils that touched the gold ball from the top and bottom while avoiding the old man's hands.

The gold ball kept on shrinking and Jing Wei pressed his hands together and eventually, his two palms met.

Blinding green light was leaking from the gaps between his fingers and palms while the gold ball had shrunk to become the size of a small marble.

~Huu~

Jing Wei let out a breath of relief as he saw that this task had succeeded. He looked at Duan Ke without moving his hands and spoke.

"Return the control to me and activate the barrier, do it at the right moment or you know what will happen..." Jing Wei said before turning his focus back to the tiny gold ball in his hand.

He slowly opened his hands and the gold ball was revealed, except it was not golden anymore, instead it had turned a pale green in color that had tinges of yellow in it. The green light had also stopped emanating from the marble and was now contained within it.

But when the marble was fully revealed it saturated to shake, and it looked like it was getting unstable.

"NOW!" Jing Wei shouted.

Duan Ke passed her control of the forge to Jing Wei and erected a multi-layered barrier. There were about ten layers to it, with each subsequent one thicker than the first. Jing Wei freed one of his hands and extended it towards the forge, taking back control over it while with his other empty hand he held onto the green marble.

He gestured with his hand and brought forth flames that transformed into strings and floated around the marble. He let go of the marble and freed that hand, but before the marble could fall it was held onto by the strings of fire.

Jing Wei gave Duan Ke and Lin Mu a look before taking a deep breath.

He waved his empty hand and an object came flying out of the forge. The item was lit and flames were blazing off its surface. Looking at it closely, one could tell that it was a small anvil that was about the size of a palm.

"Oh? He actually found some impure Void star metal?" Xukong suddenly spoke upon seeing the small flaming anvil.

"You know what that is, senior?" Lin Mu questioned.

"Yes, indeed. That is one of the materials that contain spatial elemental qi and can be used to make spatial storage tools. Though Void star metal is definitely an uncommon material. They can be found in the void surrounding the worlds and occasionally crash into the worlds along with meteorites." Xukong answered.

Lin Mu memorized the information in his mind as he kept on watching Jing Wei. The old man floated the small flaming anvil in front of him and then flipped his hand, making the broken spatial storage ring appear in his palm.

The spatial storage ring physically looked the same as before when Lin Mu had last seen it, but the fluctuations coming off it told him that something was different about it now.

Chapter 282 - The Repaired Ring

"What's changed with the ring? Hmm... Seems like it is the stuff he did to it before we arrived." Lin Mu muttered to himself.

"Yes, that is exactly it. Fixing a spatial treasure like this is quite difficult if not impossible for most spirit tool refiners. To be honest, I was not fully sure whether he would be able to do it or not. Even if he was able to fix just a little bit, I would have been impressed. But he exceeded my expectations and has nearly completely fixed it.

Of course, its capacity would definitely not be as much as it should originally have been." Xukong explained.

Lin Mu silently nodded in response as he then watched Jing Wei continue fixing the ring. A lot of things were happening all at once right now, and it would seem overwhelming to most people.

The flaming anvil came to a stop in front of Jing Wei, and on top of it, he placed the ring. Then he controlled the green gold marble to float over the ring and let it fall on to it.

~DENG~

As soon as the marble touched, the ring thought it made a loud sound. Although the marble was rather small in size, its weight certainly was not. There were at least a few tons of gold refined to make that marble and Even if most of it was lost in refinement, the small amount was still quite dense.

The green gold marble struck the ring, which then struck the flaming anvil which was made from Void star metal. The three objects hummed in response and a faint cracking sound was heard.

~Crack~

~Crack~

~Crack~

Lin Mu could see faint cracks forming on the ring now.

"What is he doing! Won't that destroy the ring?" Lin Mu uttered with shock.

"That is exactly what he's doing. He's found a method to repair the ring without the materials which would have usually been needed. He's making do with what he has right now.

Just watch and you will understand." Xukong spoke.

Lin Mu focused his attention onto the anvil and saw the fine cracks in the ring releasing something from them. He couldn't identify what it was at first, but soon sensed it. It seemed to like spirit qi but of a higher quality, although it also felt impure to him.

The energy seemed like a corrupted form of a higher versions of spirit qi.

'Wait, could it be...? Immortal qi?' Lin Mu guessed.

Lin Mu had already known that in order to break through to the higher realm after the Immortal Ascension realm, a cultivator had to refine the spirit qi into immortal qi. Thus Lin Mu guessed that it was that very immortal qi that was released from the ring.

"But if it's immortal qi then why does it seem corrupted and impure?" Lin Mu muttered in confusion.

"Your guess is half correct." Xukong suddenly spoke.

"Oh, what do you mean Senior?" Lin Mu questioned while Jing Wei controlling the flames to revolve around the anvil and the ring.

"While that is indeed a higher quality qi than spirit qi, it is not immortal qi. Rather, this is the impure spatial energy. The one that you've seen in the ring is perhaps the purest form you can find anywhere in this cosmos. The most common type you will find is the impure spatial energy like this." Xukong answered.

Lin Mu did not respond to this, as his attention was captured by the next step that Jing Wei was talking.

He had now heated the green gold marble enough that it has started melting again. The glittering drops of the green gold dripped onto the ring and started coating it. Soon the ring was hidden under the green gold drops and Jing Wei took out a hammer.

The hammer was octagonal in shape and seemed to have some characters engraved on its sides. Jing Wei grabbed it with his right hand and firmly grasped it. The grip of Jing Wei was so hard that his muscles tensed up ripping his sleeves apart exposing his bare arm which was now filled with tight muscles.

