

Walker 541

Chapter 541 - The Nurturing Heart Sutra

The moment he said 'master' the eyes of Mudan similarly glowed in a red light too. Shaoyan Qianyu though looked at them with a cold face. Internally she felt strange about this all. She had heard about this 'master' that the supreme elder and the patriarch had met before.

This master was willing to become the backing of their sect and was said to be an expert. They were even sending a lot of resources to this master. In fact, a lot of the resources that they were supposed to send the master were included in the vaults that were robbed.

'No way... could it be?' Shaoyan Qianyu remembered Wu Lian's words.

She decided to excuse herself from the meeting as the patriarch and Yi Deng went alone to someplace. Shaoyan Qianyu didn't like what had happened with the sect's condition, but the actions of Mudan and Yi Deng unnerved her too.

"Oh Ancestors... what is this beast? And who is that man? Why has our sect suffered such tragedy?" She muttered to herself.

The culprit behind this was currently unconscious and lying in a cave somewhere. He was laid against a wall and had a still face. A large beast laid at his side but it seemed to be extremely tired. Its fur had lost its shine and its aura seemed to be weak too.

This was of course none other than Lin Mu. He had passed out after he got onto Little Shrubby's back and when the beast ran away at great speed. Little Shrubby had run for a day and night, only after which did he stop.

He knew he was being chased by Mudan and thus didn't stop, even if the distance between them was quite large. Little Shrubby could smell the man and that was how he could tell he was being followed.

Only after the scent got very faint did he pick a good enough place to hide. It had found a random cave at the side of a mountain and entered it before putting down Lin Mu. By this time all the flames on his body had already been extinguished and his size had returned to normal as well.

Unknown to both the man and beast, a change was happening between them. Little Shrubby's aura flickered like a flame in a storm and Lin Mu's was similar, both of their auras intermixed before becoming synchronous. Then suddenly the mysterious ring on Lin Mu's hand started to hum.

Lin Mu who had been unconscious the entire time, woke up but found himself in front of the ethereal altar at the center of the ring.

"Huh? Why am I here?" Lin Mu wondered as he looked around.

"Senior? Senior Xukong!" Lin Mu called out, but received no response.

He then tried to contact him using his link, but found it to be blocked. He could tell that the link still existed but was unable to do anything to it.

"What is happening?" Lin Mu questioned as he tried to remember.

He recalled being paralyzed from the tribulation lightning and then being chased by the elders and patriarch of the Tri Cauldron peony sect. Finally, little Shrubby had come to rescue him and he had fallen unconscious after that.

"A lot happened huh... though my body... is it fine or not?" Lin Mu questioned.

~hum~

As if responding to him, the ethereal suddenly started to glow as mystical runes started to appear on it. Lin Mu's attention was instantly pulled by it as he felt a calling in his mind. It told him to come to the altar.

Lin Mu faced the altar and walked towards it before halting at its front. He lifted his hand before placing it on it, fully expecting something to happen.

~shua~

Lin Mu's vision went dark as a streak of runes started to appear out of the Ethereal altar. These runes entered Lin Mu's head and were like an endless river. Lin Mu felt memories starting to appear in his mind as he felt his body becoming numb.

When his vision returned, he found himself in a strange place. He was standing on a platform that floated in the middle of the sky. Below him, he could see massive forests, frozen glaciers, dry and scorching deserts, colossal volcanoes that spewed out dark smoke and an abyssal ocean that extended wherever his eyes went.

He looked closer and saw that each of these areas had something in common. There were beasts in all of them. These beasts were of various types, some could fly, some crawled, some walked and some swam. They were of various sizes, from the size of a dust particle all the way to the size of a mountain.

All these beasts were also staring at Lin Mu from their locations. The ones that were on the ground looked up at Lin Mu while those flying the sky stared down at him. Lin Mu felt unnerved by their gazes and felt fearful.

But this was merely the start of it. Soon the beasts started to let out their cries. They roared, growled, screeched, cackled, clicked, chattered, chittered and howled. Their cries all mixed up to become an ugly noise that assaulted Lin Mu's ears.

"Argh!" Lin Mu cried in pain as covered his ears.

Their cries were only increasing in volume and made Lin Mu kneel on the ground as he lost strength in his legs.

Time passed by and the cries of the beasts never stopped. Lin Mu was now curled up on the ground, half unconscious. He was just about to pass out when he heard a different voice among the cacophony of cries.

Unlike the other beastly cries, he was able to understand this one. He focused on this voice as he found it to be a lot better than the beast's cries. But then he realized more and more such voices appeared.

One by one, the cries of the beasts disappeared, and replacing them were coherent voices that spoke words which Lin Mu understood.

They were all chanting the same thing, and Lin Mu finally grasped it. All the voices then merged to become one massive voice, which boomed in his ears.

"Open thy heart to the world, embrace its creations and become one with them! - Behold, The Nurturing Heart Sutra!"

Chapter 542 - Cracked Core

Once the voices disappeared, Lin Mu found that the world he was in disappeared as well and he was now back in the Mysterious ring. He looked at the altar in front of him, which had become dim again, and sighed.

"When will I figure out how this works..." Lin Mu muttered to himself.

Lin Mu didn't exactly know by what logic the altar gave him the parts of the Nine Divine Heart sutra and the skills. For skills, at least he reckoned it depended on his cultivation base, but even that had varied a lot.

"I got the Calming heart sutra at the very start, then I got the severing heart sutra when I managed to cultivate spirit Qi, I got Burning heart sutra when I felt angry and killed the Town head and now... the Nurturing heart sutra... I got because of little Shrubby?" Lin Mu spoke.

Lin Mu now fussed that the altar would give him the other parts of the sutra when he fulfilled certain conditionals, though what they were, it was unknown. Lin Mu had now obtained four of the nine parts of the Nine Divine Hearst Sutra.

Each sutra was unique and transformative for Lin Mu. He wondered what kind of effect the Nurturing heart sutra had.

~hum~

Lin Mu felt the ring on his finger hum and realized it was time to return to the real world now.

