

Walker 51

Chapter 51 - Sudden Enlightenment

Xukong was happy with the progress Lin Mu had done in the past day. Not only was he able to freely manipulate the wisps of spirit qi and link them, but he was also able to completely connect them into a tendril of spirit sense.

'The boy has talent in Spirit qi control, but I can't tell if it is innate or if this is the work of the ring as well.' Xukong thought.

Lin Mu was sitting on the ground cross-legged and was using his newly refined spirit sense to feel his environment. The new sensations felt novel to Lin Mu. He felt that he was able to see in a 360-degree angle with the help of the spirit sense.

Lin Mu wanted to test the second skill Blink and see if he could teleport to a location outside his field of vision, but decided against it as he had exhausted nearly all of his spirit qi. Every time he failed during the process of refining the spirit sense, he would lose the wisps of spirit qi that he was manipulating.

The spirit sense tendril that he had refined was one meter long and was refined by linking twenty wisps of spirit qi. Over the multiple attempts, Lin Mu had lost nearly five hundred wisps of spirit qi, leaving him with a meager 35 wisps of spirit qi in his dantian.

'I need to replenish my spirit qi and I also need to eat something, I'm starving.' Lin Mu thought.

"You can continue your practice tomorrow, for now, you need to rest." Xukong ordered.

"Yes, senior." Lin Mu responded.

Lin Mu cooked some dinner for himself, ate it, and then laid down on the bed. He rested his head on the soft bolster and slipped into a deep sleep. Perhaps because Lin Mu was extremely exhausted both physically and mentally, he did not appear inside the Sleepscape and just slept normally.

While Lin Mu was sleeping, Xukong was continually absorbing the spatial energy within the ring.

'There seems to be no end to the spatial energy in here. I had originally thought it would be depleted after I absorbed it and would take some time to be replenished. But the ring seems to be producing it at a much higher rate than I can absorb.' Xukong thought.

'Although the boy has talent, he is still lacking in resources. Without resources, it would be extremely difficult for him to progress in his cultivation. I need to figure out a way so that he can gain some resources. Till then, I guess he'll have to depend on the forest.' Xukong pondered.

Several hours passed, and the sun rose up in the sky. Lin Mu woke up and stretched his body, but found that it was surprisingly not stiff. He felt refreshed and his body felt as if it was new.

Lin Mu started his morning routine and cooked some beast meat. While the meat cooked, he sat down to cultivate and replenish his spirit qi. His body had already replenished a hundred wisps of spirit qi while he slept, thus he had a sufficiently large amount of spirit qi to start cultivation.

Although Lin Mu only cultivated for 15 minutes, he found out that the speed of absorbing spirit qi had increased again and he was able to absorb 50 wisps of spirit qi.

"How did my speed of absorption increase again?" Lin Mu muttered to himself, but senior Xukong heard him.

"That would be because of your spirit sense. Spirit sense not only allows you to sense your surroundings, but it also has other effects as well. One of them being an increase in sensitivity to spirit qi." Xukong spoke.

"What are the other functions and effects of spirit qi then, senior?" Lin Mu asked.

"Spirit qi is highly versatile and is used in things such as controlling spirit weapons and tools, creating formations and refining alchemical pills." Xukong answered.

Lin Mu's had heard about spirit weapons before. He knew that they were much stronger than normal weapons and even had some special effects. He wondered if he should obtain one somehow. While Lin Mu was lost in his thoughts, his breakfast was ready.

He then finished his breakfast and assimilated the vital energy. When he was about to start cultivating, he noticed that the black dots had returned. He was able to spot several of them in the area.

"Senior, the black dots have returned." Lin Mu spoke.

"Black dots? Ah, you mean the spatial gates. Hmm, I can sense them too, but there are far too many of them here." Xukong replied.

"Too many? But I see them wherever I go. Is this abnormal?" Lin Mu inquired.

"Yes, those black dots you see are actually the weak points that exist in the space. Normally they should be rare, but it seems that the mere presence of your ring is enough to destabilize the space." Xukong answered.

Having satisfied his curiosity, Lin Mu sat down cross-legged to replenish his spirit qi. He cultivated for two hours and was able to replenish his spirit qi up to his previous levels. Lin Mu slowly extended the tendril of spirit sense and analyzed the surrounding area.

He could sense each and every blade of grass and the tiny insects that were crawling on it. If Lin Mu used the severing heart sutra and focused even more, he could observe the specs of dust floating in the air.

Lin Mu tried to sense the area underground beneath him and found that he was only able to probe a few inches in. If he tried to go any deeper his spirit sense was just blocked, as if there was an iron wall in front of it. Stumped at this problem, Lin Mu decided to ask senior Xukong for guidance.

"Your spirit sense won't be able to pierce through solid objects for now. You will have to increase its range and strengthen it further to be able to do that. Right now you should just focus on increasing its range and leave the rest for the future." Xukong advised.

Lin Mu nodded and decided to finally test out Blink. He stood up and extended his spirit sense behind him. He locked on to a location and activated the skill. In the next instant, Lin Mu disappeared from his previous location and appeared in the location he had chosen.

"Well done." Xukong commended.

"Thank you senior, it is all due to your guidance." Lin Mu politely acknowledged.

He then continued to test out Blink in different manners. Since the range of Lin Mu's spirit sense was only one meter, he was only able to teleport that far behind. If he wanted to increase the distance of teleportation, he would have to increase the range of his spirit sense.

While using spirit sense, he found out that he could actually teleport in mid-air. But it was only possible if he used his spirit sense and not by just using his eyes. Lin Mu could think of multiple situations where he could use this method for an ambush.

Suddenly, Lin Mu remembered that tomorrow would be the day when he had to return to the town. It had been five days since he had booked the room at the inn. So he will have to return tomorrow.

"Senior, I will be returning to the town tomorrow, to live in a room at the inn." Lin Mu said to senior Xukong.

When Xukong first saw that Lin Mu was living in an old and mottled shack, he did not think much of it. For a being such as him, who has lived for countless years, he had seen people from all walks of life. Also, because he was a beast himself, he could not be bothered with humans and had a different mind-set.

"Why have you been living here in that shack and not in a human town?" Xukong finally asked.

Lin Mu then went on to narrate the story of how he was punished and his house was seized. Xukong silently listened to the story and let Lin Mu speak. Only after Lin Mu had finished speaking did Xukong respond.

"So I guess you want to buy back your property?" Xukong asked.

"Yes senior, and once I do that, I'll pay my respects at the grave of my parents and ancestors, before leaving the town to start my journey." Lin Mu answered with determination in his voice.

"Good. A true cultivator can only progress when he experiences the worldly tribulations. Your choice of leaving the town behind and journeying will only bring you benefits in the long run." Xukong spoke with a sagely voice.

Lin Mu was lost in thought after listening to senior Xukong's words. He then remembered the esoteric chants that he heard while receiving the severing heart sutra. A sudden wave of enlightenment spread in his mind and he was washed away in it.

Seeing that Lin Mu had closed his eyes and seemed to be lost in his thoughts, Xukong called out for him. But suddenly alarm bells started ringing within his mind and he became apprehensive. Then Xukong saw a blinding glow appear in front of his eyes and felt a feeling he had not felt for millenniums, Terror.

Chapter 52 - The Day Of The Fallen

The altar within the mysterious ring was currently glowing with a blinding light. A peculiar energy was being emitted by the altar, which was leaking out of the ring. Even the barrier created by Xukong could not stop it. The energy was so strong that it had spread out in an area of hundred kilometers.

Xukong, who was inside the ring and also the closest to the altar, was bearing the full brunt of the impact. The feeling of terror filled every speck of his body and paralyzed him. Especially since his current body was only an avatar and did not have the cultivation base of the main body, he felt much worse than normal.

'What is this aura? Even those old monsters would not come close to this level.' Xukong thought.

A minute later, the aura changed from being cold and overwhelming to sharp and deadly. Xukong now felt as if he was in the presence of a peerless sword immortal. He had to use every bit of his will to resist the sharp aura, otherwise he felt as if his soul would be severed in an instant.

In the Northern town, there was a large courtyard that was hidden from the eyes of mortals. Within this courtyard, a manor existed, in the front of which a beautiful garden full of fragrant spirit flowers was spread. In this garden, two people were currently sitting inside a pergola.

These two were none other than the pair of grandfather and granddaughter, Jing Wei and Duan Ke. Jing Wei was drinking a cup of aromatic tea while Duan Ke was reading a jade scroll. Suddenly both of them felt as if freezing water was poured over them and they dropped the items in their hands. The elegant cup fell from Jing Wei's hand and shattered, while the jade scroll dropped on the table and made a clinking sound.

Once the freezing feeling passed, it morphed into a sharp and deadly aura. They felt as if thousands of swords were pointed at them and would be cutting them into a million pieces in the next instant. This overwhelming feeling lasted for a minute, after which it disappeared.

