

## Walker 721

### Chapter 721 - The Story Of Adviser Chu - II

Lin Mu was stunned by hearing the time for which the old man was stuck there and the struggles he had gone through. Lin Mu compared himself to him and realized that he at least had some people to talk to during the past few years, but Adviser Chu had no one.

He too was blind to the ways of cultivation and had gone through it due to a fortune. But Lin Mu had managed to figure out his own method of cultivation and Adviser Chu had not.

Lin Mu even wondered if the way he figured out his cultivation method could even be replicated or not. Senior Xukong called it the path of the primordial, but Lin Mu didn't know what that exactly meant.

Though according to senior Xukong, this method of cultivation would allow him to have many paths of progress in the future unlike a lot of cultivators that become restricted to a few avenues of growth.

'With the time that Adviser Chu had he should have been able to learn something about his meridians and cultivation base right? Since he was not able to do it then what was it that made me different?' Lin Mu couldn't help but wonder to himself.

Even though he had these questions, he did not ask them and let the old man speak. They didn't know how long he had and it was better to listen to all his words before asking him more..

*~cough~*

The old man lightly coughed and took a few breaths before speaking again.

"A lot of us had heard rumors of the Wandering Sinkhole and how it would take away people never to return them. When people encountered it, they had two options. Either to succumb to greed and enter it, or be scared and run away.

Though there was also the fact that a lot of people fell in it involuntarily since it was hard to spot the Wandering sinkhole. There were a lot of cultivators that seeker it out as well and wanted to learn about its secrets with the hope that there was something powerful in it.

Which from what I could see, wasn't actually false. The wandering sinkhole contains a lot of treasures, spirit herbs, and even spirit stones. Thus, a myriad of cultivators came here to test their luck.

Alas, none of them succeeded. Or perhaps... some did, but the world never found out about it. Of the ones that were unsuccessful I learned about cultivation. The dead were my teachers and I their student.

Upon discovering the tombs, I spent time uncovering them and learning about their secrets. Various tombs contained the various inheritances that the cultivators who entered sinkhole left behind.

I do not know for how many centuries or even thousands of years this had been going on, but an unofficial record of some kind had been made by the survivors of the sinkhole. While they were unable to leave the place, they still learned from their predecessors and wrote down the things they say.

They had hope that perhaps someone would come to rescue them or maybe their information would help someone else in the future. And that information certainly came in handy for me.

Not only did I learn about the ecology of the sinkhole I also learned about cultivation. The cultivation technique I gained was left behind by a nameless cultivator and I had to spend ten years in order to learn it.

And after those ten years, it took me another hundred years to perfect it. By that time, I was already over two hundred and fifty years old. I knew my lifespan would end soon, thus I took that time to make my breakthrough to the Nascent soul realm.

Thirty years passed before I was finally able to complete my breakthrough to the Nascent Soul realm. But even then, my troubles did not end and there was no path to escape in sight.

I spent the rest of the time learning about the sinkhole and the beings that lived inside it. And from that I learned, there was always a bigger fish behind a big fish. I thought I would be strong enough to handle anything once I was in the Nascent Soul realm, but I was foolish.

There were plenty of beasts and plants that were at the Nascent soul realm and even a few that were at the Dao shell realm. I of course, avoided as many fights as I could and continued my escape plan.

It was only when 450 years had passed since my arrival into the sinkhole did I find a path to leave. Once I learned that I waited for the opportune moment, and escaped the sinkhole." Adviser Chu explained.

*~huh~*

The old man took a deep breath and rested for a bit.

"What was it that you used to escape the area?" Lin Mu questioned.

"It was a formation array. Making it was a throw in the dark that I tried and it ended up working." Adviser Chu answered.

"I see... but then why didn't you speak of your experiences in the Sinkhole?" Lin Mu questioned.

If it were him, he would probably learn about everything there and give the answer to the juniors in the world.

*~Sigh~*

Hearing this, the old man sighed to himself.

"I have seen the sinkhole... while there is fortune there, it is a mere trap. I did not want the juniors of this world to be tainted and thus I never revealed it to the world. All I wanted to do after escaping it was to meet my family.

Alas! They had long since perished, after all, there are no mortals that lived as long as the cultivators. I had gained increased longevity and didn't even get to share that with my family.

Then the King noticed me and offered me a position after hearing my situation.

A person like me was very useful for the king and thus I was made an Adviser." Adviser Chu explained.

**Chapter 722 - Three Routes Of Entry And Exit**

Hearing the story of the old man, Lin Mu was intrigued. Yet there were questions that were still unanswered.

"Adviser Chu, how can we find the Wandering Sinkhole? And if we do enter it, what is the method to get out of it? We also want to know where a thousand year old Hong Lin tree can be found within it." Lin Mi shot off a series of questions.

"Ahah! A bit impatient, I see. Well... young men like you must have drive..." Adviser Chu chuckled.

"But I fear I won't be able to tell you about it. Not because I don't know, but rather because I don't want other people to succumb to the greed and get trapped there." Adviser Chu spoke, shocking the others.

"Please Adviser Chu, tell us so that we may save our kingdom." King Hong pleaded.

"Save the kingdom? What happened?" Adviser Chu was now worried as well.

"Well... how to begin this. But..." King Hong and adviser Liu then told them how the kingdom was faring and how it had almost become a puppet in the hands of others.

Once King Hong was done, Adviser Chu seemed visibly agitated. His tree bark like skin trembled while the veins underneath it throbbed.

"The northern tribes I see... so they have finally returned." Adviser Chu stated with a sigh.

He took a pause for a few seconds and then spoke again.

"Seems like the situation is far more dangerous than I had thought. This no longer concerns just our kingdom but also the rest of the world..." Adviser Chu said, his voice gaining a bit of volume.

"Will you tell us then, Adviser Chu?" Lin Mu asked again.

"I shall tell you then. Listen carefully...."

