

Walker 701

Chapter 701 - Granting A Meeting

The Junior brother looked at the mountain and then at the senior brother.

"Senior brother, should we... ask the man... no, Senior for help?" The junior brother questioned.

But the senior brother didn't answer right away and stayed silent as if thinking about it.

"Senior brother, you've seen how this senior is proficient in the formations. He must be a great formation master. Where else would we find someone that can do all this? Even if we go to your friend in the Long Cloud sect, we have no guarantee that they would be available to do that.

Plus, the time needed to travel back and forth will be more than fifteen days. And even if we manage to convince your friend, I doubt they would be able to set up a tribulation accentuation fomentation array that quickly.

This senior seems like our best choice." The junior brother pleaded.

~Sigh~

"Fine... we will try. But we will not bother him. He has no obligation to help us and seeing his skill and cultivation base, I doubt he is anyone without a background." The senior brother stated.

"Yes. Of course, the final decision about accepting our request is up to him. But I guess we can try." The junior brother replied.

"Alright, let's go and see if he is willing to help us. Don't talk and let me speak first." The senior brother ordered.

The two of them then flew to the base of the mountain and cupped their hands while bowing their heads.

"We two are disciples from the Noon grass sect and couldn't help but notice the senior's great skill in formations. Can the senior please grant us audience?" the senior brother asked in a humble tone.

His voice was normal, yet it managed to reach all across the mountain. While they were doing this, inside the cave of the mountain, something else was happening.

~shua~

A man appeared out of the ground and looked at another man who was standing at the entrance of the cave while gazing out. The man who had appeared was none other than Lin Mu of course, while the other being Jing Luo.

"They took the bait. It actually went far better than expected." Lin Mu spoke.

"Good. Since they are the ones asking us for a request, we will now have an upper hand." Jing Luo replied.

"Should we let them enter?" Lin Mu asked.

"Not so fast... let them wait a few more minutes." Jing Luo replied.

"He hasn't responded yet... is he in seclusion already?" The junior brother asked his senior brother.

"Hmm... it has been an hour since he entered it. I doubt he would start this fast as he would need to set up more things inside the abode." The senior brother replied.

"Then is he perhaps ignoring us?" The junior brother questioned.

"That could be possible. He doesn't really have an obligation to help us, anyway." The senior brother answered.

"Even the name of our sect doesn't help this..." The junior brother replied.

"Our sect has always been low key and prefers to stay out of conflicts. This also includes any debts and favors. It's usual for other cultivators to not pay much attention to us at this point.

Some normal cultivators might, due to our identity as one of the top sects, but those who know more will probably not care much about it. Plus, this senior definitely has a much higher identity than us." The senior brother explained.

Hearing this, the junior brother nodded his head.

"Now that I think of it... doesn't he look younger than us?" The junior brother compared.

"That's another way to confirm that he may actually have a higher rank than us. Even if we are the direct disciples of the sect master, there are many geniuses out there in the world. This is one of the things master, wants you to learn." The senior brother replied.

Despite hearing his senior brother's words, the junior brother couldn't help but feel a tinge of envy from comparing himself to the senior who had made the formation array. To him, the beefy man not only had a higher cultivation base than him and his senior brother, but was also of a younger age.

The two of them looked like they were in their late forties right now, while the beefy man looked to be in his late thirties. While they couldn't confirm his actual age just by this, before one reached the Adult Soul stage of the nascent soul realm, using appearance to judge was still enough.

The junior brother himself was over two hundred years old, while his senior brother was twice as old as that at the age of over four hundred.

Just as the two of them were about to give up, they heard a deep voice come from the mountain.

"Enter!" The voice stated.

The eyes of the junior brother lit up after hearing this, and he looked at the senior brother.

"Seems like we are in luck." The senior brother said. "Let's enter. Best not to keep him waiting."

The two of them then approached the mountain and saw the barrier materialize in front of them. A small door opened up for them and they were able to enter it. Upon entering, they could see the

mountain change slightly and the cave which had disappeared was now visible again on the mountainside.

The two of them quickly reached the cave and came to a stop there.

"Senior, may we enter?" the senior brother asked in a polite tone while cupping his hand. His junior brother followed his lead and did the same.

"Come in," Jing Luo said from the inside.

"Thank you senior." The senior brother said and took a step in while his junior followed.

Upon entering, they could see the completely different look of the cave. There were several sets of furniture that had been arranged in a simple, yet elegant manner.

Seeing this, the two felt a bit better since they realized that they weren't being ignored, just that the senior was busy.

Chapter 702 - Hua San And Hua Wu

The two brothers saw Jing Luo sitting at a table while working on something. There were a few components lying around that they couldn't fully identify. The only thing they could tell was that they were of a high quality from the spirit Qi fluctuation that was coming from there.

"Thank you for giving us the chance to talk to you senior." The senior brother spoke.

"Mmmhmm... so who are you two?" Jing Luo questioned.

"I am Hua San and this is my fifth junior brother, Hua Wu. Both of us are direct disciples under sect master Hua of the Noon Grass Sect." The Hua San introduced.

"You took up his surname? He made you his legacy disciples?" Jing Luo asked, finding their names to be same.

"Indeed, senior. All of us were orphans before the sect master took us in from the secular world. We take up his surname to show our eternal gratitude. Our master is our father as well." Hua San answered.

"I see... seems like Sect Master Hua Dan had far more disciples than I thought... I've only ever seen his first disciple named Yi and the second disciple named Er." Jing Luo replied.

"You know eldest senior brother and senior sister?" Hua Wu was surprised.

"Hmmm, I've never met them but I believe my clan did have some interactions a few hundred years ago." Jing Luo spoke, elevating his status in the minds of the two.

