

Walker 151

Chapter 151 - The Calling

Lin Mu did not enter the Sleepscape this time. He was far too tired, thus he directly entered a deep slumber.

An unknown amount of time later, he was woken up by a voice that was calling out to him. Lin Mu opened his eyes and felt that everything was blurry. He could hear that someone was calling to him but could not clearly hear what they were saying except for his name.

Lin Mu tried to rub his eyes to clear his vision, but everything was still blurry. He was still sleepy and dazed, thus could not think clearly. He stood up and tried to look around. He saw a strange scene, everything was moving and the scenery would twist and turn.

Sometimes it would melt, and sometimes it would shatter. The scenes were blurry but he could sometimes make out some things such as mountains, rivers, lakes and oceans. Though in addition to these things, he also saw some strange spheres.

These spheres were of different colors and had different patterns and designs. Some were green with blue parts, some were green and brown, some were yellow, some were red, some were gray, some were white and some were even black.

Lin Mu continued following the sound of the voice that was calling him and walked towards it. The more he walked, the farther he got. The scenery which mostly showed him the mountains and rivers before was now only showing him those strange spheres.

The number of spheres could not be counted and were spread everywhere. No matter where he looked, he could see spheres of different kinds there. Lin Mu kept on moving, and slowly his vision was getting clearer. Eventually, he reached a point where some spheres seemed completely clear to him while some were blurry.

The voice continued to call Lin Mu, and it seemed to be guiding him towards a specific direction. Eventually, the voice got close and Lin Mu came to stand in front of a sphere that was covered in four colors. The four colors were spread around in the form of bands.

These bands were of green, blue, yellow, and dark gray colors. The green band was at the center of the sphere and seemed to be the smallest in size and covered around ten percent of the sphere. The band that was just below it was blue in color and seemed to cover around forty percent of the sphere.

The next band that was on top of the green band was gray in color and covered twenty percent of the sphere. The final band was below the blue band and covered the final remaining thirty percent of the sphere. Overall, the sphere looked like a playing ball to Lin Mu.

But at the same time, he felt as if the sphere was different. Lin Mu felt as if the sphere was much bigger than him, much, much bigger. Even though it was only the size of a palm right now, Lin Mu still felt as if it was as big as a mountain.

Lin Mu could not explain this storage feeling and felt conflicted. His perception was telling him that he was both small and big at the same time. Lin Mu now heard a strange noise. It was a whirring sound that sounded similar to a spinning fan.

"Lin Mu..." The voice called out to him.

Lin Mu looked around and could not tell where this voice was coming from. Before it was coming from a specific direction, but now it was as if it was coming from all directions at once. It made Lin Mu feel disoriented and even more confused.

"Lin Mu..." The voice called out again.

Lin Mu's mind was finally starting to get a little clearer, and he could think further. Since he couldn't sense where the voice was coming from, Lin Mu extended his spirit sense and tried to observe. But in a surprise to him, he could not command his spirit sense.

It was as if his spirit sense was trapped in a box that was his head and could not get out, no matter how much he tried. Lin Mu kept on forcing and bashed on the box that was trapping his spirit sense. Ever since refining the spirit sense, he had gotten used to it and it had become like a new organ to him.

His spirit sense being restricted was incredibly discomfoting to him and made him feel as if his freedom was being violated. He kept on bashing and bashing but could not break free. This was now starting to make him enraged.

What Lin Mu did not notice in his anger was that the sphere in front of him was getting bigger. It was expanding little by little.

"NO! I shall not be restrained!" Lin Mu shouted.

Unknowingly Lin Mu started chanting the Burning heart sutra and the box that was trapping his spirit sense started to shake. Lin Mu's spirit sense, which was in the form of a tendril previously started to slowly morph.

It started to grow and elongated. Even its thickness increased, and now it looked more like a tentacle than a tendril. But the change did not stop here, the spirit sense kept on growing and soon turned into a massive whip.

The whip was as thick as a tree and was the length of a few hundred meters. Under Lin Mu's incessant chants, the whip started moving. First, it started moving from side to side and then started spinning. Eventually, it had gathered enough momentum and with a thundering crack it slammer on to the wall of the box.

~Crumble~

The powerful whip faced little resistance as it shattered the box and made it crumble. But the whip did not stop as its momentum was far too great, it kept on going escaped Lin Mu's mind. It moved at a great speed and slammed into the first obstacle that it met.