I'll start with the easiest question, the one about the thousand year old Hong Lin trees. Yes, they can be found in the sinkhole, but if you want to get to them, you will have to pass through the territories of several dangerous beasts, most of which are in the Nascent soul realm and even Dao Shell realm." Adviser Chu answered, reliving Lin Mu and the two disciples a bit.

But even if they had heard the confirmation, the approach was still difficult, as the danger was quite high.

"Now about finding the Wandering sinkhole... the only way is to just search the entire Hong Lin forest. The sinkhole has no rhyme or reason and can be found moving around anywhere; hence the name wandering sinkhole.

As for getting out of it... there are three methods.

The first one is to exit through the same opening that you entered through. But the problem with this is that the opening moves around and there is a great chance you won't find it in the same place that you entered through.

The opening moves around at a rather fast pace as well and even if you spot it, the chances of you reaching it becomes rather less.

The second method is to make your own passage. I don't even know if this can be done by anyone in this world, even if they are from the top sects. The cultivation base needed to do it is simply massive.

Within the sinkhole, I've seen graves that belonged to Dao Treading realm experts as well, and if they were unable to escape it, someone at the Nascent soul realm escaping is far less.

Then there is the third and final method that I used. Using the intended exit of the Sinkhole." Adviser Chu explained.

Hearing all the answers, everyone was intrigued. They did not know which ones were viable for them fully, but knew that they would have to take the risks regardless. Lin Mu on the other hand, felt like the first and second methods might be viable for him even if the others did not seem like that.

Though the greatest doubt he had was about the third method.

"Adviser Chu, if there was an intended exit, then why did you not use it all those years? Was it perhaps hidden somewhere?" Lin Mu questioned the man.

"From all that I learned about the wandering sinkhole, I believe it was supposed to be a sacred ground or trials ground for some power a long time ago. But then it fell into despair and no one maintained it.

This caused it to return to the main world and develop to become a minor plane instead. It took in several plants and animals from our world and then isolated itself. But even then, there are several traces of its original structures remaining.

One of these original structures is the intended exit I spoke of. It is hidden, or rather I must say protected by strong spatial phenomena that would kill you before you can even approach it.

The only reason I was able to escape using that was that there are moments in time when the spatial disturbances reduce in intensity, allowing one to push through the phenomena.

Of course, since I escaped it and never returned there, I am not sure how often that reduction in spatial phenomena occurs. But from the comparisons I made earlier there, I reckon it happens at least once a month or so.

While I used the exit only once, I had been observing the area around it for years. I was simply unable to approach it due to the danger it held. But I was lucky as I ran out of all options and decided to take a do or die initiative.

This allowed me to learn about the increased stability of the exit and I didn't hesitate to leave at that point. I even left behind most of the things I had gotten there." Adviser Chu answered.

*~pew~*

Hearing this, Lin Mu and the rest took breaths of relief. To them as long as they had at least one viable option, they were fine with it. Lin Mu even more so, as he realized all three of those options might be viable for him.

## Chapter 723 - Gratefulness And Regrets

"Thank you for sharing your knowledge with us, Adviser Chu. I am grateful to you and I believe the entire world will be grateful for you as well." Lin Mu spoke.

"Indeed, Adviser Chu. If it were not for you, perhaps our supreme elder would not have a chance either." Hua San added.

"And the Hong Lin kingdom might not have lived past this either." King Hong added.

"The work of our ancestors was saved due to you, Adviser Chu." Adviser Liu said with gratitude.

Hearing the kind words of his visitors, the old man felt pleased, but at the same time, he felt a bit regretful..

"Perhaps... perhaps my choice of entering seclusion was wrong. I should have been actively involved with the kingdom these years." Adviser Chu stated.

"No, don't blame yourself, Adviser Chu. If you had not gone, perhaps we would not have had the pressure to reach the Nascent Soul realm. With you there, we would have just relied on you and forget to be prepared ourselves.

It was a very wise decision on your end." Adviser Liu spoke without hesitation.

*~Sigh~*

The old man sighed and shook his head.

"If only I had more time, I would have taken care of this. Breaking through at this juncture is also impossible for me. I simply don't have any longevity left." Adviser Chu said with regret.

"With the technique I used, you should still have at least a week left, adviser Chu. I'm sorry I can't do anymore, I am helpless in that aspect." Lin Mu said, finding it to be a bit sorrowful as well.

But he knew this was the harsh truth of the world and perhaps only a miracle could save the old man now.

The others seemed to resonate with Lin Mu's thoughts and felt sad as well.

"Do you have any solution, senior Xukong? This man has done so much for his kingdom and even for us, it seems unfair for him to die like this." Lin Mu asked grasping for some hope.

"I can't do much here either. Unless he got some immortal pills, to extend his longevity or managed to breakthrough it is impossible for him to live on." Xukong replied.

What Xukong didn't tell Lin Mu was that these were the orthodox methods he knew of. There were some other unorthodox methods that existed and he knew of, but those weren't something that were appropriate here.

Some were rather cruel, while others could greatly harm themselves. He also didn't think cultivators of this level were mature enough to handle it and not be tempted by them too much before falling into depravity.

'I'm sorry I can't help, but if it were you though going through this, I would not hesitate in using each and every means in my arsenal.' Xukong secretly thought.

Having gotten what they needed, Lin Mu and the rest decided to depart.

"Wait!" the old man suddenly spoke.

"Yes, Adviser Chu?" King Hong asked.

The old man's hands trembled before they entered within his robes and pulled out an old and mottled jade slip. While it looked rather bad, it was fully functional.

"Take this... it's my understanding of the Wandering sinkhole and has information about the things there. It also has a map I made of it, though beware that things change there quite often and you might get lost, regardless.

There's also the fact that it has been over five hundred years since I left the sinkhole and thus there might be many changes that have happened since then. The map and intimation might become entirely useless." Adviser Chu explained.

Hearing this, Lin Mu felt even more grateful.

"Thank you, adviser Chu. With a map it will be far more easier for us. And don't worry, even if the sinkhole has changed, and the map is useless, we shall still find a way out. We can't die yet... the world needs us." Lin Mu spoke.