"I should head back... I have a lot of things to check anyway..." Lin Mu muttered to himself.

Back in the real world, Lin Mu opened his eyes that felt heavy and looked around. Straightaway the first thing he saw was little Shrubby lying on his side. The beast looked to be exhausted and was in a bad condition.

Even though it didn't have any injuries per say, it looked to be weakened and sick.

"Little Shrubby..." Lin Mu muttered as he felt a pain in his heart upon seeing him like this.

Lin Mu then looked around at the rest of the place and saw that they were in a cave currently. The cave wasn't that big and plenty of light came from its opening to the front. It was daytime, and Lin Mu could see the trees that were located in front of the cave's entrance.

~pew~

Seeing that he was in a relatively safe place for now, Lin Mu took a breath of relief. That was one of the worries out of his mind.

"Senior, Senior are you there?" Lin Mu called out in his mind.

"LIN MU! You're finally awake!" Xukong spoke in an anxious one.

"Yes, senior. I am..." Lin Mu spoke.

"That's a relief. You've been unconscious for over a month now." Xukong replied.

"Wait WHAT!? A month?" Lin Mu questioned.

"Yes. I managed to get my spirit sense through a few times and observed the surroundings from time to time to confirm. Little Shrubby managed to get you here after a day and night of constant running. But after that both of you have been unconscious." Xukong answered.

"That is..." Lin Mu couldn't find words to describe the situation.

"Put that aside for now. How are you feeling? I couldn't check your body at all during this time. I was being prevented by the ring, it seems like." Xukong asked.

"Prevented by the ring... I think I know why I was unconscious for a month senior." Lin Mu suddenly said.

"Why?" Xukong questioned.

"The altar in the ring... it gave me another part of the Nine Divine Heart Sutra." Lin Mu answered.

"So it was that... no wonder." Xukong spoke in an understanding tone.

"I couldn't tell how long I was there in the ring, but from what you have said, I guess it was for over a month. I saw a lot of things at that time and learned the sutra." Lin Mu stated.

"What is the sutra that you obtained?" Xukong questioned.

"It's called the Nurturing Heart sutra." Lin Mu answered.

"That's an... unexpected name." Xukong said. "Do you know what it can do?" he added.

"I think I have a guess..." Lin Mu said as he looked at Little Shrubby.

"But before that I need to sort myself." Lin Mu said as he peered into his body, using his spirit sense.

He was finally able to use it and didn't feel the strong paralysis that he had felt before. While his body still felt numb, he reckoned it could have been due to not moving for a long time.

Inside his body, Lin Mu saw that his muscles and tissues were fine but his meridians had some injuries. But when he reached his Dantian did he saw the main problem.

"Oh no..." Lin Mu said with surprise he saw his core.

His core was now covered with cracks. Xukong, who was watching along with Lin Mu though felt strange instead.

"It's not damaged... rather these cracks are similar to a cultivator who is undergoing Heavenly Tribulation." Xukong spoke.

"It's not?" Lin Mu asked, still feeling unsure.

"No... if it was cracked due to being damaged, it wouldn't be just the core that was this damaged. Your meridians and the entire Dantian would be damaged too. Right now your condition is similar to someone who is in the middle of his breakthrough to the nascent soul realm." Xukong explained.

Lin Mu nodded his head and tried to use his spirit Qi, finding that it was still controllable.

"That's correct. My spirit Qi is not hampered at all." Lin Mu said, feeling pleased. "But then, what am I supposed to do about my core?" he asked, feeling confused.

"This is a complex situation which I don't think I've seen before. But if my assumption is correct, it may be due to your bloodline of the Great Slumber bear. Remember what I told you about them before?" Xukong replied.

"That they are born at the realm above Immortal Ascension realm and that they can give birth to their nascent soul with just a thought?" Lin Mu replied.

Chapter 543 - Seven Beasts Burst

Xukong felt pleased with Lin Mu's quick thoughts and nodded his head.

"Exactly! When you tried that it didn't work, right? I think we overlooked the vast difference of power between you and an actual Cub of Great slumber bear. First of all, a beast like that would not be found in a world like this at all. Instead, it would be in a higher leveled world where the heavenly laws are more active." Xukong said.

"What would that mean for me?" Lin Mu asked.

"That means the environmental conditions were simply not the same for both of you. Instead, what you needed was a little push which came in the form of the tribulation lightning. From what we saw it was the pure tribulation lightning that was intended for Bilao that struck you. It was not a mistake at all, nor was it a chance, it was clearly drawn to you.

I think the problem you have is a contradiction. While you should be able to form a Nascent soul easily like a Great Slumber bear, the world you are in is not optimum for it." Xukong explained.

Lin Mu listened carefully and went deep in thought. Five minutes later he felt like he understood it and had an idea of what he now needed to do.

"Seeing as I have not broken through to the Nascent Soul realm, I'm guessing that I need more bolts of Tribulation lightning." Lin Mu said.

"That's right," Xukong replied.

"But I can't trigger it on my own either due to the contradictions between the bloodlines method and the world's state." Lin Mu added.

"That's right as well," Xukong replied.

"Which leaves me with... stealing other's tribulations?" Lin Mu said, feeling a bit unsure.

"Well, that is indeed the most obvious solution." Xukong answered.

~Sigh~

"And how am I going to find cultivators undergoing heavenly tribulations?" Lin Mu asked.

"That is up to you. Though seeing as how about half of your core is covered in cracks, one more tribulation lightning bolt like this one or a couple more will be enough for you to successfully breakthrough to the Nascent Soul realm and from your Nascent Soul." Xukong answered.

Lin Mu felt a bit disappointed that there was not an easier way, but then realized this was already a lot more than he had known before. At least now he knew what to watch out for, plus this now meant the only thing that was restricting his cultivation was now time or the lack of resources, but just the right opportunity.

'I should try moving now.' Lin Mu thought as he willed his hands.