"I see..." Hua San muttered, wondering if they had really lucked out today that they met an acquaintance of their master.

"May we know the name of senior?" Hua San questioned.

"I am Jing Luo... Heir of the Jing clan." Jing Luo answered.

"Jing Clan...?" Hua Wu muttered and tried to recall if he could remember the clan.

"THE JING CLAN!?" Hua San was shocked.

"If you mean the great weaponsmith Jing clan, then yes." Jing Luo confirmed.

"This... I never knew..." Hua San said, finding it hard to speak.

Hua Er, seeing his senior brother like this, was also quite surprised. He had not heard of the Jing clan and didn't know their significance. But from his senior brother's tone, he could tell that it was very important.

Hua Er felt curious and wanted to ask about the Jing clan, but knew that doing so while Jing Luo was here might be a bit rude to him. Thus, he kept his silence and decided to ask him later when they were alone.

While Hua San was surprised, Jing Luo was surprised as well. He had not expected that there would still be someone that remembered his clan. Till now they had actually tried to inquire and gather information about the Jing clan, but all of it had come empty.

Even Lin Mu had searched for information on the Jing clan in the Tri cauldron peony sect and the Hong Lin kingdom. He was unable to find the information in either of the places. Just from this, Lin Mu assumed that the information about the Jing clan was far more hidden than they had thought.

Jing Luo didn't know how far the empire had gone in their attempt but knew that the sects must have had a hand in this obviously.

'If someone from the Noon Grass sect knows about my clan, then it means that the Noon Grass sect still maintained records about our clan. If they were involved in the extermination back then, they would have erased all of them.' Jing Luo thought to himself.

He felt like they now had a sect that can be somewhat trusted, even if it was not fully assured and could change any moment, depending on whether Gu Yao manages to take control of others.

~huh~

Jing Luo took a deep breath, pushing aside these thoughts for now. He needed to focus on the task at hand and thus decided to talk.

"So what is it that you wanted to talk about?" Jing Luo questioned.

"Ah yes! We are in a little bit of a problem senior." Hua San replied.

"What kind of a problem?" Jing Luo asked.

"It's like this..." Hua San then started to explain the complication that they had.

He told Jing Luo about their mission and why they came to Hong Lin kingdom and what the king wants. While the information about the King breaking through was confidential, he didn't think it was necessary to hide it from Jing Luo.

After ten minutes, Hua San was finally done speaking, leaving Jing Luo to continue.

"Hmm... so you want someone to make a tribulation attenuation formation for you, so that the king can use it so that you can get the thousand year old Hong Lin wood." Jing Luo summarized.

"Yes senior." Hua San nodded his head.

"If I decided to help, what do I get?" Jing Luo asked.

"Anything within my capabilities, I shall offer senior." Hua San replied hurriedly.

"I'll assist as well." Hua Wu added, not wanting to miss out.

"Hmm... I do need your help with something if you are willing to listen to a problem I have." Jing Luo said.

"Of course! Please do tell senior." Hua San replied.

"Very well... this thing is a bit sensitive and it would be better if you don't let others know about it... for your own safety as well." Jing Luo said, making Hua San furrow his brows.

A serious expression appeared on Hua Wu's face as well and the two disciples decided to listen on.

Jing Luo then explained to them about the threat about Gu Yao and how he has been controlling the sects and even the people from the imperial court. He told them about the truth behind the Zither wind alliance and the northern tribes.

It took Jing Luo two hours to explain it all and the two disciples were shaken after hearing all this.

"No wonder master said not to interact with those from the sects asking for an alliance..." Hua San muttered in shock.

Chapter 703 - Agreement With The Two Disciples

Hearing that the sect master of the Noon Grass sect was wary about the actions of the other top sect, Jing Luo was a bit intrigued.

"Sect Master Hua knows about this?" Jing Luo asked.

"I don't exactly know how much he knows, as even we don't know. All that he told us before leaving was to not get involved with the sects that are asking us to join their alliances and to keep away from them.

I never knew there was such a problem behind it." Hua San replied.

"I see... Sect master Hua certainly has a great foresight to be able to see the problems even when the top three sects could not." Jing Luo said with a sigh.

Hua San and Hua Wu didn't speak and waited for Jing Luo to continue.

"Alright... I can help you guys out as long as you can contact sect master Hua and tell him about Gu Yao. You should be able to tell that this matter involves the entire world and can lead to a lot of people dying." Jing Luo stated.

"Of course, senior. This can actually be considered a favor from you to us. By telling us this, you may have just saved our sect perhaps." San Hua spoke.

"We shall certainly inform master about this. Currently, we can't contact him since we are too far from the set, but once we return we shall definitely do so." Hua Wu added.

"Ah, yes. You do not have a high grade communication jade slip, do you?" Jing Luo questioned.

"Yes, we don't. I think in the entire sect, only the supreme elder and master have one. They are far too rare for us to be able to get one." Hua San said with a little embarrassment.

"Well then, here you go." Jing Luo said before handing two jade slips to the disciples.

"Huh? High grade communication Jade Slips!?" The two disciples were shocked upon seeing this.

They had never expected that they would just get one like this. And it was not just a single one, but two, one for each of them. One must know that even if a communication jade slip was also a spirit tool and that it would not be that hard for them to get a high grade spirit tool from the sect, jade slips were still hard to make.

The higher the grade, the more difficult it was to make them. But there was also the matter of the components required for it; they were simply far too difficult to find and expensive to use since they could be destroyed if the production failed.

This was the reason why high grade communication jade slips were even rarer than the other high grade spirit tools and weapons.

As for peak grade communication jade slips?

It was said that a peak grade communication jade slip would work no matter where someone was in the world.

"My communication jade slip is linked to those two, so once you link that with your masters, we will be able to communicate." Jing Luo spoke.