Lin Mu could sense that although the muscles were not gained from body tempering realm cultivation, the strength within them was no less. Jing Wei raised the hammer high and slammed it onto the ring, which had been coated with the green gold.

~Deng~

The sound of metal hitting metal echoed in a room for a moment before Lin Mu suddenly felt spatial fluctuations.

The anvil that was made up of Void star metal had now cracked as well, along with leaking something from it. But unlike the ring, this energy was slate grey in color and was entering the places that had the cracks on the ring.

While the energy entered the ring, it also took the green fold drops that were coating the ring with it. The amount of liquid green gold that was covering the ring started to reduce and soon disappeared completely having been absorbed by the ring.

Still, Jing Wei did not stop there and raised his hammer again before slamming it back down. The blow this time was softer than before, but it was still enough to completely destroy the anvil that been made by the void star metal.

The chunks of void star metal fell to the ground and turned to ashes because of the heat." The ring was now floating in Jing Wei's hand as he took fatigued breaths.

~Huu~

~Huu~

~Huu~

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~Phew~

Jing Wei let out a breath of relief as he saw the newly repaired ring floating in front of him. The ring didn't have any more cracks and seemed to have been fully fixed. But along with this, he could see the difference in the look of the ring.

The cracks that were once present on the ring had been filled by the green gold and the spatial fluctuations could also be felt coming from it.

"Success!" Jing Wei yelled as he saw the precious artifact.

Chapter 283 - The Repaired Ring- II

Jing Wei himself had not expected that he would fully succeed and that too up to an extent like this. The techniques that he had devised were mostly guess work, and he had used incomplete theories that had been present in his clan's records for a while now.

Jing Wei even had used something which he had thought was wrong and would have been laughed at if it was ever revealed to the world. Even he himself had laughed at the technique when it was theorized and had rejected the person who had made it.

'Seems like you were way ahead of me Luo'er, I regret the day I let you go. If I ever got the chance to go back in time, I would rebel against the very heavens to save you.' Jing Wei thought with a little sorrow.

Jing Wei pushed his thoughts back as he focused on the treasure in front of him. He knew that this was the start of a new era of spirit tool refinement.

The spatial storage ring in front of him was for sure the highest quality spatial storage treasure in the entire Great Zhou empire. But this put him in a bit of a shock, as he knew that what he had made was still an inferior product.

Jing Wei knew that even with all the skills he had used, the ring was barely at five percent of its full potential since he was still restricted by the materials. He had already tried many materials, but barely any of them were suitable and even less were available.

Jing Wei held the ring in his hand and probed it with his spirit sense, wanting to get a true gauge of its capacity.

~Gasp~

"A... thousand..." Jing Wei muttered.

Duan Ke and Lin Mu had already come close by now and heard what Jing Wei had said. Even if he had just muttered it, both of them had high enough cultivation to listen to.

"A thousand what?" Lin Mu asked.

Although Lin Mu did not know what Jing Wei was getting at, Duan Ke knew exactly what he was talking about.

"Really grandfather, a thousand meters?" Duan Ke asked with apprehension.

"Yes... take a look." Jing Wei said as he handed the ring to her.

Jing Wei meanwhile was lost in his own thoughts as he pondered over the entire process of refining. He was learning from the mistakes he had made during the refinement as well as the new insights he had gained.

Duan Ke held the ring and checked it with her own spirit sense and found it to be true as Jing Wei had said.

"A size of more than a thousand cubic meters... Truly a masterpiece." Duan Ke muttered in amazement.

"Wait, the ring has a storage size of a thousand cubic meters? But mine..." Just as he was about to continue that sentence, he held his tongue.

Lin Mu remembered what he should and should not say. One of the biggest things being the truth of the ring. If the size of the ring Jing Wei had repaired was just that much size, then his own ring was incomparable. The size of it was incomprehensible to even Senior Xukong.

Duan Ke's hand was trembling slightly after having confirmed her grandfather's words. She looked at the ring with a longing for a bit before handing it to Lin Mu.

"Here, take it," Duan Ke said.

"Huh, oh yeah." Lin Mu said awkwardly as he took the ring.

He could sense the spatial energy from the ring better than anyone here. He actually felt it the moment the ring was completed and even the mysterious ring had reciprocated in response. Lin Mu knew that if he wanted to, he could rip the ring from their hands or perhaps even destroy it if he wanted to.

He couldn't exactly tell why, but these were the innate feeling he was getting in his mind. He slid on the ring to his index finger of his right hand, next to the mysterious ring. The ring was slightly bigger than his finger's size, but Lin Mu didn't worry as he now knew how it functioned now.

Lin Mu branded the ring with his spirit sense, and the ring automatically shrunk to fit his finger snugly. The contrast between the two rings was a bit appealing. The mysterious ring was sliver with five spurs, while the new spatial storage ring was golden with irregular green patterns that looked like cracks with a flat top and a green gem on top.

Lin Mu peered into the ring and saw its capacity for himself. He actually felt a bit uncomfortable seeing the space inside the ring as it was much more smaller than the mysterious ring and neither was there any free spatial energy shimmering around.

But while Lin Mu was appreciating the two rings, the pair of grandfather and granddaughter could only see a single ring on his hand that was the new ring with the green gem and green patterns. Lin Mu looked back at Jing Wei with a grateful expression.

"Thank you for repairing it. I can see that you had to spend a lot of effort and resources and fixing it, I am truly thankful for it." Lin Mu spoke.

"No, thank YOU for giving me the opportunity to do this. I've learned more from this than I've done in the past few centuries. You don't know what this means for us... for our clan..." Jing Wei spoke and trailed off.