Duan Ke collapsed on the ground and was left breathless. Blood could be seen dripping out of the edge of her lips. Jing Wei was no good either. He was able to hold on to the table and plopped down onto a chair.

"Grand... father... what... was... that?" Duan Ke uttered between her breaths.

Jing Wei stayed silent for five minutes before he was able to gather his wits. He let out a breath of foul qi and spoke,

"That was sword intent. A hidden cultivator ascended two days ago, and now this; I don't even know what to make of this anymore."

"That was sword intent! Is there even a single expert in any of the top sects that can have such an overbearing sword intent?" Duan Ke exclaimed out loud.

"No, I'm afraid not. Even the sword intent of the previous ancestor of the Centennial Sword sect cannot compare to this." Jing Wei said.

In Wu Lim city, a shocking phenomenon could be witnessed. The commoners saw one cultivator after another collapsing on the ground. Some could even be seen bleeding from the seven orifices.

Inside the mayor's mansion, Wu Xun was also struggling to stand. He could not understand what was happening right now either.

After the overwhelming aura vanished, he immediately popped a pill into his mouth and rushed through a hidden entrance. He later appeared inside a cave deep underground. Wu Xun walked into the cave with the blood pool and saw that the inscriptions carved into the roof and the walls had crumbled into dust.

Wu Xun walked over to the blood pool with an anxious expression and saw his elder brother sitting there safely. Seeing that his elder brother was fine, he let out a breath of relief.

"If you are fine, then everything will be fine." Wu Xun muttered.

This day would later be called as the day of the fallen.

Back at the hunting shack, Lin Mu was still sitting on the ground cross-legged. A tranquil expression could be seen on his face, completely unaware of the phenomenon that had happened. The day had turned into night when Lin Mu finally woke up.

"So there's more to Severing heart sutra than just enhanced spirit qi control." Lin Mu muttered.

"You're finally awake." Xukong spoke.

"How long was I out for?" Lin Mu asked.

"Look around. You've been in a state of enlightenment for the past twelve hours." Xukong informed.

Lin Mu looked at the sky and found that it was indeed late. He had not expected that time would pass so fast. For him, it was only a few minutes. While for others, hours had gone by.

"What did you gain from your enlightenment?" Xukong curiously asked.

This question had been picking at Xukong's mind ever since the overwhelming aura had disappeared. He wondered what kind of concept could it be, that it would cause such a massive impact. From the aura that he experienced, Xukong could tell that it was similar to sword intent yet different. One thing was sure though, that it was related to the sword path.

Lin Mu thought for a moment and recalled all that he had learned.

"The severing heart sutra, it's not as simple as it appears. It has numerous methods of application, and I've only been using one. It also has different stages of comprehension from what I understood." Lin Mu answered.

'Hmm, so that aura was from Lin Mu gaining enlightenment about the severing heart sutra. I already knew that it was related to the sword path, but now I'm sure it's some kind of immortal inheritance.' Xukong thought.

"So, what are these different stages of comprehension that you've understood?" Xukong questioned.

"The stage I'm in right now is the second stage of external comprehension. But this is for the severing heart sutra only. For the calming heart sutra, I'm still in the first stage of external comprehension." Lin Mu answered.

"In the first stage of external comprehension, I'm only able to use the nine divine heart sutras on myself. While in the second stage of external comprehension, I'm able to use it on others as well. As for the stages beyond this, I will only know them when I progress further." Lin Mu further explained.

Seeing that senior Xukong was not speaking anymore, Lin Mu just decided to continue training. He estimated it to be midnight, thus he first cooked some dinner and ate it. Then he cultivated for a while and then decided to sleep.

Lin Mu appeared in the Sleepscape in front of the spirit apple tree. He saw that there wasn't only one spirit apple on the tree, but rather three of them. Two of those apples were ripe and one was still growing.

"Wait, two spirit apples? Oh no! I think I spent much longer in the Grand Void than I thought." Lin Mu exclaimed.

"Well, I've already paid for the room in advance, so it shouldn't cause much of a problem for me." Lin Mu thought out loud.

Lin Mu then plucked the two spirit apples and stored them in the ring.

'Can I bring out senior Xukong in the Sleepscape?' Lin Mu wondered.

When he was in the real world, senior Xukong had informed him that he will not be able to come out of the ring, as the world's restrictions would not allow him to exist there. To test this out, Lin Mu actually tried it and indeed found it to be true. No matter how much effort he put, he could not pull out senior Xukong from the ring.

To satisfy his curiosity Lin Mu willed it and the tiny body of senior Xukong appeared on his hand.

Xukong seemed dumbstruck when he suddenly found himself in a different place. He saw that he was on Lin Mu's hand, and the place that they were in seemed unnatural. He did not speak and looked around for a bit before speaking.

"Where are we?" Xukong asked.

"In my Sleepscape, Senior." Lin Mu informed.

"Your Sleepscape?" Xukong muttered.

Lin Mu then realized that in all that happened, he had completely forgotten to tell senior Xukong about the Sleepscape. Even yesterday because he was extremely tired, he did not enter the Sleepscape. Thus he did not get the chance to speak about it beforehand.

Seeing that Senior Xukong was waiting for his explanation, Lin Mu described the circumstances behind the Sleepscape and what its characteristics were. He told him how it was originally a dark and gloomy place and how it later turned into this. He told him about the spirit apple tree and the size of the entire location.

Xukong digested the entire information and searched his own memories, as well as his bloodline memories for an answer to this enigma of a place. After a few minutes of searching, he was able to reach a conclusion.

'For a place that exists within a person, can accommodate my avatar and seems to be able to support some rudimentary laws, there's only one answer that comes to my mind.' Xukong concluded.

"A Garden Of Karma." Xukong uttered.

Chapter 53 - The Garden Of Karma

Lin Mu became interested in what senior Xukong had just spoken. However, he could perceive that senior Xukong was still in thoughts, thus he did not interrupt him and waited till he was done.

But Lin Mu did not expect that he would get no answer even after thirty minutes, thus he returned Senior Xukong to the ring and started practicing with his weapons.

After nearly four hours, Lin Mu heard the voice of senior Xukong in his mind prompting to bring him out of the ring. He heeded senior Xukong's words and brought him out of the ring.

After being brought out of the ring senior Xukong floated up from his hand and flew away at great speed, only to return after ten seconds.

Xukong had heard about the characteristics of the Sleepscape from Lin Mu's mouth, but he still wanted to see it with his own eyes. After observing the entire place, he came to the conclusion that this place was indeed a 'Garden of karma'. Though it had some differences compared to the information, he had in his memories.

The biggest difference was in the rudimentary laws. From the information he had in his memories, he knew that a Garden of karma was a fully stable spatial realm with its own Dao laws. But in the case of Lin Mu, there wasn't even a sun in the sky and there was no night either. And from the ability of the space to return to its initial conditions, he could tell that this place was not fully developed yet.

Though the fact that strengthened his belief in this being a Garden of karma was the spirit apple tree that was growing in the middle of the Sleepscape. It was the only thing in this place that allowed 'change', the change being able to pick its fruits.

"What do you know about Sleepscape, Senior Xukong?" Lin Mu asked.

"This place that you call Sleepscape is actually a spatial realm called as Garden of Karma. It was difficult for me to identify it because of its rarity and also because of its characteristics being different from the ones I know." Xukong answered.

"Why is this place different?" Lin Mu questioned.

"Well, even the information I have in my memories is not complete. It is not known whether the creation of a Garden of Karma is linked to a person's physique or something else. Even the existence of a single Garden of Karma is incredibly rare, such that there are known records of only four people in the entire cosmos." Xukong replied with uncertainty in his voice.

"Because there have only been four owners in the past, the information about the Garden of karma is very limited. Even the past owners had differences between the characteristics of their respective Gardens of karma. But I can say one thing for sure, your Garden of Karma is not developed yet. And even after it is developed, it will still keep on growing. For example, you are not able to use vital energy here, but you should be able to use spirit qi." Xukong explained.

Lin Mu felt a little happy that there were other people who had a similar condition to him before. He felt that he may be able to resolve a lot of his questions if he got to know them. He also tried guiding the spirit qi and found that he was indeed able to control spirit qi in the Sleepscape now.

"These people who had a Garden of karma, where are they?" Lin Mu asked with a hint of anticipation on his face.

"Three of them died before I was born and the one that I knew of also died some years ago." Xukong answered.

Disappointment could be seen on Lin Mu's face after hearing senior Xukong's answer. However, he was able to snap out of it and returned to his weapons practice. Senior Xukong stayed there, floating in the air. He was observing Lin Mu's weapon skills.

Xukong saw that Lin Mu was using multiple weapons instead of focusing on one weapon, thus was intrigued by this. He had seen some experts use multiple weapons before but those experts were much much stronger than Lin Mu.

"Why do you use multiple weapons instead of focusing on only one?" Xukong curiously asked.

Lin Mu stopped his spear thrust mid-way and turned around to answer senior Xukong.

