

Walker 991

[Chapter 991 - Towards The Northern Lands And A Short Visit To The Light Harmony Sect](#)

Lin Mu and Jing Luo were on their way to the Northern Lands right now.

"It feels surreal returning after all these years." Jing Luo muttered.

"Indeed... even though it's been far less time for me, it still feels so long." Lin Mu replied.

Both Lin Mu and Jing Luo hadn't been to the Northern Lands for a while. Lin Mu's home was in the Shuang Qian Kingdom while Jing Luo's didn't exist anymore. Still, the only thing for Jing Clan that was still there was their ancestral land that was located in the Black Dawn Kingdom... or the edge of it.

They had started their journey from the Long Cloud sect and had now entered the Kong plane.

Coming to stand in front of the different teleportation gates, Lin Mu gazed at them.

"So then... which one should we take?" Lin Mu asked.

"Patriarch Mingliang recommended we go through the one in his sect. It is the closest location to the Shuang Qian kingdom and we will already be in the Northern Lands that way. You might even be able to contact Little Shrubby right away." Jing Luo replied.

"Hmm... that does seem like the best option. We shall take that then." Lin Mu agreed.

He activated the teleportation gate and saw as the runes came to life. A portal opened between the two pillars and swirled nonstop.

"Let's go." Lin Mu said as he stepped into the portal.

Jing Luo followed behind him and their vision darkened for a few seconds before it finally returned.

~SHUA~

Stepping out of the portal, Lin Mu looked at the old elders standing in wait for him.

"Greetings, Alliance Leader Lin Mu; Elder Jing Luo." The elders greeted with cupped hands.

Lin Mu didn't know who these elders were as he had never met them before, but from their Nascent soul realm cultivation base, he could tell that they were junior elders. Which made sense why he didn't know them.

All the Senior and High elders had met with Lin Mu before at the Long Cloud sect as they needed to take the oath in person.

"Greetings." Lin Mu responded as well.

"Patriarch informed us of your arrival and told us to prepare somethings." The old elders said before one of them took out a storage bag.

"Please take this. It may come in handy on your journey." The elder handing the storage bag spoke.

Lin Mu took the bag and asked, "what's this?"

He peered into the storage bag, finding a few things inside.

"There are two identity tokens inside it. They shouldn't be needed, but in case something happens, you can use them. We know that your identity is sensitive and is best kept hidden. This will instead show your affiliation as an elder of the Light Harmony sect.

You won't come across any trouble this way... though considering your standing, I believe that might not be a problem either way." The elder spoke.

Both Lin Mu and Jing Luo were in the Dao Shell realm and there would be very few people left on the continent that would be able to create trouble for them.

"It is better to be prudent. These tokens will be good to have, just in case." Lin Mu agreed.

"There is also an updated map and a few more informative records along with that, which may come in handy." Another elder added.

"That'll definitely be useful." Jing Luo stated.

Having taken them, Lin Mu bid his farewell to the elders.

"We shall take our leave then, elders." Lin Mu spoke.

"We wish you success in your endeavor, Alliance Leader Lin Mu." The elder said while bowing their heads.

Lin Mu gave them a gentle nod and left the hall. Appearing outside, he saw that he was actually in a large pagoda, and the hall was merely a small part of it. They continued onwards and left the pagoda, finally appearing in the actual Light Harmony sect.

"So this is what the Light Harmony Sect is like huh..." Lin Mu muttered as he saw the stunning scene.

There were pagodas everywhere in the sect and long stacks of colorful smoke could be seen rising from multiple locations. The aroma of spirit herbs could be smelled from a long distance, and the crackling of pills could even be heard.

"This is truly a sect that specializes in alchemical pills, alright." Jing Luo commented.

"Have you been here before?" Lin Mu asked.

"Not really. Never had the chance before." Jing Luo replied.

"I see... well, that's another thing of the list then." Lin Mu spoke.

"Though I've been to the Eastern Ming Dynasty before." Jing Luo added.

"Oh? Really?" Lin Mu replied.

"Yes. It is really a beautiful place. Wait till you leave the Light Harmony sect's borders, the rest of the kingdom is no less beautiful." Jing Luo said, inciting Lin Mu's curiosity.

"Well then, no use waiting." Lin Mu said before he flew up.

~shua~

Jing Luo followed behind him, and the two of them soared across the sky. Normally, something like this would be considered an offense in a sect, but Lin Mu and Jing Luo were technically elders of the Light Harmony sect.

Even if they were guest elders. Thus, no formation array was triggered and the two of them easily left the sect after about an hour. This only made Lin Mu realize just how large the Light harmony sect was.

"If we consider area wise, the Light Harmony sect is perhaps the third largest in size. Due to it being a pill making sect, they need a wide area so that the pill refinement is not disturbed. Explosions can often happen due to failure and different disciples might disturb each other due to this.

Thus, having some distance between them is better." Jing Luo explained.

"I see..." Lin Mu muttered.

Lin Mu knew of the sizes of the sect and the Rainbow pill sect was the largest sect area wise even though it was ranked second.. While the Sky Precepts sect came second in area size while being the first in sect rankings.

[Chapter 992 - The Beautiful Eastern Ming Dynasty](#)

"Whoa!" Lin Mu exclaimed, seeing the vibrant and sprawling lands of the Eastern Ming Dynasty.

"I told you right, it's amazing." Jing Luo chuckled.

There were tall snow-capped peaks, that were in the distance and a colorful forest that spread to the very horizon. There was a long river that flowed towards the north and came from the southwest.

Millions upon millions of flowers were blooming currently even though it was already autumn. Usually the flowers should have reduced in numbers due to the incoming winter and yet it was not so.

Bird flew across the sky, going about their day while the beasts hunted on the ground. The cycle of life continued, and it didn't seem like there was any darkness looming here.

'We truly are small in the large world. None of these beings know about the incoming doom and yet they live their lives. There is bliss in ignorance and yet that very bliss is a deadly poison that will kill them slowly.' Lin Mu thought to himself.

~hum~

"Huh?" Lin Mu looked at his hand as he felt the ring hum ever so slightly.

'What happened?' Lin Mu wondered.