"The old are the torches of the youth. It is my honor that I managed to be helpful to you." The old man replied with a little smile on his face.

Lin Mu nodded his head and took the jade slip from his hands before storing it away. Having gotten the last item they needed, Lin Mu and the rest cupped their hands before leaving the underground hall.

They would give Adviser Chu some privacy in his last few days on the world, and let him pass on his own terms.

Back at the court, Lin Mu looked through the jade slip while the others sat around. The more Lin Mu read the more shocked he got. The information recorded in the jade slip was rather large and he didn't even know if he could read it all soon.

*~Sigh~*

"Can't believe so many things can be written about a single place." Lin Mu muttered to himself.

King Hong and the rest looked at Lin Mu, waiting for him to proceed. After looking through the jade slip, Lin Mu looked at the rest of the people in the court.

"Looks like we are in for a rather dangerous journey." Lin Mu spoke.

"Even if it is dangerous, we need to go through it. A lot of people are relying on us." Hua San affirmed.

"Plus if we go together, our chances of survival will be higher." Hua Wu stated.

"No!" Lin Mu rejected right away.

"Huh? What happened, senior?" Hua Wu was surprised and also a bit anxious at Lin Mu's negative reaction.

"From all that I've heard and read about the Wandering sinkhole till now, I don't think you all should go there." Lin Mu replied.

"What! But we have to do it." King Hong said anxiously.

"Yes we do indeed. That's why I shall be heading there alone. I have confidence that I can escape it with my skills, but I don't know if I would be able to do the same if I had other people with me.

Please understand my concern." Lin Mu expressed.

### **Chapter 724 - Convincing The Team**

Hearing that Lin Mu wanted to get to the Wandering Sinkhole on his own, the others felt concerned and didn't know if it was good.

"You can't do that. It will be too dangerous to go alone. Plus with more people, we would be able to cover more ground." Hua San replied.

"That is exactly why I don't want you all to go. It will be too dangerous. If it's just me alone, I can deal with danger and escape if I want to. The greatest confidence I have is in my speed and ability to retreat.

Plus, I won't be going alone completely, I'll be having another companion with me." Lin Mu spoke.

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Hearing this, they were a bit confused but then realized that Lin Mu might be talking about Jing Luo.

"Why can senior Jing Luo come with you then?" Hua Wu asked.

"Oh, he won't be coming either. He is needed here more. Not only will he need time to set up the tribulation attenuation formation, but he has his own preparations to do." Lin Mu said, remembering that Jing Luo had yet to fully assimilate the knowledge he had been given.

Not to mention the entrance token to the ancestral land of the Jing clan that he still needed to make. Plus, it would be far more safer if Jing Luo was still in this world as there was no guarantee that Gu Yao won't just attack.

Even if these two disciples were from the Noon grass sect and were at the Nascent Soul realm, Lin Mu didn't know if they would be strong enough to fight against the tricks and schemes of Gu Yao.

Heck, from what Lin Mu had heard, they didn't even go out of sect that much and didn't have enough experience with the world, despite being significantly older than him.

"Not senior Jing Luo? Then who's going to come? It won't make sense if they are weaker than him or us." Hua San asked.

"Oh, the one I'm taking is far faster than anyone here. Even faster than me and has decent strength." Lin Mu stated.

"And who's that?" now even Adviser Liu was curious.

So far they had met two Adolescent soul realm cultivators and now he heard there was an additional expert?

Adviser Liu wondered how they were just popping up now, or if Lin Mu was hiding even more than that. While he hadn't seen the full might of Lin Mu, he could tell that the young man was not normal.

Casual actions of him exerted strength that seemed unusual.

"The one I'm taking is my tamed beast." Lin Mu answered.

"You have a tamed beast too?!" Hua Wu asked, feeling excited.

"I do indeed. He'll also be the one to help us find the wandering sinkhole in less than a month." Lin Mu stated.

"Huh? Can he really do that? I mean, even if one is fast, just how fast would they even have to find it in a month?" Hua San was doubtful and so was adviser Liu.

It was understandable since finding the wandering sinkhole was the same as searching the entire Hong Lin forest for it. And that was a massive area to cover. Even with the spirit sense of a Nascent soul realm cultivator expanding the area that could be observed at once, there were still several thousand square kilometers of the area to cover.

Not to mention the Wandering sinkhole did not have a set location and would move around, which meant that it might appear in a location one had already searched in which meant that one would have to search the entire forest multiple times.

"Mhmm... It shouldn't really be a problem. He's actually out looking for Hong Lin trees now that are hundred years or older than that." Lin Mu spoke.

The people in the hall didn't really know what to think of it now and asked a few more questions while Lin Mu tried to convince them. After several minutes, though, they agreed; albeit reluctantly.

They were anxious that Lin Mu might not return and get trapped or something. But Lin Mu assured them that trapping him won't be possible, not to mention that spatial manipulation was something he was good at.

"Senior can do spatial manipulation!?" Hua San and Hua Wu were shocked.

This was not a skill that anyone could have. Even Dao Treading realm cultivators struggled with it, and the only way most cultivators could come in contact with it was through formations.

Otherwise doing it on their own was close to impossible since not only did it require great comprehension ability but also the spirit Qi to back it up. Lin Mu had a great advantage in this since the skills granted by the ring didn't have as high of a spirit Qi usage as compared to the other crude spatial manipulation skills cultivators had in this world.

"Indeed, I can. So don't worry. Worse comes to worst, I get trapped in an isolated space. If that does happen I would just choose the second option that Adviser Chu told us. I'll just make my own exit by carving out an opening in the void." Lin Mu said.



Hearing Lin Mu speak casually about manipulating the space and interacting with the void felt surreal to them. If this was some great elder from a top sect like the Sky precedent sect, they would understand, but this was not.

Lin Mu was only at the Adolescent soul stage of the Nascent Soul realm.