"I prefer using multiple weapons, as I want to be ready if there ever comes a situation where I've lost all my weapons and I don't have a choice. I want to be able to use any weapon that's available in that situation." Lin Mu answered.

"If you are going to follow this path, then you need to learn from a proper weapons manual that teaches the use of multiple weapons." Xukong advised.

"I know that senior. I've been intending to buy a weapons manual once I return to the town." Lin Mu answered.

Senior Xukong hummed in approval and spoke,

"You probably won't be able to find a Spirit weapon manual in that town though I expect."

"Spirit weapon manual? But I will first need a spirit weapon before that, senior." Lin Mu replied with slight confusion.

"You already have one. Your short sword is a spirit weapon. Don't tell me you didn't know that." Xukong spoke with a puzzled voice.

Lin Mu was shocked by this revelation. He never expected that the short sword he had been using all this time had been a spirit weapon.

"I... I did not know that. But I don't think a spirit weapon should so cheap that it is worth less than even a gold coin." Lin Mu said with an embarrassed face.

Seeing that senior Xukong did not understand him, Lin Mu explained to him how he bought the short sword from the old store and how he was suspecting that the owner and his granddaughter were cultivators.

"Hmm, I don't know why that old man gave you the short sword for cheap, but I can tell that he is definitely a cultivator." Xukong said.

'Everything will be revealed when we get to the town, anyway.' Xukong said inwardly.

"How do I use a spirit weapon then, senior?" Lin Mu asked with excitement on his face.

"Use it the same way you strengthen your body with qi. Spirit weapons are conductive to spirit qi, thus you will be able to guide it into it the same way you do with your body." Xukong explained.

Lin Mu withdrew the short sword and held it in his hand. He guided a wisp of spirit qi from his dantian and guided it into his hand, and from his hand he let it flow into the short sword. He had thought there may be a slight difficulty in doing this but did not expect the short sword to freely accept his spirit qi.

As soon as spirit qi entered the short sword, it hummed and a faint glow could be seen in it. A few runes appeared on the blade and soon faded away. Lin Mu then slashed at the air and could see a faint outline cutting out in the air. Senior Xukong saw this and spoke,

"Hmm, surprisingly that short sword is a high-grade spirit weapon." Xukong spoke.

Lin Mu looked at senior Xukong with a question expression, which he understood and explained.

"Spirit weapons are divided into four grades depending on their quality. They are- low grade, mid-grade, high grade, and top-grade spirit weapon."

"That old man was very generous if he gave you a high-grade spirit weapon. He even sealed it so that other cultivators won't be able to detect it. But now that you've activated the short sword and released the seal, you'll need to be careful." Xukong said.

Lin Mu could not help but wonder why that old man would give him such a precious item.

"Also, you won't be able to use the full potential of the short sword yet. If you want to be able to fly with it, you will have to reach the core condensation realm or at the very least the peak of the qi refining realm. You will also need to refine your spirit sense to a much higher level as well, as you need spirit sense for the more complex control of spirit weapons." Xukong elaborated.

Lin Mu felt elated at the aspect of flying. He had heard the stories of immortals who would fly using their swords, clouds, beast, and countless other items. Being able to fly was one of the dreams that everyone had as a child.

When he slashed using the short sword, he had only used a single wisp of spirit qi. Back then, he was able to feel that it was not the limit and he can actually amplify the strength of the short sword even more. To test out the maximum power of the short sword he withdrew the large heavy rock that he had found in the spatial rift.

Lin Mu had tested the rock before and knew that the rock was unusually strong and hard. It would be the perfect target to test the power of the short sword on. He thus channeled spirit qi into the short sword and kept on doing it, till he felt that he was going to lose control over it. Once it was filled with 200 wisps of spirit qi, Lin Mu raised the blade and slashed the rock with all his might.

In the next moment, the blade passed through the rock with ease, as if a hot knife through butter. The part that was cut fell down, revealing a smooth surface at the site of the cut.

Chapter 54 - Teachings About The Void

Lin Mu took a deep breath when he saw the outcome of his slash. He had expected it to cut a certain part of the rock. But did not think the sword would end up smoothly cleaving through the rock. He looked closer at the cut and found that the surface was smooth and shiny.

Lin Mu then relaxed and let the spirit qi return back to his dantian. He sensed that he had consumed fifty wisps out of the 200 that he had reinforced the short sword with.

'I'll be able to use four strikes of equal to this strength after amplifying the short sword to the maximum once.' Lin Mu thought.

While Lin Mu was focused on the short sword, Senior Xukong's focus was on the large rock. Xukong felt a little confused at the large rock. He was able to identify the material it was made out of.

'Why is there such a large chunk of Heavy depths Iron ore here? It shouldn't be present in this world.' Xukong thought.

"Where did you get this Heavy depths iron ore from Lin Mu?" Xukong questioned.

Lin Mu stopped his thoughts upon listening to senior Xukong question and turned towards him.

"Heavy depths Iron ore? You mean this large rock?" Lin Mu counter asked.

"Yes, that's what it is called." Xukong answered.

"Oh, I found it in a spatial rift. Is it something rare and special?" Lin Mu spoke.

'Is there a collapsed oceanic world somewhere nearby?' Xukong pondered to himself.

"Not specifically. Except for it being heavy and hard, there isn't much special about it. Although it is not rare, but such a large chunk is usually only formed in special conditions. In a world such as this, only smaller chunks of it would be found." Xukong answered.

Heavy depths iron was a type of metal that was formed under the heavy pressure of a large water body. It could be found in any world that had seas or ocean, but the size of its ore would depend on the size of the ocean. The chunk of ore that Lin Mu found was too large for it to belong to this world. The only place it could be formed would be in an oceanic world.

Oceanic worlds were large planets that had nearly no landmass and were completely covered with water. Such worlds were dominated by monstrous Aquatic beasts and were often uninhabitable for cultivators. However, oceanic worlds also had magical treasures and unique materials that were only found within them. Thus they were the targets of many large cultivator sects and organizations.

Since Lin Mu was able to find such a large chunk of Heavy depths iron ore, it meant that there was quite likely a collapsed oceanic world nearby this world. It also meant that there were precious treasures that were lost in the void, waiting to be found. And if someone was able to find the original location of the oceanic world, they may even be able to find something priceless, a world essence crystal.

Stopping his train of thought Xukong, saw that Lin Mu was asking him something.

"Senior is this Heavy depths Iron ore useful for making weapons or armors and can it be sold?" Lin Mu asked with expectation on his face.

"It is unsuitable for making weapons and armor because of its properties. It would be fine if it was just hard and heavy, but because it also obstructs the flow of spirit qi, it is not used to make them. Instead, it is used in the construction of defensive fortifications for castles and forts, so you can sell it." Xukong answered.

Lin Mu's eyes lit up with the glint of gold. Now that he had the support of senior Xukong, he would not have to be as cautious as before and would be able to ask him for advice. The quicker he bought back his house, the quicker he would be able to start his journey into the cultivation world.

While Lin Mu was thinking about his future prospects, Xukong was thinking about the situation of this world. He was wondering if there were more collapsed worlds near Lin Mu's world. He thought of a way to confirm his doubts.

"What other items have you found in the spatial rifts? Show me all of them." Xukong ordered.

Realization dawned on Lin Mu's mind. If the large rock which looked useless was precious, then who knows what other things he found were rare and perhaps priceless. Lin Mu hurriedly started taking out one item after the other from the ring. Soon enough there were five piles of items lying haphazardly on the ground inside of the Sleepscape.

Lin Mu had separated the items which he found useful, such as the booklet which contained the martial technique 'boulder collapsing fist' and the four vessels restoration pills in different piles and useless items like the old shoe and clump of soil into a different pile.

Senior Xukong closely scrutinized every item and then came to float in front of Lin Mu. He then instructed Lin Mu to separate the items into two different piles from the five piles. Senior Xukong then came to float in front of a pile and spoke,

"This is garbage."

"This is useful." Xukong said after floating over to the other pile.

Lin Mu looked at the garbage pile and sure enough, most of the items he thought were useless were just that, useless. But he was a little surprised looking at the pile of useful items. There were some items which he did not think would be useful.

For example, the clump of soil that he had found was now in the pile of useful items and the small shard of metal was too. Lin Mu could not understand the reasoning behind this, thus he asked senior Xukong.

"That clump of soil is not what you think it is. It is actually the dried blood of a spirit beast. While that metal shard is quite possibly part of an immortal tool. Even though it's only a small shard, it is still linked to the immortal tool and you may be able to find it with the help of it." Xukong explained.

Lin Mu was shocked upon hearing about an immortal tool. He could tell that it was something that was above spirit weapons and was much stronger than them. But he could not help but wonder how these items ended up in the spatial rifts.

"Senior there is one thing I could not understand. How do these items end up inside of spatial rifts?" Lin Mu asked apprehensively.

"There are many reasons for that. But the most common reasons are either the destruction of a spatial treasure or the collapse of a world. Depending on the reason, the item will be lost in a different layer of the void." Xukong answered.