"We shall do that then, senior." Hua San replied.

"Before I get to making the tribulation attenuation formation though, there is one more person you should meet." Jing Luo spoke.

"Oh? Who is it?" Hua San asked.

Originally, Lin Mu and Jing Luo had wanted to talk a bit more with the two disciples and thought that they would need to do a lot more convincing. But everything had gone much easier and there was no need for Lin Mu to come in with his planned act at all.

And since that was out of the way, Lin Mu had no chance to appear and was still listening to the entire thing while hidden in the walls. Of course, he couldn't appear directly out of the walls upon being called, as it would seem inappropriate and work against the act they had done till now.

Thus, Lin Mu waited for Jing Luo to contact him using the communication jade slip.

The two disciples looked outside the cave as they suddenly felt a presence outside. There were spirit Qi fluctuations coming from there and they could tell that they were at the Nascent soul realm as well.

~gulp~

Finally, they saw a handsome man enter the cave. He was far younger than them and looked to be barely twenty years old. But the spirit Qi fluctuations coming from his body showed that he was no less powerful than Jing Luo here.

"Greetings senior!" The two of them hurriedly cupped their hands, realizing that it was another strong person.

"Greetings, I am Lin Mu." He introduced himself.

"Come sit. We'll talk for a bit." Jing Luo said and quickly explained the situation to him.

Even though Lin Mu knew about it already, they needed to do so to keep up the act. They were too far in and could not break it anymore. Thankfully, Jing Luo was able to wind it up in just five minutes.

"I see... well, I'm in agreement with everything and am thankful that you two are willing to talk to the sect master on our behalf." Lin Mu spoke.

"It is fine, senior Lin Mu. We shall do our best." Hua San said.

"Though, you two are also looking for Thousand year old Hong Lin trees like us." Lin Mu spoke. "I guess we can join up in finding them." He added.

"Seniors are looking for them too? Do you want the wood as well?" Hua Wu questioned.

"Well... Jing Luo wants the sap of thousand year old Hong Lin trees, but I just want the living trees themselves." Lin Mu answered.

"Hmm... we tried searching but couldn't really come up with any clues other than asking the king's chief adviser. While they do have the thousand year old Hong Lin wood in their reserve storage, I don't know if it is enough." Hua San spoke.

"I know. That's why I have been searching for them myself as well.." Lin Mu replied.

Chapter 704 - Clarifications

Hearing that Lin Mu and Jing Luo were looking for thousand year old Hong Lin wood as well, the two disciples were surprised. They even felt that they might have a little bit of a competition when it came to that now.

"Senior wants thousand year old Hong Lin Wood as well? Why?" Hua San questioned.

"Well, not thousand year old Hong Lin Wood itself. Jing Luo needs the sap of thousand year old Hong Lin trees, while I need the actual living tree." Lin Mu explained.

"Ah, I see." Hua San said, feeling a bit relieved.

He thought at least this way they wouldn't have a complete clash.

"Though getting thousand year old Hong Lin tree sap would be difficult. It can only be extracted when the tree is alive and even then it is quite hard to keep for long periods of time.

I don't think even the Hong Lin kingdom has any in storage." Hua San spoke.

"Yeah, I guessed that. That's why we prefer finding an actual living tree." Lin Mu replied.

"Hmm.. But why does senior need a living tree? Are you going to make something from it as well?" Hua San asked.

"I don't want it for making anything. Rather, I want it for a cultivation technique I practice." Lin Wu informed.

"Oh? That's something I didn't know was possible." Hua San spoke, feeling truly surprised.

"Are there even cultivation techniques that use it? What are they even used for?" Hua Wu asked.

"Well, it's a fire elemental cultivation technique and as you may know the Hong Lin trees are abundant in fire attribute spirit Qi. While I can use hundred year old Hong Lin trees as well, as my technique progresses further, I'll need at least one thousand year old Hong Lin tree to complete it." Lin Mu explained.

He didn't really feel uncomfortable telling them about this, since they couldn't really do much with it. Even if they knew that it was a body cultivating technique, they would be helpless as they would have to first complete all thirteen stages of the body tempering realm and obtain a Xiantian physique before they could even begin with the Five Treasures realm.

When the first king of the Hong Lin empire made their technique, he had only made it as a body tempering realm technique, which switched to a normal Qi cultivation technique when one reached the eighth stage of the body tempering realm.

This same technique would allow them to absorb spirit Qi from the trees and boost their speed of cultivation. This was a fire element spirit Qi cultivation technique and would allow the cultivator to get fire elemental spirit Qi for use.

Lin Mu though, could not use the spirit Qi aspect of this technique since he didn't cultivate spirit Qi directly using a cultivation technique. Senior Xukong had told him to continue following the primordial path, and that was what he was doing.

Lin Mu absorbed spirit Qi naturally with the pathways he had learned himself and they were the most appropriate for him. Naturally, he would not switch to a cultivation technique that was inferior and had a slower speed.

Thankfully, Lin Mu was merely using it for five treasures realm cultivation and didn't really care for the spirit Qi aspect.

"Hopefully we are able to find them so senior can practice his cultivation technique." Hua Wu stated.

"Mmhm... I think if we look long enough we will find it." Lin Mu said.

This was true since it was only a matter of time till they found a thousand year old Hong Lin tree. With Little Shrubby manually looking around at his speed, it was quite likely for them to find it.

If needed, Little Shrubby could literally scan every inch of the Hong Lin forest to find some thousand year old Hong Lin trees. Lin Mu had currently refined 43% of his heart and needed a lot more before he could reach the peak.

He knew that eventually, he would need a Thousand year old Hong Lin tree as every use of a hundred year old Hong Lin tree, lesser the amount of vital essence that was obtained by him.