After a few minutes of shock, they came to a complete agreement and decided to let Lin Mu go on his own. Lin Mu contacted Jing Luo and told him about what he was going to do, and Jing Luo agreed that it was better for him to go on his own.

If one knew Lin Mu and his skills better than anyone else now, it was Jing Luo. After all, it was due to Lin Mu that he had managed to escape the isolated fragment of the sacred ground of Ripple Mist sect.

### **Chapter 725 - Putting The Kingdom Back On Track**

With the agreements made, Lin Mu and the rest came up with a pipeline for the events. They hoped for the best and planned for the worst, making contingencies for contingencies. They even made plans in case Gu Yao decide to directly come out and attack them or even start his takeover of the empire.

Jing Luo also agreed to set up some better formation arrays around the Hong Lin kingdom just in case they needed to protect from attacks. It was needed since they were their allies and their survival was essential to them in the long term.

Plus, King Hong was going to use the entire kingdom to provide the resources now. He knew it was no time to skimp on things and put the administrative machinery into work. While this was happening, Adviser Liu efficiently weeded out the corrupt officials of the kingdom and replaced them with the right people.

During the reign of minister Fu Delun, a lot of good workers had been wrongfully dismissed or transferred to other positions. Adviser Liu rectified these mistakes and checked the records to see who actually did well.

This was not easy as the records were heavily manipulated as well and they had to take a lot of direct testimonies from people and then cross reference them before actually checking the differences..

It was a long and hectic process and it would have been impossible if not for the people's support. When it was announced that Minister of Law Fu Delun has been arrested along with several other officials on the charges of corruption and forgery, a lot of the other good officials that had been suppressed were overjoyed.

Even the commoners who had suffered during this time were pleased that their king and adviser were taking action. In the royal court, half of the people were either greatly fined or arrested entirely due to their involvement with Minister Fu Delun.

As for Fu Delun himself, since he was under the control of Gu Yao, there was always a chance that he would try to escape and contact Gu Yao. As long as Gu Yao didn't know what was happening in the kingdom, they would have the advantage.

Thus, to prevent Gu Yao from discovering what had happened, Lin Mu and the rest put Minister Fu Delun in a tranquilized state perpetually. The royal physicians and an alchemist combined their skills to make a

strong tranquilized which won't harm the body but would truly put the person it was used on in a deep sleep.

They wouldn't wake up even if the person was beat up and was rather deadly if one thought about it. It was fine to use on cultivators, but if it was used on normal humans, they would die of thirst before they could even wake up.

For Fu Delun at least, the physicians set up a nutritional solution made of several herbs that would prevent the man from dying. Because in the end, Lin Mu and the rest knew that Fu Delun was a victim too and wasn't doing this on his own.

Killing him would be a grave injustice when they still had the capability to restrain him. King Hong and adviser Liu had spoken of how Fu Delun truly took his responsibilities very seriously all these years.

In fact, it was that very reputation that led to them overlooking all the mistakes that had been made in the past few years. Had it not been for that, Adviser Liu and King Hong would have been more hands-on in their approach with administrative matters.

A wise man once said, 'having competent subordinates makes one's life easier, but it also makes one dependent on them, thus taking away their caution.'

This was one of the reasons why strong clans and sects always chose to let their juniors train and experience the world and get some setbacks. Otherwise, if they were given a smooth carved out path by their seniors, they would get complacent.

Of course, doing all these changes brought their own set of problems. The new people for higher positions were hard to find and for lower positions, they needed to be trained from the start.

The biggest issue though, was finding a suitable replacement for the minister of Law. So far, Adviser Liu had taken over the duties for that, but it was no longer viable for him to keep on doing that as his duties were expanding by the day.

They needed someone to replace Fu Delun. Plus, since the mess started from this position, the eyes of everyone in the kingdom would be on this position. Thus, anyone who took over, would be facing great pressure.

For this, Lin Mu actually had a suggestion. The person he suggested to King Hong and adviser Liu was none other than the head of the law enforcement department. Lin Mu himself had seen how hard the man worked, despite the bad hand he was dealt and still managed to keep the department running.

Adviser Liu had already seen the work ethic and productivity of the man and accepted it right away. But when they actually called in the man to offer him the position, he cried.

He said that he would die if he took on more work. Lin Mu couldn't help but chuckle when he heard this and gave a few solutions.

First, they gave the man a well deserved vacation and secondly they gave him enough resources so that he could break through to the Core Condensation realm.

Xian Po was stunned and had not expected this at all. To him, it was completely out of his scope that he would ever reach a higher cultivation base.

They knew that he was a hard worker and was pushed to the limit. But these limits were also there because of his cultivation base. Thus, the easiest option was to simply upgrade it and that's what they did.

And thus, Xian Po's vacation week also turned into a secluded cultivation session which he did like.

### **Chapter 726 - The New Court Session**

With a new minister of Law set up and the rest of the administrative machinery working in proper order, King Hong felt pleased. To him, this was one of the most necessary things that needed to be addressed.

Lin Mu was also happy with the progress and got to experience the inner workings of a kingdom for the first time. He got to learn how different matters were handled and how it was to deal with complex people, all of whom had their own agenda.

While this was not useful to him directly right now, he reckoned he may as well learn all that he could. Xukong was of the same mind and told him to do so while Little Shrubby continued his search.

Little Shrubby had been looking for the Wandering sinkhole right on the day when Lin Mu made the agreement with King Hong and the two disciples. He gave the description of the sinkhole to Little Shrubby and told him to search across the entire Hong Lin forest for it.

Little Shrubby was fine with it and did so.

Jing Luo on the other hand, was busy with making formation arrays.. The tribulation attenuation array was already completed and ready for use at any moment. He was now setting up the formation arrays for the Hong Lin Kingdom's capital city.

Upon hearing the plan that Lin Mu had for the city, Jing Luo went even more extravagant and asked that if they are doing it for the city, why don't they just do it for the entire kingdom.