But even after a few seconds, nothing was felt from the ring, so Lin Mu just let go of it. It had happened multiple times and Lin Mu didn't know what to make of it. He knew it was better to focus on the task at hand rather than wasting his time wondering about the unknown.

'The ring will tell me if it really is something truly important.' Lin Mu thought to himself.

Since Lin Mu didn't have Little Shrubby, and Jing Luo was accompanying him, the journey would be a lot slower than he was used to. It would take them about a week to reach the border of the Shuang Qian kingdom and then another week to get to the capital where Wu Hei actually was.

Still, two weeks was a frighteningly short amount of time considering the long distance they were traveling. If it was the average cultivator at the Qi refining realm, it would take him at least three months to do the same.

And if it were a commoner, it would take them even longer. Perhaps even six months would not be enough. After all, the path was not just difficult because of the distance, but also because of the dangers that existed there.

The paths passed through mountains, rivers and forests, all of which were the habitats of beasts. One needed strength to be able to safely pass through them all. A commoner wouldn't even be able to take such a journey and would probably end up dying before reaching the final destination.

Which was also why commoners traveled along with the merchant caravans as they had cultivators for protection.

"It's a shame we won't get to see the capital of the Eastern Ming Dynasty, though. Their Azure roofed buildings are an amazing sight." Jing Luo suddenly spoke.

"We can always go there later. I want to see it sometime in the future, too." Lin Mu replied.

The Light Harmony sect was located southwest of the Eastern Ming Dynasty's capital and they were heading further west, thus there was no way they would get to see the capital.

"Though we will pass by the location of the destroyed teleportation gate, right?" Lin Mu asked.

"Yes. It is on our path." Jing Luo said with a serious expression.

The destruction of the teleportation gate was a loss of both life and finances. And since it was due to the Northern Tribes, Lin Mu definitely didn't want to let go of it easily.

"Do you know more about that place? How did the explosion happen and all?" Lin Mu questioned.

"I do know some. The place was selected originally as a merchant outpost too and also a way for us to get closer to the Shuang Qian kingdom. But what we didn't know was that the Northern Tribes evidently had the same idea and had picked the same region as their base.

Both our outpost and the base of the Northern Tribes were within a hundred kilometers of each other. We didn't encounter each other for the first three months, but then the very first conflict turned serious.

Three of our people died then and several more of the Northern Tribes died. At first we didn't know that they had a base there and just thought they might have been passing through. But then over the coming months, we ended up encountering them more and more.

Three months later, the entire area had basically turned into a battlefield. But then one day, out of nowhere... the explosion happened. We had a clue that the Northern Tribes were doing something there, but we didn't know what exactly.

But whatever it was, it must have been quite volatile to have caused an explosion that obliterated an area of over a hundred kilometers." Jing Luo explained.

"Damn... could it be the rebirth blood or the reborn that they make?" Lin Mu wondered.

"Since we don't know how they are made, it could be possible." Jing Luo relied.

"Has anyone else gone to check the area since the explosion?" Lin Mu questioned.

"We did send some scouts, but there was pretty much nothing left to check. The entire area has been flattened and charred black. You will know when you see it. A large black patch on this beautiful green land." Jing Luo answered.

Lin Mu's expression darkened, and he subconsciously sped up.

Their journey went mostly uneventful, and they didn't really have any troubles except for the one time that they passed by the territory of some beasts which got startled and ended up starting a stampede.

Lin Mu and Jing Luo then had to stop that since the beasts were heading towards a town nearby. While it was a little hiccup in their journey, it did replenish Lin Mu's stock of meat again.

'I need to eat more later... my stores of vitality are down since I woke up..' Lin Mu noted.

[Chapter 993 - Better Cultivation Efficiency?](#)

"We should reach the border in about two more days." Jing Luo spoke.

"Yeah, we'll get to check on that destroyed outpost too." Lin Mu said before taking a bite.

There was a large bonfire burning in front of him and floating above it were slabs of meat. They were floating on a grill that was actually a spirit tool!

It was a low grade spirit tool that Lin Mu had found in the spatial storage ring of the cultivator he had killed in the Iron Bull town. It was supposed to be a restrictive spirit tool that could trap someone, but now Lin Wu was using it as a grill.

"This is really convenient, though. I don't need to set up an entire stove, just have it float and ignite a fire below it." Lin Mu spoke while eating.

Jing Luo had been watching Lin Mu eat and didn't know what to say. In the hour of break they've had, Lin Mu had already finished over thirty beasts. And Jing Luo couldn't help but shudder hearing the crunch of bones that came from Lin Mu's mouth from time to time.

"Are you sure you'll be fine eating like that?" Jing Luo couldn't help but ask.

"Yeah. I'm used to it. I need to restore my stores of vitality. I didn't eat for two years after all." Lin Mu replied.

'Still...' Jing Luo didn't speak further.

He looked at the side where a pair of spirit swords automatically moved and butchered beast corpses. There was a pile of such beast corpses next to it and they would get picked up before being butchered and then thrown onto the grill.

This was just three spirit tools working in tandem and Lin Mu could control a lot more now. In fact, he didn't even know what his limit was right now. With his increase in his spirit sense and it getting strengthened, there seemed to be no limit to him.

Lin Mu already had over six hundred spirit tools he had branded with his spirit sense and it wasn't even a quarter of the number of spirit tools and weapons he had in his storage. Only those that were good or had some particular use were branded by him.

Lin Mu continued to eat until all the beast corpses were gone and digested. He didn't even need to assimilate the vitality and spirit Qi from the meat he had eaten, since his body was already used to it.

Plus being having three treasured organs passively boosted his body's metabolism as well. Additionally, having his lungs as the third treasured organ also increased his overall speed of cultivation since it depended a lot on breathing.

With the refined lungs, his efficiency of breathing and absorbing the spirit Qi in the air increased exponentially.

Lin Mu guessed that it might have been one of the reasons why he progressed so fast while the well of slumber was active. He knew from his past experience that even if the Well of Slumber worked, he would still take at least 10 more years to accomplish the same.

But his lungs became treasured organs sometime before that and ended up boosting the speed at which he cultivated. It was a benefit to him in the end, and he couldn't really complain about that.

In fact, Lin Mu was confident that if he only cultivated, he could breakthrough to the Shell completion stage of the Dao Shell realm in just a month. He wouldn't even need to use the Well of Slumber.