While the normal Hong Lin trees won't even make a difference. The normal Hong Lin trees that were younger than hundred years were only useful for cultivators that were in the Body tempering realm.

"By the way, have you two chosen a location for the tribulation attenuation platform, or perhaps the king has chosen one?" Jing Luo questioned.

"No, he hasn't specified anything. They only told us that they want one. I reckon they should be fine with any place as long as it has a tribulation attenuation platform. They can't really be choosy with the location since even a single use Tribulation attenuation platform has very specific requirements." Hua San answered.

"I see..." Jing Luo muttered, not telling them that he could make one essentially anywhere to save him some work.

"How about this mountain itself?" Jing Luo asked after thinking for a bit.

"It would actually be quite good!" Hua San said. "Not only does senior have the other illusory formations set up, the location is also distant enough that the entire session should be a bit private."

"Indeed. I'll get to working then. You guys can talk with Lin Mu and do other things." Jing Luo replied.

"Oh yeah! Speaking of the king, we would like to meet him as well." Lin Mu spoke.

"Meet the king?" Hua San asked.

"Why would you want that?" Hua Wu felt a bit confused.

The two of them thought that Lin Mu and Jing Luo were intentionally concealing themselves from the king and that's why they were here so far away.

"For the same reason that I wanted to talk with Sect master Hua... Gu Yao. We'd like to inform them and see if they are willing to join our cause. Plus... I'd like to clarify some things with them as well.." Lin Mu explained.

Chapter 705 - Back To The Hong Lin Capital

Having heard Lin Mu's words, Hua San and Hua Wu couldn't really reject them. They were reasonable requests and besides, if Lin Mu and Jing Luo were to go to the royal palace, they would be willingly given an audience with a king.

Their cultivation base gave them the authority to ask for such a thing. Though the only reason why Lin Mu hadn't done, that was because he was unsure if Gu Yao had his spies here as well.

But now that he knew about the situation of the Noon Grass sect and how they have been careful since the start, they reckoned it would be fine. Plus, Lin Mu himself had spied on their records and could tell that the Hong Lin kingdom was still relatively safe.

Even though Lin Mu had some doubts, he felt a bit more confident in himself that he would be able to resolve any problem that came with his cultivation base. He was no longer the weak Qi refining realm cultivator that had barely been able to stand against Gu Yao; he was now an Adolescent Soul stage Nascent Soul realm cultivator.

Lin Mu also had the confidence that he would be able to fight Gu Yao in an open fight and even defeat them. But that was the very problem; Gu Yao would never do this unless it was the final option he had.

The old man liked to scheme and control others, as could be seen from the skills he used. This was why he was someone even more dangerous than someone who was at the Dao Treading realm.

After all, Gu Yao himself had at least one cultivator that was at the Dao Treading realm in his control and multiple Dao shell realm and Nascent soul realm cultivators.

So far, Lin Mu hadn't felt the presence of anyone being controlled in this kingdom. He had felt the full aura of Gu Yao and the effect his human controlling blood curse had. At first, Lin Mu couldn't really differentiate them.

But now that he had reached the Nascent Soul realm, his sensitivity had increased and he was able to tell the difference. In fact, any Nascent Soul realm cultivator would be able to do the same for granted they had felt the aura of Gu Yao himself.

This was also the reason why he hid himself somewhere and refused to come out, using others to do his bidding instead. This way, no one would see him and sense his aura, thus making it close to impossible for others to figure out others were being controlled.

Lin Mu reckoned other than him, only Wu Hei should be able to do this. After all, the man was also under the control of Gu Yao temporarily, but had managed to break free due to his bloodline and the cultivation technique.

"Hmm... if senior Lin Mu wants a meeting with the King we can ask him right away. After all, Senior Jing Luo is setting up the tribulation attenuation platform and this would be something the king and his adviser would be happy to hear." Hua San stated.

"Very well then. I guess we can head out now." Lin Mu spoke.

"Sure senior." Hua San replied.

"Contact me if anything happens. I'll get to work in the meantime." Jing Luo added.

"Alright." Lin Mu said and the three men flew away.

~shua~

The two men had a bit of a hard time catching up to Lin Mu's speed, thus Lin Mu had to intentionally slow down.

'If I really went at my full speed using blink, they won't even be able to see me at that point...' Lin Mu thought to himself.

The comparison was enough to make him a bit happy, as it meant that he would be able to stand his ground against even stronger cultivators or multiple weaker cultivators with ease.

The three men flew for about an hour before they finally reached the Hong Lin Kingdom's capital.

"Let's walk from here. Better to not attract extra attention." Hua San said.

"Is that fine with you, senior?" Hua Wu asked.

Some cultivators would find it offensive that they needed to walk like commoners and thus they thought it was appropriate to ask.

"Oh yes. I am of the same thought as you. It's better to be low key for now." Lin Mu replied.

Hua San found Lin Mu to be even better now that he heard this, and Lin Mu's image in his heart rose up by a bit. The three men made their way through the city, weaving through crowds of people.

"Is it just me or are there a lot more people out today?" Lin Mu questioned.

Hua San furrowed his brows and looked around, finding it to be really more crowded.

"It does seem to be more crowded than before..." Hua San replied.

"AH! I remember, it's nearly the time for the Autumn festival!" Hua Wu suddenly spoke.

"It is?" Lin Mu asked.

"Yes. While many kingdoms have the Autumn festival, it is especially more important in the Hong Lin kingdom. Since Autumn signifies the end of summer and the change in weather to winter, it also signifies the fall of the fire element.

Since the Hong Lin kingdom reveres Hong Lin trees, they bid farewell to fire at the end of Autumn. Plus the leaves of Hong Lin trees that are naturally red become even more vibrant in Autumn before they start to fall." Hua Wu explained.