Hearing this, everyone was shocked as well, and they didn't know if this was viable at all. To this Jing Luo explained that while security on the same level as that of the capital might not be possible, it would still be possible to set up lower levels of securities across the entire kingdom.

At the borders, there would be a basic formation array that detected and recorded who left and entered the kingdom. Of course, this was a rather grand project, but under the support of the entire Kingdom and their other formation masters, Jing Luo didn't have much problem in starting it.

Even the Hua San and Hua Wu joined in to help. While they weren't specialized in formations, they still had enough knowledge to help out. Plus, they were one of the stronger cultivators in the entire kingdom and thus just their cultivation base was enough to support more of the formation arrays which depended on power and not skill.

Of course, this plan was done rather covertly, and the people were mobilized secretly. The ones involved were asked to take oaths. That would kill them if they ever broke them. Only after that were they allowed to be part of it.

King Hong's tribulation was also fast approaching and there was little time left until he would have to get ready for it. The same could be said for the former adviser Chu but in his case what was approaching him was death.

The old man had not moved since that day and had stayed in the same state. Everyday King Hong and Adviser Liu would go to see him and check his condition. They were ready to give the man the funeral he deserved.

Finally, three weeks had passed since the start of the plan and today Xian Po broke through to the Core condensation realm.

"Xian Po pays his respect to King Hong." The man cupped his hands in greeting and bowed his head.

"At east, Minister Xian Po." King Hong said with a smile.

Xian Po looked up at the King and the rest of the people sitting in the royal court. He was the last one to join, and the rest of the positions had already been fulfilled. While he was technically the first to be added to the new court, since he entered seclusion, it took him longer.

"Take your place Minister Xian Po, it's time we begin." King Hong said and gestured to the third seat on the left side of the court from the King's position.

On the left of the king sat adviser Liu, while on the right sat none other than Lin Mu. He was actually feeling rather awkward here.

'Should I even be here? This feels strange...' Lin Mu thought to himself.

He didn't know why, but King Hong had specifically requested for him to be here for the Royal court. It was fine before since the were in a more informal setting and discussed the plans.

But not all of those members were here. Hua San and Hua Wu weren't invited.

Lin Mu looked at the ministers sitting in their seats. Their clothes showed their rank and position with it being embroidered on their outer robes. The ministers sat closer to the king on the left side, while the junior ministers and other officials such as army officials, sat on the right side.

"Today we are here to start a new journey. This will either take us to a safer future or lead us to our eventual end." King Hong spoke, turning the vibe in the room a bit cold.

"I have decided to tell you what we are facing now. It is an unprecedented threat, the likes of which only our ancestors have faced before. Some of you here already know about it or have an idea about it, but I'll be properly telling about it to you all." King Hong said, turning the faces of everyone serious.

Hearing this, Lin Mu now understood why King Hong had asked him to be here. Hua San and Hua Wu were helping out Jing Luo and thus were out of the capital at this moment in one of the other major cities.

'No wonder...' Lin Mu thought to himself.

Lin Mu felt a little less anxious now and listened to how King Hong spoke about Gu Yao and the threat he posed along with the threat of the Northern Tribes.

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Once King Hong WA finished with his explanation, the people of the royal court finally understood the reason for the recent upheaval in the kingdom. Having learned that there was someone who could control them and others wouldn't even know was a terrifying thought.

"Now that I am done, you all can speak if you wish to." King Hong spoke.

Lin Mu looked around and saw that most of them weren't really in the mood to do anything and were still digesting the tough information that had been dropped on them. The ones that had a stronger mentality though, were already thinking of plans to do.

"Your Majesty, I have something to say," the new minister of Law Xian Po suddenly spoke.

"Pleased do, Minister Xian Po." King Hong replied.

Xian Po stood up and looked around at his fellow court members.

"We all have heard King Hong speak and have even seen the effects that this man Gu Yao has brought upon our kingdom. While we were lucky that we had senior Lin Mu this time who helped us avoid an even worse situation, I do not know if we would be lucky in the future.

I have personally experienced the distress brought on by the former Minister Fu Delun and the difficulties it brought. I do not want anyone else to go through it, yet there is a chance someone among us may end up being controlled anyway.

Thus to address this, I propose we take up an oath." Xian Po stated, surprising everyone.

While it was fine asking the formation masters and other lower officials to take oaths, one must know that asking their ministers and other higher official such as army generals, was not usually done.

This was considered to be offensive in many places and basically meant that the King did not give them the respect they deserved and also made them into slaves. Since taking an oath meant they would be binding themselves forever, giving a sense of safety and trust, it also meant that they were cutting off their other routes of escape.

If for some reason the kingdom fell and they had no other choice, they wouldn't even have a chance to escape, as that would mean them dying anyway. Of course, the specific conditions of the oaths varied, but this was the general consensus among them.

Xian Po and Lin Mu looked around, seeing the hesitation on the faces of some people in the hall.

"I volunteer to do it first!" Xian Po spoke up with determination.

"I shall take it as well." This time Adviser Liu stood up.

"And I'll be doing it as well." King Hong said, shocking everyone.

"But... why you, your majesty?" one of the generals asked.

"The situation we are facing is not just any threat. While you can be controlled, I can be controlled as well. Besides, it would be unfair if you all are bound to just me. Rather than that, I would prefer it to be a unified oath so that all of us are on equal terms." King Hong replied.

Hearing this, the court officials were left speechless.

### **Chapter 727 - An Oath**

It wasn't often that a king would allow such an oath to be taken, not to mention taking it himself. This went against all that was considered usual for the royalty and kings. One could count on one hand the number of kings who had ever done this.

There were oaths taken by kings sure, but they were taken among others of equal or higher status. And thus, the court members were left speechless. Only after a minute of silence did someone speak.

"I volunteer too!" one of the generals spoke.

"I do too!" A junior minister spoke.

"I shall take the oath as well!" Another minister joined in.

One by one, hands rose up as more and more people joined.. In the end, each and every person was ready to take the oath and this put a smile on the face of the King and even Lin Mu, who had not expected this.