He was mostly done with it anyway now.

'I'll find the right opportunity and breakthrough. Hopefully, we get that between all this chaos.' Lin Mu thought to himself.

Having rested enough, both Lin Mu and Jing Luo replenish their stores of energy and set off on their journey again. They blazed through the skies and didn't stop anywhere this time.

The region they were passing over was filled with beasts and there were barely any human settlements here for around five hundred kilometers. This was also the region which was the most difficult to traverse.

This was exactly why they had chosen to establish an outpost here so that the merchants would be able to save time and get better profits. The goods that were obtained from the Eastern Ming Dynasty could be sold at at least five to six times the price if they were taken through their route.

With the outpost set up near the border, the merchants could basically skip on the entire difficult journey if they belonged to the trusted ones that they allowed through the gates. For all others, they could travel without goods and simply collect them at the outpost.

This was way faster than having to haul the goods with them.

Lin Mu could soon see the vast black expanse in the distance. It was a stark difference from the vibrant green forest and the clear blue rivers.

"So this is the site of explosion." Lin Mu spoke.

"Mmhhh. Even though I've never been here and only read the report, there is no mistake it is this." Jing Luo replied.

Lin Mu nodded his head and looked around.

"Which direction do you want to start from?" Jing Luo asked.

He knew that they were to search this place and see if they could unearth some clues. With the level of destruction that had happened, they couldn't even figure out where the secret base of the northern tribes was.

But Jing Luo got an answer from Lin Mu he had not expected.

"No need..." Lin Mu spoke.

"Huh? You don't want to search it?" Jing Luo asked, feeling confused.

"I already found it." Lin Mu replied, opening his eyes.

"Already found it? How..." Jing Luo wondered before he understood.

He felt the vast spirit sense moving in the air. The entire time Lin Mu had it spread around this Jing Luo hadn't felt the difference, but now that it actually moved he could perceive it.

'What even is this? Do even Immortal Ascension realm cultivators have such spirit sense?' He couldn't help but wonder.

Chapter 994 - Unearthing The Collapsed Area

Lin Mu gazed towards a particular location, having discovered something there.

"Let's go." Lin Mu spoke and Jing Luo followed behind.

The two of them appeared over what looked like broken ground. It was a very common scene considering the explosion that had happened and looked no different than the many other areas.

Jing Luo extended his spirit sense but didn't find anything there.

"It's really here?" Jing Luo asked.

"Oh yeah, it's here." Lin Mu replied.

"I can't feel anything, though." Jing Luo spoke.

"That's understandable. It's not in this world." Lin Mu replied.

"Huh? What do you mean?" Jing Luo questioned.

"It'll be easier to show you." Lin Mu answered and descended.

He extended his fist downward and punched out.

~BOOM~

A burst of spirit Qi traveled straight down and dug the ground apart, leaving behind a two meter wide hole that went at least ten meters deep.

Jing Luo raised his brows in surprise at this display of power. While he could do the same at his cultivation base, it would certainly not be this casual.

Lin Mu hadn't even used Boulder Collapsing fist this time.

He descended downwards and punched again when they reached the bottom of the hole and there was nothing there.

~Boom~ Boom~ boom~

Lin Mu ended up doing this three more times until he finally reached the place they were looking for. It was a mostly collapsed hall, and it was hard to tell that it was even a place that was actually a base before.

The explosion had really removed any signs of it.

"No wonder I couldn't find it. If its this damaged, it would be impossible to spot." Jing Luo said.

"I would be the same if not for the faint spatial fluctuations coming from here." Lin Mu replied.

"Huh? Spatial fluctuations! You mean to say..." Jing Luo said with surprise.

"Mmhmm... they might have a minor plane hidden here." Lin Mu stated.

Hearing this, a thought immediately came to Jing Luo's mind.

"Wait! Can it be..." Jing Luo was about to speak, but Lin Mu interrupted him before that.

"There is a chance that it is here. I'll have to see. It could also be that this was one of the entrances." Lin Mu explained.

Jing Luo nodded his head and let Lin Mu do his thing.

~step~ step~ Step~

Lin Mu walked towards a particular area that had some traces of runes and inscriptions left on the ground. The surrounding rubble had similar runes carved on them too, but it was hard to properly tell now.

"It's near, no doubt." Lin Mu said as he closed his eyes.

His spirit sense scanned the area in detail before he extended his right hand towards it.

~shua~

The ring activated and showed its power under Lin Mu's command.

~Rip~

Soon, the air in front of them started to tear apart as a black crack appeared there. The black crack kept on expanding until an opening in the void was established.

~huu~

"There we go." Lin Mu said, while taking a deep breath.

Jing Luo carefully peered into the tear in the space and felt cold sweat appearing on his back. He had never been this close to an unsecured entrance to the Lesser void and even if he was at the Dao Shell realm, he was no less nervous.

"I... don't see anything here." Jing Luo spoke.

"Yeah, it seems to have collapsed, mostly." Lin Mu replied. "But there are still some traces left." He added before extending his hand into the tear.

Jing Luo watched carefully as the spatial energy leaking out of the void started to stir around Lin Mu's hand. Lin Mu stood there with his hand inside the tear for about five minutes before finally they saw something.

"W-what is that?" Jing Luo spotted the object appearing from the distance.

"Whatever is left of that minor plane... or it would be more accurate to call it a pocket dimension instead; similar to that of a spatial storage treasure." Lin Mu replied.

The object got closer and its appearance became cleared. The void was mostly dark, though from time to time streaks and sparkles of light could be seen coming randomly from the distance.

Thus, it was often hard to make out what was actually in there unless it was close to your sight.

Once the object fully reached where the tear was, both Lin Mu and Jing Luo got to observe it properly.

"An... Altar?" Jing Luo realized.

What floated in front of them was a partial altar. It had evidently been broken off during the explosion or perhaps even before that during the spatial collapse.

But that was not the most important thing. What was more important was a pale red crystal that was kept on it. The crystal was held in place with six metal prongs that firmly clasped it in place.

Those prongs were perhaps the only reason why the crystal had not separated from the partial altar.

~shua~

Lin Mu pulled the altar out and rested it down on the ground before closing the spatial tear. It was always unsafe if an unsecured spatial tear was left open. Even if it was Lin Mu who had opened it, there were always chances of an accident.