"I see..." Lin Mu nodded his head. "Looks like you researched quite a bit before coming here." Lin Mu added.

"Indeed, it is my first time leaving the sect in thirty years. Master prohibited me from leaving the sect unless I reached the Nascent Soul realm." Hua Wu explained.

Hearing the stringent requirement, Lin Mu was a bit astounded.

'Huh... didn't know sect would put such restrictions on their disciples.' Lin Mu thought to himself.

"Oh, there are far more than just these. You will see many peculiar conditions later on..." Xukong chimed in.

Chapter 706 - Directly Entering The Palace

While Lin Mu had seen some special requirements that cultivation sects had on their disciples in the memoirs of the Lost immortal, they were mostly to do with their cultivation talent.

There were none that Lin Mu had come across that wanted for their disciples to stay cooped up in the sect till they reached a specific cultivation base. He wondered what other condition they could put on them without it becoming problematic.

"I see, senior. I'll keep that in mind for future reference... if it ever comes to use." Lin Mu said before continuing ahead.

He looked at Hua Wu and spoke, "how long does this festival last?"

"The Autumn festival lasts for about a week. This is the last week of winter and seeing as it has started today, it will last for six more days till the beginning of the next month." Hua Wu answered.

"That's long enough for a festival. Though since there aren't really proper winters and autumn here in the south central area of the continent, I guess it isn't really as restricted by climate." Lin Mu replied.

He remembered the harsh winters of the north and how the people in the Northern Town had to struggle with food all the time. The winters would lay several feet thick layer of snow on the doorsteps of people sometimes.

There were even a few years when the snow had been two meters deep, which was enough to basically bury most of the houses. That was said to be one of the worst winters in the past few centuries and had happened about two hundred years ago.

A lot of people had died at that time, though the help was also sent from the Shuang Qian kingdom's capital at that time. But the event was still terrifying enough for many generations of people to know it by heart.

When Lin Mu was just five years old, his mother had told him about the dangers of winter and how to prepare for it. He knew what things needed to be done absolutely and which things could be kept off for later.

~Sigh~

'The past is in the past... the present is important and the future is far...' Lin Mu said to himself in his mind.

The three men weaved through the crowds of people as they observed the various new goods that were being sold along with new food items that Lin Mu had not seen before.

"Oh? They added even more new things for me to buy," Lin Mu said with surprise.

Hua San and Hua Wu ignored the words of Lin Mu as they thought that he was just talking about something general. If they knew Lin Mu was talking about food, they would definitely be astounded.

It took them almost an hour to reach the outermost wall of the central district. They were stopped by the guards there, but managed to enter quickly just by showing their identity as a cultivator.

For the second ring, the two disciples showed the new entry pass that was given by the king's uncle to them and entered as well. They had originally thought that they might need to let Lin Mu wait while they went and talked with the king, but they didn't have to.

The guards easily allowed the two disciples in along with Lin Mu, as well. This was mostly because of the specification on the entry pass. It stated that it allowed entry to Nascent soul realm cultivators but not how many nascent soul realm cultivators.

And so, when the guard looked at it, while they were surprised, they still let Lin Mu enter with the two men. Of course, this was not a free method for a ground of Nascent soul realms cultivators to enter since the guards would probably become suspicious when more than the entire city's number of Nascent soul realm cultivators appear at the doorstep.

The other two gates were also crossed with the same method and they got the final entry to the place. Of course to Lin Mu, this was a rather long and winded method, but due to the official nature of this visit, he had to keep up with the etiquette.

Otherwise, he would have just entered using phase from the ground. The formation array around the palace was as good as paper to him and he could freely enter it without being detected now.

Even in the palace, the guards seem to recognize the two of them and let them enter. Though they did stare at Lin Mu for a tad bit longer than normal when they saw him. But this time Lin Mu had his cultivation revealed slightly.

While they were unable to tell what stage he was at, they could very well tell that he was at the Nascent Soul realm just like the others. Just from this, they knew he was not anyone common.

Normally they should have become concerned with the appearance of an unknown Nascent Soul realm cultivator inside the royal place since it could be a threat to the life of the king. They weren't as much because of the other two.

They had gotten specific instructions that those two were honorable guests of the king and were not to be offended in any way. And since Lin Mu was accompanying them, they expected that prohibiting Lin Mu might offend the other two, which might end up causing them problems.

They could only hope that Lin Mu was not here to cause trouble. Though they did escort them to the courtroom of the royal palace. This was to both keep an eye on Lin Mu's behavior and also to serve as cannon fodder while the King got the time to react if Lin Mu turned out to be an enemy.

All of these were general tactics that they had learned over the years and it had served handy quite a few times till now.. But at the doors of the courtroom, Lin Mu had to halt.

Chapter 707 - Meeting King Hong

"Pardon me seniors, but the presence of any additional guests needs to be informed to the King." The guards that were standing outside the courtroom blocked their path.

Hua Wu furrowed his brows, but Hua San took the lead.

"That is fine, we shall go talk with the king first and then invite senior in." Hua San spoke.

"That's fine with me. I'll wait here." Lin Mu replied.

The guards also nodded to this and watched as Hua San and Hua Wu entered the courtroom.

~Rumble~

The large doors of the royal court made a slightly high sound that spread throughout the entire courtroom. One could tell that the doors were not normal and were made from some high quality materials.

They were also heavy and sturdy, able to withstand attacks of Core condensation realm cultivators and even Nascent soul realm cultivator if push came to shove. Of course to Lin Mu, this might be nothing, since he could use skills to get in. He still wanted to get in through the front part to show sincerity.

The door closed the moment Hua San and Hua Wu entered the courtroom and no sounds could be heard coming from inside there. The guards who were standing near Lin Mu were sweating in their boots.