Lin Mu saw that Jing Wei was moving to a more emotional state, thus decided to change the topic a little bit.

"Umm, will the courtyard be fine? I mean, there is a pretty big tear in the barrier," Lin Mu said with concern.

"Hahaha, oh that? You don't have to worry about that, it will fix itself after a couple of days. Though it was definitely worth it." Jing Wei said in a jovial manner as his state of mind shifted.

Chapter 284 - Rewarding Jing Wei And Duan Ke

"How did the tear appear, though? Isn't the courtyard quite strong, what was it that could cause damage like this?" Lin Mu questioned.

"Oh, it was one of the materials needed for the ring. More specifically, the one that contained spatial attribute qi. The one that we got previously while useful, was not really compatible and the technique I used wasn't perfect either. Thus, as a result of that a great amount of it escaped my control and tore a hole in the barrier." Jing Wei answered.

Lin Mu was a bit surprised, as he had not expected for it to be something like that.

"Did you know this Senior?" Lin Mu asked in his mind.

"Yes, I did. I recognized the damage caused by it, as it is how spatial qi does it. You should learn from this and know how dangerous it can be if you aren't able to control it one day or perhaps lose control." Xukong explained.

"I understand, Senior." Lin Mu answered.

"Also, I have a reward for the man. I believe one is in order." Xukong added.

Lin Mu's expression lit up as he instantly agreed with it.

"Yes Senior, that would be good. They have helped me a lot, and even now repairing this ring was quite an effort." Lin Mu replied. "But what kind of rewards did you have in mind?" He asked.

"Just listen to my instructions and do as I saw," Xukong stated before telling him what to do.

A minute later Lin Mu's focus returned to the real world, and he looked at Jing Wei and Duan Ke. The two were doing something with the formations as they were glowing all around the room. The soot that covered the room was also disappearing now, so it seemed like they were using the cleaning formations.

"Old man Jing Wei," Lin Mu called out.

"Yes?" Jing Wei said as he looked at Lin Mu.

Right now Jing Wei wanted nothing more than to finish fixing all the damage that had been caused due to the refining, before recording all the things that he had learned today. He then wanted to go and check the other incomplete theories that were in the clan records and test them out with his new insights.

'Perhaps I'll be able to find a new solution.' Jing Wei thought to himself.

Lin Mu took a couple of steps towards Jing Wei and said, "my master has something for you."

Jing Wei immediately became alert, and so did Duan Ke. She stared at Lin Mu intently, and ideas started to go through her mind. She was trying to guess what Lin Mu's master wanted with her grandfather. She certainly did not want the repeat of last time and did not want to experience that terror again.

Jing Wei composed himself and aligned his thoughts before speaking.

"And what does he have for me?" Jing Wei asked carefully.

Jing Wei saw Lin Mu extended his hand in response and then it happened.

A presence that was as heavy as a mountain descended in the room, making him choke for a moment. Jing Wei and Duan Ke both felt it and their hearts fell and they imagined the worst. But then the pressure lifted, or more like it wasn't as heavy to them. They could still sense the power in it, but it wasn't targeting them in a malevolent manner.

Then the two of them saw an illusion. For a moment there, they could see a massive silhouette of something behind Lin Mu. They realized that the room had somehow disappeared, and they were in a space where there were only two things, darkness, and ten golden eyes.

The gaze of the golden eyes shook their minds and they felt inferior in front of it. They felt as if they were mere ants. But then something else happened. They felt something entering their minds, it was similar to the presence in front of them but was much more milder in nature.

Then finally as if a bolt of lightning had struck, information started pouring into their brains. They couldn't do much other than just hold on and wish that it ended quickly. While the process wasn't painful, it was still quite uncomfortable.

Duan Ke and Jing Wei felt as if a few hours had passed by before the information finally stopped and they were able to open their eyes. They then realized that in reality, not even a minute had passed while they went through all that.

"What-" Duan Ke was about to ask when she paused.

The information that was added to her brain finally kicked in and she was able to understand what it meant. The same happened to Jing Wei, but his reaction was of absolute shock.

"Marvelous... absolutely marvelous! This- this knowledge..." Jing Wei uttered with sheer awe.

"Thousands of years of my clan's experience cannot even compare to one percent of this," Jing Wei proclaimed. "No! That's not it... Thousands of years of experience combined of each and every spirit tool refiner cannot compare to this!"

Lin Mu just patiently watched the two's reactions. Senior Xukong had already told him to expect something like this and had warned him that this will happen. What Xukong had just done was use the ward he had placed on Lin Mu along with Lin Mu's spirit sense and transfer information to the pair of grandfather and granddaughter duo.

Originally he only wanted to give it to Jing Wei, but then Lin Mu told him that he should give something to Duan Ke as well. What Xukong had given Jing Wei was a bare smidgen of knowledge of refining from the immortal realm. He had already seen his talent and knew that the old man was even better than some refiners of the immortal realm.

He reckoned that this would be a good reward and would help him a lot more in the future. As for Duan Ke, he had merely given her a few tips about cultivation. These were rather common ones in the immortal realm but would be priceless for someone from a low leveled world like this.

Chapter 285 - A Fortune Of Pills

Lin Mu looked at the two of them, who were in a state that was a mixture of excitement, shock, amazement, and utter awe. It was obvious that whatever Senior Xukong had given them was enough to shake their world forever.

"I need to consolidate this..." Jing Wei muttered suddenly.

He then looked at Lin Mu and thought for a moment before speaking.