That obstacle was the four colored sphere that had been expanding and had now become the size of a large boulder. But unlike before the whip did not break this sphere, instead, it was attracted to it and was sucked into it, and along with it, Lin Mu was pulled in as well.

Chapter 152 - A Dream?

As Lin Mu was sucked in, he realized why the sphere was expanding. In reality, it was not the sphere that was growing but Lin Mu himself that was shrinking. Only when he was being sucked did he feel the difference. His body felt as if it was being squeezed and compressed into a smaller size.

Still, this did not feel painful to Lin Mu and only gave him discomfort. While being sucked, his vision once again became blurry and he felt as if he was moving too fast to see anything. He didn't know how much time passed but when he could see everything clearly, he had stopped moving.

Lin Mu looked around and saw that he was standing on gray colored ground and everything around him was empty. From one horizon to the other, all he could see was gray lands. The light was very dim and his surroundings could barely be seen.

The only reason he could see the horizons was because of a strange glow that came from one of the horizons. This horizon would glow with seven different lights and would change around. The calling which Lin Mu was hearing from all directions was now calling him towards a particular distance again.

It was calling him towards the direction of the horizon. Lin Mu didn't know what to do except walking towards it and that's what he did. But something shocking happened once he did that.

Lin Mu had expected that he would need to walk for a while to reach the source of the calling, but when he took a single step towards that direction the ground started shrinking. It was as if the horizon was folding and he was traveling forwards at a great speed.

As soon as Lin Mu's foot touched the ground, he had reached a completely different place. While the ground here was still gray, there were some other things here, such as some gray mountains. Though the most eye catching thing was the seven colored glow that was coming from it.

Lin Mu looked at it and saw that the seven colored glow was coming from seven orbs of light that were floating above the mountains. These seven light orbs were arranged in a specific format. They were rotating in two circles, with two orbs in the outer circle and five in the inner.

The two orbs in the outer server were of two different colors. One was purple and the other was azure. They would spin in a circular orbit and left behind a glowing trail. This glowing trial took the shape of a circle and half of it looked purple while the other half looked azure.

The orbs in the inner circle were of five different colors. They were colored red, brown, yellow, blue and green. These five orbs too moved in a circular orbit and left behind a glowing trail of five colors that were respective to each orb.

Lin Mu felt mesmerized by them and could feel that the calling was coming from there, but as soon as he took another step everything started crumbling into dust. The mountains in front of him, the ground beneath him and the sky above him.

He did not understand what was happening, but soon saw the dust that made from the crumbling world forming into a complex pattern. This pattern had concentric circles with a pentagram and a oval in it. Along with these shapes, strange letters and characters were also written in it.

This pattern shrank to the size of a palm and came to float in front of Lin Mu. Suddenly the pattern shone brightly and blinded Lin Mu. During this time when he was unable to see anything the pattern shrank even more and then imprinted itself on Lin Mu's forehead.

A moment later Lin Mu was able to see again and saw that the pattern had disappeared. Unknown to him, the pattern was currently sinking into his forehead and soon disappeared. He looked around and could not find it. Giving up on it he soon felt a strange tug on his body.

The tug soon turned into a massive force and yanked him into himself. His body collapsed into himself and reduced to a small point which eventually shrank into nothingness, leaving behind an empty void.

When Lin Mu's opened his eyes again, he saw a canvas roof above him. He felt the soft bolster below his head and the bed roll below his body.

"Am I back? So that was just a dream..." Lin Mu muttered to himself.

A few minutes ago, just as Lin Mu had shattered the box that was trapping his spirit sense and was subsequently sucked into the four colored sphere, Xukong was silently cultivating inside the ring.

He had engrossed himself in his cultivation and from time to time one of the silvery Grey streaks that were shining in the sky would break into a stream of particles and be absorbed by him. These silvery Grey streaks were incredibly pure and condensed masses of spatial attribute qi.

After overseeing Lin Mu help Hei Yingjie, Xukong too wanted a little rest. And rest for him was nothing but cultivating. But he had never thought that he would suddenly sense the link between his avatar body and main body becoming stronger all of a sudden.

Xukong opened his eyes in shock as he sensed his main body.

'What is happening, why did the link get so strong all of a sudden? It's almost as it...' Xukong thought and trailed off.

Then his eyes opened even wide as he realized something.

"It's almost as if the world's barrier does not exist!" Xukong spoke out loud.

He sensed his main body and tried to see if he could use its cultivation base, but just before Xukong could dig deeper into it, the situation passed. His link to his main body returned to its weak state again.

"What was that? Was that just a normal fluctuation in the void? Or... something more..."

