

Walker 361

Chapter 361 - The Creation Of Hei Corps

Lin Mu had not expected the start of Wu Hei would have been like this. It was evident that he had gone through a lot, and that was why he was at the position he was right now. But he was still a bit confused about one thing, Wu Hei's cultivation. The mayor and his elder brother seemed to think he had a low cultivation, but Lin Mu could clearly sense that he was at the Mid stage of the core condensation realm at the very minimum or likely even higher.

"It is likely due to an auxiliary cultivation technique that he practices. It is able to hide his cultivation base and makes it seem like he has a lower cultivation base than it actually is." Xukong explained.

Lin Mu internally nodded his head before continuing to listen to the story that Wu Hei was saying.

"I then had a few minor encounters with the Gu legion but there wasn't much I could do except let them escape. Eventually while on my journey I came across a village at the border of the Shuang Qian kingdom. It was nighttime, and it seemed like everyone in the village was asleep.

This was strange, as even the guards who should always be alert were fast asleep. We checked them and discovered that they were not sleeping, but rather unconscious. No matter what we tried, we couldn't wake them up and knew that something must have happened.

Our fear turned out to be true, as most of the people in the village seemed to be unconscious as well. We waited and observed until morning arrived. The people eventually woke up but seemed to have no memory of the night before.

I questioned them and found out that a curse had been put on the village. People would fall asleep into a deep sleep and through the night at least one person would go missing. This had been happening for the past month and nearly fifty five people had disappeared since then.

Eventually, I was able to figure out that this was no curse, but rather someone was poisoning the villagers." Wu Hei said.

When Lin Mu heard this part he instantly recognized this as this was the very thing that happened in the Northern town as well.

"It was the memory confounding poison, wasn't it?" Lin Mu questioned.

"Yes, it was indeed. But we were still a bit late in finding it out as some of my men were affected by it too. Thankfully, I had people that were cultivators and were able to stop the Gu legion that night. But what I had not expected was that they would have cultivators too, and more numbers than I had.

I lost half of my men in that conflict but was able to finish all of them off. Then, after mourning for a bit, I found out that this village was not the only one that was affected. Three more villages were too, and all of them had people missing.

The villagers learned of this and were angry. The ones that were willing joined me in my venture and became part of the Hei corps.

Over the years more and more incidents happened, but not all were related to the Gu Legion. I learned a lot of things and gained even more experience before reaching the stage I am in right now. Finally, I decided to return to the Wu Lim City and properly establish the Hei corps as a power.

I expanded its ranks and made an information network across the empire. In the years that I had traveled, I learned one thing that was at the very apex: Knowledge. If you had knowledge, you could change the very fate itself." Wu Hei explained.

Lin Mu was lost in thought after hearing the entire story and spent a minute on it. During this time, they had finally reached the district where the Mayor's manor was located.

"My Lord, we're here," The carriage driver lightly spoke from behind the blinds.

Lin Mu snapped out of his thoughts and looked out of the window, only to learn that they were at the manor of the mayor.

"You want me to come with you?" Lin Mu asked with raised brows.

"Yes. I was hesitant at first, but seeing that we are on the same page about the Mayor, I believe this would be best. Perhaps, brother Lin Mu would be able to see something here that I was unable to all these years." Wu Hei answered.

Lin Mu then remembered the tunnels and nodded his head.

"Alright, but I also want your help with another thing." Lin Mu stated.

"What do you need?" Wu Hei questioned.

"I need access to the Ancestral temple." Lin Mu answered.

"Hmm... that is something even a bit difficult for me." Wu Hei replied with hesitation.

"Why? I thought it would be easy with your authority?" Lin Mu asked, feeling confused.

"The problem lies with that very authority. Not many people know this, but the ancestral temple is actually run by a different power and even the mayor has barely any control over it." Wu Hei answered.

"What?! How's this possible? Who runs it then?" Lin Mu questioned, feeling extremely shocked.

He had not known that there was another power here that he was unaware of. When he had talked with Jing Wei and Duan Ke they had talked about a few powers, but this was not one of them.

'Perhaps it is not as important for them.' Lin Mu thought.

"Well, it is run by an organization of priests who take care of all ancestral temples of the Shuang Qian kingdom. Their head is none other than the High Priest of the Royal court of the Shuang Qian Kingdom.

Though they are not a threat and they only deal with the temple matters. As for the entry to the temple, while I'm allowed inside and commoners are allowed on certain days, getting permission for another person from those stubborn priests is difficult.

They would simply say that we are 'Disturbing the rest of the ancestors' and push the request aside." Wu Hei explained .

Chapter 362 - Visiting The Manor

Having heard that it would be a problem getting access to the Ancestral temple, Lin Mu started to think of other solutions. It was then that an idea appeared in his mind.

"Wait, can you just make it so the guards move away for a bit or something like that?" Lin Mu questioned.

"Move the guards?" Wu Hei repeated as he furrowed his brows. "Hmm, that should be possible. The guards still come under the city administration so it shouldn't be a problem. Though what are you going to do?" Wu Hei asked after thinking for a few seconds.

"As long as the number of guards is reduced and there is a lapse in security for a bit, I can sneak in." Lin Mu replied.

Wu Hei was a bit surprised by this and wondered how Lin Mu would be doing this, but didn't question it. He knew people had secrets and better not to do that.

"Alright, I can do it just tell me when you need it done." Wu Hei said with a nod.

"Though you may need to be careful of the priests. Particularly the head priest of this temple, from the rumors I've heard he's a Core condensation realm cultivator too. Though we don't know exactly what stage. He's also seldom seen and only appears during the yearly ancestral worship." Wu Hei warned.

'Another core condensation realm cultivator, huh? They just keep popping up now...' Lin Mu thought to himself.

"Do you have a suspicion about the temple or something?" Wu Hei questioned.

"I do actually... Do you perhaps know what's under the city? Or rather the entire region around the city all the way to the northern town?" Lin Mu replied in a serious tone.

"Oh? Do you mean the caves?" Wu Hei questioned feeling surprised again.

Not many people knew about the caves around the area and most didn't even care as they were mostly inaccessible. The only troubles they had with them was when they were building something big and a cave was under the foundation. They would then either need to move the building or fill up the cave first.