Lin Mu had heard the two words Grand Void and lesser void from senior Xukong before, but could not understand the difference between them. Thus he asked him to explain.

"Senior, could you explain to me about the void?" Lin Mu asked.

"While you will not understand the actual characteristics of the void, I'll give you a simplified explanation. The Void can be broadly divided into four layers- the lesser void, the great void, the greater void, and the Grand void." Xukong spoke and took a pause until he was sure that Lin Mu had digested this information.

"The lesser void is a place that exists parallel to the real world and is separate for each of the worlds. The great void is the layer which contains minor worlds and spatial dimensions, your Sleepscape could be considered as an example of a spatial dimension.

While the Greater Void contains all the worlds in a specific realm. Finally, the Grand Void is the layer that separates the different major realms and contains all the layers below it. Also, every higher layer in the void contains multiples of the layer below it. For example, the great void has multiple layers of the lesser void contained within it." Xukong explained.

Lin Mu was a little overwhelmed by all the information that senior Xukong had just spoken. It took him a few minutes before he was able to analyze and integrate all the information into his mind. He also felt minuscule at the immensity of the entire universe. He could not even imagine the sheer size of the worlds that existed, not to speak of entire realms.

Xukong saw that Lin Mu was astounded at his explanation, thus he spoke,

"Don't be overwhelmed by my explanation. Even if you don't understand it right now, it won't matter. You will eventually understand it in the future."

Lin Mu felt a little better after hearing senior Xukong's encouraging words. His attention was then redirected towards the useful pile of items. There were some items in it that he knew were useful, but he could not tell what their use could be. One such item was the high-quality wooden slip he had found.

Lin Mu picked up the wooden slip from the pile and showed it to senior Xukong while asking,

"Senior, what is this wooden slip, why is there nothing written in it?"

Xukong looked at the exquisite wooden slip in Lin Mu's hand and let out a chuckle before speaking,

"That is the most useful item out of all of them, its worth exceeds all the items combined. That wooden slip is a Legacy treasure."

Chapter 55 - Legacy Of The Lost Immortal

Xukong himself was a little surprised upon finding a legacy treasure in the pile of random items. He was getting more and more interested in this world. He could not tell what the legacy treasure would contain, but he was sure that the legacy treasure was not from this world.

The craftsmanship of the legacy treasure belonged to a higher realm and with how complex the formations placed on it were, Xukong knew that it contained a complete legacy. The only question remaining was that whether it will deem Lin Mu worthy of it.

While senior Xukong was in his thoughts, Lin Mu was staring at the wooden slip, trying to figure out how to use it. He even tried observing it with his spirit sense, but was unable to find anything. Finally, giving up after a few tries, Lin Mu turned to senior Xukong for answers.

"What does this wooden slip contain?" Lin Mu asked.

"Every legacy treasure is different. Some contain the entire inheritance of an expert while some may only contain minor inheritances. Some contain martial techniques or cultivation techniques while others may contain the life experiences of a cultivator." Xukong answered.

"Now then, to activate the legacy treasure you need to put a drop of your blood on it." Xukong explained.

Lin Mu followed senior Xukong's words and used the short sword to prick his finger. He then let a drop of blood fall on the wooden slip. As soon as the blood touched the wooden slip, it was absorbed and numerous runes appeared.

The runes spread from the wooden slip on to Lin Mu's hands and then onto his chest. Unbeknownst to Lin Mu, an obscure pattern was formed on his abdomen which then sunk in and disappeared. A few seconds later the runes disappeared, and a connection was formed between Lin Mu and the wooden slip.

Lin Mu then opened the wooden slip and saw words appearing on it. The entire wooden slip when opened was fifty centimeters long and was made of twenty five individual wooden strips. Lin Mu started reading the words one by one.

"I was called as the Lost Immortal and this is my final legacy.

This legacy that I am leaving behind was the work of my life. I suffered many setbacks in my life, some because of my enemies, some due to my miscalculations, and some due to the heaven's will.

While I was staunch and stable in the early part of my life, later on, after suffering one misfortune after another I developed heart demons.

I could be considered to have had below-average talent in cultivation, and all that I had was gained through sheer dedication and hard work. The heart demon I developed was because of a problem that usually belonged to the mortals, starvation.

In the tens of thousands of years that I lived, I often found myself in conditions where I was heavily injured, stripped of qi, and trapped in deadly situations.

While the commoners think that immortals don't know the sufferings of mortals they are wrong. They think that immortals no longer feel hungry, nor do they need to breathe. While this is correct to a

certain extent, it is only so when you are in an optimum condition. Even immortals when they deplete their qi and vital energy need to eat in order to survive.

For cultivators who have lived as long as me, all have gone through similar situations such as mine. But their suffering cannot be compared to mine. They may have been in one, two, five, or even ten situations, but it still would not compare to mine.

While most would not survive after their luck ran out, I do not know whether it was my fortune or misfortune that I have survived one hundred and seven such tribulations.

I often thought if it would have been better if I perished early on and did not suffer these tribulations. But every time I did that, my heart demon grew.

Slowly, over the years, I developed an obsession. I would no longer suffer the tribulation of starvation ever again. I knew that the heavens were against me and would pit me against a grim tribulation again, thus my obsession grew.

Eventually, all I could think of was my obsession and my progress in cultivation plummeted. I knew that this could not go on any longer, so I started my journey to find a solution. I journeyed through countless worlds and a multitude of realms.

I researched techniques that would help me in relieving starvation forever. I observed beasts that were known for their hunger, their ability to devour, and beasts that were long-lived and seldom ate. I hunted down unique races that did not consume material food as sustenance but rather obscure types of energies.

I found some beasts that were once thought to be myths and legends. I even discovered beasts that were never seen before. I went after creatures that were a hundred times stronger than me and came out alive. My obsession was now somehow fuelling my strength.

I now knew what I had to do, I was going to create a technique that would absolve one of their hunger. I gathered precious materials and unique treasures while using the knowledge that I had gained to forge my creation.

But alas, I failed. I was still lacking.

I began my journey again and wandered the universe. It was during this time that I was given the title 'Lost Immortal'. I had long forgotten my own name in my obsession, thus I just accepted it.

After a few years, I had an epiphany and my cultivation started growing once again.

But with the growth of my cultivation, the heaven's fury returned as well. I survived more of those cursed conditions and let my heart demon grow. I did not know why, but my heart demon never harmed me even though it had existed for a long time. Others would have suffered a qi deviation or a Dao collapse, but miraculously I did not.

More years passed and I could feel that I was slipping into insanity, one year at a time. I knew that once I was completely drowned in insanity, I would never resolve my obsession. Thus I staked all I had and revisited all the places I had been to, just to gain any small smidgen of inspiration I could grasp.

This time, I could not find some of the beasts that I had originally discovered, but I was still able to find the beasts such as The Golden roc, The Taotie, The Realm eater worm, The Sky swallowing wolf, The Immortal Kun Peng, and many more. I stripped their secrets and gained an understanding of their physiology and cultivation.

By now I was at the very edge of insanity and knew that I would fall into its abyss as soon as I lost control, even for a moment.

Knowing that I had no time left, I ended my research and started to reforge my creation.

I never intended to come out of this alive, thus I used everything I had, including my very life.

I ignited my Dao laws with my obsession and used the flames to temper all the precious materials I had gathered. I spent years working on it, yet I still felt that I was far from perfect.

Then suddenly, I was enlightened when I heard a voice in my mind. It was my heart demon; it had finally awakened.

It knew what I wanted, thus my heart demon offered me a solution which I gladly accepted, for I knew I had nothing to lose. I sacrificed my cultivation base and my body, using them as the metal, and fused it into my creation. Then finally, using my soul as the last ember, I let my heart demon perfect my creation.

Even at the very end, I knew that while my creation was perfect; it was still incomplete. Of course, unless a person cultivated it, it will be deemed incomplete. Thus, with my last wisp of consciousness, I finished my legacy and sealed the technique I had created into this wooden slip.

I recorded my life's experiences and tribulations for my inheritor to learn and as a final gift or you could say my last wish; I want my inheritor to name this technique after learning it. I hope that you will not suffer the tribulations that I did and are able to benefit from my experiences."

After an hour, Lin Mu had completed reading the entire wooden slip. As soon as he read the last word, all the words written on the wooden slip faded away and new words appeared on the wooden slip.

Lin Mu read these words and found that these words were describing the unique technique that the Lost Immortal had created. He read them and was slowly lost in them. Unknown to him, senior Xukong was closely observing him.

Xukong felt that everything was normal at the start, but after a while, he saw tears coming out of Lin Mu's eyes. He tried calling out to him but received no answer, as if he was lost in enlightenment.

'What kind of legacy did he receive?' Xukong thought.

Chapter 56 - Returning To The Northwind Inn

Lin Mu had been reading the wooden slip for the past few hours, but still had not finished it. Senior Xukong had tried calling out to him multiple times, but he never responded, thus senior Xukong gave up and waited for him to normalize.