They didn't know what would the king be talking about to them and whether this was even appropriate.

Usually, the common public ended up waiting several weeks, if not months, to get a chance to talk to the King, but now Lin Mu was just getting an express pass.

Lin Mu of course, didn't just stay still there and used his spirit sense to probe the room. And just as he had expected, the room was covered in a separate layer of formations that protected the king and prevented spirit senses from coming closer.

"Oh? They are indeed talking to the king alright. And even the king's uncle is here already." Lin Mu muttered to himself upon seeing the scene inside the royal court.

While Lin Mu couldn't hear what they were saying, he could kind of guess based on their lip movement and body postures.

Overall the expression of Hua San and Hua Wu were normal throughout the short conversation, but those of the king and his uncles were changing. At first, they were surprised, then became calm and when they heard the words of the two disciples, they became even more shocked.

The King gestured them to stop with his hand and said something to them while pointing to the door.

"Ah, seems like this is it for my turn..." Lin Mu muttered to himself.

~Rumble~

The door of the royal court opened up again, but this time it was opened by Hua San and Hua Wu.

"The king is calling senior in," Hua San informed.

"Very well. It won't be good to leave him waiting." Lin Mu said and walked into the court under the eyes of several guards.

Only when Lin Mu had fully entered the royal court did they take breaths of relief. To them, if Lin Mu were to be a bad person who came to kill the king, they would have a very hard time battling him.

At most, they might serve as cannon fodder while the king himself escapes. Though they also recalled that there was the king's advisor and also uncle waiting to help him out in case of trouble.

"Welcome to the royal court of the Hong Lin kingdom," The king's uncle spoke.

Lin Mu took a look at the man and also the king. While the king had a normal expression, Lin Mu could see the fine tremors in his body.

'Hmm... while he is a bit unnerved, he is still observing.' Lin Mu thought to himself.

And while Lin Wu was observing them, the king was doing the same.

'While they already said that the help they got was stronger than them, I didn't expect it to be someone at such a high cultivation base...' The king thought to himself.

As a king, he couldn't let his weaker emotions be shown to the public, lest it just becomes more problematic.

"It is nice to meet his majesty, Hong Qiqiang. I am Lin Mu." He introduced himself.

The king looked at Lin Mu deeply and took a breath himself before speaking.

"So senior's name is Lin Mu. It is an honor to meet you." The King also said with a bit more respect than others.

He could tell that Lin Mu was stronger just from looking at him, as the pressure and aura radiating off him were on a completely different level.

And while the king wondered about Lin Mu's strength, his uncle focused on the name.

'Lin Mu? That seems familiar...' The king's uncle thought.

"Sect master Hua's two disciples say that they have a proposal for us?" The King questioned.

"Indeed, King Hong. I along with my other companion are willing to help the king safely breakthrough to the Nascent Soul realm. We will be getting the tribulation attenuation platform ready for you." Lin Mu answered.

Hearing the words directly from Lin Mu's lips, the king and his uncles were astounded to say the least. While they had indeed asked for help from Hua San and Hua Wu, they had not expected it to come this quick.

"King Hong doesn't need to worry now. Senior Jing Luo is highly proficient in formations and will be able to set up the platform in just a few days." Hua Wu chimed in.

The king furrowed his brows and looked at his uncle.

"Since it is you two vouching for brother Lin Mu, I guess I can believe it." The king's uncle stated.

"Fear not. You will get to see the tribulation attenuation platform with your own two eyes and can actually confirm that it works." Lin Mu said. "Besides... from what I can tell, King Hong still has about twenty three days till the time for his heavenly tribulation arrives.." Lin Mu stated, surprising the king and his uncle as well.

Chapter 708 - Hard To Believe

Hearing his own expected time of heavenly tribulation, King Hong was shocked. Usually, this was information that only the person who is about to undergo a heavenly tribulation should be able to know.

If it was to be anyone else judging, they would have to be at a very high cultivation level to be able to do so since it was not simple. Heavenly tribulation was related to the restrictions of the heavens, and it was not something anyone could just casually pry into.

'Even I didn't know it was going to be 23 days from now a week ago... how did he know it so easily?' King Hong wondered.

The king's uncle was stunned as well and didn't know what to think of it.

'This man is not simple...' was all he could think for now.

"*Ahem*~ what is it that brother Lin Mu wanted to talk to us about more? The two brothers mentioned it. I heard this will be the compensation you want from us instead of anything material?" The king's uncle asked.

"Yes, that part... I believe you may already know about me." Lin Mu said.

"Know about you?" The King furrowed his brows, and the uncle did this as well.

"Your name is relatively common, so it's hard to tell..." The King's uncle said, but after a few seconds his brows were raised.

"No, wait... there is only one Lin Mu that comes to mind in the recent times... the one wanted by the sects and the empire." The king's uncle said.

"Ahah! Uncle, you jest. It's surely not that." The king said upon hearing this for the fear that they might offend Lin Mu.

He was here to offer them help, and they were certainly not going to deny it by just saying things casually.

"No, Adviser Liu is actually right. That is indeed me." Lin Mu admitted.

"This!" The king's eyes went wide and so did his uncles.

They didn't expect it to truly be like this. According to the general thinking, no one would admit them being Lin Mu like this, even when they weren't actually Lin Mu and were just joking. Doing something like that would be problematic and would end up with them in the hands of law.

"How can this be? No... you are surely joking. I've seen the portrait of Lin Mu that they sent out. You look nothing like that. The original Lin Mu disguised as a young boy but was actually an old cultivator." The king's adviser replied.

"Oh, that's one of the least problematic things they made up about me." Lin Mu stated.

It was now that the two disciples thought they should speak up.