"Yes, and not just that... but rather an entire network of tunnels all across the city." Lin Mu answered. "I believe the Gu Legion have been using it to hide their tracks all this time." He added.

Wu Hei underwent the same revelation that Lin Mu had and everything started to make sense to him.

"You understand it too now, don't you? But that's barely the tip of the iceberg..." Lin Mu said, seeing Wu Hei's reaction.

"Wait! Not here! Let's get to the manor first, my room there is more secure." Wu Hei interrupted.

Wu Hei could tell that this was getting more serious and knew better than to discuss it in a location like this. He knew there were special skills that could be used to spy on people and who knew if someone was truly listening in. While the chance was low, it was not fully zero.

"Alright, let's go in then." Lin Mu agreed.

The carriage had entered the compound of the manor by now and had reached the front entrance. Lin Mu and Wu Hei stepped out to see an old steward that was waiting for them outside.

"Madam told me you were coming, it has been a while Young Master Hei." The old steward spoke.

"Greetings old Lan," Wu Hei responded.

"Please come in, Madam is waiting for you in the lounge." Old Lan said before looking towards Lin Mu.
"And this is?"

"This is Lord Mu Lin, he's one of my friends." Wu Hei answered.

"Ah, this is a pleasant surprise. I believe madam will be happy to meet the young master's friend too." Old Lan said while giving a smile.

He then turned around and opened the door of the Manor. Wu Hei and Lin Mu walked in silently while Lin Mu took in the sights. He had expected that the manor would be luxurious and well decorated like the Town Head's office.

But surprisingly, it was not. Even though it did have decorations, they were rather tasteful and not ones that blared opulence at your face. Lin Mu internally nodded at this and found it to be much better than the town head.

'I guess the mayor still has some sense even if he's bad.' Lin Mu internally said.

"Well, if he is gonna be greedy and survive for a long time like this, he has to be smart. There is no use in splurging for showing off. But this also means the man is rather wise and could prove a more difficult opponent than we thought." Xukong advised.

"I understand, Senior." Lin Mu reasoned.

While he was having this conversation in his mind, they had reached the lounge where a middle aged woman was sitting on a sofa. She looked the same as Lin Mu had seen her a couple of days before, but only her clothes were different and a bit of fatigue could be seen in her eyes when she glanced them.

"Xiao Hei..." She uttered.

"Hello, mother." Wu Hei calmly greeted.

Lin Mu could see her eyes light up for a moment when she saw Wu Hei and could sense the longing hidden in them.

But then...

"YOU INSOLENT BRAT, WHY DO YOU NEVER COME HOME!" A loud voice assaulted Lin Mu's ears and almost made him flinch.

Seeing that the situation was getting uncomfortable, the steward interrupted, "Madam we have a guest too, Lord Mu Lin."

Then almost in an instant, her expression changed to become calm and mellow.

"Oh ho! Did my son really bring a friend home? Greeting's Lord Mu Lin, and thank you for being my son's friend." Wu Hei's mother spoke.

"Uh..." Lin Mu didn't know what to say at this awkward and abrupt change, and the corner of his lips couldn't help but twitch.

One would have thought that Wu Hei would get embarrassed or something, but the man stood the same with a cool and calm expression as if nothing could faze him.

Chapter 363 - Demonstrating

Wu Hei had knew his mother well enough and what her tactics were. All she had done now were plain old acts that she would do all the time. She was no simple lady and was not averse to schemes either. Being the wife of an aristocrat like Wu Xun was no easy thing.

Not to mention She herself was an aristocrat before she even married Wu Xun. If Wu Hei showed a reaction, she would only do more things to make it worse. Such was the way she teased him or rather punished him.

"Are you done, mother?" Wu Hei calmly asked.

~Sigh~

"What a son I have, doesn't even have time for his mother..." The madam said, shaking her head.

"Brother Mu Lin meet my mother, madam Zhen Sui." Wu Hei introduced.

Lin Wu clasped his hands in a formal greeting again and slightly bowed his head. This was the first time he was hearing the full name of the mayor's wife. He knew that her first name was Sui and that some people called her madam Sui.

"So mother what did you want from me?" Wu Hei questioned after they all had taken a seat.

The old Steward meanwhile went to get some refreshments for them and did not dare to listen in anymore.

"Well, I need you to take care of the marital tournament to be precise. This was supposed to be done by your father, but now that he's unavailable you are the only one who can do it. I'll be handling the other tournaments but the Martial tournament is the prime jewel of the ceremonies. It needs to be perfect." Zhen Sui answered.

"What about Elder brother? Can't he do it?" Wu Hei asked with reluctance.

"You think he would really do it? All that happens in that thick skull of his is food, women, and fighting. He has no idea how to do things like this... I still don't know how he leads his battalion with his management skills." Zhen Sui replied.

Wu Hei nodded his head in agreement. He knew that his brother was rather ill suited to tasks such as this. But this didn't mean that he was willing to take the task of organizing the competition. This would mean that he would have to talk with other aristocrats and important people, which was a thing that he usually disliked.

He would much rather go back to his mansion and continue his research. But then after thinking for a while, he realized that this could actually work in his favor. It would make it easier for them to investigate the Gu Legion along with him being able to fulfill the challenge that Wu Xun had given him.

"Alright mother, I accept." Wu Hei stated.

~clap~

"Ah! That's good, finally you came to your sense and decided to become an obedient son." Zhen Sui teased again.

Wu Hei let out another sigh before shaking his head helplessly. Zhen Sui chuckled before looking at Lin Mu, who was calmly sitting there and looking around.

"Lord Mu Lin, I wonder how you met my son?" Zhen Sui curiously asked.

She knew that her son did not like to make many friends and even if he had met a lot of people during his journey, there weren't that could be said to be his friends. Perhaps only some of his subordinates could be considered to be his 'Friends'.

Lin Mu turned his neck upon hearing her speak and raised his brows.

"I met brother Mu Lin in the Fenlong kingdom when I visited the Mu clan there. He's one of the Young masters of the clan and seldom goes out in public." Wu Hei quickly answered.

"Oh, I see. Well then, you must be quite an intellectual for my son to find you worthy to be his friend. But what made you come here all the way to Wu Lim city? I mean, if my knowledge is correct then the Fenlong Kingdom is a few thousand kilometers away from the border of the Shuang Qian kingdom." Zhen Sui questioned.