In the blink of an eye, it was morning, and the sun had risen. Lin Mu was shaken from his trance after his consciousness disappeared from the Sleepscape and returned to his body. He slowly opened his eyes in

a daze and looked around. After seeing that he had returned to the hunting shack, Lin Mu took a deep breath.

"That was a really unique experience." Lin Mu muttered as he remembered the information recorded in the wooden slip.

After Lin Mu had finished reading the introduction, he saw the technique that was created by the Lost immortal. It took him a long time to read it, and he still could not understand it. The technique was complex, very complex; so much so that he could not even identify some of the words that were mentioned in it.

After the technique, the next thing that was recorded in the wooden slip was the life experiences of the Lost immortal. When Lin Mu read them he felt as if he was there and was experiencing them firsthand. He could not tell if it was an illusion or not, but everything that he saw looked extremely real.

'Guess, I'll have to ask senior Xukong for an explanation.' Lin Mu thought.

Lin Mu then called out to senior Xukong and received a reply instantly.

Xukong had been a little worried after seeing that Lin Mu was in a trance. He knew it was due to the legacy treasure, but could not tell if it was good or not. When Xukong had told Lin Mu about the legacy treasures, he had left out some information. Some Legacy treasures had powerful seals on them, which when released would bind to the first person who came in contact with it.

While this was fine, if the Legacy contained was suitable for that person, but if it was not so, this would become extremely troublesome. Xukong had observed and scanned the wooden slip before allowing Lin Mu to use it; but when he saw that Lin Mu was stuck in a trance and could not respond, he became wary.

The only reason Xukong could not find the cause for this would be if the legacy treasure was created by someone from the higher realms. Another reason why he easily let Lin Mu use the legacy treasure was that he was sure that there wasn't much chance that it could be difficult for him.

While Xukong was thinking of possible scenarios, Lin Mu suddenly disappeared and his vision turned black for a moment. Then he felt the familiar spatial energy in his surroundings and realized that he had returned to the ring. A few seconds later, he sensed Lin Mu's voice and responded to it.

"What did you gain from the Legacy treasure, Lin Mu?" Xukong asked.

Lin Mu then started to explain everything that he had found out from the wooden slip. He told him about the Lost immortal and how he created the nameless technique. He told him about the technique itself, how it was very complex, and about the words, he was unable to read. Finally, he told him about the life experiences of the Lost Immortal that were recorded in the wooden slip.

The first thing that shocked Xukong was the circumstances of the Lost Immortal. He was able to identify the reason for his misfortunes and the unending streak of tribulations. The person titled as the Lost Immortal actually had a special type of physique called as the 'Broken Fate physique'.

It was an extremely rare physique and could be ranked along with the people who were the owners of the Garden of Karma. Though its rarity did not mean that the physique was beneficial to its bearer.

Rather, the person who was born with this physique would suffer endless misfortunes and tribulations. They would then perish and be removed from the wheel of fate. This was the reason this physique was named as the 'Broken Fate physique'.

Xukong could not tell how an expert like the Lost Immortal, who had traveled countless worlds, did not identify his own physique. He should have been knowledgeable enough to identify it. It was only when Lin Mu was telling Xukong about the mythical beasts that the Lost Immortal encountered, that he understood the reason for his ignorance towards his physique.

The mythical beast that caught Xukong's attention was the 'Realm eater worm'.

'It's impossible that the Lost Immortal encountered a Realm eater worm. Their clan was eradicated millions of years ago and the last of their bloodlines were also extinguished by the heavenly Dao for accumulating unforgivable amounts of negative karma.' Xukong thought.

"Unless the Lost Immortal encountered the Realm eater worms before their extinction." Xukong muttered.

'This would explain why he did not know about his physique. He was probably one of the earliest owners of the Broken Fate physique. There simply was no information about this physique back then.' Xukong inferred.

Xukong was also wary about the nameless technique that was created by the Lost Immortal. He could not tell what effect the technique would have on Lin Mu, as it was deemed incomplete by its creator himself. Considering the state in which the Lost Immortal created the technique, Xukong had all the reasons to be wary of it.

But Xukong would not be prohibiting Lin Mu from learning the technique. He will only explain to Lin Mu what he thought about the technique and leave the final decision up to him. If he wanted Lin Mu to become a peerless cultivator, he could not keep on interfering in his life. It was up to Lin Mu, to decipher his fate and wade through his karma.

Lin Mu then asked senior Xukong about the words which he was unable to understand. He felt that the words were from a different language and did not seem to belong there. After explaining to senior Xukong, he got the reply that while senior Xukong knew what language the words belonged to, he would not be able to tell him what the words meant, until he drew them.

Lin Mu thus tried to draw them on the ground, but found that he could not. It was as if his mind went blank as soon as he thought of drawing them.

"Hmm, it's the world's restrictions prohibiting you from drawing them. Wait till tonight when you return to the Sleepscape. There you should be able to draw them with no problems." Xukong told Lin Mu.

"But what language are these words from, Senior?" Lin Mu asked.

"It's not exactly a language but rather a different script of writing. Those words are most likely from the Dao script. It is a universal script that every language can use and can be understood by all intelligent races." Xukong answered.

"It is also necessary for many things such as making formations, forging spirit weapons, refining alchemical pills, and of course creation of various techniques." Xukong further explained.

Lin Mu's curiosity in learning the Dao script was ignited, hence he asked senior Xukong to teach him about it. Senior Xukong accepted Lin Mu's request and told him that he would teach him some lessons every day. Then he reminded Lin Mu what he was supposed to be doing today.

'Oh no! I need to get to the town soon.' Lin Mu thought.

Lin Mu skipped his breakfast and started storing everything that he thought to be of use. Before leaving, he made sure he had everything one last time. He then started his journey back to the town. But for Lin Mu, who had become a cultivator, such distance was a stone's throw away.

Lin Mu strengthened his legs with spirit qi and broke into a sprint. His speed was incomparable than before, and within five minutes he was already at the town. Some people spotted him running towards the town, but all they could see was a trail of dust.

Before entering the town, he saw the peasants working in the spirit apple orchards. This made him reminisce about the time when he was still weak and was working in the orchards. Although it had only been a few weeks, he still felt as if ages had gone by.

Pushing his thoughts to the back, Lin Mu continued on to the inn. Because the Northwind inn was close to the entrance of the town, it did not take him much time to reach it. When Lin Mu was standing outside the inn's entrance, he heard the sounds of someone arguing and shouting, coming from inside the inn.

He walked in and found a group of ten hunters arguing with the three people at the desk. Lin Mu identified one of the three people at the desk as the clerk who had booked the room for him. But he could not tell who the other two were. He also identified the ten hunters rather easily. These ten hunters belonged to one of the two hunter groups in the town, whose leader was a cultivator.

The Leader of the hunter group was a man called Gan Ma. He was a cultivator, thus had some influence in the town. Lin Mu had seen the man before and also had heard about him. Gan Ma was a rather crude man, who was selfish and ruthless. He would often forcefully take over good hunting areas from common hunters, and if they resisted, all that waited for them was a harsh beating.

Lin Mu's father especially did not like Gan Mu and had warned him to stay away from the man. Who knew that Lin Mu would have to defy his father's warning today.

Suddenly the clerk who had booked the room for Lin Mu spotted him and pointed at him while shouting, "There he is, that's the boy who booked the last room."

Chapter 57 - A Small Conflict

Lin Mu would have never expected that he would be facing such a scenario just because he was one day late. There were currently thirteen pairs of eyes staring at him, some with helplessness and others with anger.

At first, he could not figure out why these people were looking at him with such eyes, but as soon as they all started speaking, he knew he was in another troubling situation. The ten hunters soon surrounded him in three directions.

"Boy, give up the room that you booked." One of the hunters spoke.

"Yeah, since you did not come yesterday to claim it, you don't need it anymore." A short hunter spoke.

Confusion could be seen on Lin Mu's face as he could not understand why these hunters were speaking to him like that. Only when the clerk came forward and explained did he understand.

"These hunters want the room that you booked. They came today for a room but I told them we did not have any available, they said they were willing to pay double and asked if any rooms were unoccupied. They then saw that one room was still unoccupied, thus they forced me to give it to them." The clerk hurriedly spoke.

"Take your refund and leave, brat." The hunter in front of Lin Mu ordered.

An annoyed expression could be seen on Lin Mu's face. There was no chance that he was going to accept these hunter's orders. He had booked the room well ahead and had also paid in advance. These men had no right to order him.

"These men are paying double the price right, so I'll just pay triple." Lin Mu said smugly.

Right now Lin Mu had plenty of gold coins, so he was not worried. He would be able to earn those back rather easily once he starts hunting again.

Upon hearing Lin Mu's words, the hunters became confused at first but then became angrier. But the man who was with the clerk looked happy instead. Looking closer at the man's clothing, which seemed to be of higher quality than that of a commoner, Lin Mu guessed that he was the owner of this inn.