"There is a lot more hidden than meets the eye King Hong, Adviser Liu. Senior Lin Mu is telling the truth and even our sect has had our doubts about all that has been happening recently." Hua San stated.

"Indeed. Please hear out senior Lin Mu and then you can decide on your own." Hua Wu added.

Hearing the two disciples also pleading on Lin Mu's behalf, the king still felt doubtful, but knew that it was worth listening to it at the very least.

"Alright, please go ahead and explain to us." The King finally said.

The King's uncle also decided to hold his tongue and decided to listen in.

"Very well..." Lin Mu said before explaining the entire series of events from the start while omitting things that should not be said, of course. Two entire hours passed by and the king and the adviser listened closely.

Learning more about Gu Yao and his ability to control others made them shiver involuntarily. To them, Gu Yao being able to control the Zither Wind sect and the entire alliance meant that they were mere fishes on a chopping block if Gu Yao truly decided to target them.

When Lin Mu was finally finished, the king and his uncle took Deep breaths. This time though, the first one to speak was the king's uncle.

"How can we truly believe you? You must understand what you are saying goes against all that the top sects and the empire are saying." Adviser Liu spoke.

"I know... and that is exactly why Gu Yao's plan is incredibly nefarious. He is making the sects and empire target each other while the Northern Tribes take this opportunity to infiltrate the empire secretly.

In the months that I've been investigating this now, I have seen signs of Gu Yao's interference in many places, but yet I haven't seen the Northern tribe's people. This only makes me wonder where exactly they are and what they have in plan.

But I can tell one thing, if they are hidden for this long and are not acting, they must be waiting for the right opportunity. Perhaps when Gu Yao has the control over most of the powers of the world, they might appear and snuff out the resistance from the remaining.

Now it is up to you whether you want to keep your free will or become the pawns of Gu Yao as well." Lin Mu explained.

Silence descended in the room for about five minutes, in which no one spoke. Unlike the two disciples who had seen the undercurrents of the events happening through the lens of their sect, the King and his adviser didn't have access to information such as what Lin Mu had brought forward.

In fact, they didn't even know the proper history of the continent and about the existence of the Jing clan, and how they were once one of the strongest powers of the world.

Lin Mu was observing the two the entire time and realized that they weren't fully believing him even now.

"Seeing as how Gu Yao works, I'm pretty sure there is already someone in your kingdom's higher ups that are being controlled as well." Lin Mu stated.

Hearing this adviser Liu furrowed his brows and spoke, "that is a tall assumption to make brother Lin Mu."

Chapter 709 - Doubts Over Lin Mu

Accusations as what Lin Mu had made could not be taken lightly and if were taken as false, could bring a lot of problems. But the same could be said if what Lin Mu said turned out to be true.

It would mean that the Hong Lin kingdom was already compromised and perhaps puppets, in the hands of a second party. It was not a good feeling for a king to experience and could even be said to be a bit humiliating.

"What if I can prove it?" Lin Mu asked.

"Hmm... but didn't you say that the people being controlled by Gu Yao couldn't be differentiated? If they were, the top sects should have been able to tell something was wrong, shouldn't they?" Adviser Liu questioned.

"Of course, that is true for most people. In order to be able to tell if someone is being controlled, you would have to know the source aura of the Human Controlling Blood curse. And this source aura could only come from none other than Gu Yao.

Now if no one has seen the man, they would be unable to tell if someone they meet is being controlled by Gu Yao or not, since they would have no standard to match it with. But I've personally seen and fought Gu Yao before.

There is also the additional restriction that one needs to be in the Nascent soul realm to be able to sense it as well. I admit I was unable to do this back when I was at the core condensation realm but now I can." Lin Mu answered.

The king thought for a bit before speaking again.

"Let's say for argument's sake, I believe you and your words. Who do you think is being controlled in my kingdom and how would you prove it?" The King questioned.

"Before I met you today, I did some investigations on my own." Lin Mu said, making up an excuse.

He had of course, done them, but it was different from normal. He had actually spied on them. He couldn't tell the king and his adviser that he sneaked into the law enforcement department and looked through their records, and neither could he tell them that he had seen through their repository.

"And the person I have my suspicions about is Minister of Law, Fu Delun." Lin Mu stated.

"Fu Delun?! That's impossible." Adviser Liu said outright.

"If you bring him here, I assure you that I'll be able to verify my claims." Lin Mu stated. "And if not... I'll let you arrest me. I'm pretty sure King Hong can activate the formation arrays of the palace at any time." He added.

"Senior! This... you can't do this." Hua San was surprised at the level of risk that Lin Mu was willing to take.

Though he was unaware that Lin Mu wasn't really at any risk right now. There were very few people who could fight Lin Mu now and if he wanted to escape, they would not be able to stop him either.

The king looked at Lin Mu deeply and then turned to his uncle.

"Call minister Fu Delun... let's get to the bottom of it." He ordered.

Adviser Liu seemed to be a bit unconvinced, but he still nodded his head.

"As you wish, your majesty," Adviser Liu stated.

He then took out a communication jade slip and contacted the minister of Law. The man in question was somewhere Lin Mu had not seen yet. Since last time, Lin Mu had not come to the central district, though upon seeing the way how the office of law enforcement was working, he was truly suspicious.

Even in the records of Hei corps that he had found in the repository, Lin Mu had learned that the arrest and hunt were all done under the orders of the Fu Delun. Normally, this would be what the minister would only do for high profile criminals.

But what stood out was the fact that the man had personally gone out of his way to find and capture the 'culprits'. Those were the things written in the records. Lin Mu had not thought much of it at first, but then seeing the state of the poor head of the law enforcement department, Lin Wu wondered if something else was wrong.