At first, nothing happened, but after a few seconds, he was able to make his fingers twitch. Five minutes later, he was able to lift his hand and move it. Half an hour later he managed to sit up properly and finally when an entire hour passed he was able to walk around.

~Ahh~

Lin Mu grunted as he stretched his tense body. The sounds of his joints and bones popping could be heard as a wave of pleasure washed over him. He looked at his tattered robes that were quite dirty and damaged before removing them and cleaning up with the water that he had stored.

He then put on a fresh set of robes and got to checking on Little Shrubby. Lin Mu scanned him with his spirit sense and found that the beast was in a different condition than him. His heartbeats had gotten slower, and it was as if he was in deep hibernation.

Though when he checked Little Shrubby's Core and Dantian, they seemed to be quite depleted as well, but now there was a new pattern over Little Shrubby's core.

"Little Shrubby seems to have awakened an innate ability?" Lin Mu said.

"Ah yes! I almost forgot. Do you remember when he came to rescue you?" Xukong suddenly spoke.

"Hmm... I remember some fragments. But yeah, I saw him killing the elders and the disciples." Lin Mu replied. "And then... some illusory beasts that appeared around him

"Indeed. The seven illusory beasts that manifested around him are part of his innate ability that awakened as part of his bloodline." Xukong stated.

"Do you know what the innate ability is?" Lin Mu said as he stroked the fur of Little Shrubby.

"The innate ability he awakened is called as Seven Beasts Burst. The ability is very powerful and quite rare too. It is actually a confirmation that Little Shrubby has multiple Bloodlines that are mutating to form a single bloodline." Xukong replied.

Lin Mu felt happy for Little Shrubby, but then felt uneasy upon seeing his current condition again.

"Senior, why is he like this now though?" Lin Mu questioned.

"Seven Beasts Burst is an innate ability that demands a lot from its user. It not only boosts all aspects of the beast's strength but it also increases its cultivation base. Little Shrubby used it for the first time and kept it activated for a long time.

It's his blood essence that has been damaged, most likely. Thankfully, his bloodline seems to be recovering on its own. If not he would not have been in a hibernation state like this." Xukong explained.

Lin Mu nodded at this and then remembered what he was going to do earlier.

"Wait him awakening the innate ability and me getting the new sutra are linked." Lin Mu said.

"Linked? How?" Xukong questioned.

"When I was getting the sutra, I saw a lot of beasts. They were letting out their cries, but I couldn't understand them. But after more time passed, I began to understand it bit by bit, until it was the same as the human tongue for me.

It was they who taught me the Nurturing heart sutra." Lin Mu answered.

'Could it be...?' Xukong suddenly thought of something.

"Use the sutra and see what effect it has right now." Xukong urged.

Lin Mu nodded his head and sat down cross legged. He took a deep breath and finally started to chant the Nurturing heart sutra.

But the moment he did so, countless beasts across the world howled out as one.

Chapter 544 - Cry Of A Billion Beasts

At one of the cities in the empire, a herd of beasts was lazing around in a pen. These were Long Furred Goats and were early stage Qi refining realm spirit beasts. They were rather docile and their meat and milk were considered to be a high end delicacy.

They were so easy to handle that even children could take care of them. While they did have quite a lot of strength, they wouldn't attack anyone without any provocation. They would even let the people shear their fur so that it could be used to make clothes.

Overall they were no different from normal goats, except for being spirit beasts. The caretakers were doing their daily chores in one of the pens when suddenly the goats all stood up in unison.

The caretakers were surprised but didn't find anything to be wrong. They thought something must have caught the beast's attention as they were sensitive to spirit Qi. But then, the goats all turned their heads in one direction, before raising them and letting out a loud bleat.

~BAAA~

It didn't stop there though, as more cries of beasts all over the city could be heard. Some people who kept spirit beast pets saw them suddenly stop and turn in a specific direction before letting out a cry.

"What is happening?"

"All the beasts are crying out at the same time!"

"Did something scare them?"

"Quick go and inform the master! There is some strange phenomenon happening."

This scene repeated in nearly every place that had beasts.

At the Rainbow pill sect.

An orange feathered bird that was as big as a swan was perched atop a spirit fruit tree. It lazily pecked at the berry like fruits hanging on it and ate them.

A white haired elder was standing at the side of the tree and looked at the orange feathered bird with a smile on his face.

"Da Cheng won't you give me a feather, please..." the white haired elder pleaded. The orange feathered bird though paid no attention to the man and just continued eating.

"Just... just one feather will do. Please... pretty please..." The old man continued requesting to no avail.

The bird had no intention of listening to the old man.

~Sigh~

The old man shook his head and turned to sit down at the stone table that was placed nearby. But the moment he turned he heard a shrill sound.

~Qiyaaa~

The old man's eyes went wide as he hurriedly turned around. He saw his precious bird spreading its wings and letting out a loud cry. Looking in its eyes one could see a strange kind of fervor. The old man felt puzzled but a few seconds later, more such cries sounded all across the sect.

The old elder's brows furrowed as he looked around. A massive wave of spirit Qi came from his body as it spread around the sect.

~shua~shua~shua~

Soon multicolored lights could be seen flying towards him from all over the sect. The lights landed around him, revealing many men and women, who started bowing their heads and cupping their hands in respect.

"Ancestor! The beasts all over the sect are acting strange."

"They aren't listening to us either. A few disciples who tried to restrain a couple of them were attacked directly."

"We're getting reports that this isn't happening just here. It is happening all over the empire."

The old man raised his hand, silencing all the people at once.

"If all the beasts are acting like this then can only be a few reasons for this." The Ancestor spoke.

"And what are they, ancestor?"

"Either they have been scared by the presence of a very strong beast, the likes of which we've never seen before. Or... if what I've read in our forbidden archives is correct... an immortal treasure that is priceless to beasts is coming into existence somewhere." The ancestor spoke.

"What should we do now, ancestor?"

"Investigate of course. If it's the first option then we may need to talk with the other sects about it first. A beast like that... won't be something I will be able to deal with alone." The ancestor said shocking the people.