Chapter 153 - Disturbance In The World Barrier

While Xukong was pondering about the phenomenon that had just happened, there was something else happening at the Sky precepts sect.

At the star catching peak, in a large hall, disciples could be seen sitting in their respective positions on the formation. The formation was glowing and would sometimes show things on an ethereal screen that hung in the air. There were hundreds of disciples sitting on the formation with a majority being peak qi refining realm cultivators and some core condensation realm cultivators.

In a separate hall from that, twenty Grey robed elders were sitting on a formation array similar to the disciples previously. Except this formation array was much more complex than the other one and had multiple layers to it.

These twenty Grey robed elders all had the design for star catching peak embroidered on the front of their robes and were the nascent soul realm elders of the star catching peak.

If it were anywhere else, any of these twenty elders could make a sect of their own. Just this showed the power and reserves of the Sky precepts sect.

At the head of this formation array sat another elder, but this elder was not a man but an old woman. She had faint wrinkles on her face and seemed to be in her mid fifties. She was dressed in a black robe and similarly had the symbol of the star catching peak on her robes.

The aura that emitted from her told one that she was higher than the other elders and was at the Dao shell realm. She was none other than the peak head of the star catching peak.

All the elders and the disciples of the star catching peak were currently engrossed in operating the star catching formation array and were fully focused on it, except for the peak head. She was merely looking at the screen and did not participate.

Just as she was looking at the screen, she felt someone's presence behind her.

"What brings you here head elder Han?" The peak head spoke in a calm voice.

The person that was standing behind was none other than the black robed elder Han. He had appeared behind her soundlessly, and it was not clear how he had reached there.

"I've just come to assess the progress of the new batch of disciples." Head elder Han spoke in a friendly tone.

The peak head snorted lightly and turned to look at head elder Han.

"If you were here for that you would have directly gone to see them and would not have come to the core chamber like this." The peak head spoke.

"Ah Peak head Meili, you know the situation had not been well lately. So I just wondered how you were faring after the recent loss." Head elder Han replied.

~Hmph~

Peak head Meili did not respond and simply turned back to look at the screen that was showing a mass of characters that would switch and change around.

~Cough~

An awkward silence descended and head elder Han coughed to dispel it before speaking.

"Well, it seems like I should head on to check on the disciples then."

He was just about to leave when suddenly the formation array disappeared and the screen faded away as well.

The twenty nascent soul realm elders that were sitting on the formation array all simultaneously opened their eyes, and so did the other disciples.

"Oh! Seems like the disciples could no longer handle it." One of the nascent soul realm elders spoke.

"Yes, they did last longer than before though." Another one spoke in a praising tone.

A few seconds later the formation started glowing again, and the screen appeared once again. But while the nascent soul realm elders were talking amongst themselves, the expressions on the faces of Head elder Han and Peak head Meili were of dread. They looked at each other for a moment and subtly nodded.

Peak head Meili turned to the twenty elders and spoke.

"Seems like we can give the new disciples a break for now. Let them return to their abodes, I need to go do something as well."

The twenty elders stood up and cupped their hands in acknowledgment.

"As you command, Peak head." They all spoke in unison.

Peak head Meili lightly nodded and left along with Head elder Han. They appeared outside the core room and soon moved to a secluded building that was located on a corner of the star catching peak. They moved at a blinding speed and reached there in less than a minute.

After reaching there, peak elder Meili gestured in the air and a string of characters appeared. They arranged themselves in a formation and soon a barrier was formed around the building.

"Now no one can hear us." Peak head Meili spoke.

"That's good, we don't want anyone except for the two of us to know about this or it will lead to chaos." Head elder Han spoke in a serious tone.

"So was it really what I think it was?" Peak head Meili questioned with apprehension.

"Indeed, you should have read the old records. You know what this pertains." Head elder Han answered.

"But if the World barrier really disappeared, why was it only for a few seconds? Back when the tragedy occurred, the entire peak had shut down for months now. We could only repair the formation and get it functional, a little while ago." Peak elder Meili spoke in a doubtful tone.

"Because this time it was not an expert undergoing ascension who broke through the world barrier. But rather something else that caused the world to lower its own barrier. This is all that I can deduce." Head elder Han spoke in an unsure tone.

Peak head Meili suddenly had a change of expression, as if she had realized something. She withdrew a jade slip from her storage treasure and held it for a few moments and closed her eyes. She then opened her eyes, which had hints of fear in them.

"So you figured it out? What did you see in the hidden records?" Head elder Han asked.