Jing Luo and Lin Mu studied the altar and the crystal on it.

"The stone this altar is made from is porous basalt that has been refined in earth flames. A rather unique choice of structural material." Jing Luo spoke.

"What do you think about the prongs that hold the crystal in place?" Lin Mu questioned, unable to recognize the metal.

"Hmm..." Jing Luo probed the prongs with his spirit sense, but was unable to figure out what it exactly was.

"Seems like an alloy of at least six metals. I'll have to smelt it down if I want to tell what they are." Jing Luo said in the end.

"I See..." Lin Mu said before trying to touch the pale red crystal.

~hummm~

But the moment he did, he felt something stir within the ring!

Chapter 995 - Benefit For The Grey Egg

"Huh?" Lin Mu's attention was quickly pulled towards the ring.

This was the first time he had felt this sensation.

'I can feel the insides of the ring like this?' Lin Mu was confused.

Until now, whenever Lin Mu wanted to check inside the ring, he would have to actively look into it to know if there was any change. Or it would be Senior Xukong who would tell him if there was something happening.

If the change was too big or related to the ring itself, Lin Mu would feel the ring stir too, and it would inform him directly. But this time, the situation was different. It was as if he felt a calling from inside the ring and not the ring itself.

"Let's take a look."

Lin Mu peered into the ring and his spirit sense appeared where the sensation had come from. This place was of course, near the Ethereal altar but not exactly from it.

"The Egg?!" Lin Mu saw.

~shua~

Xukong seemingly appeared next to the egg as well and checked on its unusual activity.

"Seems like it wants you to take it out." Xukong spoke.

"Hmm, alright." Lin Mu said before withdrawing the egg.

Jing Luo watched as a Grey egg appeared in Lin Mu's hand. He had seen the Egg several times before and always wondered what beast it belonged to. Lin Mu had told him that it was a snake egg but seeing how long it had stayed in the form of an egg confused him.

'Is that egg even alive by now?' Jing Luo wondered.

~Tremble~

As soon as the egg appeared in Lin Mu's hand, it started to tremble. Lin Mu observed the faint movement on it that made it tilt in a certain direction.

"The crystal..." Lin Mu muttered, and a thought appeared in his mind.

He brought the egg closer to the crystal and saw the crystal shake as well.

~SHUA~

Suddenly, the pale red crystal started letting off wisps of energy from it. Feeling a bit alarmed, Lin Mu withdrew his hand back, but the egg seemed to be pulling the energy towards it.

~WHOOSH~

The pale red energy started being absorbed into the egg rapidly and the crystal too kept on producing it.

"What is this energy?" Jing Luo questioned.

Lin Mu probed it and found it to be unusual. But at the same time, it was a bit familiar to him.

It felt vigorous like fire or blood, but at the same time different. There wasn't any 'heat' of the fire or the 'Vitality' of the blood in it.

"Yang Qi?" Lin Mu muttered in wonder.

"That is indeed Yang Qi... just impure. Similar to those Impure Yin Qi crystals you had found at the Ku Shae ruins and from those beasts." Xukong confirmed.

"Isn't this what we were looking for all this time!" Lin Mu exclaimed.

Lin Mu had been looking for Yang Qi so that the Egg could be hatched. They had already known that after absorbing a certain amount of Yin Qi, the egg had become satiated and to balance it out, needed Yang Qi.

This would speed up the time in which it could hatch and currently its speed was really slow. Even if Lin Mu was giving it Beast Qi, it would still be slow. Besides, Lin Mu hadn't given the Egg any beast Qi in the past two years, he was asleep.

So in a way, the egg could be considered to be hungry.

Xukong reckoned that if Lin Mu had never given the egg beast Qi, it would have not even developed to the point it is now. It would have stayed as it is until it was given Yin And Yang Qi.

The beast Qi was somewhat acting as a replacement, but wasn't enough for the egg. Actual Yin and Yang Qi were still the best nourishment it could have. Thus Yang Qi was highly desirable for them.

"That egg is absorbing that? Is that fine?" Jing Luo asked.

"Yeah... it's good for it." Lin Mu said, a hint of excitement in his voice.

The two of them watched as the Egg continued to absorb the Impure Yang Qi from the crystal. It took ten minutes before the Impure Yang Qi coming from the pale red crystal, was fully exhausted.

~kacha~

The crystal's color also changed to a pale grey, and cracks appeared on it. The egg stopped trembling and now seemed to be as still as a rock.

"That's it?" Jing Luo asked.

"For now... yes." Lin Mu replied and probed the egg.

He realized that he was still unable to penetrate the shell, and it was impervious to his senses.

"Senior, can you see if you can check the egg now?" Lin Mu requested.

"Sure. Send it in." Xukong replied.

Lin Mu placed the egg back into the ring and Xukong tried to check to.

"No, it still doesn't work." Xukong said, feeling a bit surprised himself.

"You can't sense it either, huh..." Lin Mu wasn't as shocked.

He knew that egg was special since it could even elude the senses of Senior Xukong.

"More like I can't sense it without harming it. I fear that if I forcefully try to probe it, the egg might die. The shell is protecting it for a reason. Whatever is in there needs such protection to grow and be born." Xukong replied.

"Hmm... guess we'll just have to wait till it actually hatches." Lin Mu stated.

His gaze lingered on the egg for a bit more before he withdrew his senses from the ring.

"Seems like coming here was beneficial to you at least." Jing Luo spoke up.

"Indeed." Lin Mu nodded his head and his thoughts went back to the pale red crystal.

"I wonder what this crystal is? And if we can find more of them." Lin Mu said with a hint of desire.

"Well... there should be more of them. And we know who would have them.." Jing Luo replied.

Chapter 996 - Potential Divination Skills? And Sign Of Little Shrubby

Now that Lin Mu knew that the Northern Tribes or Gu Yao had crystal that could provide Yang Qi, he had another reason to go after him. In fact, it was only a bigger incentive for him to raid their bases.

"But we'll need to find them first." Lin Mu spoke.

"That's true. But I don't doubt in grandfather's and Duan Ke's abilities. If anyone can track them, it would be those two. Duan Ke especially has the inheritance of her father's clan.