"You think you can just disrespect us like that." The short hunter spoke with fire in his eyes.

Looking at the short man's expression, Lin Mu guessed that he was the one who wanted the room while others were just here to back him up. The Hunters belonging to Gan Ma's group were well-known bullies. They submitted to the strong while oppressing the weak.

If it was the Lin Mu of the past, he would have never dared to go against these men. But with the strength that he had right now, the only person who could give him trouble would be Gan Mu himself.

Suddenly one of the hunters seemed to have recognized Lin Mu as he pointed at him and whispered in the ear of his companion, who then told the rest of the hunters.

"So, you're the boy who had his property seized by the supervisor of the orchard." Said the hunter standing in front of Lin Mu.

"Weren't you also banished from the town?" another hunter added.

"No wonder he was willing to pay triple the cost for the room. The money doesn't belong to him, he stole it." Said the short hunter, straight away accusing Lin Mu.

Lin Mu saw the situation turning worse and worse by the second. Thus he spoke up.

"I wasn't banished, I was only thrown out of the town. These are the words of the supervisor himself. And I didn't steal the money, I made it by hunting beasts." Lin Mu countered.

"As if a scrawny brat like you could kill beasts that would be worth that much." A long-faced hunter spoke.

"Don't listen to him, he's only lying to save his skin. Catch him, we'll hand him off to the guards." The hunter in front of Lin Mu spoke.

"Search him for the coins too. He's definitely has them on his body." The short man spoke with greed in his eyes.

Seeing that there was no chance that this situation will be resolved. Lin Mu readied himself for a fight. He could sense their strength and found them to be much weaker compared to him. The strongest hunter was in the 8th stage of the body tempering realm.

While Lin Mu could sense the hunter's strength, they could not do the same as he was a cultivator now. Because they did not sense Lin Mu's strength, they made the mistake of thinking that he was much weaker than them.

The first to approach Lin Mu were the three hunters on his left. One of them tried to grab his arm, but Lin Mu was able to push him away effortlessly. Then the four hunters on the right lunged at him and grabbed his shoulder and wrist.

Lin Mu used his left hand, which was free, and smashed it on the hands of the men that were holding his shoulder and hand. A snapping could be heard as the arms of the four men were broken in one hit.

"Aaargh" The four hunters on the right shouted in pain.

"Careful, he's been hiding his strength somehow. Use all your force." The leading hunter shouted.

Lin Mu did not want to straightaway kill the men in the town, as it was prohibited. Thus he did not use his sword or the spirit qi to strengthen his body. All he had used was just his body's raw strength.

The hunters did not hold back a bit and drew their weapons. Two of them were using swords, three were using axes, and two were using maces, leaving behind the four with broken hands. All of them attacked Lin Mu together, but he was able to dodge it with his superior speed.

Lin Mu flitted between their bodies and rained blows upon them. The short hunter managed to slip behind Lin Mu and slashed with his axe at Lin Mu's back. Lin Mu saw this with his spirit sense and reacted. He moved his right fist back without even seeing and slammed it on the side of the axe.

~Klink~ Crack crack crack~

A cracking sound could be heard, as the blade of the axe shattered into pieces. The hunters were now shocked and fear could be seen in the eyes of the leading hunter as he guessed Lin Mu's strength.

"Run, leave him, he's a cultivator." The leader of the hunters shouted.

Fear spread to all of the hunters, and in the next second, they ran away. Lin Mu did not bother to stop them and let them leave, as he knew that if he used any more force, he may just kill them. While he may

be able to get off scot-free, even if the guards found out that he killed the hunters in self-defense; what he did not want was Gan Ma to target him. Especially not before he was able to find out his cultivation base.

If Gan Ma was weaker than him, it would not be a problem, but if he was stronger, then Lin Mu will have to plan for it. Though Lin Mu was sure that he will be able to escape with the help of the two skills he got from the ring.

Once the hunters left the inn, Lin Mu walked up to the desk and spoke.

"Now that they're gone, I don't need to pay any more money right." Lin Mu spoke with a little chuckle.

After witnessing Lin Mu's strength, the owner did not want to antagonize him, as he thought it would not end well for him. The owner gulped and spoke,

"Yes, yes. You don't have to pay anything. You already paid in advance, please go on in." The owner spoke and gestured to the clerk.

The clerk then guided Lin Mu up the stairs and into a corridor. He walked all the way to the end and stood in front of a door. He then took out a small key out of his pocket and opened the door, while gesturing with his hand.

"This is the room you booked, sir." The clerk spoke respectfully.

Lin Mu was not surprised by the sudden respectful attitude of the clerk. Cultivators were considered to be above commoners and thus were feared and respected. This was the first instance where Lin Mu felt the prestige of a cultivator.

"Please inform me if you need anything." The clerk said.

Lin Mu nodded and spoke.

"Is there a kitchen here?" Lin Mu asked.

"If you're asking about food, then you don't have to worry, as breakfast and dinner will be provided to you free of charge." The clerk answered.

"What if I want to cook it on my own?" Lin Mu questioned.

The clerk seemed confused by Lin Mu's question but did not probe further.

"Ah yes, you can use the kitchen if you want. I'll notify the cook beforehand." The clerk answered.

Lin Mu did not want to eat normal food anymore as it would not be of much use to him and even if he did eat it, the small portion would not satisfy his enormous appetite.

He could have also given the meat to the cook to prepare, but he did not want to take the risk of someone stealing parts from it. Even a small portion of high tier beast meat would sell for a few silvers in the town.

While Lin Mu was settling in the inn, the hunters had reached their leader's house.

Chapter 58 - Xukong's First Test

Near the western exit of town, there existed an open ground. Many tents were currently pitched in that open ground. On some of the tents, banners or plates bearing the symbols of mercenary groups could be seen. While the other tents were just normal tents used by hunters.

The mercenaries could be seen sitting outside the tents, doing chores. Some were sharpening their weapons, some were taking an inventory while others were just talking to each other. Suddenly the mercenaries heard a commotion coming from the site where hunters had their tents set up.

Some of the mercenaries stood up and walked there to check. Upon reaching there, they saw a couple of broken tents as well as hunters that were currently being beaten. They looked at the aggressors and saw that they did not seem to care much as they continued their one-sided fight.

"We already told you to leave once, why don't you listen?" A short hunter said as he punched the face of a man lying on the ground.

"Do you dare to disrespect Gan Ma again? A long-faced man spoke as he stepped on the hand of another hunter lying on the ground.

These hunters were none other than the same hunters who had fought with Lin Mu before. Since they were unable to get a room at the inn, they had no choice but to pitch a tent with the other hunters at the western exit of the town.

Most of the hunters were not natives of Northern town. They usually came from the subordinate villages and lived at inns for the most part as they could not buy houses in the town. There were two reasons for this, the first being that there were few empty houses left in the town and the houses were expensive to buy as well.

Especially for hunters who barely made a few gold coins a year, it was impossible to buy a house. Though it was not like every hunter stayed at the inn during the winter. The hunters that came from the villages would return there during the winter and only return during the spring.

"Damn it, how did that kid become a cultivator?" The short hunter shouted as he punched an unconscious hunter.

He then stood up and then kicked the unconscious man one last time before leaving him. A couple of other hunters came by and picked up the unconscious man before taking him away.

"Don't think too much. Leader Gan Ma will take care of him soon." The long-faced hunter replied.

"I want to kill that kid with my own hands. Even leader took years to become a cultivator, who even taught him?" The short hunter spoke with frustration on his face.

A buff hunter that was standing at the side spoke,

"There aren't many cultivators in the town. It's definitely not someone from the town, thus it could only be someone from the mercenary companies."

"God dammed mercenaries, putting their noses where they don't belong. First, they take our hunting grounds, then our inns, and now they try to change our power structure. Trash like that brat should stay trash forever and know their place." The short man said.

Suddenly sounds of weapons being drawn can be heard.

"Try and say that again." A burly mercenary spoke with a rough voice.

The hunters became alarmed as they saw mercenaries standing behind them. One of the hunters with a long face came forward and passed a small pouch to the mercenary while whispering something to him. After hearing the hunter, the mercenary took the pouch and retreated along with the rest of them.

The hunter who had spoken with the mercenary came back and slapped the head of the short hunter.

"Watch your mouth. Look around before you wag your tongue. You nearly got us in trouble." The long-faced hunter spoke.

The short hunter did not protest and just stayed silent. While the rest of the hunters set up the tent.

Back at the Northwind inn, Lin Mu was looking around the room. The room was at least ten times bigger than the hunting shack. There were four beds, a table, and four chairs in the room. On the right of the room, there were two windows, through which one could see the street below.

Lin Mu had not expected for the room to be this big. The room was clearly made for accommodating four people, but right now he had occupied it all by himself.

'No wonder the hunters wanted this room, it is big enough for four of them.' Lin Mu thought.

Lin Mu was bothered by the attitude of the Inn's staff, but understood that it was something that they had to do. Gan Ma's hunters were forceful bullies, and if they had not given in, they probably would have done something worse to the staff.