"Invader... but not any invader, but an old one. The ancestors... they missed someone."

"Or one survived..."

Chapter 154 - Waking Up

Lin Mu touched his face and ensured that he really was in the real world and had woken up. He then sat up and touched his surroundings as well. Once he confirmed that everything was as he had known, he took a breath of relief.

'So that really was a dream, a strange one at that. It was as if my spirit sense was really trapped.' Lin Mu thought.

But just as he thought that, an idea popped into his mind. Acting on this idea, he released his spirit sense and extended it. As soon as he extended it though, he was shocked. He had a hidden feeling that what had happened in the dream was not completely fake.

And that's what it was. In Lin Mu's dream, he remembered that his spirit sense was hundreds of meters long and was incredibly strong. The same had happened here. Except that it was not exactly the same. While it had increased its range, it was only extended up to eighty meters, ten times of what it was before he went to sleep.

"This is amazing! How is this possible though?" Lin Mu spoke out loud in surprise.

But him extending his spirit sense had another effect.

~Shing~

A strange sound was heard that was similar to how unsheathing a sword felt. A swooping sound was heard as a few people shouted out loud.

"WATCH OUT!"

"WHOA!"

~Rip~

A tearing sound was then heard as the canvas walls of the tent were torn and an object entered from it. It came to float in front of Lin Mu and hovered there while humming faintly. It was none other than Lin Mu's short sword. Somehow it had come flying to him.

"What?..." Lin Mu spoke in shock as he saw the short sword floating.

"Hold it, it's responding to you now." Xukong suddenly spoke.

Lin Mu heeded his words and held on to the handle of the short sword. As soon as he held it, the short sword stopped thrumming and calmed down. Lin Mu looked at it from top to bottom and couldn't see any differences in it.

Xukong saw this and knew what Lin Mu was thinking.

"It's not a physical change. It just the spirit control link that it had established with you. While it responded before back when you didn't have a strong enough spirit sense, it was only acting on instinct. But now that your spirit sense is sufficiently strong, it will heed your commands." Xukong explained.

"Try connecting your spirit sense with it. You should be able to control it." Xukong added.

Lin Mu did as he was asked and connected his spirit sense with the short sword. He thought that it would be complex at first, but it wasn't. Instead, it was as if it was instinctive, his spirit sense attached to the short sword, and Lin Mu felt as if it was now like a part of his body.

Lin Mu let go of the short sword and it kept on floating in the air. He flicked his spirit sense and with it, the short sword moved. But in his amazement, Lin Mu had forgotten where he was. The small flick of spirit sense was too large, and the short sword moved with a fast momentum.

That small movement of spirit sense was amplified much more in the short sword and it slashed out, destroying the canvas tent. The tent fell apart in two parts, and Lin Mu was revealed to the elements. Faint sunlight dappled his face as he looked at the members of Hei Corps that were staring at him with dumbfounded expressions.

They were first scared by the short sword which had suddenly started flying and had barely missed their heads, and now it was a tent that had been split in half. They felt as if this was going to be a long and tough day.

"The short sword... it's flying?" someone who had not noticed the short sword until now spoke.

"It's a spirit sword! A high grade one at that." One of them exclaimed.

But just as that man shouted that out loud, another one of the men slapped him on the back of his head.

"Watch what you say!" The man whispered to him.

The man immediately zipped his lips and looked on over at Lin Mu. He had a nervous look on his face and was worried that he had offended Lin Mu. But to his relief, Lin Mu was instead focused on the short sword itself.

Lin Mu was waving it around and trying to get a judgment of how much force he was supposed to apply. Since his spirit sense had grown much more stronger than before, about ten times. He was not accustomed to using it and was experiencing the problem.

A few minutes later he finally got a good grasp on it and could control the short sword freely like a third arm. But along with this, he realized another thing. With each passing second that Lin Mu used the short sword, one wisp of spirit qi was used.

After sleeping and waking up, Lin Mu only had about six hundred wisps of spirit qi in his dantian. And now that he had used it for a couple of minutes, that amount had fallen to below a hundred wisps.

"You need to be careful with your spirit qi consumption. Cultivators usually don't have a spirit sense as strong as you in the qi refining realm, thus your consumption of spirit qi is much higher. You shouldn't use the full range of your spirit sense when it's not required, or you will deplete it fast."

"In addition to this, there will be a spike in the consumption of spirit qi when you use your spirit sword to attack. So you need to be extremely sure when you strike. But once you reach the peak stage of the qi refining realm and have refined enough liquid spirit qi; you'll be able to use the spirit sword freely." Xukong explained.