Wu Hei wanted to answer again, but Lin Mu decided to interrupt. He knew that if Wu Hei continued answering everything for him, Zhen Sui might find it suspicious. Besides, he had the perfect answer for Zhen Sui that would work and was also legitimate.

"Oh madam, I'll be representing Brother Hei in the tournament." Lin Mu said with a smile.

This came as a rather big surprise to Zhen Sui as she had not expected this from Lin Mu. Looking at him, she could tell that he was rather young even if he seemed to look older. She had seen enough people to get a good estimate just from looking at them.

She had guessed that he would at least be twenty years old. But considering he came from a rather small kingdom like Fenlong kingdom, she reckoned that he wouldn't be that strong. From what she knew, even a few core condensation realm cultivators were going to participate in the tournament.

"Representing? Lord Mu Lin, you mean you'll be fighting?" Zhen Sui asked doubtfully.

"Yes, I will..." Lin Mu confirmed with a nod.

Zhen Sui still seemed unconvinced and decided to ask a few more things.

"Pardon my rudeness, Lord Mu Lin, but... how old are you?" Zhen Sui questioned.

"I'm sixteen." Lin Mu answered simply.

'Sixteen! How the hell is this boy sixteen? His cultivation must be even less than I thought then, but then why would Hei chose him?' Zhen Sui thought.

Wu Hei could see the faint changes in his mother's expression and guessed what she was thinking.

"Don't misunderstand Brother Mu Lin's age, mother. Despite his age, he is rather accomplished and talented." Wu Hei said.

"But..." Zhen Sui was about to speak again but was interrupted.

"Brother Mu Lin, would you care to demonstrate?" Wu Hei asked.

Wu Hei knew that the best way to shut up his mother was to shock her into submission. He knew about Lin Mu's skills and the things that he had done. Fighting against core condensation realm cultivators and beasts while being in the qi refining realm already made him extremely talented if he considered the circle of aristocrats.

While there would be others like him in the sects, they weren't really comparable.

Lin Mu was a bit surprised that Wu Hei asked this of him and was hesitant.

"Lord Hei, are you sure?" Lin Mu questioned.

"Yes, I'm sure. I believe mother would be fine with it too, wouldn't you mother?" Wu Hei said.

"Yes, that would be fine. I don't mind, so do your best." Zhen Sui assured.

Now she was even more interested in knowing the capabilities of this boy in front of her.

'Even if he's talented, it doesn't seem like he's in the core condensation realm, so what's the most he can do.' Zhen Sui thought.

"Alright then if both of you are fine with it." Lin Mu replied.

He thought for a bit and wondered what would be the best way to do this. He didn't want to go overboard and expose himself. There were still a lot of secrets that even Wu Hei didn't know and there was no way he wanted Zhen Sui to know them too.

Lin Mu thought of the things that Senior Xukong had said he could do in the tournament. He knew that he would be exposing a part of his capabilities in the tournament in front of hundreds of people and thus thought that it would be best to only show that part.

Lin Mu stood up and walked a bit behind the sofa. The room was sufficiently wide, thus it wasn't much of a problem for him, and even the roof was quite tall. Wu Hei looked on with a smile on his face, while Zhen Sui had an interested expression on her face.

Both of them were relaxed at first but then soon they became alert.

Lin Mu flicked his hand and the short sword appeared in front of him. It was floating in the air which showed to Zhen Sui that he was proficient in Spirit sense and even had a mid grade spirit sword at the very least.

But then he extended his hand and grasped the short sword firmly in his hands. As soon as he held it though, his entire demeanor changed. Lin Mu had recently had good progress in the Thousand armament blade scripture and had learned something new.

'What was it that Old man Jing did back then... that feeling... that intent... that pressure...' Lin Mu recalled.

He focused on grasping that feeling and tried to emulate it. During this entire time his eyes were closed and not a hint of disturbance could be seen on his face.

It was as if a long time had passed for him, but in reality, mere seconds had elapsed.

But just from this, the pair of mother and son were shocked.

"What in the name of heavens..."

Chapter 364 - Desire

While Lin Mu was focused on his mind, the pair of mother and son were seeing something completely different. At first, they thought that Lin Mu was simply gonna demonstrate his skill of using a spirit sword with his spirit sense.

But they had completely misunderstood it.

Lin Mu was trying to emulate what he had seen Old man Jing Wei do when he went to buy the short sword and knew that he could do it after seeing the progress he had with the thousand armament blade Scripture.

He had known that the Thousand armament blade scripture was what both Jing Wei and Duan Ke's techniques were derived from and were inferior versions of. He guessed that he wouldn't be at the level of Jing Wei of course, but if he could demonstrate even one percent of that, Lin Mu would be happy.

The thing that Lin Mu was mistaken about though was his method. Jing Wei's sword intent was born after countless years of battles and fights. He had slain mountains of enemies before he had reached his current level.

Xukong was also curiously watching what Lin Mu was doing currently. He didn't know either and didn't want to read his mind as it could cause him to become disturbed. Lin Mu was almost in a state of trance and had cut off the real world.

For him, only he and his sword existed.

In the room, Zhen Sui's heart was beating like crazy and Wu Hei wasn't in a better position either. Both of them felt as if they were in mortal danger, yet not at the same time. It was not that Lin Mu was targeting them, but rather his very presence that had become dangerous.

Wu Hei could sense the spirit qi in his core becoming unstable, and Zhen Sui's sea of spirit qi in her dantian became stormy. Now for them, each second felt like an hour.

Unknowingly Lin Mu felt as if he had discovered something, it seemed far yet close, ethereal yet material. He tried to grasp it but found it to be slipping through his fingers.

In his mind, he was standing in an empty space. This was unlike the empty Sleepscape which he used to be in. If that Sleepscape was absolutely dark, then this was different... just empty. It was as if there was no concept such as light or darkness in here.

Yet Lin Mu could sense the thing that his heart desired to be in front of them. He walked towards it and held onto it; but it slipped away again. He ran and clutched it, only for it to knock him away. He tried countless times, yet the result was a failure.

"What am I doing wrong?" Lin Mu questioned himself.