The Duan Clan was said to be at the peak in investigation and tracking skills." Jing Luo praised.

"That's true. I've seen her skills once before. She told me she found the invader's tracers back then." Lin Mu replied.

"See? If she could do it back then and we've been toiling for so long without any results, it is best we get them." Jing Luo agreed. "Perhaps she might have even learned the divination skills by now, haha!" he chuckled.

"Divination skills?!" Lin Mu was surprised.

"Yeah. You didn't know? It is said that the techniques and skills that were in the Duan clan's inheritance were actually descended from a great divination technique. But those were very difficult to practice and were thus adapted into tracking and investigative skills.

Though there was always a rumor that if someone talented enough was born in the Duan Clan, they would be able to finally use the divination skills." Jing Luo explained.

"That's... really amazing." Lin Mu acknowledged.

But this also gave Lin Mu some questions. He knew how rare and difficult the Divination skills and techniques were. He had read about them in the Lost immortal memories and knew that even weak ones that could be used below the Immortal realm were incredibly difficult to use.

The reason was that it wasn't just a matter of practice or proficiency; Divination greatly depended on talent. In fact, the stronger techniques could only be practiced by people who could only be one in a billion.

But then there was also the difficult part of finding them. The talent for cultivation and divination didn't go hand in hand. There could actually be someone born that was incredibly talented in divination but have crippled meridians from birth.

If it was like this, even finding them and teaching them would be impossible, not to mention the rarity of their existence.

One would need someone that was both talented in divination and cultivation for them to be able to be of any use.

Of course, all this was for the very extreme example. Lin Mu didn't really need someone like this. Even a normal diviner might be able to do the work here.

"If it really is like this, then with the information and insights I gave her, she might really be able to learn some divination." Xukong suddenly spoke.

"You really think so, senior?" Lin Mu asked, feeling hopeful.

"Yes. Even if she is able to divine a vague location or some time period at which we might find the enemy, with the power you have there will be no issue in capturing them or killing them, whatsoever." Xukong replied.

Hearing this, Lin Mu felt even better than before and motivation appeared in his heart.

"Though the question stands... what were they actually doing with a crystal like that?" Xukong posed.

Lin Mu's expressions turned serious as he thought about it.

"First the Yin Qi and now the Yang Qi... I don't need to tell you that this doesn't bode well." Xukong continued.

"I know, senior. Guess we'll just have to speed up our efforts." Lin Mu stated.

He looked towards Jing Luo, who was checking the runes on the altar, trying to figure out their functions.

"Let's go. We should leave now. We got enough. I don't think we'll find anything more here." Lin Mu said.

"Yes, no use in wasting time here anymore." Jing Luo agreed.

~SHUA~

The two of them flew up and left the hole. They turned to the west and continued onwards.

~WHOOSH~

Soaring across the landscape, Lin Mu and Jing Luo soon went past the charred area. The vibrant green forest appeared again, and they felt a bit more comfortable here. Lin Mu was still on the lookout for the Northern Tribes or the Gu Legion people.

'There's no way they never came to check up on this place. Though there were no traces of them there either.' Lin Mu thought to himself.

He wondered if they were waiting somewhere outside the range of that explosion site. It was, after all a base and there was a reason they had built a base there. They could have built another one around here in that time.

But the area was really vast and even with Lin Mu's strong spirit senses, he couldn't look past his limits. And he didn't have time to fly around scanning each and every place. He needed to reach the Shuang Qian Kingdom's capital.

Their journey went on for another day, after which they finally saw the mountains appearing in the distance.

"There! The East Shuang Mountains. That's the border." Jing Luo spoke up.

The East Shuang Mountains acted as a natural border between the Shuang Qian kingdom and the Eastern Ming Dynasty. Seeing those meant that Lin Mu was almost in the Shuang Qian kingdom now.

~shua~

Lin Mu sped up and soon covered the mountains.

But just as he passed over a certain point, he felt something and stopped.

"What happened?" Jing Luo questioned, seeing Lin Mu's strange state.

"Little Shrubby... I can finally sense him." Lin Mu answered.

"You do? That's great!" Jing Luo exclaimed.

"Yes. Let me try contacting him." Lin Mu said and closed his eyes.

He tried to use the link between him and Little Shrubby and sent him a message. He knew that since the distance was still very far; it was better to just send a short message.

And that is exactly what he did. He only said two words: I'm here.

Having sent those, Lin Mu held his breath in anticipation. For two minutes, nothing happened until he finally felt it.

"I'M COMING!"

Chapter 997 - Hiding Right In Front Of One's Eyes

Seeing the message from Little Shrubby sent a wave of excitement through Lin Mu's body and he couldn't wait to meet him.

"Do you want to wait here?" Jing Luo asked.

"No, we'll continue onwards. Little Shrubby will catch up with us before we even finish half our journey to the capital." Lin Mu replied.

"Very well. It doesn't matter since we can't match his speed anyway. Haha." Jing Luo chuckled.

The two of them started flying again while Lin Mu kept on checking up on Little Shrubby. He could feel the link between them strengthen by the minute, just a little. But that little amount was still enough to make him feel happy.

'It means he's getting closer.' Lin Mu thought to himself.

It also made him wonder about another thing, just how large little shrubby was now.

"Oh yeah, you were the last one who saw little shrubby, right? How big is he now?" Lin Mu questioned. "Was he bigger than the time I was still awake?"

"Yeah, he did grow a bit after you entered seclusion." Jing Luo replied.

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

Though despite hearing this, Lin Mu had a hunch that he might be in for a surprise soon.

But there was another thing that happened which Lin Mu had not expected, even after half a day had passed, Little Shrubby had yet to reach him. Jing Luo felt the same and was a bit concerned.

"This is strange. With his speed, he should have reached us in this time from the frontier." Jing Luo spoke. "Did he get caught up somewhere?" He wondered.

Lin Mu closed his eyes and felt Little Shrubby, still sensing the link getting stronger.

"No, he's certainly getting closer. And it has been a constant speed from what I can tell." Lin Mu replied.

"Hmm... that's strange." Jing Luo furrowed his brows but then an idea appeared in his mind. "Unless... he went beyond the frontier?"