Lin Mu felt even more amazed and understood much better now. But along with this, another idea popped into his mind and his eyes lit up with excitement.

"Before you think of this, know that you still can't fly on the spirit sword. The consumption will be immense and you will drain all of it in a few seconds." Xukong spoke in a cold tone and broke the excitement of Lin Mu.

Lin Mu felt as if water was spilled on his plans, but soon picked himself up as he remembered there were far too many things he needed to take care of for now. Lin Mu first decided to check up on Hei Yingjie. He had told the team members to inform him if anything happened and they hadn't, so it meant that everything was going well.

Lin Mu went to the tent in which Hei Yingjie was resting and walked inside. He saw that he was still unconscious, but his condition seemed to be well from the outside. Lin Mu used his spirit sense and checked his internal condition and discovered that while the injuries had not completely healed, they were still better than before.

~Sigh~

"At least he's improving." Lin Mu muttered.

After checking up on Hei Yingjie, he walked back outside and saw that the men were cleaning up the destroyed tent. One of them saw him and walked up to him.

"Do you have any orders, senior?" The man asked. It was the same man who was the first in supporting Lin Mu in healing Hei Yingjie.

"We need to inform the other team. I don't think we can continue the mission like this." Lin Mu spoke stating the problem.

The man's expression fell, and he nodded.

"That is true senior. With our strongest expert down, there isn't much we can't do. Before you woke up, we were discussing our course of action, but we didn't want to decide it without you. Now that Senior Hei Yingjie is injured, you're the one who's in command." The man spoke.

Only now did Lin Mu realize that he had never asked the man for his name. In fact, he had not asked anyone's names somehow.

"Umm, what's your name?" Lin Mu asked.

"Ah, my name is Xie Bohai." The man introduced himself.

"Xie? Not Hei?" Lin Mu asked, feeling perplexed.

"Oh yes, Senior. We did not take up the Hei name as we were to be the reserve force of the Hei Corps. Since we had to disguise and live a normal life for a long time, the Lord had decided that it was better this way." Xie Bohai explained.

Lin Mu nodded in understanding and then took a look around at the rest of the members.

"Xie Bohai, tell me how are the others? Have they recovered?" Lin Mu questioned with a straight expression.

"Yes, Senior. All of us have recovered and are ready for any task you may deem necessary." Xie Bohai spoke in a respectful tone.

"That's good. Now the first task is to inform the other team, do you have any suggestions?" Lin Mu questioned.

Lin Mu didn't know if they had the means to contact others, but seeing their previous methods and them being resourceful, he was kind of expecting something.

"Of course, Senior. We still have the locating compasses. As long as we are close to them, we will be able to find them." Xie Bohai spoke.

"Very good. How long will it take you to inform them then?" Lin Mu questioned.

"I'll dispatch two of our men right away. It shouldn't take more than a day or two at the most." Xie Bohai answered.

"Yes, do that. Meanwhile, I have something to do." Lin Mu replied and then walked towards the copras of the alpha steel back wolf.

Chapter 155 - The Beast Core

Lin Mu came to stand in front of the Alpha steel back wolf and observed it. The large stab wound in its skull was still dripping with blood as his short sword was only recently retrieved. There were other smaller wounds on its body, but they were no longer bleeding.

Compared to Hei Yingjie, the Alpha steel back wolf was relatively unscathed. This made Lin Mu wonder why. Although Hei Yingjie was supposed to have a higher cultivation base than the beast, he still lost. He wondered if the Bloodline awakening was really that impressive.

"It is indeed rather surprising that Hei Yingjie lost. From what I observed, it seemed to me as if his spirit qi stores were much lesser than they should have been. We've already seen his core, so it's obvious that there is some problem that we don't know of." Xukong spoke.

"We should get some idea after observing the Alpha steel back wolf's beast core." Lin Mu replied in his mind and then extended his spirit sense.

Now that his spirit sense was ten times as stronger than before, Lin Mu had an easy time scanning the corpse. Lin Mu knew that when beasts reached the Core condensation realm, they would similarly form a spirit qi core, which was called as the beast core.

Though there were some exceptions as well. There were some beasts that could form a core before they even reached the core condensation realm. The cores that were formed when they were in the qi refining realm were called as pseudo cores.

Any beast that could form a pseudo core was considered to be exceptional and was often multiple times stronger than its normal counterpart. While this usually only happened with beasts that had high ranked bloodlines, sometimes normal beasts could also achieve this through a stroke of luck.