He did not feel sad at failing. He did not feel happy at being here either. All he could feel was nothingness. He looked at his heart's desire and it was right in front of him again. But this time he did not try to catch it.

"Am I wrong?" He questioned himself.

Lin Mu stood in silence, looking at his heart's desire without moving an inch. It was as if he had become a statue that would not move no matter what tempests it went through.

Lin Mu continued thinking and question after question appeared in his mind; One became two, two became four, and four became eight. Eventually, his thoughts were no longer thoughts but were now floating in front of him, becoming real.

"What is 'wrong'?" Lin Mu questioned again.

His heart's desire that was once the only thing in front of him was now hard to see. It had been hidden behind the thoughts that had become real.

Lin Mu kept on looking at them and time passed during which the thoughts kept on multiplying.

It was as if a millennium had passed by when Lin Mu spoke again.

"WRONG!" He said, this time his voice was cold yet filled with power.

The entire space shook as his voice traveled through it. An earthquake appeared, yet Lin Mu stood there unaffected. The material thoughts in front of him shook around like reeds in a storm.

"Nothing is wrong and everything is wrong..." He said making some of the thoughts break.

His heart's desire that had been buried under this ocean of thoughts had suddenly been awakened. It struggled to rise, yet found it difficult.

"A desire is nothing and everything is a desire..." He continued making more of the thoughts break apart.

It was as if they were crumbling to dust and fading away into nothingness. With each thought that dissipated, Lin Mu's voice became more powerful.

"A desire is born from nothing and everything can become a desire..." Lin Mu whispered, but the whisper was as if lightning striking a mountain.

"A desire is power, and a desire is poison..." He declared wiping away half of the thoughts.

His heart's desire that was struggling to float, rose above coming to the top of the ocean of thoughts. Yet it was far away, as if a mirage on the sea.

Lin Mu took a step forward and all the thoughts moved backwards. His every step causing tremors, creating waves in the ocean of thoughts.

"A desire can be strength and a desire can be weakness..." He claimed shattering another quarter of the thoughts.

Now it was as if the thoughts had become alive. They were scared of Lin Mu and angry at the same time. Some of the thoughts that seemed to be stronger came to attack him while the rest ran away.

"Nothing matters when my heart desires everything, and everything matters when my heart desires nothing." Lin Mu uttered, destroying the thoughts that came to attack him.

Now there were only the eight original thoughts left. They appeared as if mountains and were the strongest of them all. Lin Mu's heart's desire was still there now, being crushed by the eight mountains.

"Sever the heart and gain everything, sever everything and gain the heart!" Lin Mu proclaimed, but this time his voice was inaudible with merely his lips moving.

Chapter 365 - No Desire

The eight mountains that were crushing Lin Mu's heart's desire were pulverized in the next instant.

He finally looked at the desire that floated up and came towards him, pleading like a wronged child. But Lin Mu's gaze was cold, as if what he was looking at was less than dirt.

"You are not needed either..." He stated.

The desire in front of him started trembling as if dissatisfied by his thoughts. But then it suddenly grew enormous, reaching the size of a mountain. This mountain was bigger than the previous eight mountain thoughts combined.

The desire then morphed and transformed into a being that could only be called as a devil. It had swords for its arms and legs while its teeth were like daggers.

~KREEEEE~

A soul stirring scream came from its mouth which cut upon one's heart like scythe through grass.

But Lin Mu was still the unmoving statue as before, unaffected by the scream nor the appearance of the devil.

He looked at it fearlessly and another mountain manifested behind his back. This mountain though was different and seemed as if made from countless swords. The mountain started rising, taking Lin Mu to the skies with him.

The devil seemed agitated by this and lunged forward to attack, but Lin Mu was ready for it.

"SEVER!"

He extended his hand forward and slashed it as if it were a sword.

~WEEENG~

A loud hum was heard as a titanic sword manifested in front of him. The sword swung like his hand and exterminated the devil. Not a single cry or scream was heard as all the traces of the devil were removed from this place.

In the real world, Zhen Sui and Wu Hei were still gazing at Lin Mu.

They couldn't move their eyes nor could they blink, for they feared that the moment they tried that they would be killed. They wanted to move but feared the same thing again. Merely a minute had passed, but they felt as if hours had gone by.

Lin Mu finally opened his eyes and saw the pair of mother and son looking at him. But they seemed to be uneasy. In fact, in the very next second, Zhen Sui coughed and a streak of blood seeped from the corner of her lips.

Wu Hei was still able to hold on, but he was having a hard time stabilizing his core.

When Lin Mu had opened his eyes, they both had seen the same thing. It was the thing that had shocked the life out of them and made Zhen Sui cough blood.

It was a sword mountain and on top of the mountain was a throne on which sat none other than Lin Mu. But this Lin Mu was nothing like the one in front of them. This Lin Mu had an emotionless and cold gaze with eyes that could rip into the soul.

The scene lasted only for a fraction of a second, but that was already enough for it to be carved into their memories forever.

Lin Mu came to his sense and saw that while he had grasped something, he seemed to have still failed. He then looked at the two people in front of them who seemed to be injured now.

"Oh, no! Are you alright?" Lin Mu asked with concern.

He remembered the feeling he had when he first saw Jing Wei hold the short sword. The fear was quite strong, but overall he was uninjured. And this was when he was not even a real cultivator and was merely in the sixth stage of the body tempering realm.

Both the people in front of him were much stronger than that and he had thought that they would be able to take it without much problem. Besides, they had said so themselves and had given their explicit permission.

Another thing he now realized was that, if he had failed in his attempt, then why were the two injured?

Wu Hei heard Lin Mu's words and couldn't help but laugh internally.

'Alright? What joke! You just unleashed a sword intent the likes of which I've never seen before.' Wu Hei said to himself.

But still, Wu Hei did not dare to show this on his face. He knew that what they had witnessed had gone beyond what he had expected. He knew that this was also not something that could be exposed, not to mention said out loud.

There weren't many options left for him when he saw that his mother was injured and took the one that he found to be the easiest.

"We are alright brother Lin Mu. Mother was just a bit overwhelmed and her past sickness flared up. You see, she was injured a few years ago and we thought that it had healed by now. But thankfully because of you, we now know that it was not.