"But if it's the second option then... we need to obtain it at all costs!" The ancestor said as a powerful aura exuded from his body.

All the top sects reared certain beasts and even had guardian beasts who were treated no less than the sect's elders. These beasts were as smart as humans, but even they were acting the same and letting out loud cries.

The cultivation sects were sent in a tizzy trying to control them as some of them redacted violently to being interrupted.

This phenomenon continued for over an hour before it stopped.

The commoners were scared that this was an evil omen and that something bad was about to happen, while the sects hurried to find the cause behind it, thinking that it must be something really beneficial for them.

Even the nobles of various kingdoms were not excluded in this and they sent out their own people to check it as well.

The actual cause behind this was none other than Lin Mu who was sitting inside the cave in an unknown forest.

After he started chanting the Nurturing heart sutra the cries of beasts could be heard from all over the forest by him too, but he didn't pay attention to it for now. For him, little Shrubby was the main concern.

Inside Lin Mu's Dantian, the spirit Qi started to stir before it started to bubble. Soon the reaction got more violent it was as if the spirit Qi would soon explode. Lin Mu felt like something was wrong when he looked at it, but his mind was telling him everything was fine and this was supposed to happen.

The bubbling spirit Qi started to reduce in size before Lin Mu was only left with half of his entire store of liquid spirit Qi in his Dantian. The amount that had disappeared had instead changed into a string of energy that floated above the sea of spirit Qi.

Chapter 545 - Beast Qi

Lin Mu looked at it curiously but couldn't tell what it was. From his own body's response, it didn't seem to desire the energy as it did with spirit Qi or vital energy.

"What is this senior?" Lin Mu questioned feeling completely lost.

Xukong though did not respond to Lin Mu. He just kept on staring at the string of energy that was floating above Lin Mu's spirit Qi sea without moving.

"Senior? Is everything okay?" Lin Mu questioned feeling concerned.

"Could it really be..." Xukong muttered.

"Senior?" Lin Mu called out again.

"Yes?" Xukong said snapping out of his daze.

"What is that strange energy?" Lin Mu questioned.

"That Lin Mu... is something nearly every beast in the world would desire..." Xukong said and took a pause, looking at the energy again.

"That energy is a strand of pure Beast Qi." Xukong answered.

"Beast Qi? Is that another type of spirit Qi?" Lin Mu questioned.

"No..." Xukong shook his head. "It's something on a completely different level."

"Beast Qi is a special type of Qi that contains a fragment of the essence of the Beast Path." Xukong revealed.

Upon hearing that it was related to one of the 'Paths', Lin Mu instantly connected the points and realized what it was.

"So it's similar to other derivative Qi's like the Sword Qi, Buddhist Qi, and more." Lin Mu asked.

"Exactly... these types of qi's are different from the three categories of the Qis of the universe. They all contain a fragment of the essence of various paths. Sword Qi would contain the fragment of the essence of the Sword path, Buddhist Qi that of the Buddhist path and in this case, Beast Qi has the beast path." Xukong explained.

Lin Mu felt excited about this as he understood that the fourth sutra that he obtained was the representative of the Beast path. Now he had sutra for four paths including the Sword, Buddhist and Demonic path.

While Lin Mu was feeling excited about this, Xukong on the other hand was going through a storm of emotions. He felt sad, angry, happy, terrified and excited at the same time.

"Seeing as it is of the beast path, will this Beast Qi help other beasts to cultivate?" Lin Mu asked.

Xukong forcefully controlled himself and reminded himself he needed to be calm.

"Yes... but not directly. It will not be like spirit Qi which would increase the cultivation base of a beast. Rather Beast Qi has a slightly different effect." Xukong said as he took a pause.

"What is it?" Lin Mu asked impatiently.

"Beast Qi can instead help a beast improve their bloodline and overall quality of their body." Xukong answered.

Upon hearing this Lin Mu knew exactly what he now needed to do.

Lin Mu placed his hands upon little Shrubby's body. He then controlled the Strand of Beast Qi to leave his Dantian before guiding it through his meridians and then into the body of Little Shrubby.

Once it entered Little Shrubby's body, Lin Mu didn't need to do anything else. The arrival of the Strand of Beast Qi was like throwing a drop of water into a vat of boiling oil.

Little Shrubby's body convulsed violently as its spirit Qi became chaotic. Lin Mu became scared and went to intervene when Xukong interrupted.

"Don't! Let it happen! Little Shrubby needs to do this on his own." Xukong said.

Lin Mu had a worried expression on his face as he looked at little Shrubby on the ground.

"What is happening to him senior?" Lin Mu questioned.

"The Beast Qi is not something that is easily handled by anyone. Absorbing it is an even more difficult task." Xukong said.

"But... didn't you say it is something that every beast desires?" Lin Mu asked feeling confused.

"Yes... while nearly every beast desires it, they can't all hope to survive it. When a Beast absorbs Beast Qi, it will be forced to withstand its power. The Beast Qi will thoroughly activate every part of the Beast's body. The beast's bloodline, whether it has one or not will be tested and trialed.

If the bloodline is strong enough it will be able to absorb the beast Qi, but if it is weak then the only chance the beast would survive it is if it has luck or a good body. In a way, it will temper the body of a beast as well.

Once a beast successfully absorbs some Beast Qi they would gain an increase in the quality of their bloodline." Xukong explained.

"Then will they undergo a bloodline evolution?" Lin Mu questioned.

"No, of course not." Xukong said before continuing, "a bloodline evolution is no small thing. While a bloodline evolution can indeed happen due to Beast Qi, it would require a large amount of it. A strand like this will only increase the quality of a beast's bloodline.

It also has more effects but they vary from beast to beast. It's hard to tell what would happen in each beast due to the vast variety of beasts in the world." Xukong answered.

"I see..." Lin Mu nodded his head.

He then looked at his Dantian and a wry smile appeared on his face.

"All this spirit Qi and only a small strand like this..." Lin Mu muttered.