He went over the information gathered over and over again and started to make links. He recalled the mismanagement in the law enforcement officers and how the information was a bit misplaced.

This lead him to believe that perhaps all of this was done intentionally. From the memoirs of the Lost immortal, Lin Mu had learned that one of the best ways to defeat a country was to weaken its internal systems first.

No matter how much military power they might have, if their own house was in disarray, there was little they would be able to do. Then, thinking of Gu Yao's methods of working, Lin Mu realized that this is something he would obviously do.

The Hong Lin Kingdom was known for its Hong Lin trees and the more old ones of these were certainly quite useful in several things. Lin Mu reckoned that Gu Yao wanted a part of this too and decided to bring this plan.

Lin Mu even wondered if what Gu Yao did here was thought on the side as a little extra project. Because if he truly wanted to take over this place, it wouldn't even take the man a single day.

'He does want the resources here, but it's not that urgent to him. But if he is doing it right now, it means that he will be needing them in the future. It is best if I can prevent that from ever happening.' This was Lin Mu's conclusion.

Now all that was left was for Lin Mu to wait for Fu Delun to appear and see if he truly was being controlled.. Lin Mu knew that there were better ways he could have gone about this and prepared, but for now, this was all he had and could do.

Chapter 710 - Secret Sabotage

Lin Mu and the rest ended up waiting, or about thirty minutes before Fu Delun actually appeared. Lin Mu could tell that King Hong and Adviser Liu had stern appearances on their faces upon seeing the time required for the man to appear.

Lin Mu looked to the entrance of the empty court and saw the minister of Law appear. The man was about six feet tall and wore the uniform robes of a court official along with his designation, which was imprinted as the crest on his robe 'Minster of Law'.

The man had a long mustache with no beard and had broad eyes. Lin Mu couldn't tell anything from him directly, but the moment he used his spirit sense he knew it... there were traces of the Human Controlling Blood curse on him.

Lin Mu kept his cool though and didn't show any change in expression on his face. He didn't know the details of how Gu Yao communicated with the people he controlled. He knew that he had to verbally give them commands, but the exact methodology over long distances was unknown.

Even the information that Lin Mu got from Wu Hei back then was not fully accurate as Wu Hei's scope of action was reduced to the Shuang Qian Kingdom and thus he never got to come in contact with the more complex operations.

According to the theories Lin Mu, Jing Luo, and senior Xukong had come up with, they were most likely using communication jade slips to do it. And that was exactly what could make it very difficult for them.

If someone was found out that they were working for Gu Yao and managed to send out a message, their entire plan might end up failing due to Gu Yao becoming aware of them and directly acting against them.

Lin Mu certainly didn't want that to happen and already had made a few plans about what to do with people such as those. The first thing Lin Mu did after confirming the fact that the minister was truly controlled by Gu Yao was to see where his communication jade slip was.

Normally, cultivators hung it on their waists, but some also had custom ones made for them, which were in the form of bracelets and pendants. In the case of Fu Delun, Lin Mu quickly spotted it on the left side of his waist.

But this was just one of the communication jade slips. While most cultivators only had one communication jade slip, some of the more affluent ones will keep more than one in case of emergencies.

After all, the problem with keeping communication jade slips on their bodies was that they could break during a battle or get lost. And while communication jade slips were hard in themselves while also having reinforcement formations on them, strong attacks could still break them.

These extra communication jade slips would, of course, be kept in the spatial storage treasures of that cultivator. While they could be of various forms and hid on one's body, to Lin Mu this was the easiest part to control.

Lin Mu easily sensed the two spatial storage treasures the man had on him. One of them was the ring on his left hand, and the other was a pendant hidden underneath his robes.

'Hmm... one low grade spatial storage treasure and one... mid grade one? I doubt even a minister should be able to obtain a mid grade spatial storage treasure... this is definitely suspicious.' Lin Mu thought to himself.

Within three seconds of seeing the minister, Lin Mu had already obtained the facts that were needed for him.

"This might be the best time for you to try out that trick I showed you before. At your skill level, you should be able to execute it... and even if you don't it will still be fine in this situation." Xukong suddenly spoke.

Xukong had actually been watching the entire series of events for the past few hours. He had decided to take a break from cultivating to see how his disciple takes care of the current situation.

Hearing Xukong's words, Lin Mu understood what he was talking about. Lin Mu had a hunch that he would be able to destroy or break spatial storage treasures if he wanted to a long time ago, but he had never actually gotten to do it.

While he could have figured it out on his own at one point, Xukong showed him a faster trick to do the same.

"I understand, senior." Lin Mu said and focused on the two spatial storage tools using his spatial perception.

The first one he targeted was the low grade spatial storage tool, which was none other than the ring Fu Delun was wearing. Then, Lin Mu's spirit sense condensed into a very fine thread before shooting towards the ring.

There, it quickly met with the formations on the spatial storage rings while avoiding alerting the man. The formations Lin Mu was targeting were not the surface one, but the deeper ones that interacted with the space directly.

Usually, these were buried deep within the formation array to protect them, but this also made it difficult for most average cultivators to sense them. Thus, when they got damaged, one would not know until it was too late.

'There!' Lin Mu found the node he wanted and attacked it with his spirit sense.

A wave of spatial fluctuation arose from it and impacted the ring. The formations within the ring subtly changed, but the surface stayed the same.

'Success! Just the second one left now.' Lin Mu thought to himself.

By the time he was done with the ring, Fu Delun had reached the end of the court where Lin Mu and the rest were sitting. Fu Delun had of course, noticed Lin Mu and the other two Nascent Soul realm cultivators and was a bit confused.

He could sense their cultivation bases and was a bit unnerved, but seeing the king sitting there calmly, he didn't panic either.

"To what do I owe this visit, King Hong?" Fu Delun questioned.