"Beyond the frontier? Did you tell him to do that?" Lin Mu asked.

"No... going beyond the frontier would be of no use. Or rather it could cause more problems. The barrier there is something we know little about. It was made later on and is set up by the Northern Tribes, so there can be some unknown traps around and beyond it." Jing Luo replied.

"A barrier? You mean the pear's belt?" Lin Mu asked, finding it unknown to him.

"No, this barrier is new. It wasn't there before. We don't know when exactly it was made since no one has actually entered the forbidden continent in many centuries, but our guess is that the Northern Tribes set it up for something entirely else." Jing Luo replied.

Lin Mu thought to himself and wondered why the northern tribes would do something like this. After all, they were the 'prisoner' and the wall was built to keep them in. Why would they build a wall of their own?

But then it struck Lin Mu.

"No way... can it really be that simple?" Lin Mu muttered in disbelief.

"What? What did you think?" Jing Luo inquired.

"If someone reached the Immortal Ascension realm, for example... the other stronger cultivators in the Great Zhou continent, maybe the sects or at the very least the three Ancestors of the top three sects should have felt it, right?" Lin Mu asked, knowing that Jing Luo should have some more information about being from the Jing clan or at least a basic understanding.

"Yes. They will very much know it! It is no joke when someone reaches the Immortal Ascensions realm. From what I learned from Grandfather a long time back, the very skies themselves would call out the day someone reached the Immortal Ascension realm.

There won't be a tribulation, but every cultivator in the world would sense something had happened, even if they were merely at the Qi refining realm. The very spirit Qi of the world would shake and tremble at the birth of another Immortal Ascension realm cultivator." Jing Luo answered detail.

"Just as I thought... Then let me ask you this... would it be possible to hide something like this?" Lin Mu asked.

Jing Luo's brows rose up high before furrowing deep into a valley as his expression darkened. He too guessed what Lin Mu was getting at with his words here.

"Hiding the phenomenon... it hasn't been done before. Though I guess that was because there was no reason to hide something like that... but I reckon with enough preparation, study and resources, a formation array could be set up that could restrain all this.

Perhaps even completely isolate the region where the cultivator is having a breakthrough." Jing Luo explained.

"Seems like that's it then... it was right in front of us too..." Lin Mu muttered, finding it ironic.

~Sigh~

"Seems like we were fooled... this entire time." Jing Luo spoke.

"What can I say? It was the obvious thing to think of... But I guess the Northern Tribes really did outplay us. No one would expect them to do something like this." Lin Mu agreed.

"Though... doing something like this won't be easy. The level of skill needed to make a formation array like that. I can only estimate it would need someone on my level." Jing Luo replied.

"The Northern Tribes have done far greater things in the past with their knowledge of formations. Perhaps they even got some knowledge from the higher worlds on how to set up better ones that could be made by weaker cultivators.

Though despite all that, the Northern Tribes certainly did have talent with formations." Lin Mu stated.

"Hmmm... We'll need to inform this to the alliance. Can you send me to the Kong plane?" Jing Luo asked.

"Sure." Lin Mu replied.

~shua~

The runes shone on his back and took both of them to the Kong plane where Jing Luo quickly sent a quick message to the alliance and both of them returned.

But when they did, they found a shadow towering over their location.

"Huh?"

Chapter 998 - Little Shrubby's Return!

Lin Mu and Jing Luo had barely been gone for ten minutes and thus finding a shadow towering over them was alarming to them.

But when Lin Mu actually realized who it was, his expression massively changed.

~THUD~

Before he could speak though, he was tackled to the ground!

This was no joke, and not easy to do. Lin Mu was after all over six tones heavy. Moving him was like moving a small hill.

~PURR~

"AHAHAHA!" Lin Mu thought didn't mind it and started laughing.

"MASTER!!!!!!!!!" Little Shrubby cried out.

Little Shrubby rubbed his head on Lin Mu, embedding him deeper and deeper into the ground.

Jing Luo who saw all this, was stunned though.

"Oh, boy... that is not the same beast I last saw." Jing Luo was shocked. "How in the heaven's name did he grow that big?!"

Just Little Shrubby's head alone was bigger than Lin Mu's entire body now. Seeing that size, it would be easy for little Shrubby to just devour several humans whole in a single bite.

Jing Luo had read and seen several beasts in his lifetime, but he could easily say that Little Shrubby was among the top five largest beasts he knew of.

He kept on watching as the Master and beast rolled around on the ground, creating depressions after depressions with their weight. A few trees around them were broken apart and it was like a large bowling ball had mowed them down.

Finally, after five minutes of 'cuddling', Little Shrubby stopped. It was a cuddle that could easily kill most people. Jing Luo was not confident that he'd be able to come out of it uninjured either.

Lin Mu too stood up and wiped away the saliva that was splattered on to his face and robes. Little Shrubby had pretty much drenched him in it. He tried to evaporate the saliva with fire but realized that it could do nothing to it.

Then he realized that this was saliva that stayed in Little Shrubby's mouth from where he literally spat out flames. There was no way just simple flames would be able to dry him out.

In the end, Lin Mu just had to change his clothes and quickly wash his face.

Even the armor of the Mortal Strengthening Scripture was unable to bear the cuddles of Little Shrubby and had shattered easily. Otherwise the saliva would have fallen off Lin mu's body rather easily.

Night had already descended by now, thus the two men and a beast decided to take a break for a while.

~clang~ ~clang~ clang~

The sound of metal hitting metal could be heard lightly. This was of course, the sound of Little Shrubby stirring a large pot of stew. Or rather one of the prosthetic hands doing it.

"There are ten of them now?" Lin Mu was surprised.

"Oh yeah, I made more for him later on." Jing Luo informed.

Lin Mu checked all the hands and realized that they were far better than before. In fact, each of them was now a high grade spirit tool!

Even the old ones were upgraded and were stronger than before.

Lin Mu looked at the giant Little Shrubby and was still surprised. He was now nearly seven meters tall when standing and was pretty much the size of a building. While the length of his body was ten meters long.

"He's heavier than me too..." Lin Mu realized upon remembering the weight with which Little Shrubby tackled him.

It was surely more than Lin Mu who was over sixty thousand kilograms heavy.

"So then, are you gonna tell me how you became this big?" Lin Mu asked.