"I need to go into seclusion and fully comprehend the knowledge that was just given. I believe Duan Ke needs to do the same. The effects will be the best if we do it right away, thus before we go is there something you need, anything?" Jing Wei asked with fervor.

The reward that he had obtained was probably a hundred times more valuable than what he had provided Lin Mu with. It didn't matter to him if he even had to give away the courtyard itself, he had so much new knowledge that he would be able to refine a better one, all on his own.

Lin Mu didn't even have to think before asking, "I want more basic qi pills."

"Duan Ke, take him to the pill repository, give him any and all the pills that he wants. You know what this is worth..." Jing Wei immediately turned and said to Duan Ke.

~Gulp~

Duan Ke silently gulped before nodding and gesturing to Lin Mu to follow. Meanwhile, Jing Wei increased his pace of fixing the damage to the formations. Lin Mu followed behind Duan Ke and was guided to the same place where he had received the pills before.

The doors of the pill repository opened automatically and Duan Ke immediately waved her hands, summoning a large number of pill containers. There were so many that there was no space on the tables that were kept there and most of the larger containers had to be kept on the ground.

The ones that were kept on the table were the more important and valuable pills and also the ones with the smaller bottles or vials.

Duan Ke walked to the table and pointed with her hands towards the boxes that were kept on the ground.

"These are all basic qi pills that we have, there should be about a million low grade Basic qi pills, five thousand mid tier basic qi pills, hundred and fifty high grade basic qi pills and three peak grade basic qi pills." Duan Ke stated.

Lin Mu's jaw almost fell in shock, but he was able to control it at the last moment. He had certainly not expected that there would be so many basic qi pills that would be present here. Last time he had barely gotten two thousand basic qi pills that were of low grade, but now there were a million of them.

Not only that, but the higher grade versions were also here, some of which he could not even use currently at his cultivation base. The most he would be able to use was the mid grade pills as the high grade and peak grade ones were not intended for qi refining realm cultivators and would only end up harming them instead.

Seeing that Lin Mu had gotten an idea of the number of pills, Duan Ke shifted her hand over to the other pills on the table.

"These are the toxin cleansing pills they are similarly of low, mid, high grade. There are 1500 low grade ones, fifty mid grade ones, and one high grade one. As for the peak grade toxin cleansing pills, we do not have them." Duan Ke answered.

"Why are there no peak grade ones, though?" Lin Mu curiously answered.

"Removing pill toxins from a cultivator's body gets more difficult the higher their cultivation base gets. You should know the grades how they are intended for different cultivation realms, right? That's the reason. It is simply too difficult to make a toxin cleansing pill that can work on even Dao treading realm cultivators.

There aren't many alchemists that can make them in the empire either. According to what I know there are only three alchemists of that level in the entire great Zhou empire, with one belonging to the emperor's court, one being the supreme elder of the Rainbow pill sect and the third alchemist is one of the head elders of Sky precepts sect." Duan Ke explained.

If it was before, Duan Ke would have never had given such a detailed explanation and would have only told him the most basic of information. But now that Lin Mu or rather his master had given them such a huge reward, this was the least she could do.

Duan Ke knew that if Lin Mu were to offer the knowledge to any of the sects or even the empire, he would immediately ascend to their top ranks and would be taken care of. It was their fortune that they were able to meet Lin Mu.

Duan Ke then went on to tell Lin Mu about the rest of the pills that were present on the desk. There were a lot of healing pills of different qualities, and pills that were just useful in general. Overall, Lin Mu ended up receiving over fifty types of different kinds of pills.

He was a bit overwhelmed by them and thus had difficulty remembering their names, effects, when not to take them, and all those conditions. But Duan Ke was helpful and made him a list. The list was conveniently put in the communication jade that he previously got from Jing Wei, thus Lin Mu didn't have much problem.

"Seems like I'll be going into seclusion again and you two will be as well." Lin Mu lightly joked.

"Hmm," Duan Ke hummed in response, clearly thinking about the things that were newly added to her mind.

Jing Wei wasn't the only one who was impatient about getting to comprehend the knowledge, Duan Ke was too.

Lin Mu thus took this cue and bid her farewell before leaving the pill repository and after that the mansion. He looked up at the sky and saw that the tear in the barrier was already repairing, although very slowly.

Chapter 286 - Fixing The Tear In The Barrier

Please read the author note at end.

Lin Mu felt a bit curious about the tear in the barrier as he peered at the void that was behind it. He realized that he could faintly sense something moving around the tear. He had not felt this before and could only sense it for the first time now.

What Lin Mu was sensing was different from using the spirit sense, as whatever it was near the tear, it was too far away for his spirit sense to reach.

'Huh? How am I able to sense that...? Is it because my cultivation recently increased?' Lin Mu thought to himself.

"Why don't you try to focus on it more, see what happens?" Xukong suggested in an encouraging tone.

Lin Mu closed his eyes and tried to focus on whatever that was moving around the tear. He realized that he was feeling it through a different kind of a sense. A sense he had for a while, but it was not as strong. He had been using this sense for a while now, unconsciously.

"The thing moving around the tear, its... spatial attribute qi!" Lin Mu uttered upon realization.

"Of course, Jing Wei said that the tear was caused by the spatial attribute qi that was accidentally released because he lost control. So it's still around the tear and that's what's stopping it from repairing fast enough," Lin Mu concluded.

"You are correct, that's exactly what's happening. The spatial qi that escaped from the material that Jing Wei previously used is trying to escape the confines of the barrier but is being restricted by it. The more it leaks out into the lesser void, the faster the barrier heals." Xukong explained.

Lin Mu's brows furrowed as he felt some counterproductive points in Senior Xukong's words.