"Gan Ma would probably come after me soon. I need to get a measure of his cultivation before that." Lin Mu muttered to himself.

"Hmm, so this is the place you will be staying at." Xukong spoke inside Lin Mu's mind.

"Yes senior." Lin Mu replied.

"Seems like you will have to return to the forest every time you want to train your skills though." Xukong said.

"That I will have to do indeed. I can't reveal them here, of course." Lin Mu spoke.

"And this man Gan Ma, I want you to eliminate him. This will be your first test." Xukong ordered.

Lin Mu was a little taken aback by senior Xukong's words, but then he further explained.

"You need to learn to eliminate a problem from the very roots. If you don't, they will only come to trouble you in the future." Xukong spoke with a stern tone.

Lin Mu nodded and accepted senior Xukong's test. He then left the room and went downstairs towards the desk. He went up to the clerk and asked where the kitchen was.

"Follow me, please." The clerk spoke.

Lin Mu then followed the clerk to the back of the inn from where they exited out into the yard. The kitchen of the inn was located in a small shed in the yard behind the inn. He took him to the shed where a fat and squat man was chopping some meat.

"Fatty Yuan, this sir will be using the kitchen to cook their food. Please ensure that he has whatever he needs." The clerk spoke to the cook.

The cook named Fatty Yuan did not speak and only grunted in response. The clerk was unnerved by this and looked at Lin Mu's face. Seeing that Lin Mu did not mind the cook's dismissive attitude, he took a breath of relief. He then left Lin Mu and went back to his work.

"Use whatever you want here." Fatty Yuan spoke curtly before resuming his work.

Lin Mu could not withdraw the meat from his ring, thus he just used the ingredients that were already there and cooked some breakfast for himself. Although it did not fill him up, it was enough for him to last awhile. He would have to withdraw the meat before coming to the inn next time.

After Lin Mu finished his breakfast, he left the inn and headed towards Jing Wei's emporium. He wanted to sell all the materials he had accumulated during these few days and also try to find a weapon manual.

Lin Mu looked around the town and observed that the people have started to wear thicker and warmer clothes. He himself had no need for such clothes as his body would resist the cold and keep his body at normal temperature.

A few minutes later he had reached the desolate alley. Lin Mu walked up to the shop and withdrew all the materials he had. Unknowingly, he had accumulated a rather large amount of materials. A problem now presented to Lin Mu. He could not justify bringing so many materials at once to the shop, as he would not be able to show how he carried them here.

Even the sled that Lin Mu made would not be enough to carry so many materials. He thus withdrew only half of the materials and placed the rest of them back into the ring. He then placed the sled at the side of the shop and opened the door of the shop.

Surprisingly, the door still felt hard to open, even though Lin Mu was much stronger than before. He did not mind this and picked up some of the items before walking in. He placed the items at the empty counter and went back to get the rest of them. After he had brought all of the items inside, he ringed the small bell kept on the counter.

A few minutes later Duan Ke walked out from the door behind the counter. She looked at the counter that was overflowing with beast materials and became annoyed. There were 21 beast pelts, beast horns, feathers, and many more bones lying on the counter.

Duan Ke then inwardly sighed.

Chapter 59 - Getting A Weapons Manual

Duan Ke had certainly not expected for Lin Mu to bring so many beast materials within a week. It seemed to her that Lin Mu had outdone himself this time, as looking at the materials she could tell that most of them were from high-tier beasts.

"I assume you are here to sell these materials?" Duan Ke spoke.

"And also to buy some things." Lin Mu hurriedly added.

After a few transactions, Lin Mu had understood that Duan Ke did not like it if he only sold and did not buy anything. Looking at her expression he could at least tell that she was probably not having a good day, thus he did not want to piss her off even more.

Lin Mu was indeed right about Duan Ke not having a good day. She had been searching for clues about the sword intent that was released two days ago. Her grandfather was also doing his best in scanning the library for any evidence of a hidden cultivator. Her grandfather's library had an enormous amount of materials, so much so that it could compare to that of the top sects.

If there was any clue about the hidden cultivator that ascended or the overbearing sword intent, it would be present in the library. There was no chance that a cultivator who had the aptitude of being able to ascend or having peerless sword intent would be able to hide every track of themselves. They must have had outstanding talent when they were younger, thus there should be some records of them.

Duan Ke felt a little better that Lin Mu would be buying something as well, hence her expression eased a bit. She went ahead and started checking the beast materials. Some of the materials were a little damaged, but most of them were fine.

After confirming the quality of the materials, Duan Ke calculated their value. There were some mid-tier beast materials mixed in, along with high-tier ones. Thus she took a few minutes. Five minutes later she had finished her calculations and concluded it to be 27 gold, 59 silver, and 11 copper coins.

To be honest, Duan Ke was a little surprised at Lin Mu's pace of making money. A month ago he had only 20 copper coins, and now he was making gold coins instead. She was also shocked by the growth of his strength. Just by looking at him, she could tell that he was already at the 9th stage of the body tempering realm at the very least.

"Your total would be 27 gold, 59 silver, and 11 copper coins." Duan Ke spoke.

Lin Mu nodded at this price, as he had already estimated it to be around this value.

"I would like to buy a weapons training manual for a sword." Lin Mu said.

"Very well, go to the fourth shelf from the right and pick out whatever one that you like." Duan Ke replied.

Lin Mu nodded and turned to the right and went towards the shelf. While he was looking at the old booklets and scrolls, senior Xukong spoke in his mind.

"Don't waste your effort here. None of these manuals are worth your time, you should instead ask that woman for a better one. She is hiding a lot of secrets, there are concealing and illusory formations placed all around this shop." Xukong spoke.

Lin Mu had suspected that Jing Wei and Duan Ke were cultivators, but now senior Xukong's words had just confirmed it. He wondered what their cultivation base could be.

"Do you know what their cultivation level is, senior Xukong?" Lin Mu asked silently.

"I would have to use my spirit sense to do that, but if I did, they would be alarmed and will know that I'm here. But from the formations, I can tell that at least one of them is a very high-level cultivator." Xukong answered.

"If you're this curious, why don't you try sensing it yourself?" Xukong spoke with a chuckle, as if he was looking forward to something fun.

Lin Mu felt a little strange upon hearing senior Xukong's tone, but did not think much of it. He returned to the counter and saw that Duan Ke was taking the materials to the back of the shop. Duan Ke saw that Lin Mu had returned, hence assumed that he had chosen a manual.

"Show me the manual that you want to buy." Duan Ke spoke.

"Oh, I don't want those weapon manuals, I want the ones better than that." Lin Mu spoke as he used his spirit sense to probe Duan Ke's cultivation base.

But Lin Mu was unsuccessful in finding her cultivation base. He felt as if there was a barrier stopping his spirit sense from getting close to her. Duan Ke was shocked by this but did not show it on her face.

"Is that so, please wait here for a bit then." Duan Ke replied.

Duan Ke then picked up the last of the materials all at once with ease and went into the door behind the counter. Lin Mu asked senior Xukong about the barrier that was surrounding Duan Ke.

"That was the effect of a defensive spirit tool. It was protecting her from spirit sense probes." Xukong spoke.

"Then what would her cultivation base be?" Lin Mu questioned.

"Well, just from her ability to use spirit tools, you can assume that she's above the Qi refining realm. As in order to use spirit tools, you have to be at the core condensation realm at the very minimum." Xukong explained.

Lin Mu gulped and became a little nervous as just Duan Ke was strong enough to defeat him alone. Who knows how strong her grandfather Jing Wei was. From senior Xukong's information, he already got that Jing Wei was the stronger one of the two and was the person who had set up these formations.

Five minutes later, Duan Ke walked out of the door with Jing Wei behind her. They came to stand at the counter when Jing Wei spoke.

"So, my granddaughter says you don't like the weapons manuals here and want better quality ones." Jing Wei spoke with an amused tone.

Lin Mu nodded and spoke, "Yes, Owner Jing Wei."

"Then let me see how strong you've become." Jing Wei spoke with a stern tone.

Before Lin Mu could say anything in reply, he felt a pricking pain in his head which he guessed to be Jing Wei's spirit sense. But in the next moment, he felt like a veil covered his body entirely and the pain in his head stopped.

Lin Mu then saw the pair of grandfather and granddaughter in front of him and became terrified. The condition of those two did not look good, their faces were drained of blood and became pale. Sweat could be seen on their foreheads, while Duan Ke was straight up shivering with fear.

A few seconds later senior Xukong chuckled in his mind once again. Suddenly, Jing Wei grasped the black-beaded bracelet on his wrist and broke it apart. In the next moment, he could see that Jing Wei and Duan Ke seemed to be free from whatever that was bothering them.

"Humph, and I was just starting to have fun." Xukong muttered.

The veil that Lin Mu felt was covering his body, slowly vanished. He then heard Jing Wei spoke.