"After the breakthrough, I grew a little, but once I went to the Frontier, I ate a lot of stuff and grew faster." Little Shrubby answered.

"Oh?" Lin Mu was surprised.

His spirit sense spread out and he checked Little Shrubby's body, discovering a lot of things.

'He's almost at the Shell Genesis stage of the Dao Shell realm, too.' Lin Mu discovered.

While little Shrubby was still in the Shell Initiation stage, Lin Mu could see the faint outline of the Dao Shell in his Dantian. The Dao Shell had changed its shape and now looked like a cube that had five long extensions on one half of it.

'Is that... a hand?' Lin Mu found the shape to be vaguely like that of a hand.

"Or a claw." Xukong suddenly spoke up. "Seems like his bloodline is also directing the shape of his Dao Shell. That is good, he won't have to spend time in figuring out a shape for himself." He added.

"Mm, that can indeed be helpful. Wonder if it will be the same for his Dao Embryo in the future." Lin Mu replied.

"Oh, it definitely will. There is now way with seven strong bloodlines he would have a hard time forming a Dao embryo. I'm sure the moment his bloodline feels his Dao Shell is ready, it would quickly form an appropriate Dao Embryo." Xukong spoke.

"And that Dao Embryo, it would most likely be a fire related one, right?" Lin Mu asked.

"Quite likely. I don't see any other that could be formed. Though we can't say much. His other bloodlines can influence it too. After all, he has other elements than fire in him now." Xukong replied. "And speaking of that... I can feel some difference in his aura." He added.

"A difference?" Lin Mu raised his brows.

He tried to sense it but couldn't tell much. Little Shrubby's aura and cultivation base were both vastly different than before, so it was hard for Lin Mu to tell right away.

"I think one of his bloodlines has strengthened again. And from the increased wood elemental spirit Qi in his body, I think it is the Fume Wood Panther." Xukong explained.

"The Fume Wood Panther's Bloodline..." Lin Mu closed his eyes and chanted the calming heart sutra to enhance his perception.

He opened his eyes after a minute and indeed felt the difference.

"Little Shrubby... by any chance, did you learn a new skill?"

Chapter 999 - New Ability?

While Lin Mu didn't know for sure if Little Shrubby had actually awakened a bloodline, he had a hunch that it might be so. The Fume Wood Panther bloodline's strengthening had indeed increased the wood elemental spirit Qi in his body.

Lin Mu could feel it clearly and wondered if it came with an ability, too. Since awakening the Seven beasts Burst innate ability, Little Shrubby hadn't gotten any new ones.

"I have." Little Shrubby spoke.

"You do?" Lin Mu asked, feeling surprised.

"He does?" Jing Luo too picked up on what the two were talking about from Lin Mu's words.

"Yup." Little Shrubby nodded his head.

"What is it?" Lin Mu asked.

In response to this, Little Shrubby moved. Lin Mu watched him curiously as his eyes went wide.

"What in the..." Lin Mu said in surprise.

~shua~

Jing Luo was stunned too, as he saw the large figure of Little Shrubby disappear all of a sudden.

~mew~

Lin Mu looked at the little cat on the ground in front of him and was speechless.

"That... That's you?!" Lin Mu exclaimed.

"Its me, yup!" Little Shrubby replied with a purr.

"How?" Lin Mu was confused.

"Indeed, how?" Jing Luo was disoriented, thinking of it.

"I just can," Little Shrubby spoke.

Lin Mu raised his brows and kneeled down to pick up little Shrubby.

"Huh? He's light? Extremely light!" Lin Mu discovered.

"That cannot be!" Jing Luo said.

He took Little Shrubby from Lin Mu's hand and checked it for himself. But even then the result was the same.

"He... he's the same weight as a normal cat?" Jing Luo muttered.

Lin Mu was still confused and didn't know how this worked.

"Can you turn back to normal?" Lin Mu asked.

"*Okay~*" Little Shrubby said before his body started to grow rapidly. In less than five seconds, he was back to his normal size of seven meters.

The size difference between the two forms was massive, pretty much being exponential.

But it was now that Lin Mu noticed something.

"Wait, do that again. Shrink back." Lin Mu asked.

"*Okay~*" Little Shrubby replied and did it again.

Lin Mu observed it closely using his spirit sense and felt the difference.

"It's... it's not just his body... his cultivation base... it reduces too." Lin Mu muttered in realization.

"It does?" Jing Luo checked for himself and realized that Lin Mu was speaking the truth.

The spirit Qi fluctuations and even the aura coming from Little Shrubby were the same as that of a Qi refining realm beast now.

"Vitality Reversal... there's no doubt... its Vitality Reversal." Xukong suddenly spoke up.

"You know what the ability is, senior?" Lin Mu questioned.

"Yes, it is actually a common ability many plants have. You've already seen something similar to it in the Wood Spirit Tulip and the Purple Sickle Amaranth before." Xukong answered.

Lin Mu thought over it and understood what Xukong was talking about.

"The ability to grow their parts spontaneously?" Lin Mu said, recalling the way the Wood Spirit Tulip used its roots to lash out and the Purple Sickle Amaranth its leaves.

Both the spirit herbs could use their body parts and make them grow and contract. Lin Mu had not paid much attention to it and didn't really have much to question it back then, but now hearing it from Xukong gave him some other thoughts.

"Yes, that's one part of it. But what Little Shrubby has is a bit more complex." Xukong replied.

"How so senior?" Lin Mu asked.

"You know how plants can let themselves wither during bad conditions like a harsh winter and they grow back again when the right condition appear? That's what I'm talking about.

Some plants can go even further and kill their bodies and leave behind some seeds which will then endure the tough conditions before sprouting again.

This is just the ability of the normal plants and trees, for spirit plants this goes beyond it. They can return to their younger forms and turn dormant for long periods of times. This way they can save up on their lifespans and still survive whatever tough condition they are going through.

This very ability is called Vitality Reversal. Despite being very common in plants, it is not something that has been seen much in animals. Or humans for that matter. Even if the said human has assimilated that plant beast's bloodline somehow." Xukong explained.

Hearing this Lin Mu was surprised, he had not expected Little Shrubby to gain something like this.