"But Senior, if the barrier restricting the spatial qi is what's preventing it from repairing, doesn't that mean it is actually a flaw?" Lin Mu asked.

"Absolutely correct!" Xukong said in a pleased tone.

'Seems like his talent in formations is indeed good and his spatial sense is also improving. Hmm, let's see if he can do that...' Xukong thought.

Lin Mu was still thinking about the flaw as he walked forward and then suddenly stopped. An idea had just appeared in his mind.

"Senior, if the spatial qi is removed somehow, won't the formation repair faster?" Lin Mu questioned.

"Maybe it will... Why, do you want to try something?" Xukong replied with a slight chuckle as Lin Mu asked what he had thought of before he could even do it.

"I feel like since I can sense it, perhaps with the help of the ring I can make it leave the barrier faster, or perhaps something else like... absorbing it?" Lin Mu said in a slightly unsure tone.

"Well, go ahead then. Try it, find out for yourself." Xukong encouraged.

"Hmm," Lin Mu hummed in response before closing his eyes and focusing on the spatial qi swirling around the barrier.

It took him a little while to fully get a measure of how much spatial qi there actually was, but after five minutes Lin Mu got it. Lin Mu then extended his right hand and pointed it towards the tear.

At first, nothing happened, but a minute later the air in the courtyard started swirling, turning into the wind. The invisible spatial qi that was near the tear started to move from its position. A part of it moved out from the tear into the lesser void outside, while the remaining part instead descended.

The part that descended started clumping together and soon formed into a translucent cloud. This cloud moved towards Lin Mu's hand and then turned into a stream, entering the mysterious ring on Lin Mu's middle finger. A few seconds later, all the spatial qi was absorbed and the tear in the barrier started repairing at a rapid pace.

Thirty seconds later it was completely gone, and the barrier was repaired to its original state.

~Phew~

Lin Mu opened his eyes and let out a breath of relief. While the entire process looked relatively easy, it was not. The process had been taking on Lin Mu's mind and he felt fatigued now.

"Excellent! That was flawlessly done." Xukong praised in an elated tone.

Xukong had not expected that Lin Mu would actually be able to do it this well. Originally he had thought it may take him a few tries to do it, but he had done it in a single try. And not only that, but he was also able to absorb a small part of that spatial qi into the ring.

That final thing in itself was a complex thing that would trouble a lot of experienced cultivators that specialized in using the spatial qi techniques or had cultivation techniques that focused on that aspect.

"Thank you, senior." Lin Mu replied before peering into the ring.

There he saw the translucent cloud of the spatial qi floating in a corner. Unlike the silvery grey streaks of spatial energy that floated in the sky, Lin Mu realized that this cloud was fully in his control. He could move it wherever he liked and could even change its shape.

"Umm Senior... what do I do with it?" Lin Mu asked, feeling confused.

While he had obtained this cloud of spatial qi, he had no use for it. He had not planned to really get something like this, thus was confused.

"Well, there are many uses for it, of course, that I want you to find them out yourself. But, I can still give you one use, which is rather obvious. Try using that spatial qi to power the skills that you obtained from the ring." Xukong answered.

Lin Mu tilted his head as he thought over the other possible uses, but then decided to try the one that senior Xukong had suggested him.

Lin Mu decided to use it with the first skill 'Flicker' as it was the easiest one to use and took the least amount of qi. He controlled the cloud of spatial qi and broke out a small part of it before using that to activate the skill 'Flicker'.

Chapter 287 - Alternate Method Of Using The Ring's Skills

Lin Mu's vision suddenly changed, and he felt as if everything had turned black and white. He looked around and could see that all the things were in different shapes. Some things were blurry while others were distorted. He could also see some black dots that he knew were flaws in the fabric of space and that they lead to the lesser void.

While it seemed like a while had passed to Lin Mu, in reality only a mere second had passed. In the next instant, everything turned back to normal and Lin Mu could see in color again.

"Huh, what was that?" Lin Mu said.

"So what did you experience?" Xukong asked.

Xukong himself didn't know what kind of effect Lin Mu using spatial attribute qi directly would have on the skills. But he could guess a few things and wondered if that was actually what Lin Mu experienced.

"It was strange... everything turned black and white. The time also seemed to be... slow for some reason. The objects were not exactly correct either." Lin Mu recalled.

"Seems like you were able to get spatial perception when you used the skill with the spatial attribute qi. That black and white color was due to your proficiency in it being less. Also, that feeling of time slowing down, that was an illusion or rather a misperception. That happens when a cultivator newly starts using spatial perception.

If you actually tried to move, you would realize that you would be moving at the same speed as before and that time wasn't actually slowed down. And as for the objects not being correct, I believe that was because of them being occluded by spatial distortions or the flowing space." Xukong explained.

"I understand senior." Lin Mu said before thinking of using another skill.

Lin Mu took another small part of the spirit qi cloud and this time used it to power the second skill 'blink'. He already had an intention of where he wanted to move, thus had no problems.

The moment he used it, his vision turned black and white again, but this time he realized that he could still use his spirit sense unlike the during the first skill 'Flicker' where it just didn't work or rather felt like it was frozen.

Usually when Lin Mu wanted to teleport using blink his spirit sense could only extend up to the maximum range of the skill which was ten meters. But now he realized that he was not limited by that. He sensed that he could actually teleport freely up to the maximum length of his spirit sense.

'This... this is amazing!' Lin Mu inwardly exclaimed.

In the next moment, he triggered the skill and disappeared from his location, appearing at the place he had chosen.