"No, Lin Mu. That's not it. You don't understand... If the Nurturing heart sutra can keep on producing Beast Qi like this then it is nothing less than a fortune of the heavens. If a beast wants to get Beast Qi normally, they would have to obtain it by killing countless other beasts in hopes of condensing a small amount themselves.

Or... they would have to find a natural treasure that contains such Beast Qi. Either of these options are hard for most beasts and even cultivators would go crazy to obtain Beast Qi just so that they can get their tamed beast to progress." Xukong stated.

Lin Mu finally understood the gravity of the situation and knew he would need to ponder on this matter more.

Chapter 546 - Restriction And Resources

Lin Mu continued observing Little Shrubby and saw that his condition was slowly getting better. The convulsions had reduced and only some muscle twitches could be seen now from time to time.

Lin Mu waited there for over three days before the changes in Little Shrubby finally stopped, even though he was still asleep. By now his body had healed and the color of his fur had a glossy sheen again.

Even his aura seemed to be a bit more powerful than before.

Lin Mu had also restored the spirit Qi in his Dantian and had taken this time to normalize his own body and meridians. He needed to see if his spirit Qi was hampered by anything or not.

Finding that except for his core being cracked, there wasn't any problem for him.

"You will need to watch out for your spirit Qi consumption though." Xukong suddenly spoke.

"What do you mean, senior?" Lin Mu questioned.

"You use the spirit Qi from the spirit Qi sea in your Dantian most of the time and don't depend on the spirit Qi in your core as your capacity is high. But for others, their spirit Qi sea is depleted quickly and they primarily depend on their cores.

Cores have a much higher storage of spirit Qi in them due to being condensed into a solid form. But this also determines the cultivation base of the cultivator. So you should know what would happen if they use up too much spirit Qi." Xukong replied.

"Yeah, their cultivation base would regress and they would fall back one stage." Lin Mu answered.

"Correct. But in your case, you can't let it get to the level where your cultivation base is about to regress. Other's core will shrink in size when it has been deprived of Qi, but yours is cracked.

If you do the same, instead of simply shrinking in size, your core will directly explode due to becoming unstable. A core explosion is quite deadly and not many survive it. And even those that survive it, become crippled." Xukong explained.

Lin Mu didn't know that there would be a restriction like this on him. But he didn't really mind it, as reaching that point would be quite difficult. Lin Mu's Dantian already had a large capacity for spirit Qi and his core had over six times that capacity.

Unless it was some extreme situation, Lin Mu doubted he would even be able to deplete that much spirit Qi at once. Not to mention before reaching that point he had a lot of resources like spirit stones and basic Qi pills that he could easily use to restore his spirit Qi.

Thinking of the resources made Lin Mu realize that he now had a lot of resources taken from the Tri Cauldron Peony Sect. He quickly peered into his ring and went through them, one by one. There were many herbs, pills, manuals, natural treasures, spirit stones, weapons and such in the ring. Along with a large vault that was still lying there, locked.

"Ah, I still need to unlock it." Lin Mu remembered.

Seeing as Little Shrubby had still not woken up, Lin Mu decided to take care of the vault for now. He definitely couldn't do it in the cave as the area was simply too small, thus he first carved out the cave to make it big enough.

About an hour later, Lin Mu had expanded the cave to become over ten times the size it was before. The rocky walls were easy to chop with the spirit swords and transporting them was even easier, as Lin Mu could simply store them in the ring.

Once a large enough area was constructed, Lin Mu placed the vault on the ground. The ground cracked and trembled because of the weight of the vault, but it soon settled down. Lin Mu got to unraveling the formations of the vault and took his sweet time in doing so.

He had chosen to take this opportunity to learn a bit about the formations, as well. Plus, now that he actually had resources that could help him in constructing formations, he may actually be able to use them more.

He even had access to manuals, which contained information about various formations. Lin Mu ended up taking an entire day before he finally opened the vault. When it opened though, Lin Mu felt a wave of spirit Qi coming from it.

The spirit Qi was dense enough that it had turned into a visible mist. The mist obscured the items within the vault and made it hard to see.

~HUU~

Lin Mu took a deep breath and sucked all the mist into his body, clearing it out. Once the mist was gone, Lin Mu was left to gaze at the various treasures that were left in the vault.

Unlike the other vaults, though, the number of items here was quite less, but the quality was top notch. Many of the items were things that even the top sects would desire.

"Isn't this... an Eight Sigils Chrysanthemum?" Lin Mu said in astonishment.

The Eight Sigils Chrysanthemum had eight petals and each petal had a sigil on it. From these petals, streams of spirit qi were being released. They would leave one petal and enter the next after spreading a bit. This way they bounced eight times before returning to the first petal.

A unique pattern was thus formed that had a mesmerizing property. Looking at the flower, Lin Mu felt as if he was being hypnotized. He chanted the severing heart sutra and dispelled the effect of the flower.

"Truly marvelous..." Lin Mu muttered.

"I didn't expect that there would be an Eight Sigils Chrysanthemum here... these are rare even in the higher worlds." Xukong spoke.

Lin Mu nodded his head as he had known about this too. He had actually learned about it from the Lost immortal's Memoirs.

The use of this Eight Sigils Chrysanthemum was quite important in the refinement of a pill called Twilight Ascension Pill.

It was peak grade pill that could assist a Dao Treading Realm cultivator to break through into the Immortal Ascension Realm!

Chapter 547 - Sorting Through The Contents

A herb like the Eight Sigils Chrysanthemum would be priceless even in the top sects. Lin Mu had no idea how one of them turned up here. But looking at its condition he could tell that it had been growing for a long time and had been perfectly preserved in a jade box.

"Doesn't the Flower look a bit different, senior?" Lin Mu questioned.

"Hmm... I guess it does. It has probably been preserved in the box for a long time now and that box is the only thing keeping it alive. Once it dies, its medicinal properties will start to fall as well.

It is one of the spirit flowers that needs to be fresh for them to be useful. That is one of the reasons why they are so hard to find. While they are indeed born in many worlds, finding one that is alive is quite difficult.