"Okay, you satisfy my conditions. Now take this and please leave." Jing Wei hurriedly spoke.

A coin pouch appeared on the counter along with a booklet. This surprised Lin Mu, as Jing Wei had just used a spatial treasure. They had been concealing their capabilities all this time, but now they suddenly dropped all pretenses and revealed that they were a cultivator by using a spatial treasure.

Lin Mu took the coin pouch and booklet. He then turned around and left the old shop swiftly, as he felt like that was the right thing to do at that time. He touched the sled that was kept to the side and stored it in the ring.

Lin Mu walked out of the alley and left the old shop behind. He suddenly felt a fluctuation in qi, which made him turn around. Upon turning around, Lin Mu saw that the alley in which the old shop was located had vanished.

"How?" Lin Mu muttered to himself.

"That was the concealing formation being activated. And it's a high grade concealing formation as well." Xukong spoke.

"A high grade concealing formation?" Lin Mu questioned.

"It's strong enough to hide a place from the senses of a Dao shell realm cultivator." Xukong explained before Lin Mu could continue his question.

"Let's return to the forest. You should take a look at the weapons manual that the old man gave you." Xukong said.

"Yes, senior." Lin Mu responded.

After Lin Mu left the town, he thought about senior Xukong's strange behavior as well as the terrified pair of Grandfather and granddaughter. He wondered if he should ask senior Xukong or not, as it was picking at his mind.

While Lin Mu was out, he had no idea that what just happened in the shop had now terrified Jing Wei for a lifetime.

Chapter 60 - The Terrified Jing Wei And Duan Ke

Fifteen minutes ago, when Lin Mu had asked Duan Ke for a better quality weapons manual, she had actually not minded it. She would be open to selling him a higher quality manual if he was willing to pay the price for it.

But when Duan Ke felt her defensive spirit tool activate, she understood his underlying meaning. He did not just want a common weapons manual that's for body tempering realm experts, instead what he wanted was a weapons manual that's intended for a Qi refining realm cultivator.

Lin Mu's spirit sense had shocked Duan Ke, as she had never expected for him to become a cultivator this fast. It was only a month ago when he was in the 4th stage of the body tempering realm, and now he seemed to be a Qi refining realm cultivator. From what she observed, Duan Ke could tell that Lin Mu was at the 9th stage of the body tempering realm when he became a Qi refining realm expert.

Pushing all these thoughts to the back of her mind, Duan Ke decided to inform her grandfather first. She picked up the materials from the counter and walked to the back of the shop. She then blew out the lamp that was hanging from the ceiling and appeared in the enormous courtyard.

She stored the materials in her storage ring and went to the manor. Once inside the manor, Duan Ke looked for her grandfather who was currently in the massive library. She quickly found him standing near a shelf, reading from a book.

Jing Wei sensed his granddaughter's unease when she appeared in the library. At first, he thought that it was because she had found some clues, but when she spoke; it was not something he had expected.

"Grandfather, that boy Lin Mu came to sell beast materials and now he's asking for a high-grade weapons manual." Duan Ke spoke.

Jing Wei stopped reading the book he was holding and put it back onto the shelf before turning around.

"Hmm, so why does he think we have those manuals?" Jing Wei asked while stroking his beard.

"He has refined his spirit sense now. He tried to sense my cultivation base." Duan Ke replied.

"What stage?" Jing Wei shortly questioned.

"The 9th stage of the body tempering realm at least." Duan Ke answered.

"If he has the guts to ask you and even try to blatantly sense your cultivation base, I guess we can test him." Jing Wei spoke with an amused expression.

Jing Wei then left the manor and walked towards the entrance of the shop. Duan Ke was walking along with her grandfather, thinking about Lin Mu. She was wondering what kind of fortunate encounter he had, that allowed him to become a cultivator this fast.

Soon they reached the entrance of the shop and appeared in the back room. Duan Ke opened the door and entered the shop with Jing Wei behind her. Jing Wei silently gestured to Duan Ke and asked her to stand back, as he was intending to deal with this situation.

"So, my granddaughter says you don't like the weapons manuals here and want better quality ones." Jing Wei spoke with an amused tone.

Lin Mu nodded and spoke, "Yes, Owner Jing Wei."

"Then let me see how strong you've become." Jing Wei spoke with a stern tone.

Jing Wei had intended to gauge Lin Mu's cultivation base at first, thus he used his spirit sense. Jing Wei's own cultivation base was sealed, and hence he could not use his techniques or skills. Thus the method he had chosen to test Lin Mu was to directly exert pressure on Lin Mu's mind.

Jing Wei easily sensed Lin Mu's cultivation base, which was at the early stage of the Qi refining realm.

'He's progressed rather fast. He is already halfway through to the mid-stage of the qi refining realm.' Jing Wei thought.

Jing Wei then used his spirit sense and touched Lin Mu's head. He then saw Lin Mu slightly wince in pain, but in the next moment, he heard a thundering harrumph in his head. Suddenly a veil-like barrier covered Lin Mu and an imposing presence spread out from his body.

Jing Wei could even see the presence materializing. Bit by bit, the pressure was getting heavier. He was able to resist it but he did not think Duan Ke would be able to bear it for much longer. The presence got even denser and had now completely occupied his vision.

Neither Jing Wei nor Duan Ke could see anything anymore except for an empty black void in front of them. The shop and Lin Mu had disappeared from their vision. Suddenly Jing Wei saw a colossal figure appear in front of him. The figure was hidden in darkness, and only a faint silhouette of it could be observed.

Ten giant golden yellow eyes opened on the colossal silhouette. As soon as Jing Wei's eyes met those ten eyes, he experienced what true terror felt like. It was as if the presence was commanding him to cease existing. He could not even come close to imagining the strength of the being who could exert such pressure just by the virtue of their presence.

Jing Wei had fought against the invaders from the forbidden continent in the war that occurred a thousand years ago. During that war, he had destroyed the shrines that were made by the invaders. The function of these shrines was to aid in summoning an evil beast from another realm.

The invaders had once come close to summoning the evil beast and were able to partially open a summoning portal to a different realm. Jing Wei along with other experts of his time went to stop the summoning. It was then that they experienced the strength of a being that was above the Immortal ascension realm.

But even the full strength of that beast could not come close to the mere presence of this being. In the past couple of days, he had sensed a cultivator ascending and had also experienced the peerless sword intent of a hidden expert. He had thought that these two incidents were already shocking enough, but he never thought that he was soon going to face a being that was even stronger than that.

Duan Ke was in a worse condition than Jing Wei. There were no thoughts in her mind other than that of pure terror. She was shivering with fear and could not think of anything. She did not think of moving; she did not think of resisting; she did not think of dying. She had become a shell of her previous self that was only filled with terror now.

Duan Ke and Jing Wei were both drenched with sweat. Although only a few seconds had passed in the actual world, both of them felt as if years had gone by. Jing Wei was trying to think of a way to get out of this situation. He had one solution that was bound to work, but he did not want to use it as it could only be used once.

Jing Wei knew that he would not be able to survive this if it was the actual being, but this was just the presence of that being that was imprinted on Lin Mu. He could not think of any reason why such a tyrannically strong being chose Lin Mu, a boy who was rather unassuming.

Suddenly Jing Wei heard a chuckle. It came from the colossal being that was in front of him. He could sense the ridicule in that chuckle and knew that he deserved it. He also understood that it was the final warning given by the being, thus he gritted his teeth and used the trump card he was trying to save.

Jing Wei grasped the black beaded bracelet that was on his left wrist and broke it apart. The black beaded bracelet was a spirit tool that was made by an ancestor of his clan. This ancestor was at the immortal ascension stage and had created the spirit tool, with the intention to be passed down as an heirloom.

As soon as the black beaded bracelet was broken, the floating figure of an old man appeared in front of Jing Wei. The old man looked similar to Jing Wei, but appeared to be slightly younger than Jing Wei. The figure was sitting cross-legged and had placed his palms at his navel. The left palm of the figure was kept on the right palm and was facing upwards.

A small sphere was floating above the palms of the figure. The sphere was mostly blue with some green and brown parts on it. If one looked at it closely, it seemed like a planet. The figure raised his palms up to his chest along with the sphere. Then in the next moment, the figure moved his palms away and stretched out his arms. Suddenly he slammed his palms together in a praying gesture, with the small sphere stuck between the palms.

The sphere started glowing and turned into smoke, after which light filled the surroundings and banished the darkness. The light soon disappeared and Jing Wei was able to see once again. He saw that he had returned to the shop and saw Lin Mu standing in front of him with a confused expression.

Not wanting to spend any more time with the boy, Jing Wei swiftly took out a coin pouch along with a booklet. He did not even count how many coins he gave to the boy. He only knew that there were enough coins in the pouch for him to not return to the shop again.

The booklet Jing Wei had given to Lin Mu was also a top-grade sword manual that was in his clan for hundreds of years. Even he did not have the authority to practice the manual when he was in his clan, and now that he was old, he had no reason to practice it.