We can not take proper care of it and ensure that she is a hundred percent healthy again. After all, don't they say; a hidden disease is more dangerous than visible death?" Wu Hei said, lying through his teeth.

"Don't you think so, mother?" Wu Hei questioned, turning to his mother who hastily wiped away the blood from the corner of her lips.

Zhen Sui was about to say something, but then she held her tongue. She could sense the faint difference in Wu Hei's tone of voice. The difference was almost negligible, but she being the one who gave birth to Wu Hei recognized it clearly.

She could sense the faint warning in his voice and knew that this had gone beyond what she had expected. The boy was a monster no matter what angle she thought about it, and hearing the straight-up lie that her son told confirmed it.

'So he's afraid too... is this boy really his friend or something else? Is he even who he claimed to be? Is he really from the Mu clan?' Zhen Sui couldn't help but think.

Still, she heeded her son's words and reasoned appropriately.

"Yes lord Mu Lin, I'm fine. Do not worry..."

Chapter 366 - Showing The Proof

Lin Mu couldn't help but feel that he had gone overboard. He was about to say something when senior Xukong suddenly spoke.

"Just go with the flow." He advised.

Lin Mu silently nodded and then looked at Zhen Sui.

"If you are fine with it then it's all good, madam Zhen." Lin Mu said in a calm tone.

"Of course, Lord Mu Lin. I cannot fault you with this. It was my mistake that I did not take proper precaution or you wouldn't have to see an embarrassing situation like this..." Zhen Sui spoke.

"Brother Mu Lin, I'll show you some of the literary works that I told you about, come let's go to my room. Mother, we'll see you later." Wu Hei spoke, wanting to end the conversation quickly.

"Yes, yes. Please go ahead, Lord Mu Lin. If you need anything, just ask we will do our best to satisfy." Zhen Sui spoke.

"Ah, thanks for your hospitality." Lin Mu stated before leaving with Wu Hei.

Once the two of them were gone, though, the eyes of Zhen Sui lit up.

"I can't believe Wu Hei found someone like him to represent him, that boy is a monster. I don't think I've ever seen sect disciples like that. Perhaps only the top sects may have someone like him." Zhen Sui said to herself with excitement.

She didn't mind one bit that she was injured and her fear from before had faded away, replaced by the joy that they may have a new ally.

"But that sword intent... that isn't normal. Who is that boy's master, someone from Centennial sword sect?" Zhen Sui wondered.

Then suddenly her expression darkened.

"Wu Xun cannot find out about this... at least not until the tournament." Zhen Sui muttered before leaving the room.

Back in the corridor, Wu Hei and Lin Mu were walking down while he admired the paintings hung on the wall. All of them were ink paintings and seemed to be made by an expert painter. Even though Lin Mu had no idea about art, he could still tell that the paintings were good.

"These are made by using special ink that contains spirit qi." Wu Hei spoke, seeing Lin Mu's interest.

"Oh? Is that why they give off such a feeling?" Lin Mu questioned.

"Yes, while the spirit qi has long since faded away from it. The intent that the painter drew it with still lies within it. That is the function of the special ink." Wu Hei explained.

Hearing about the ink made Lin Mu think of the refinement of the awakened bloodline. He remembered the runes that he had drawn using the blood of the Trunk Faced cow.

'Wasn't that technically just using blood as ink? And it definitely had a lot of spirit qi in it as well. Hmm... so making formation can also be said as translating one's intent into reality...' Lin Mu pondered.

A couple of minutes later, the two of them finally reached Wu Hei's room. Rather than room, it could be said to be more of an apartment, to be honest. It had a front room that could be used as a living room, another room that was a bedroom and also a study room/office. To the other side, there was a smaller room, which was none other than a bathroom.

While the room was clean and dustless, it still seemed like it hadn't been used for a while. Lin Mu didn't know why he could tell this, but it just felt like it.

'It lacks... aura?' Lin Mu wondered.

"You are correct. The place that a person usually resides in absorbs their aura and would give it a unique presence." Xukong explained.

"Hmm, is that so senior..." Lin Mu replied.

Wu Hei meanwhile waved his hand and activated some of the formations that he had set up in the room. Once all of them were activated the room was completely isolated and soundproof.

"Now we can talk brother Lin Mu." Wu Hei stated.

"Finally... So the thing I was talking about was regarding the caves and tunnels underground. Most of them are natural, that seemed to have been artificially been modified. Not only that, but some of the tunnels even have runes carved on them.

Though the thing that bothered me was the aura that I felt there. It was uncomfortable and made me want to leave. But I continued on and found out the place for the Blood sacrifice." Lin Mu revealed.

Wu Hei's eyes went wide as he almost gasped due to the shock. He would have never expected that this would have been hidden right below their noses.

Lin Mu then went on to explain the layout of the underground area and how he came to the conclusion that the place where the blood sacrifice is being done is right under the ancestral temple. Wu Hei started connecting the dots and found all of the hypotheses to be reasonable.

But he didn't just want to hear it, he wanted to see it with his two own eyes before coming to a proper conclusion.

"Can you show this place to me? I want to see these... sludge pools and runes." Wu Hei asked.

"Sure, it wouldn't be much of a problem. We don't have to go far, anyway." Lin Mu said. "But we will still need an excuse to enter the well, wouldn't we? I'm pretty sure the mayor would have some of his spies as guards here in the Manor." Lin Mu added.

"That you don't need to worry. I'll take care of it..." Wu Hei said as his eyes showed a dangerous glint for a moment.

Wu Hei removed the formations, and they walked downstairs to the garden. While on the way, Lin Mu could feel that Wu Hei was emanating some strong waves of spirit qi and he could even sense his spirit sense moving around.

On the way, they encountered a few guards who greeted Lin Mu and Wu Hei.

"What are you doing here at this time, Young Master?" The guards who were standing in the garden questioned.

Wu Hei walked forward with a smile on his face as he placed his hands on both the guard's shoulders in a friendly manner.

"You don't need to know..." He muttered before,

~kachak~

Chapter 367 - Showing The Proof-II

Lin Mu looked at the two corpses that were now lying on the ground. He had not expected that Wu Hei would kill them without a bit of hesitation.

"Are you sure this was a good idea?" Lin Mu questioned, "I mean what if they were innocent?" he added.