Lin Mu's spirit sense pierced the Alpha steel back wolf's body and started scanning around for the beast core. Depending on the species of the beast, its core could be anywhere in the body. Though in most cases it was either in their head or their chest.

Lin Mu didn't have to search for long as he found the core easily. The core of the Alpha Steel back wolf was in its chest, right above its heart. Lin Mu observed it and found that it was completely different from Hei Yingjie's core.

Not only was it bigger in size, but its color was also different. While Hei Yingjie's core was of a white color, the Alpha steel back wolf's was of a Grey color and had a brown pattern on it that was similar to the one on its body. Wanting to observe it even better, Lin Mu used his short sword and swiftly dug out the core.

Blood that was still warm spilled from the beast's chest and stained Lin Mu's clothes. He didn't mind it as he was still wearing the tatted clothes from yesterday and had the mind to throw them away, anyway. He pulled out the bloodied beast core and rubbed it on his clothes to clean it.

The beast core slightly gleamed in the sunlight and seemed to be heavier than its size. Lin Mu guessed that the core was easily more than two hundred grams, even though it was only about the size of an olive. Hei Yingjie's core was even smaller and was the size of a pea.

Lin Mu probed the beast core with his spirit sense and felt as if he was blocked.

"Huh?" Lin Mu muttered in surprise.

"The beast core has an immense amount of spirit qi condensed in it, of course your spirit sense can't penetrate it," Xukong spoke.

"Not only that, but this beast has also awakened a bloodline ability. You see those patterns on the beast core, those are the mark of an awakened bloodline. Usually, if a beast core has marks such as those, it means that the beast that it belonged to had awakened a bloodline ability. Though there are certain exceptions to this." Xukong explained further.

"So we know that something is definitely wrong with Hei Yingjie then?" Lin Mu questioned.

"Yes, that is true. Unless we can observe a few more core condensation realm cultivators, this is all that we can do." Xukong answered.

"Alright, now this is done, I want to check up on something more." Lin Mu spoke with a serious tone.

"Oh? What do you want to do?" Xukong asked, feeling strange.

"I want to go and search for the clues on my own. Now that I have a stronger spirit sense, it should be relatively safe. And even if someone does find me, I'm confident I can escape using my skills. If I stay with the Hei Corps, won't be able to freely use my skills and with Hei Yingjie out of commission our protection is gone anyway." Lin Mu spoke and took a pause.

~Sigh~

"This way at least this trip won't go to a waste. Hopefully, by the time the other team gets the news, I'll be back as well." Lin Mu continued in a tired tone.

'Hmm, although his decision is risky, it's good that he's taking it. He needs to learn to take risks. Anyway if push comes to shove, I can temporarily help him hopefully.' Xukong thought to himself.

"Fine, then. Though I don't think you can tell these people what you are going to do, can you?" Xukong replied.

Lin Mu thought for a bit over it. It was indeed true that the Hei Corps may not be open to Lin Mu leaving on his own. They were now down one man and were overall weakened. Their morale was also lower than before.

"I'll just have to make an excuse, I guess." Lin Mu spoke and then walked towards Xie Bohai.

Xie Bohai had just finished telling his fellow members of Lin mu's orders and saw Lin Mu approach him.

"Do you have any more orders, senior?" Xie Bohai questioned.

"Yes... well, not exactly. I just want to inform you that I'll be cultivating on my own for two days." Lin Mu answered, cooking up a lie.

Chapter 156 - A Cave

Xie Bohai felt confused after hearing Lin Mu's words. Lin Mu noticed this too and had a bad feeling, he wondered if he would buy it or not. But then he saw that Xie Bohai suddenly had a change of expression and his eyes made it seem as if he had just had a realization.

"Ah, senior just had an epiphany. It is understandable that you would want to capitalize on it." Xie Bohai spoke in an enthusiastic tone.

~Huu~

Lin Mu silently took a breath of relief. While he could still go off without considering the situation of the Hei corps, he would still not feel well doing that. Now that Xie Bohai had unknowingly given him a way out, Lin Mu jumped at it.

And technically, Lin Mu did have a certain kind of epiphany. At least that's what he told himself.

"Yes, that's exactly what I want to do. I would also like that you do not disturb me in that period." Lin Mu replied.

"That will be fine, senior. I doubt any more beasts will come here because of the Alpha steel back wolf's scent. They should stay away for a few days at least." Xie Bohai added.