Even that box it's kept in is quite valuable and could be considered as a high grade spirit tool. The formations on it are complex enough to form an array and would probably need a formation grandmaster to inscribe." Xukong answered.

"I see..." Lin Mu said before storing the Eight Sigils Chrysanthemum in the ring.

He had no use for it now and even if he wanted to make use of it, he would need the other ingredients of the Twilight Ascension pill, each of which was quite hard to find. Lin Mu actually knew all of them since he had seen the Lost Immortal use one himself.

That is how the lost immortal was able to break through to the Immortal Ascension realm despite his low talent. Lin Mu had read quite far in his memoirs and at the current part the lost immortal was already at the Immortal Ascension realm.

Lin Mu had seen his journey and struggles along the way through his memoirs and felt enlightened. He couldn't help but compare them to his own and find that he had it quite easier than that man.

The Lost Immortals Broken Fate Physique was truly something that was devastating to a person. But despite that, the man had achieved something that billions had been unable to. The respect in Lin Mu's heart for that man was great.

Having put the Eight Sigils Chrysanthemum which was the most eye catching thing in the vault first, Lin Mu went to check the other things that were kept in there. Lin Mu first of all put away the spirit weapons that were in it. They were all high grade spirit weapons but if he compared them to the one's Old Man Jing had, they would still be of a lower quality.

Lin Mu didn't really care about using them as he would need to put his brand on them too. He already had two high grade spirit weapons with him which took up most of his control. He didn't want to add more until he had a better control on it.

Lin Mu knew he could support five high grade spirit weapons on his own right now, so he chose to replace the ones that he had for the Thousand Armament Blade scripture. A few of them had been broken and there were suitable replacements for them here.

The ones that he added were a high grade spirit Axe, a pole arm, and a saber.

Checking the other items, Lin Mu came upon several Alchemical pills that were of high grade. Though there wasn't something he could use now as he would need to store most of these items till the final war with the northern tribes.

He would then return these to the sect so that they could have resources for that. If Lin Mu were to use them up, he would be destroying the foundations of the Tris Cauldron Peony Sect and in turn weakening an ally of the Zhou Empire in the fight against the Northern Tribes.

Wu Hei had told him that he could take some items from the sects but he should not go overboard. Lin mu continued looking and found a few manuals, which had quite a lot of information about Alchemy and pill refinement.

It took Lin Mu over six hours to sort through everything before he was done. He then stored the entire vault back in his ring, not knowing what to do with it now. He didn't leave it here as the vault itself was quite valuable.

"You may as well further progress the mortal strengthening scripture since you have better earth elemental herbs now." Xukong reminded.

Lin Mu remembered it and took out all the earth elemental herbs he had gotten from the herb fields of the Herb peak. He then sat down before stabilizing his condition. Lin Mu checked the pool of earth attribute spirit Qi in his Dantian and saw that it was full.

In the month that he had been in the ring, his body had recovered the spirit Qi that he needed automatically. This was a surprise to him as before he needed to convert the earth attribute spirit Qi on his own manually.

'I guess this is the benefit of having an affinity to the earth element. Just having the technique is enough for it to work automatically after a certain point.' Lin Mu thought to himself.

Back when he had been struck by the tribulation lightning, the armor made by the Mortal Strengthening Scripture was completely destroyed and all of his earth attribute spirit Qi was drained in one go. That was also the reason why Lin Mu had not sustained as many physical injuries.

If it was anyone else, they would definitely be more than just paralyzed due to the Tribulation lightning bolt.

~huu~

Lin Mu took a deep breath and picked up one of the earth attribute herbs which was in the form of a thick brown stalk. Lin Mu put it in his mouth and chewed on it. His face cringed at the bitter taste but he clenched his fist and completely ate the herb.

As soon as he swallowed it down, the brown glowing armour around him cracked!

Chapter 548 - Gravity Of The Situation

Lin Mu was already at the edge of the next level of the Mortal strengthening scripture and thus even eating this one herb was enough to push him to the next level. But it was not enough to fully complete the process.

While the brown armor was cracked, it would take more earth attribute herbs to reform it. Lin Mu thus picked up another earth attribute herb which was a flower with six petals. Each petal was curled up as if it was shy and a small cloud of earth attribute spirit Qi surrounded it.

Lin Mu put it in his mouth and chewed, spreading the juices in his mouth. Unlike the bitter root he had eaten before, this flower was slightly sweet in taste but overall it was bland. This eased Lin Mu's expression as he swallowed it down completely.

~Shua~

The medicinal properties surged through his stomach as they were taken up by his meridians under the guidance of the Mortal Strengthening scripture. The earth attribute spirit Qi seeped out of his skin, forming into a new layer.

This layer was very thin, as if it was silk. It was still brown but its color had gotten a bit lighter. If it was brown like soil before, now it was light brown like clay. It also didn't have any patterns on it.

It looked very plain, as if someone had painted a layer on Lin Mu's skin. The layer kept on growing in thickness as more and more earth attribute spirit Qi kept on pouring in it. Lin Mu thought he had already reached the fifth level of the Mortal strengthening scripture, but now it seemed different.

"Senior, is it supposed to be like this?" Lin Mu questioned.

"Different people have different effects with the mortal strengthener scripture. Since you already have an affinity to the earth element, I think the skill is needing more earth attribute spirit Qi to make it better.

You already have plenty of earth attribute herbs and pills, you may as well use them and see the effect." Xukong suggested.

Lin Mu nodded his head and reckoned that it was fine. He thus started to eat more of the earth attribute herbs one by one. The more of them he ate, the thicker the layer got. It reached a point where the layer was over six inches thick! Lin Mu couldn't even be seen beneath it, and it seemed like someone had covered him in a mound of clay.

Once Lin Mu ran out of all the earth attribute herbs, he got to the alchemical pills. Now there were many pills in this. Most were of a lower quality than the Dark Soil pill that Lin Mu had eaten before, but there were seven pills that were of the same quality as that of the Dark Soil pill!