"No, there is no chance they were innocent." Wu Hei shook his head. "If such a thing is present under the manor, then there is no chance that the Mayor would assign any common guards here. They are definitely his spies." He explained.

"Alright, if you say so." Lin Mu said before touching the two dead guards and storing them in his ring.

Wu Hei raised his brows at this, feeling confused.

"Just a precaution..." Lin Mu said with a shrug.

Wu Hei nodded, and the two of them reached the well. Wu Hei scanned it with his spirit sense and saw the water that was flowing deep below.

"Do you need help in getting down? The underground river is rather dangerous." Wu Hei asked.

"No need..." Lin Mu said before withdrawing his short sword and jumping on it.

He floated to the well and hovered above it. Wu Hei just kept on watching a bit surprised at how effortlessly Lin Mu flew like that.

"What are you waiting for? Let's go," Lin Mu stated.

Wu Hei took out a spirit sword as well and flew down the well along with Lin Mu. It was dark here but Lin Mu simply raised his hand and a flame started burning on it. He lit a torch with it and passed it to Wu Hei.

"We will need to blow out the torches when we get near the sludge pool though, don't need another explosion." Lin Mu informed.

"Oh yes, I know. It similar to the gas from the swamps, they are flammable." Wu Hei said showing his knowledge.

Lin Mu nodded before talking him to the place where he had gone before. He showed him the damaged runes and finally the blocked door at the end of the corridor. Wu Hei could also smell the fouled smell and squinted his nose.

He used his spirit sense and checked the barrier on the door.

"Hmm, this is definitely a defensive barrier. But one that's beyond our level currently... I believe only a nascent soul realm cultivator would be able to set up something like this." Wu Hei analyzed.

He stroked his chin a couple of times before speaking, "I'll try and see if we can find a solution to this. I'll have to research a bit."

"As long as you can get me into the ancestral temple, we may not need it at all. Or... if we can find the entrance that the Gu Legion has been using. There should definitely be one somewhere." Lin Mu replied.

"Yes, that would be much easier... after we leave let me take care of the temple guards." Wu Hei said.

The two of them then headed to the sludge pool and stopped a distance away from it. They could see that the torches were flaring up and the gas was probably causing that.

"I have something that can help..." Wu Hei said.

He then took out a small fingernail sized marble from his spatial storage treasure and poured some spirit qi into it.

~Shua~

Then with a muffled noise, the marble started glowing. The light grew brighter and was now enough for them to see an area of ten meters clearly.

"This is an illumination marble, a low grade spirit tool." Xukong explained.

This was the first time Lin Mu was seeing a spirit tool like this. But he could also understand that this was technically a luxury item for people, as there were easier and cheaper ways to create light than using spirit qi.

Under the illumination of the marble, they could finally see the sludge pool and the Small troughs which carried the waste blood to it. Wu Hei furrowed his brows and had not expected that the sludge pool would really be this big.

'And if Lin Mu is right, then there are more of these...' Wu Hei thought as he tried calculating the amount of blood and corpses that would be required to fill them all.

No matter what denomination he used, the Numbers kept on being high according to his calculations.

"Beyond that wall is possible the main chamber where the blood sacrifice happens. I've tried to break it, but it has a qi barrier on it too." Lin Mu stated.

Wu Hei flipped his hand and the spirit sword appeared in front of him. He closed his eyes and swiped his index and middle fingers over the flat side of the blade, making some runes appeared on it.

~HAA~

Wu Hei slashed the sword forward and a sword beam traveled forward, striking the Wall. A cloud of dust was knocked up, but was quickly blown away with a flick of Wu Hei's sleeve. Looking at the result made Wu Hei a bit depressed.

"It is tough..." Wu Hei simply said before turning around.

"Let's get out. I'll go figure out something to get you into the ancestral temple." Wu Hei spoke.

"Alright..." Lin Mu replied before they quickly left the tunnels the same way they had come in.

Once they were out Lin Mu thought of something and asked, "how will you explain the disappearance of the two guards though?"

"It will be easy, I can just blame it on whatever intruder that came here a couple of days ago. Mother has still been bothered by it." Wu Hei answered.

"Uh... Umm..." Lin Mu muttered awkwardly.

"Is there a problem?" Wu Hei questioned, seeing his reaction.

"That intruder... that was me... I checked the carriage that your mother was traveling in curiously and didn't expect that this would happen." Lin Mu explained.

"Ahaha! This works then... technically I'm not lying then." Wu Hei joked as they walked to the Manor.

Lin Mu awkwardly rubbed the back of his head in response.

"I'll take my leave then, inform me when it's time." Lin Mu said, before leaving for his courtyard.

Chapter 368 - Open Visit

Lin Mu walked out of the manor and saw a carriage waiting for him.

"Lord Mu Lin, please," The carriage driver opened the door.

"Well, I guess I can think on the way back..." Lin Mu muttered to himself before climbing into the carriage.

~Haa~

Lin Mu let out a relaxed moan as he lounged on the comfy seat. He couldn't help but think of everything that had happened in the past year. He who was once a poor orphan was now having the Aristocrats interacting with him, that too with respect.

Lin Mu couldn't help but feel a strange sense of pride in himself, but at the same time, it felt wrong to himself. It was as if he thought he was unworthy of it.

Was it really him that accomplished all this or was it just luck?

Lin Mu asked himself this question. But no matter how much he pondered on it, no conclusion could be reached.

"Careful there!" Xukong suddenly spoke.

Lin Mu broke out of his stupor upon hearing Senior Xukong's voice.

"You said something senior?" Lin Mu asked.

"You are having a bad train of thought. Know this that self-doubt can be your biggest enemy if not controlled well. And by an enemy I mean one literally, if you let it grow for long, it will turn into a heart demon." Xukong warned.

Lin Mu's eyes went wide as he realized the seriousness of Senior's words. "I understand senior."

"But wait, why was I thinking of this? Oh yes, the thing that happened at the manor..." Lin Mu muttered.

"That Lin Mu, was you touching upon the edge of sword intent." Xukong said.

Xukong did not know what Lin Mu had actually seen. He had not seen the ocean of thoughts that had become demons, and neither had he seen the desire that Lin Mu had slain. This was not present in his thoughts either, thus Xukong could not read them.