'I thought there would be at least some resistance among them, but looks like the new people that were chosen were perfect for it and the ones that were not corrupted were good from the start.' Lin Mu thought to himself.

"Excellent! With our unity, we shall either rise through the calamities or die trying!" The king exclaimed, sending waves of excitement across the hall.

He then looked at Lin Mu, prompting him to turn a bit serious.

"Senior Lin Mu, since times immemorial when oaths as big as these were taken, the eldest or the strongest person would act as the officiator. Would you please grant us the honor of being one?" King Hong asked.

Lin Mu was a bit stunned and didn't speak when suddenly Xukong's voice rang in his mind.

"Do it," Xukong spoke.

"You sure, senior? But I'm not the oldest here?" Lin Mu asked.

"That is just a formality. In reality, anyone can act as the officiator, but the strength of the officiator does decide how strong the oath will be as well. While most people think oaths are unbreakable, it is not so.

There are certain methods that can be used to nullify them, and one can break them. Then there are also some methods that allow one to bypass them while keeping an oath intact.

We do not know of Gu Yao or the powers backing them have such means, but it would be better to be cautious." Xukong replied.

"Then how do I prevent that senior?" Lin Mu questioned.

"Well, the easiest method is to change the oath terms. Most people give blood oaths or take an oath against their cultivation. These are the easiest ones to bypass and break. Oaths can also be given to the

heavens which are far more stronger but that also requires one to be a cultivator and have a certain cultivation base.

In here, only the Nascent soul realm cultivators would be able to do that and others won't.

But right now they have you here... you have something that others don't and it will help overcome that flaw." Xukong answered.

"I see... then what do I do?" Lin Mu asked.

"Just follow my words," Xukong replied.

"Okay senior," Lin Mu replied and nodded his head, giving affirmation to King Hong as well.

"Thank you senior Lin Mu," King Hong said.

Lin Mu then closed his eyes for a couple of seconds and took a deep breath.

*~huu~*

The next moment when his eyes opened, they had a completely different aura. Everyone that looked at him felt their hearts shudder. They couldn't look into Lin Mu's eyes and felt like their hearts would jump out of their chests if they did so.

"Repeat after my words," Lin Mu said in a calm voice.

"YES SENIOR!" They all replied.

"I, Lin Mu..."

"I, Hong Qiqiang..."

"I, Hong Liu..."

"I, Xian Po..."

They all repeated.

"Shall not harm the interest of the alliance, my allies, and humanity as a whole. And if I do so, I shall be struck down by the world, erased by the bloodline, extinguished by the heavens, and have my soul removed from the cycle of reincarnation." Lin Mu completed.

The oath was a harsh one, but this was not the time to hesitate and thus they all repeated properly.

Once everyone was done saying it, Lin Mu added the final part.

"So mote it be!"

*~SHUA~*

*~HONG~*

The moment the oath was completed, a heavy presence descend in the hall. Everyone felt like boulders were pressing down on their heads and that they would collapse at any moment.

Then a glowing character appeared on the forehead of Lin Mu. It was visible to everyone and was in fact, hard to not notice with the intensity of light it was casting.

'What... is that...?' Everyone wondered while simultaneously struggling under the presence.

The character on Lin Mu's forehead glowed even brighter and shot out several tiny motes of light. Their number was equal to the number of people that were in the hall at this moment.

The motes of light flew to each person and entered their foreheads.

Then.... A character appeared on their foreheads too. This character read 'Oath'.

It lingered on their forehead for about three seconds before it faded away. The pressure on their bodies also disappeared and they could take breaths of relief. But while this was all happening, Lin Mu did not see it.

Rather than that, the moment the character had appeared on Lin Mu's forehead, his vision had gone white. He appeared in a white space and could see a character floating there as well. It was the same one that had appeared on his forehead.

"Isn't that... the mark of the Ordained?" Lin Mu recognized.

*~boom~*

Then it was as if an explosion happened and Lin Mu was sent hurtling across the empty skies. He kept on going higher and higher until he could see the entire world below him.

It was a bit hard for him to see things, but after a couple of seconds, his vision adjusted.

"What?... What is this....?" Lin Mu couldn't help but question.

### **Chapter 728 - Gazing At The World**

"Senior? Senior Xukong?" Lin Mu called out but received no answer.

He looked below and saw a massive sphere. Most of it was blue, but one third of it was made of different colors such as green, brown, yellow, white and red. Lin Mu noticed that the top of the sphere was white and looked like a pear.

"Huh... is this... my world?" Lin Mu wondered.

He checked the other points and was able to recognize several of them, such as the pear's waist and the belt. Then below he could see the northern Mountains and the northern forest.

This was enough to confirm for him.

"There's no doubt... this is my world." Lin Mu spoke..

And when he did, he could hear a voice in his mind. The voice was familiar to him and he had heard it before.

"Xiaofan World..." the voice spoke

"Huh... so the name of my world is Xiaofan..." Lin Mu muttered.



So far, he had never heard the actual name of his world and had not seen it anywhere either. Since the world had only one continent that was now named the great Zhou continent, the people also called it the Great Zhou world.

But Lin Mu now realized that it was just a name given by the people, but the real name of the world was something different. It was named Xiaofan. Lin Mu didn't know if it was written in the records somewhere, but he decided to check up on it later.

Lin Mu continued observing and could see the vast expanse of the forests that spread across the continent at the bottom of it.

"That... should be the part which was once the southern continent. So that is the Great Southern Forest." Lin Mu identified.

Above the Great Southern forest, he could see several areas that had small black and Grey dots.

"Hmm... those should be the cities, I guess, and seeing the location, it must be one of the kingdoms in the south. I think that is where the Noon Grass Sect is located as well." Lin Mu muttered.

On the northeast of that, he could see a small patch of dense red color. Lin Mu instantly recognized what this was.

"The Hong Lin forest!" Lin Mu said.

He then went west from there and saw several different areas, including one place which was densely packed with buildings.