~Phew~

Lin Mu let out a breath even he had not known he was holding in. It was obvious that he had been a bit nervous and had thus held his breath back. But now that he was successful, he finally relaxed.

"The effect this time is rather obvious I see," Xukong said, appreciating the effects.

"The range of the second skill 'blink' is no longer limited to ten meters, it seems Senior. I can use it to teleport up to the maximum range of my spirit sense now." Lin Mu explained.

"That's good. You can use it in times of emergency." Xukong agreed.

Lin Mu nodded and checked the cloud of spatial qi he had in the ring. In the two times he had used it, the amount used reached six percent of its total volume. One percent was used to activate the first skill 'Flicker' and five percent was needed for 'Blink'.

Lin Mu realized that using spatial qi to power these skills was best limited to when he truly needed them. Until now he had been relatively safe and had escaped danger effortlessly. But he knew that there may be times in the future when his skills may not be enough and this could come in handy.

Lin Mu contemplated on the idea of using the spatial qi for the third skill 'Phase'. It was the skill that had the highest consumption and would continue consuming his qi the longer he used it.

"Better to test and know the effects now rather than to experiment in times of danger." Lin Mu muttered to himself.

~Huu~

He took a deep breath and calmed his mind. He then moved near some trees as the main effect of the skill was to allow him to walk through the physical objects, or rather pass through them. He activated the skill and saw his vision change again.

Lin Mu immediately walked through the trees and did not feel much of a difference. He immediately stopped the skill and checked the usage.

~Sigh~

"As I expected, it was rather large."

The size of the cloud had been reduced by a further twenty percent when he used 'Phase'. While it was not exactly equivalent to that of the spirit qi wisps, it was still quite a lot considering that he had a limited amount of spatial attribute qi.

In total, he had used up about twenty six percent of the spatial qi cloud, reducing its size to slightly less than three-quarters of its original volume.

"Senior, how can I obtain more spatial qi? I know that I can get it from the materials that contain it, but that would be quite difficult no?" Lin Mu asked.

"Well, spatial qi is actually one of the most abundant types of qis in the cosmos. It is everywhere, it's just that most people or rather cultivators cannot sense it. Controlling it is even more difficult which leads to them thinking that it is hard to find. It is just that there are quite limited materials that naturally contain spatial qi." Xukong explained.

Lin Mu thought over his words for a bit before realizing something.

"Then doesn't this mean that as long as one can sense and control the spatial qi they can directly imbue it into materials?" Lin Mu asked.

"Exactly. How else do you think spatial storage tools are made in the higher leveled worlds?"

Chapter 288 - Worried For Nothing

Lin Mu felt enlightened at the revelation and felt a bit silly as to how he did not realize it himself. But after understanding this, many other ideas popped up in his mind. Though he did not know how many of them were actually valid.

Lin Mu then remembered that while Senior Xukong had told him about the abundance of spatial qi, he hadn't told him how to get it exactly. Still, he could guess that perhaps he wanted him to find out on his own and perhaps wanted to test him.

Lin Mu didn't mind this and took it up with confidence. He actually felt more satisfied when he accomplished and completed something on his own. But he put these thoughts aside for the moment as he needed to head back to his house.

He was at the very edge of progressing into the next stage of the qi refining realm and thus wanted to go back as soon as possible. Not to mention with all the basic qi pills he now had, it would take him quite a while to finish them.

Lin Mu finally left the courtyard and appeared in the shop. But upon leaving the back room, he saw that there was actually someone in the shop. At first, he was taken aback and thought that someone had either mistakenly wandered in or had just come to buy things.

It wasn't like there were no customers other than Lin Mu that came to Jing Wei's emporium. There were actually some random people that came here a couple of times a month. Still, the shop was relatively unknown to most people.

But then Lin Mu suddenly remembered something.

'The illusory formations are still active!' He thought, and immediately became alert.

Lin Mu's spirit sense spread around and he immediately observed the person, trying to find out their cultivation base. He inferred that if they had been able to enter the shop despite the illusory formations, they must definitely be a cultivator and that too a strong one.

The person in front of Lin Mu was a man that seemed to be in his early thirties and was wearing the clothes of a commoner. This only made Lin Mu more alert as he thought that perhaps the man was hiding his identity while disguising like this.

But after Lin Mu probed the man's body, he was a little surprised.

"He's... a commoner?" Lin Mu muttered.

Still feeling unsure of it, Lin Mu sensed the body tempering realm cultivation of the man, finding it to be at the fifth stage of the body tempering realm.

'That confirms that he's not a cultivator, but then how did he get in?' Lin Mu thought, feeling perplexed.

During this entire thing, the man had not noticed Lin Mu as barely five seconds had passed. Everything had happened quite fast, and Lin Mu's enhanced reflexes only helped this.

The man turned around and saw Lin Mu, who was standing behind the counter.

"Ah, are you the shopkeeper here? I was looking for you, I wanted to buy something." The man said.

Lin Mu took a look and saw that the man was standing near a shelf that had some miscellaneous objects placed on it. He wanted to tell him that he was not the shopkeeper but before he could do that the man spoke again.

"I wanted to buy this," the man said as he pointed towards what looked like a set of maintenance and polishing kit that was used for tools and weapons.

Lin Mu walked forwards and looked at the kit, ensuring that it was something normal and nothing precious. He couldn't help but feel suspicious that perhaps this person was sent by someone else to get this or something like that.

But after observing the maintenance and polishing kit, Lin Mu found it to be as mundane as it could be.

'Is he genuinely a normal customer?' Lin Mu thought and then extended his spirit sense towards the door of the shop.