But Xukong could still tell that Lin Mu had touched upon the realm of Sword intent.

"I did feel different when I held the short sword... it's as if there is a connection but not the same one that I had before. It's as if the sword was becoming part of me..." Lin Mu said, trying to recall.

"That's correct, you'll eventually get there and grasp the sword intent. The gate is already open, all you need to do is cross it." Xukong reapplied.

Lin Mu nodded his head in acknowledgment.

An idea then appeared in his mind and he took out the Refined bloodline crystal. He scanned it with his spirit sense and found it to be a bit easier for him this time. While it was still extremely dense and hard to penetrate, Lin Mu figured out that by condensing all of his spirit sense into a fine needle could see penetrate it a bit.

Lin Mu then observed some fine connections that existed in the structure of the crystal. These were invisible to the naked eye but were still present there. He could sense the energy within the Crystal concentrating around the joints.

He could sense that the energy flowed and circulated inside the bloodline crystal, creating an equilibrium. These joints seemed to be what were keeping the energy contained. He remembered when he first observed the core of the Trunk face cow, the joints did not exist and the energy within the core was just integrated into the structure.

Lin Mu recalled the ink paintings that he had seen in the manor and compared them with the formations that he had used to refine the bloodline crystal. He sensed that there was some kind of a link between them, but it was still a bit beyond his level.

While he had learned a bit about formations from senior Xukong, it was only at a basic level. He still didn't know the higher nuances of it and was still trying to understand them on his own.

Just like this, while pondering on the matter, he reached the courtyard.

"We're here Lord Mu Lin," The carriage driver spoke.

Lin Mu put the bloodline crystal away and left the carriage. A few minutes later, Lin Mu had changed out of the gaudy aristocrat clothes and was now sitting on the bed cross legged. He needed to recover the spirit qi that he had used up today.

Lin Mu spent the night cultivating and did not feel like sleeping. The next morning he was interrupted by the servant calling for him.

"Lord Lin Mu, a letter had come for you," The servant said.

Lin Mu took the letter from him and saw that it was from Wu Hei.

"Looks like he was fast..." Lin Mu muttered after reading the letter.

"He figured out a way to get rid of the guards?" Xukong questioned.

"Even better... we would be going in through the front door openly. The aristocrats and sect officials that would be coming today are going to go to the temple. Wu Hei was able to get me a place in the entourage as well." Lin Mu said feeling happy.

Lin Mu was honestly a bit tired with all the sneaking around he had to do. It was stressful on his mind too and being alert all the time took a toll on him. This method would be much more easy for him and he wouldn't have to be on his toes all the time.

"So when do we leave?" Xukong questioned.

"Right away, actually," Lin Mu said as he changed into something more presentable.

While these were no aristocrat's clothes, they were still of a good quality and he didn't think the people would mind it with his identity as a cultivator.

He swiftly left the courtyard and headed towards the Ancestral temple, reaching there in fifteen minutes. The streets were populated with a lot of carriages, which meant that the people had started coming for the wedding.

This made him slow down as he would have bumped into a lot of people otherwise.

At the ancestral temple, he could see around twenty carriages parked and a group of people standing near the entrance.

"Let's see what the truth is..."

Chapter 369 - Entering The Ancestral Temple

A couple of guards blocked Lin Mu when he got closer, but then a voice called out.

"Let Lord Mu Lin pass!" Wu Hei ordered.

Hearing that the person in front of him was a lord suddenly made the guards anxious. They wondered if they had accidentally offended an aristocrat and were bracing for the punishment, but surprisingly the person in front of them had no reaction to it.

They moved aside and let Lin Mu pass, still feeling a bit speechless.

"Have you ever seen an aristocrat act like that?" one of the guards asked the other.

"Very few... but they are in the minority... seems like we were lucky." The other guard muttered.

Lin Mu was observed by the other people that were wanting to enter the Ancestral Temple. All of them were either Aristocrats, or officials of the nearby sects. Lin Mu particularly paid attention to the sect officials and tried to recognize which sect they were from.

Lin Mu secretly took a breath of relief, seeing that they were actually from small sects that were not that powerful.

"Makes sense, a cultivator wouldn't particularly come to visit an ancestral temple once they have severed their mortal ties," Xukong spoke.

Lin Mu nodded his head, ignoring the curious gazes of the people. The sect officials looked away rather quickly, but the aristocrats were still wondering about his identity. They were from different places, but could still tell that the person in front of them was not normal.

No normal aristocrat would walk around that casually in clothes like that.

"Who is he?" One of the younger aristocrats questioned another.

"I heard Lord Wu Hei call him, Mu Lin. Do you know the clan he's from?" The other one replied.

"Hmm, I know of a couple of Mu clans but they are not aristocrats." Another person added.

"Greeting brother Mu Lin." Wu Hei spoke out loud intentionally with a smile.

Seeing their host greeting the person who had just come personally, made them confirm his identity. Wu Hei took a quick glance around and was satisfied by the result. This was another one of his methods that he was using to softly introducing Lin Mu to the others.

If Lin Mu directly turned up at the tournament, it would be a bit problematic and others could be suspicious. Wu Hei had thought of this method after seeing Lin Mu's demonstration last night. If Lin Mu truly ended up doing something on that level in the tournament, the others would question his motives.

Someone like Lin Mu would rightfully be worthy of cultivation sect and they would wonder if Wu Hei was cheating or something.

"Greetings lord Hei, I hope I was not late." Lin Mu replied seeing the door of the temple was still closed.

"Oh no, you are not late. The priests should be ready to open the doors at any moment." Wu Hei said, and the very next moment a sound was heard.

~Rumble~

The two big doors of the ancestral temple moved and the people could finally see the inside of the Temple. The door was opened by two priests and they seemed to be middle aged.

Wu Hei cupped his hands and slightly bowed his head in respect. "We greet the priests of the ancestral Temple. May the spirits of ancestries bring us prosperity." He greeted out loud.

The others responded similarly, and Lin Mu hurriedly did the same.

The priests on the other hand did not react at all and simply looked on, without a change of expression.

"Please, come in." The priests spoke in a calm tone.

Wu Hei nodded and gestured for everyone to enter. Lin Mu was right beside Wu Hei and was looking at the temple with interest. This was the first time that he had seen the inside of the temple and was feeling curious about everything.