"Is that... the Imperial capital of the Great Zhou Empire? Yes, that must be it." Lin Mu spoke.

He went a bit north west from there and saw the deserts and volcanoes. This was also the area where the Fire Fang snake was supposed to be a native of. He continued further up from there and saw a change in the color.

The area here was significantly darker, and the ground seemed to be black in certain places.

"That should be the Black Dawn Dynasty." Lin Mu recognized.

Then to the east of it, Lin Mu saw the Shuang Qian Empire and further east of that Lin Mu saw the part of the continent that protruded a bit outwards and went to the north.

The area here was multicolored, with different hues mixed in such as red, green, blue, yellow, pink and many more.

"That should be the Eastern Ming Dynasty." Lin Mu recognized.

He could also see several small dots in the great ocean that were sparsely spread. The biggest ones though, were closest to the continent and were none other than the Echo Conch kingdom and the First Sun kingdom.

As Lin Mu continued observing, he wondered where the sects were. He couldn't particularly see them.

"Hmm... from what I know the top sects are rather spread around. The Sky precepts sect is located somewhat east of the Imperial capital while the Zither wind sect is south west of it. Then, some distance south from the black dawn kingdom's border, there is the centennial sword sect.

The Rainbow Pill sect is the furthest from all sects and is the Eastern Ming dynasty. Then finally... there are the Northern tribes..." Lin Mu muttered.

He could see that within the frozen white northern part, there were small dots of red and black. He realized that they must be the settlements of the Northern tribes.

"If only I could see more..." Lin Mu wished.

*~shua~*

The moment he did so, he felt his vision flicker. Then red dots appeared all over the map. These dots were all of different sizes and intensities. Some of them were bright enough that they looked like beacons, while there were some that were dim enough that they couldn't even be seen unless Lin Mu squinted.

The ones that looked like beacons were located in four different parts of the world. One of the red beacons was near the black dawn kingdom, which Lin Mu recognized as the Centennial sword sect.

One of them was located in the central part of the continent that Lin Mu recognized to be the Sky Precepts sect. Then there was another one located in the north eastern part of the continent which Lin Mu recognized to be the rainbow pill sect.

"What are these red beacons? They are the strongest ones... seeing the pattern, they may be cultivators." Lin Mu wondered.

After thinking for a bit more, Lin Mu realized that this was likely.

"Considering the different intensities of the light and them being in a few locations, they might be Immortal Ascension realm cultivators. But then at the north... this can't be!" Lin Mu exclaimed.

What Lin Mu saw in the North was surprising to him. In the north, there were three such red beacons. One of them was a bit to the south in the mountains, while the other two were together in the populated area.

"If these really are immortal Ascension realm cultivators, then the Northern tribes have the same number as the rest of the empire. But how can this be? They should have all been killed in the past.

Unless... They are new..." Lin Mu understood the startling reality.

## **Chapter 729 - Stormy Ocean**

Seeing the world and the cultivators on it, Lin Mu felt a bit overwhelmed. While the general consensus was that cultivators were rare, being one in a thousand, seeing their total population, was still shocking to him.

"They have the same number of Immortal Ascension realm cultivators as us..." Lin Mu muttered.

He then looked at the other red dots that were still big but did not look like beacons. These were the cultivators who were in the Dao Treading realm. Of these, Lin Mu could see about twenty nine dots in the great Zhou continent and eleven dots in the Northern tribes.

"So the total number of Dao treading realm cultivators is twenty nine, huh..." Lin Mu said as he gazed in the direction of the Black Dawn Kingdom.

There his gaze was on a particular location that was close to the northern coast.

"No red dot there. Hmm... if Jing Wei was there, the dot should have been there.. Guess he really is in the ancestral land of the Jing clan. No wonder it doesn't appear here. But this also means there should be other such Dao Treading realm experts that don't appear on the map if they are in other such minor planes or worlds." Lin Mu analyzed.

Lin Mu wondered if he could find Gu Yao with this, but that was a tough thing to do. He knew that Gu Yao had reached the Dao Shell realm, but when he tried to see the red dots for Dao Shell realm cultivators, he found there to be over two hundred.

Some of them even overlapped, so it was hard to tell how many there actually were.

"The actual number is bound to be higher. Plus... there is a chance that Gu Yao might have taken to hiding in a minor plane. It could be one of the reasons why finding him is hard. If I was him and had the information, I would probably do the same." Lin Mu muttered to himself.

Seeing the entire world at once had given Lin Mu an overview that enhanced his thinking. He could now think from a broader perspective and realized just how little prepared he was for the coming battle.

He knew that the entire world would be embroiled in this. While both the parties had the same number of Immortal Ascension realm cultivators, he didn't know if they would be able to work together when Gu Yao was sowing discord.

"NO! Rather than that, Gu Yao would never even let them have the opportunity to fight. With the speed at which he is controlling others and taking over sects, he will probably try to neutralize the top sects before they can do much.

They should definitely have something that can restrain or even kill Immortal Ascension realm cultivators." Lin Mu concluded.

Lin Mu furrowed his brows and deeply gazed at the world, trying to memorize each and every bit of it. He tried to see which places had the most cultivators and why. He didn't know how he had ended up here, but knew that him being ordained by the world had something to do with it.

'If I have the opportunity, why not take it... even this much is enough to give us plenty of perspectives.' Lin Mu thought to himself.

Lin Mu moved from one side of the world to the other and eventually ended up completing it all.

"I've done as much as I can right now." Lin Mu said, but after a few seconds, he wondered something else. "What's there behind this? This world is a sphere, right? There should be more behind it." Lin Mu said.

And just as he said this, the world started to turn and showed the side which was hidden to Lin Mu. But what he saw shocked him even more.

"What... is this?" Lin Mu said in shock.

So far, from what Lin Mu had learned, after four of the five continents were combined, only the great ocean was left behind. Lin Mu had thought that all he would see there would be water, but he saw much more than that.