Lin Mu's eyes went slightly wide, but he controlled himself. What Xie Bohai had just spoken had taken off another burden off his back.

"I'll be leaving after a while, I need to prepare for a bit." Lin Mu informed and then was just about to walk when another thought came to his mind.

"Umm, can you also skin and butcher the alpha steel back wolf as well as some of the other wolves for me." Lin Mu asked.

"Sure senior, it won't be a problem." Xie Bohai replied and then went to the carcass of the beast.

~pew~

Seeing him walk away, Lin Mu let out another breath of relief. He then picked a tent and went inside. Since his tent was destroyed and all others were empty, it was easy for him to choose one.

Lin Mu changed his soiled and tattered clothes and washed his face before sitting down on the bedroll. He then chanted the serving heart sutra and recuperated his depleted spirit qi.

Four hours later he was done and opened his eyes. He walked outside and saw the meat that had been butchered and cut into pieces. It had been wrapped up in their pelts for convenience and was ready for Lin Mu to take.

Lin Mu took one last look around the small camp and bid everyone farewell. He stored the meat in his ring and left the camp. He went towards the Northwestern direction and tried to see if he could find any clues. Lin Mu was also a little suspicious of the Alpha steel back wolf's attack and thus wanted to know more.

Alas, all the tracks of the wolf pack had been covered due to the Snow that had fallen last night. It was still snowing, but it was light. The snow on the ground was about six inches deep, but Lin Mu didn't have much problem navigating through it.

Lin Mu also left marks on trees so that he could find his way back. Although he was experienced with the forest, he was not so familiar with it that he could easily find his way back. The markings and his newly enhanced spirit sense would help him with that.

Along the way, Lin Mu spotted some spirit beasts and some normal beasts, but did not clash with them. He didn't want to create too much of a ruckus and attract attention to himself. Who knows if the culprits were nearby or not.

There were some times where he found the nests of beasts, and he had no choice but to go around them. This ended up extending his journey a little bit.

Twelve hours had passed since Lin Mu had left the camp behind. The sun had already set, and the forest had become dark. It had also started to snow, and Lin Mu felt as if a storm would be coming soon. The winds were getting stronger as well.

Lin Mu had walked far enough that he was now close to the mountains and the hills.

'This should be far enough for now. I'll find a place to rest.' Lin Mu thought to himself.

He didn't have to look far, as with one sweep of his spirit sense he found a suitable place. Not far from him, there was an opening that seemed to be a cave. It was just at the very edge of Lin Mu's spirit senses range, thus he could not clearly tell.

But once he walked towards there for a bit, he confirmed that it was indeed a cave. A couple of minutes later he was at the entrance of the cave. There were some big trees that were blocking the strong winds near the entrance of the cave, so it was a bit more comfortable here.

"I should be able to start a fire here with little problems." Lin Mu reckoned as he took out the wood from his ring.

Lin Mu had plenty of wood stored in his ring from back when he was living at the hunting shack. He had kind of forgotten about it, but now it was coming to his use, anyway.

A few minutes later, a fire was blazing inside the cave and illuminated its insides. Lin Mu had scanned the cave with his spirit sense and had determined that while the cave went deep, it was far too small for anything threatening to live in it.

The main area of the cave was about two meters tall and about four meters wide and it tapered down as one went deeper. After a certain point, it was less than a few inches wide. Lin Mu picked up a burning branch and went close to it.

"Huh? It's actually a fissure." Lin Mu muttered to himself.

Lin Mu looked down and saw some traces of water near his feet.

"Looks like it was created due to water coming through it. It probably gets flooded when it rains and the water comes through the mountains." Xukong spoke.

Lin Mu nodded and returned to the fire. He wanted to cook and eat dinner.

But just as he was taking out some meat from his ring, he heard it.

~ROAR~

It was a roar and not just any roar; it was one he had heard before a few months ago.

Chapter 157 - The Roar

Lin Mu slammed his palms onto his ears; the roar was just too loud. Unlike before when it was distant and was simply echoing, this time it sounded close, too close.

"What... is... that...?" Lin Mu muttered as he struggled to handle himself.

The thunderous roar was making him dizzy and he was now lying on the ground trying to stop the sound. He writhed on the ground in pain for about a minute, after which the noise stopped.

~Huu~

"Haa... Haa... Haa... it... finally... stopped..." Lin Mu spoke as he tried to get a hold of himself.

Five minutes passed, after which Lin Mu finally felt better. His head was no longer spinning and his heart beats had also calmed down.