His spirit sense easily pierced the door and went outside. There he saw that the illusory formation was not working, and the shop was fully revealed to the outside, and even the alley was visible.

'Huh, the formations stopped?' Lin Mu wondered.

He then discreetly withdrew the communication jade and contacted Jing Wei, who thankfully had not entered seclusion yet. Jing Wei simply told him to sell the kit and that the formation was stopped because he was repairing the other ones.

~Phew~

'I was worried for nothing...' Lin Mu thought as he took a breath of relief.

"Umm excuse me? How much is it for?" The man asked Lin Mu, seeing that he had not responded yet.

"Oh yes! It's worth about one silver and ten copper coins." Lin Mu answered, telling him the price that Jing Wei had quoted.

Though Lin Mu doubted the high price and was pretty sure that Jing Wei had just said it from the top of his head.

The man was a bit surprised after hearing the cost, and his expression turned serious. He stroked his forehead while thinking and it looked like he was having a hard time deciding.

"I'll take it..." The man said while gritting his teeth.

"Uh, okay..." Lin Mu replied and took the money from the man's hands.

The entire time the man seemed quite hesitant about handing him the coins.

"If you don't mind me asking, why do you need this kit?" Lin Mu asked curiously.

"It's a good quality kit and has proper tools. Even if it's expensive, I think it's worth it if I can get the job at the army camp." The man replied.

"Oh? What kind of job?" Lin Mu questioned.

"You don't know? A lot of people are looking to apply for the new jobs that are opening up temporarily at the southern town." The man answered.

Lin Mu was confused by this as from what he knew, while the southern town was mostly an army base, they had their own workers and blacksmiths. If this man was buying a maintenance and polishing kit that too an expensive one like this then it meant that it was something major.

"How are there jobs opening up there? The soldiers there don't need much as they don't really fight.." Lin Mu asked.

"You don't know? The son of Wu Lim city's mayor is coming soon."

Chapter 289 - Lieutenant Wu Teng

Please read the author note at end

Lin Mu was a bit confused upon hearing that the son of the Wu Lim city's mayor was coming back. According to what he knew, the mayor had two sons. The eldest son was part of the Shuang Qian Kingdom's army and was a lieutenant, while the youngest one was rather unknown. All that was known about him was that he lived in the Wu Lim City as well and did not leave it usual.

Most people did not even know about the identity of the youngest son of the Mayor. This led Lin Mu to believe that it was obviously the eldest son that was coming back the city. But then he wondered why were jobs being issued.

"Why are there jobs though, even if the son of the mayor is coming back?" Lin Mu questioned.

"The Mayor's son is not only coming back, but is also bringing back his personal battalion of soldiers that he commands. These soldiers number in the thousands and unlike the ones at the southern town's army camp, actually practice and spar all the time.

They need people to maintain their equipment in tip top condition. And this maintenance job is not the only job being issued, other jobs like common servants, stable boys, cleaners, cooks, and blacksmiths are also being issued.

There are people from all four towns as well as the nearby villages applying for it. While the mayor's son will be living in the city during this entire time, his battalion will be left behind in the southern town according to the rules of the empire." The man explained.

Lin Mu finally understood the entirety of the situation but still felt that something didn't add up. Even if the son of the mayor was a lieutenant in the Shuang Qian kingdom's army, it didn't make sense for him to make an entire battalion move here.

Lin Mu could help but be suspicious of the entire thing.

'Did the mayor find out about something and called his son to help?' Lin Mu thought.

He then remembered the Four vessels restoration pills that originally supposed to go to the mayor. At that time Lin Mu had thought that they were perhaps intended for the mayor's son as he may have gotten injured, but now seeing him return perhaps it was not that either. Or the mayor could have also found an alternative method to help his son.

There were far too many possibilities that could not be confirmed, and this only made Lin Mu a bit more anxious.

"Perhaps the Hei Corps will know more about this..." Lin Mu muttered to himself.

"Umm, I'll take my leave then?" The customer spoke, seeing that Lin Mu seemed to be lost in his thoughts.

"Ah yes! Everything is fine you can take it now." Lin Mu handed the kit to the man and let him leave.

Lin Mu then put the coins he had gotten into a drawer that was built into the counter and left the shop.

"Is it really fine leaving the door unlocked like this? What if someone else walks in and there is no one to attend to them?" Lin Mu wondered.

But just as Lin Mu thought this, he felt the fluctuation of spirit qi. The shop's door in front of him disappeared and the shop eventually disappeared too. Lin Mu found the ground beneath him shrinking as he was moved out of the alley automatically.

A few seconds later the alley shrunk and the two walls to its sides closed up, making the entire alley disappeared.

"Huh, just in time. Looks like Jing Wei was waiting for me to leave." Lin Mu realized.

Lin Mu started walking in the direction of his house and listened to the conversations along the way. He could hear some of the people discussing about the arrival of the mayor's son and also the jobs that were opening up in the southern town.

"Is your husband also going to the southern town for the jobs?" A woman spoke to another woman.

"Yes, and my son will be joining him too. There are a lot of jobs and they can be safe too instead of going to hunt in the forest." The other woman replied.

Lin Mu then passed by a tea stall where a young man and a guard were sitting.

"Do you know when the mayor's son will be arriving in the city?" A man spoke to the guard who seemed like his friend.

"You should call him with his proper title or you may get in trouble. His status is quite above us and is already comparable to that of the mayor himself." The guard warned the man.

"His title? I don't even know his name though, we town folks don't really get that much news you know." The man replied in a joking manner.