The Ancestral temple was actually quite large, but it only had one floor. The entrance door led them to a small hall that was relatively empty and had a plain stone floor. They continued onward and were brought to the next pair of doors.

These doors were inscribed with protective prayers, and Lin Mu could tell that they were quite old. In fact, they seemed to be older than the walls of the temple. He could even feel the aura that was present on the doors.

"That aura is the amalgamation of many years of prayers of the priests. It has been imbued with their very intent and is close to becoming a treasure on its own." Xukong explained.

Lin Mu had not expected for something like this to be possible. He could not feel a single fluctuation of spirit qi from the doors, but the aura on it was still strong. Finally, the doors opened and the great ancestral tablets were visible to everyone.

There were tens of thousands of stone tablets, carved with the names of ancestors of the people placed in the center. They were elevated on a black platform that seemed to be made out of some kind of rock, yet it was polished enough that the flicker of the lamp flames could be reflected off of them.

The stone tablets were of different sizes and were placed in a circular pattern. The small ones to the outer area and the bigger ones in the inner area. The center of the platform was occupied by a five meter tall stone tablet, which was the biggest one of them all.

The name that was written on it had nearly faded away and could not be made out properly. Even the obituary that was carved on the stone had withered away due to wear and tear over the countless years it had stood here.

The people who had made great contributions or had a good status were the only ones that would have a chance to get their tablet placed here after their death. Lin Mu curiously looked around and tried to see if there were any stone tablets with the name 'Lin' on it.

He was curious if there was anyone among his ancestors that had been venerated here.

"Hmm... not the 'Lin' I want..." Lin Mu muttered to himself

Chapter 370 - Doing The Task

Lin Mu read the names on the tablets and saw a few with the surname Lin but not the same one as his. His surname meant 'Forest' but the ones here meant other things.

'Seems like none of my ancestors are here... wait, so why did father come here to pray?' Lin Mu wondered.

While the commoners also came here to pray, it was mostly because at least one of their ancestries at some point in time would be venerated here. But from what he could see no one of his could be seen. Still, no matter how much Lin Mu thought he couldn't figure out a reason for his father coming here.

"Did you Father ever see the tablets himself?" Xukong asked Lin Mu.

"No, he didn't... oh wait... I understand now." Lin Mu replied as he realized.

'He never knew... most of the commoners in the region had a link to the same family line thus would have an ancestor here. But seems like father just went with that idea in mind and came to pray here every year.' Lin Mu thought to himself.

Now that he thought about it, Lin Mu felt a bit sad for his father. He had passed on and yet never knew that there was no one to listen to his prayers. Lin Mu's heart ached for his father and mother again making his hands tremble ever so slightly even though he tried to control.

Far beyond the limits of the universe, beyond the void, there existed a wheel.

Carved out of an unknown material, the wheel turned without stopping. The thing that was moving it was actually a river, but if one looked at the water they would find themselves getting lost in it.

From this river countless smaller rivers branched, and from each of those smaller rivers, even more tributaries split. Then on each of the branches and tributaries, smaller water wheels were spinning. They weren't attached to anything yet kept on moving without stopping.

The wheels were made out of various materials. Some of the them were made out of gold, some out of crystals and some out of rotting wood.

In this place, the concept of time did not exist and neither did space. The only things that existed were the River and the water wheel.

The wheels kept on turning, and then suddenly a new tributary sprouted from one of the smaller breaches of the river. This tributary didn't have a wheel yet kept on flowing. But its flow was not smooth like the others, and there were waves in it.

The water in this tributary seemed to be rising and receding periodically, its purpose unknown. Then, an unknown amount of time later, whether right at the creation of the tributary or countless eons later, a voice sounded.

"Oh? Something interesting... finally."

Lin Mu snapped out of his thoughts when he heard someone calling him.

"Brother Mu Lin," Wu Hei called him.

"Oh, yes?" Lin Mu asked, still feeling a bit dazed.

"You were gonna do some things..." Wu Hei said in a low voice.

Lin Mu's eyes went wide as he remembered why he had come here. His memories had confused him for a bit, but then he calmed himself down.

"Yes, I'm on it." Lin Mu replied before closing his eyes.

The others that were with them were already praying, thus Lin Mu did not seem out of place. His spirit sense extended from his body and spread around. He avoided touching the people here as he did not want to alert them.

Lin Mu's spirit sense touched the walls and the other parts of the area. But the one thing he found common was the aura that was contained within them. This aura was similar to the one on the doors and the ancestral tablets, yet it was much more faint.

He then directed his spirit sense downward and started going through the ground. The floor was easy enough to pass through and Lin Mu realized that there were actually more level below the temple. The first area that he observed looked like where the priests lived.

This was still normal, as he hadn't seen any bedrooms in the area above. He then went even deeper and could see some monks moving around and some reading scriptures. There weren't many of them, only six, but Lin Mu could feel the faint waves of spirit qi from them.

All of them were cultivators, although not that strong. This seemed to be the area where the priests practiced and studied. He crossed this level and reached the third level, which was much smaller than the above areas.

There were strong waves of spirit qi coming from the center of the area and just from their intensity Lin Mu could tell that they belonged to a core condensation realm cultivator. He guessed that this was none other than the head priest of the temple, and this was his quarters.

Knowing that he shouldn't let his spirit sense get too close, lest he be detected, Lin Mu directed it to a safer corner and continued downward. But he found himself stopping as this was the limit of his spirit sense, and if he wanted to go any deeper, he would have to shorten the distance.

Lin Mu retracted his spirit sense and opened his eyes.

"There are some things that I discovered, but I need to get closer." Lin Mu told Wu Hei.

"That would be difficult... the priests wouldn't allow anyone to leave their sight." Wu Hei replied.

"I don't need long, just a minute would be enough." Lin Mu said after thinking for a bit.

If Lin Mu use Blink in tandem with Phase, he would be able to travel much faster. Of course, this was only possible since he already knew of the layout of the place. Otherwise there was a great chance he would have been trapped in some random wall.

Wu Hei furrowed his brows and tried to figure out a method for it. Lin Mu saw his troubled expression and spoke again, "just being alone would be fine too. I may be able to figure out another method."