Lin Mu first finished off the lower quality pills and saw that the brown layer was now starting to condense. A strange gravity like force emanated from Lin Mu's body as it started to pull on the layer.

~DENG~

~DENG~

~DENG~

Each time the layer compressed, it was as if someone was hitting a bronze bell. When Lin Mu had finished all of the lower quality pills, the thickness of the layer had been reduced by half and was about three inches thick now.

Lin Mu then looked at a set of pills that were kept in individual bottles. Each of these pills was equivalent to the Dark Soil pill and were immensely powerful. Usually, a Nascent soul realm cultivator or higher would use them, but here was Lin Mu, about to eat them like candy.

He put the first pill in his mouth, which immediately melted and swallowed down. His body quickly got to absorbing it and assimilating it according to the Mortal Strengthening scripture. Unlike before when Lin Mu had eaten the Dark Soil pill, the reaction was not as strong.

The brown layer started to shrink again, but this time at a snail's pace. Seeing that it was not having a strong enough effect, Lin Mu popped another pill.

~Weeng~

The sound of metal bending could be heard as Lin Mu suddenly felt his body being attracted towards the earth. He managed to keep himself from toppling but had to spend a bit of energy. Lin Mu reckoned this would only get difficult as he went ahead.

Thus he thought of doing something crazy.

~pop~pop~pop~

He opened all of the vials and ate six pills at once!

Thick Earth Attribute spirit Qi leaked out of his pores due to the sheer amount that was coursing through Lin Mu's body. His meridians were under great pressure and so was his Dantian.

In his Dantian, a unique scene could be seen. His liquid spirit Qi which was like a wide sea, became tainted with the brown earth attribute spirit Qi. It was as if the water had suddenly become muddied like during a flood and a scene of chaos was spread.

Lin Mu's cracked core spun automatically, trying to stabilize the condition.

The gravitational pull that Lin Mu was feeling suddenly multiplied threefold and his robes got pulled down straight. His hair was also stretched taut and it looked quite comical. The earth attribute spirit Qi

which was leaking out of Lin Mu's pores, was being pulled back into his body due to the gravitational force and pushed on the brown layer further.

~DENG~

Another loud sound of a bronze bell ringing was heard as the layer compressed by half. It was now at one and a half inches.

~DENG~

The force pushed it more and it reached a thickness of one inch. By now the gravitational force that was pulling on Lin Mu was not just acting on him, but in the area of over ten kilometers around him.

Though it was only a fraction of what it was on him.

Many birds that were flying around suddenly found themselves falling out of the sky as their bodies became like lead. Other animals that were galloping stumbled and fell to the ground due to suddenly finding it hard to move.

Many such scenes were seen in the forest which shocked the animals and made most of them scared.

Chapter 549 - Completion Of Mortal Strengthening Scripture And Treasured Organ!

The gravity continued to pressure the brown layer and finally reduced it to less than a centimeter thick.

The moment this happened, all of the medicinal properties of the earth attribute herbs were consumed and a rumbling sound spread in all his body. His muscles and skin stiffened as the brown layer started to attach to them.

It now formed a skin-tight bond and looked completely like a part of Lin Mu's body. It no longer had any patterns like an armor, and had returned to a very simple form. If one were to look at it when the armor was activated, they would think that it was just some low leveled defensive technique.

But in reality, this thin looking armor was strong enough to take the blows of a Nascent Soul realm cultivator now. Lin Mu had now successfully reached the fifth level of the Mortal Strengthening scripture and had done something very few people had accomplished.

But this was not the stop of it. Since the Mortal Strengthen scripture could also help Lin Mu a little bit with his body tempering realms cultivation, it was now pushing it as well. Inside Lin Mu's body the spirit Qi and vital energy were now reacting under the effect of the gravitational force.

Lin Mu's body currently contained both Vital Essence and Vital energy. But the vital essence was in less quantity than the vital energy. But now it seemed to be rapidly increasing as the remaining amount of Vital energy was being converted to vital essence.

Lin Mu's Body tempering cultivation which had been stuck all this while also kick-started again as a surprise to him and started to progress. His spleen's cells started replicating and new ones began being created.

Soon all of them were replaced and the old ones were destroyed. Earth attribute spirit Qi swirled within his spleen and a stream of vital essence also flowed out of his spleen. His blood suddenly started to speed up and he felt a heat within his chest.

~WEENG~

His blood rapidly perfused his spleen and started being filtered. His spleen was now filtering all the blood, removing the old and damaged blood cells. The process lasted about fifteen minutes before his blood flow slowed down to Normal.

If one looked at Lin Mu's face, one would see a refreshing rosy tint on his cheeks. Even his skin seemed to be vibrant, as the blood of his body had been purified by the spleen. All the old and damaged blood was removed, leaving behind youthful and young cells.

Then suddenly everything went silent.

Nothing could be heard in the area, but within Lin Mu's body, a storm was seething. His aura started to rapidly rise and if one could see it, they would find him like a beacon in the dark. Lin Mu's aura shot straight up from the cave, ignoring the rock and the mountain in the way.

His aura was unyielding as it declared its presence. Lin Mu had completed the refinement of his spleen fully, and it had now become a treasured organ!

Lin Mu had completed the first stage of the Five Treasures realm and just his flesh was strong enough to contend with a cultivator that was at the peak of the core condensation realm. If one combined that with his Qi cultivation he would now be able to contend with plenty of Nascent Soul realm cultivators!

~huu~

Lin Mu let out a dark breath that corroded the path that it passed over. The rocks of the cave sizzled as if acid had been spilled on it, while the soil changed its color to a vitriolic green. One could see the toxicity of the impurities that had just been expelled by Lin Mu's body.

But that was not the shocking part as these impurities didn't come from his body, from consumption of food and air. But rather from the pills that he had just consumed all together. Reaching the Five Treasure Realm had the additional benefit of purifying the body, just like the Toxin Cleansing pills did.

Except for the effect of brought by the Five Treasures Realm was much stronger than any Toxin Cleansing pill. But this could not be replicated again either, unless Lin Mu progressed further and reached the second stage of the Five Treasures realm.