On the other half of the world, a massive storm was churning. It looked like a white vortex that continued to spin in one place. Clouds from all over the world would join it and then get dispersed into the ocean.

At the eye of the storm, Lin Mu could see nothing. It looked like a pitch black hole and no light was seen there. It was like the deepest depths of the sea where no light could penetrate.

From time to time, streaks of light would spread across the storm, showing that it even contained thunder and lightning. The streaks were like dragons swimming in the seas and weaved through the storm.

There were no islands or any landforms that Lin Mu could see on the other side, either. It was as if all of them had disappeared or sunk.

"Is this the effect of moving entire continents, or perhaps something else?" Lin Mu wondered.

But this gave rise to another question for Lin Mu.

"These continents... were they floating that they could be united? No... that doesn't make sense. If they were able to float, they would have to be far lighter. But then how would one move something that is attached to the ground?" Lin Mu pondered.

It was now that Lin Mu noticed another thing. The color of the water was different, or rather the shade of blue was different in the different parts of the world. The water around the continent was of a lighter shade than the water in the depths of the ocean.

Lin Mu realized that the further one went from the continent, the darker the color of the water got. Then arrived the storm where everything was white due to the clouds. And in the center of the storm, in its eye, there was just pitch black darkness within which nothing could be seen.

Chapter 730 - World Nexus

"So the farther one goes from the continent, the deeper the ocean becomes and the storm should be the deepest part of the ocean." Lin Mu understood.

Having seen this though, Lin Mu realized another thing.

"Hang on... if the red dots are the markers where there are cultivators and shows their cultivation base, then where are the beasts? The population of beasts should be far more than humans.

Especially the ocean, it should be filled with strong beasts, shouldn't it?" Lin Mu questioned.

He even looked at the great southern forest, but didn't see any markers for beasts there. In fact, there were only a few red dots dispersed in the entire southern forest. It looked rather empty, which looked strange to Lin Mu.

"Those few red dots should be the cultivators who entered the forest to get the resources. But then, where are the beasts? Why does it now show beasts?" Lin Mu wondered..

Sadly for Lin Mu, this question remained unanswered and his vision turned to white again. The next time he blinked his eyes, he realized he was back in the real world in the palace of the Hong Lin kingdom.

The people around him were looking at him in awe, and he didn't know why.

"Senior Lin Mu, what was that? How did you make the oath so strong?" King Hong questioned while the rest looked on.

Lin Mu though, didn't answer and had a question mark in his mind.

"Senior Xukong what happened?" Lin Mu asked.

"Just as I had expected, with the oath you managed to trigger the world's will to descend. Now with it as the witness, no one will be able to break the oath since they will all be observed by the world." Xukong spoke.

"No wonder they looked like this..." Lin Mu muttered.

"And what about you? Your mind disappeared for about ten seconds there." Xukong spoke, finding it to be strange.

"Wait senior, you didn't see it?" Lin Mu questioned.

"See what?" Xukong asked.

"Hang on, let's deal with this situation first and then that." Lin Mu said as he began to focus on the task at hand.

He looked at King Hong and spoke.

"I just used an oath that my master taught me. It's stronger than the normal oaths and should protect us better." Lin Mu answered the King.

"No wonder. Of course, senior Lin Mu's master must be far beyond us." King Hong nodded his head.

They didn't know who Lin Mu's master exactly was, but hearing that he had one meant a lot to them. If Lin Mu was so strong, then they thought his master must be beyond what they could imagine.

This gave them an additional sense of security that they didn't even know they needed.

"Well then, now that this is done, we can get back to work." King Hong said to everyone.

"Yes, Your majesty!" Everyone replied.

Lin Mu also sat down and listened to their plans. There was little for him to do other than to speak at a certain moment when King Hong and adviser Liu sought out his opinion on a few matters.

Most of the matters were just internal things that related to the kingdom, but there were also other matters which were more of a diplomatic nature.

For example, what do they do if someone they know is being controlled? Or if a person from a sect arrives that they know is being controlled.

They needed to know how to behave during these times and that was also where they asked Lin Mu's opinion. The entire meeting lasted over twenty hours and only stopped because it was midnight now.

Once it was over, Lin Mu got to leave and went to the courtyard that he had Jing Luo rented out. King Hong had just gifted it directly to Lin Mu after having bought it from the previous owner, who was actually one of the ministers.

They owned several properties across the capital and the kingdom, and thus doing something like this was very easy. Lin Mu had become something of an unofficial elder of the Hong Kingdom by now.

"So what is it that you saw?" Xukong questioned Lin Mu after he sat down in the room.

"Why don't you take a look, senior?" Lin Mu said as he moved some of his memories to the shared mind space they had.

Xukong read through the memories and saw all that Lin Mu had seen; the world, the beacons, cultivators, the storm, and the shades of the water. He saw everything. After he was done, he couldn't help but be internally shocked.

'Why did this happen? How can he see something only a celestial should be able to see? Even if he is ordained by the world, something of this sort is impossible.' Xukong thought to himself before turning back towards certain direction.

'Unless it's something you intended to do...' Xukong said while looking at the ethereal altar.

"So? What do you think, senior?" Lin Mu questioned after a few minutes.

Xukong had been silent the entire time, so Lin Mu wondered if he was done or not.

"Hmm, the most I can tell you right now is that you have seen something that should have been impossible to see. Not just for you but the world itself." Xukong answered.

"Huh? What do you mean, senior?" Lin Mu asked for clarification.

"What you saw was the world, or rather its representation. In the higher worlds, it is known as the world nexus. It is something every world has, but only a few worlds can actually access it or see it." Xukong replied.

"You mean to say senior... only a high leveled world should be able to see it?" Lin Mu asked.

"Indeed. If it has appeared and you managed to see it, that means..." Xukong stated.

"The world has been growing and has reached a new level." Lin Mu interrupted.

"Indeed. Even if it hasn't fully reached it, it is close since the nexus is still not complete. That is also the reason why you could only see the humans on there." Xukong explained.