"That's true, but it will be better if you know it. The official title of the mayor's son is lieutenant Wu Teng of the Teng Battalion." The guard explained.

Lin Mu was intrigued by this, as this was perhaps the first time he had heard the man's name.

'So it's Lieutenant Wu Teng and Teng Battalion. Hmm... did he name the battalion after himself? Usually the kingdom officials decided the names from what I've heard before.' Lin Mu thought to himself.

Soon Lin Mu reached his house and opened the gate to enter the courtyard.

~Huu~

He took a deep breath, calming himself down and prepared for what he was about to do. Lin Mu as low wanted to know more about the lieutenant's visit to the city, but decided to leave it for later. Right now his sole concern was to reach the peak stage of the qi refining realm as fast as possible.

But before he could begin his session, Lin Mu ensured that everything was ready. He knew that anything could happen, and the ring was bound to do something. There was also the problem with the nameless technique of the lost immortal. Although it had come under a bit of control, Lin Mu was still apprehensive.

~Phew~

"Let's get to it..."

Chapter 290 - 1800 Drops

It took Lin Mu about an hour to prepare everything and in the end, he simply checked up on Little Shubby before entering his bedroom and sitting down cross-legged. He withdrew one of the many boxes of basic qi pills he had and placed it in front of him.

He then opened the box and popped a basic qi pill into his mouth before starting to chant the severing heart sutra. The spirit qi from the pill entered his meridians and arrived into his dantian. If one looked at Lin Mu's dantian right now, they could see that half of it was filled with shimmering liquid spirit qi while the other half was filled with floating wisps of spirit qi.

Now with the arrival of the extra spirit qi from the basic qi pill, the dantian was getting saturated. But this is exactly what Lin Mu wanted. He willed the spirit qi wisps in the dantian to enter his meridians and circulate.

The concentration of spirit qi in his meridians suddenly increased, and so did the pressure on them. But for Lin Mu this was barely anything, and he increased the amount again. He steadily kept on drawing from the dantian and the spirit qi from the basic qi pill kept on replenishing it.

This kept a positive outflow of spirit qi into his meridians, which allowed him to refine it faster. The concentration of spirit qi in his meridians kept on increasing more and more until finally a single drop of liquid spirit qi was condensed.

Usually, Lin Mu would have simply guided this drop of spirit qi into the dantian, but that was not what he wanted to do now. His current goal was to break through to the peak stage of the qi refining realm and for that, he knew it would be best to jump in one go.

The more pressure he generated, the easier it would be to overcome the bottleneck. Although the bottleneck between the late stage and peak stage of the qi refining realm wasn't too tough, it still existed. But this bottleneck was more of a passive one, in that the spirit qi had a higher chance of dissipating instead of being restricted from condensing.

Lin Mu wanted to refine a sufficient amount of liquid spirit qi in his meridians and then directly depositing it in his dantian all at once.

He focused on this drop of liquid spirit qi and circulated it faster through the circuit of his meridians while drawing upon the spirit qi wisps from the dantian. With each cycle, the drop of liquid spirit qi was growing in size.

At first, it was only a single drop in size, but then it doubled, then tripled, and so on and so forth. Eventually, it reached a point where it was nearly thirty times the size of a normal drop and was looking more of like a stream.

By now twelve hours had passed by and Lin Mu was still continuing on tirelessly. His newly enhanced body tempering cultivation was only making it much easier for him. In fact, Lin Mu could also feel that the conversion of his body's cells was getting faster as well, which brought him closer to achieving Xiantian physique.

Lin Mu extended his hand in an almost mechanical manner and picked up a basic qi pill from the box in front of him and popped it in his mouth. During these past twelve hours, he had eaten about a hundred pills. This would have been very shocking before, but now it was but a drop in the ocean.

While Lin Mu was refining the liquid spirit qi, he was also losing a fraction of the spirit qi. Right now he was overcoming the time factor with quantity instead of quality and overpowering the routine. The nameless technique of the lost immortal was also helping Lin Mu, as without it he would have not been able to consume this many pills.

Another thing that was happening which Lin Mu did not know was that with each circulation of spirit qi, a minute amount was also being infused into his stomach tissues. This amount was small enough that Lin Mu had no capacity to focus on it.

Seconds turned into minutes and minutes turned into hours. It had been over twenty four hours since Lin Mu started his session. The number of basic qi pills he had consumed reached nearly two hundred, and the size of the liquid spirit qi stream had reached eighty times the initial size.

'Now's the time!' Lin Mu internally shouted.

To be honest, Lin Mu had never expected to last this long. The amount of liquid spirit qi he had refined this time was the largest amount he had refined in a single session. Not only that, but simply the volume of liquid spirit qi circulating in his meridians was exuding a pressure.

Lin Mu had thought that he would keep on refining it till he would not be able to handle the pressure, and now the time had finally come. He had also exceeded the amount that was actually needed for him to break through the bottleneck a long time ago.

But he still kept on going, as this had now become a way for him to challenge himself and his will. He didn't know how he was compared to other cultivators, but he was proud of himself for reaching this level.

Lin Mu's focus reached peak, and he immediately guided the stream of liquid spirit qi into the dantian. Usually, the spirit qi would enter the dantian drop by drop, but this time it was as if someone had opened a tap as the stream came rushing in.

~Gush~

The volume of liquid spirit qi within his dantian started rising visibly.

1500 drops

1510 drops

1550 drops

1600 drops

1700 drops

1800 drops

Finally, all the liquid spirit qi that he had refined entered his dantian and with that, a wave was emitted from his body.

As soon as the wave reached the mysterious ring on Lin Mu's right hand, it started humming too.