Progression in each stage would give the cultivator an opportunity to cleanse their bodies. This was another reason why the body cultivation was considered to be terrifying. With the lack of toxins in their bodies, body cultivators would have smoother progress and their Qi would flow smoothly as well.

Lin Mu opened his eyes as they exuded an imposing presence.

He extended his hand and clenched his fist.

~phut~

The sound of a balloon bursting could be heard as Lin Mu's hand compressed the air due to the force and made it burst. While other cultivators would also be able to replicate this, Lin Mu didn't need any Qi skills to do that.

His body was now an impeccable weapon that would only grow stronger with time. His breakthrough to the second stage of the Five Treasures realm also improved the durability of his body further, which combined with the Mortal Strengthen scripture had reached an unthinkable level.

Lin Mu knew for sure that he would not be able to hurt himself unless he lowered his guard himself. He reckoned that he wouldn't even be able to harm himself, even if he tried and would need to rely on enemies to test it!

This also brought Lin Mu a sense of relief in his heart. He would not need to fear ambushes now as the Mortal strengthening scripture and his own body would be able to defend against surprise attacks at all times.

"Congratulations Lin Mu! You've made a great achievement I've rarely seen any cultivators reaching both the second stage of the Five Treasures realm and the completion of Mortal strengthening scripture in one go." Xukong praised.

"Thank you, senior. But it was also due to your guidance that I've reached this far." Lin Mu added.

Chapter 550 - Where Are We?

"Though I must say you created a lot of commotion in your breakthrough," Xukong said.

"I did, didn't I?" Lin Mu said with a chuckle.

He knew the gravitational force that had emanated from the earth was not normal and probably had something to do with the Mortal Strengthening scripture.

"Why did the gravity suddenly increase though, senior?" Lin Mu questioned.

"I think this may be due to your natural affinity with the earth element. If it were someone else that reached the fifth level of the Mortal Strengthening scripture, they would not have the same effect.

I also think it was catalyzed due to your body cultivation as well. Since you were refining your spleen as the first treasured organ, it resonated with the earth. Plus, this world likely never had someone who practiced to the five treasures realm, which probably caused it to respond.

Though it was beneficial to you, as it helped you breakthrough in both things at once." Xukong answered.

Lin Mu did not expect that the world itself would have helped him like this. He knew senior Xukong had said, being the world's ordained came with certain benefits, but this was the first time he was actually seeing them.

'But why would it give me benefit when I haven't even fulfilled my end of the bargain? I haven't dealt with the invader at all yet.' Lin Mu thought to himself.

This was another thing that had been hovering at the back of Lin Mu's mind. In all this time, he had gotten no clues to the Invader except for the fact that Gu Yao had come in contact with it and was even infected at one point.

From what Xukong had said, the main body of the invader should be hiding somewhere in the void, and if he wanted to find it, he would have to find its other avatars that were probably spread in the world.

If Lin Mu counted, he knew of multiple avatars that had been killed till now. There was one that was expelled by the Great Slumber bear, one that was erased by Jing Wei and Duan Ke and was in the form of a coyote beast. Then there was the Blight Dust beast which was killed by the disciples of the sect and cleaned up by Duan Ke as well.

Zhou Ye was also infected by the invader, but it was not an actual avatar but rather the fragment from the great slumber beast, so it would not count. The same would be the case for the others that Duan Ke erased in the forest. They were all fragments created by infecting creatures of this world.

Though if what Gu Yao had said was right about the merchant who brought the Great Slumber bear and the invader to this world, then it was likely that the other avatars could be somewhere in the Northern Tribes.

Lin Mu had guessed that the Northern Tribes had asked the merchant to bring in the invader as a trump card to use against the Great Zhou Empire and the sect. He couldn't tell if it was a foolish move or not though, as the invader was not controllable by anyone.

~Sigh~

"I'll just have to persevere... taking one thing at a time is the best I can do for now." Lin Mu muttered to himself.

Having done that, he took out the communication jade slip and tried to contact Wu Hei, but was unable to do so.

"Just as I expected... we are too far. But where?" Lin Mu wondered.

He had no idea where Little Shrubby had run to. Plus since he was still in a deep sleep it was not like he could ask him either.

"May as well take a look from the top..." Lin Mu said before leaving the cave.

He summoned his short sword and flew to the top of the mountain at the base of which the cave was.

"Oh, my... this..." Lin Mu muttered in surprise.

This was not the only mountain that was in the area. In fact, Lin Mu could easily see hundreds of mountains along with a vast forest that extended to the horizon. But that was not the most shocking thing.

The most shocking thing was the thousands of buildings and pavilions that were built along the sides of the peaks of mountains. These mountains were quite far from where Lin Mu was but they looked like small dots. But he was sure that it was a sect... a cultivation sect.

"How far did Little Shrubby exactly run? These trees... they aren't found in the Shuang Qian Kingdom at all... not even that, they aren't from the Northern Lands either." Lin Mu said in a shocked tone.

"Senior, did you see where Little Shrubby went? Got any idea?" Lin Mu questioned, just in case.

"No... after you passed out, even I could abrasively sense anything outside. Plus, since little Shrubby was using the seven beasts burst, the defense formed by it was not something my spirit sense could get through either." Xukong said.

"Only after he reached here and fainted, was I able to see things." Xukong added.

"Hmm... this complicates things..." Lin Mu muttered.

Since it had been over a month, he knew Wu Hei and the rest must be worried about him and were wondering where he went. While their plan had indeed succeeded, it was just one of them. They would still need to do it for the other sects.

"You can try to take a closer look and see what sect that is. If you know which one it is, you will know your position on the map." Xukong suggested.

"Yeah, I'll do that. I'll use the ring's skill just in case. Trespassing in a sect's territory will be problematic." Lin Mu replied before flying towards the mountain where the sect was.

He didn't go to the main part, which was highly populated by the buildings. Rather, he went to the outer mountains with fewer buildings.