"This ability certainly came from the Fume Wood Panther didn't it? With its plant like form I guess it has this too." Lin Mu spoke.

"Yes. But for it to awaken in Little Shrubby is astounding. There must be some other changes to it that we don't know yet. I doubt it can be exactly the same." Xukong replied.

"We'll have to learn more about it." Lin Mu said as he took a look at Little Shrubby.

After thinking over for about a few minutes, Lin Mu came up with some possible tests.

"Little Shrubby when you are in that small form, what's the maximum power you can exert?" Lin Mu questioned.

"Umm... ~Poof~" Little Shrubby spat out a fireball as an answer.

Lin Mu looked at the small fireball that was the size of a chicken egg and could feel the power from it.

"So it's really the same as that at the Qi refining realm, huh..." Lin Mu muttered.

"That is understandable, the Vitality Reversal is technically a sealing skill... a Self-sealing skill. It seals your life and cultivation, reverting it to the younger form or even returns to the unborn form.

Little Shrubby's cultivation will be restricted too at the same time if he uses the skill." Xukong explained.

"Hmm... that makes the use rather limited... unless..." Lin Mu said and looked at Little Shrubby.

"Can you control, how much you can shrink?" Lin Mu asked.

"No. I'm either big or I'm small. It's also how I boost my speed sometimes.." Little Shrubby said, giving Lin Mu another question.

Chapter 1000 - Little Again

While Lin Mu felt a little disappointed that little Shrubby couldn't control his size, it did give him another thing to wonder about.

"What do you mean, boost your speed? Doesn't your speed decrease if you reduced your size as it also reduces your cultivation base?" Lin Mu questioned.

"Oh, I just run very fast in my full form then shrink quickly while running. When I do that, my speed multiplies for some reason and go faster than ever." Little Shrubby answered.

"Huh?" Lin Mu was once again intrigued.

"How does that work?" Lin Mu wondered about it.

"I can show you." Little Shrubby said, and increased to his full side.

He flew up to the sky and started running. In a moment, he was at least a kilometer away from where he originally was. Then he started running towards Lin Mu again, but just as he had picked up enough speed, he quickly shrunk down.

~BOOOM!~

And when he did that, the air tore apart with a sonic boom. Little shrubby's small form shot forward faster than ever before, covering almost thirty kilometers in the blink of an eye.

"Just how fast is even that?" Lin Mu and Jing Luo were stunned.

"I think I can explain that." Xukong spoke.

"Please do, senior." Lin Mu said in his mind, finding it rather interesting.

"What is happening here is that the momentum that Little Shrubby builds while running stays the same while his body weight rapidly reduces to a fraction of what it was. Hence, this multiplies the velocity, sending him flying faster than before.

It's like you are pushing a rock with just the right amount of force to make it move, but then it turns in a feather, but your force is the same. The power exerted would be greatly different." Xukong explained in a way Lin Mu could understand.

Lin Mu pondered over it for a bit and finally wrapped his head around it. It even gave him some other ideas that he wondered if they could be used.

Lin Mu explained it to Jing Luo as well, who understood it even faster than Lin Mu.

It was easier for Jing Luo since he actually knew about the concept itself, just didn't know that this was the same.

Little Shrubby returned in this time too and went back to cooking. The food was mostly done, and the hands were still stirring. Surprisingly the hands had not stopped working even if Little Shrubby's cultivation base reduced.

Lin Mu noticed this too when Little Shrubby went to serve the food.

'How did the hands not stop working? Doesn't reducing his cultivation base also prevent him from using so many high grade spirit tools at the same time?' Lin Mu wondered to himself.

He thought while thinking and came up with a potential answer.

'Of course! The technique reduces what is in his body. But the spirit sense is not fully a part of the body. It is also attached to the mind and is mostly separate. It can also grow and be severed if needed.

It already has the same properties like that of Vitality Reversal.' Lin Mu concluded.

With enough spirit Qi that was already poured into the spirit tools and a strong spirit sense, the hands could work on their own with the commands that were already given to them.

Though Lin Mu did notice the pause in their working when Little Shrubby had gone beyond a ten kilometer radius. The hands didn't fall lifelessly though and simply floated in the positions they were last in before the spirit sense link disconnected.

It was another interesting discovery for him and made him look forward to learning more later in the future.

"If Little Shrubby awakens other abilities too, I wonder just how much a difference it will make." Lin Mu muttered to himself.

Right now Little Shrubby had his speed that he got from the Flash Fire Liger and the Thunderbolt Cheetah, the control over fire that he got from Flash Fire Liger and Scorch Claw tiger along with the Vitality Reversal that he got from the Fume Wood Panther now.

The Seven Beasts Burst was an innate ability that was independent from all the bloodlines though.

With just these many abilities, Little Shrubby's power was great. Adding more to them might make him far stronger than now.

Lin Mu recalled the different abilities of the other bloodlines that Little Shrubby had in his body. All of them were powerful beasts in their own sense, and each of their abilities could be considered very good.

"Seems like I'll have to up his portion of Beast Qi again." Lin Mu said to himself.

"Beast Qi!?" Little Shrubby's ears perked up at the smallest mention of the words and he immediately rushed towards Lin Mu.

Lin Mu chuckled upon seeing this and made a streak of Beast Qi before giving it to Little Shrubby.

"There you go." Lin Mu said as Little Shrubby happily devoured the Beast Qi.

He was in the small form so could lie in Lin Mu's lap with ease. It reminded him of the days when he was still small.

'Maybe it's not so bad after all...' Lin Mu thought as he stroked Little Shrubby's fur.

"You're Little again..." he muttered lightly.

Little Shrubby didn't mind his words and continued to eat. Lin Mu too, returned to eating and ate a large amount of food, having missed Little Shrubby's cooking. With the eight large cauldrons of food that Little Shrubby had made, Lin Mu had plenty to refill his expended vitality.

While it was not at the same level as before, he reckoned it won't be long before he'd return to that point if he kept on eating the same way.

Morning came, and it was now time for them to leave.

"This will be quick now." Jing Luo commented.

~grrr~

Little Shrubby let out a low growl before transforming into his full form.

~thud~

The large body made deep pawprints in the soil and made its presence known.

"Let's go, Wu Hei has been waiting for too long.." Lin Mu said with a sense on anticipation.