"I felt as if I was almost going to die there for a moment." Lin Mu spoke to himself.

"While the beast's roar was powerful, it wouldn't have been enough to kill you. At most you would have fallen unconscious, and then that would have stopped the noise." Xukong spoke.

Lin Mu felt a little surprised upon hearing Senior Xukong's words. Not because he said he would have been fine but because he knew that it was a beast's roar. Back when Lin Mu had heard the roar for the first time, senior Xukong had not been with him.

"Do you know what beast that was senior?" Lin Mu questioned.

"No, I can't tell just from the roar. But seems like you've heard it before. Was it the same beast you talked about before?" Xukong questioned.

"Yes, senior. Although I still want to know what kind of beast it is." Lin Mu answered.

"Hmm, well from the power of the roar, I can tell that it's a peak qi refining realm beast if not higher. But it could also be because the beast's main ability may be its roar itself. I think it's the latter though, a core formation beast wouldn't roar like that for no reason and there doesn't seem to be anything going on here. It's too calm." Xukong replied.

"Should we investigate then? The sound did seem like it came from nearby." Lin Mu asked.

"You can, of course. Your skills should allow you to escape anyway, and I think the sound came from behind you." Xukong replied.

Lin Mu turned around when he heard that the sound came from behind him. He was a little astonished and wonder if that beast was in the cave or something.

'There shouldn't be anything here, I already checked the cave.' Lin Mu thought.

"Didn't you feel it? The sound was reverberating, it came from deeper in the cave." Xukong explained.

"Deeper? The fissure! There's something behind it." Lin Mu exclaimed.

He then walked up to the fissure and checked it. No sound could be heard directly, but when he put his ear up to the fissure, he could sense a faint throbbing sound. It was as if something was breathing far away.

An idea popped up in Lin Mu's mind and he got ready. He took a deep breath and then walked towards the fissure. Instead of crashing into it, his body started passing through it as if it had turned immaterial. Lin Mu was using the third skill that he had obtained Phase.

Lin Mu kept his spirit sense extended and made sure that there was nothing dangerous in front of him and continued walking. His spirit sense kept on depleting but he did not have to worry about that as he had rested and his dantian was already full.

The fissure went on for a small distance and would change in size as he went on. Sometimes it would become smaller and sometimes it would become bigger. There were even points where it was just big enough for him to snugly fit inside. When a place like this arrive, Lin Mu would rest for a bit and catch his breath.

Lin Mu walked for about two hundred meters through the long winding fissure. Lin Mu couldn't tell what direction he was facing anymore and could only depend on the fissure to find his way back when he had to. Lin Mu eventually reached the end and saw the opening.

The place he had arrived at was another cave, but this one was much wider than the one before. He looked up and estimated that the cave was almost eight meters high and about twenty meters wide. There was some water dripping from the roof of the cave, and stalagmites and stalactites could be seen spread around.

This was Lin Mu's first time seeing such a big cave. While he had explored small caves that were in the hills nearby the town with his friends back when he was a child, this was still the biggest one. The temperature in the cave was chilly but it was still warmer than outside.

"This cave must be quite deep in the mountains judging from the size of it," Xukong spoke.

Lin Mu scanned the cave with his spirit sense and did not discover anything peculiar. He continued onward and noticed that the floor was sloping upwards. He felt a little confused but kept on walking and scanning with his spirit sense.

After walking for a hundred more meters, he noticed that this area was much drier than the one before. There was no water dripping from the roof and it even seemed to be a bit more warmer. The floor was now no longer sloping, but rather flat.

But just as Lin Mu took another step, his spirit sense detected something. He froze in place and tried to observe more with his spirit sense, but it was difficult for him as it was at the very edge of its range. He went closer and could now feel the faint vibrations in the ground.

Lin Mu knelt down and placed his ear against the floor. Then he heard it, it was a heart beat, a powerful one at that, powerful enough to cause vibrations in the ground.

"Careful Lin Mu, it seems I am wrong. This beast may be much bigger than we thought." Xukong suddenly spoke.

~Gulp~

Chapter 158 - A Sleeping Beast

Lin Mu nodded and swallowed his saliva as he kept his spirit sense alert. Just a meter more and then he could sense the large beast that was about eight meters away from him. He walked even closer and observed that the beast was sleeping on the ground and was curled up against a wall.

Lin Mu felt afraid of going forward, but at the same time, his curiosity was forcing him to see the beast. Stuck in a dilemma he thought of possible solutions, until just a moment later it presented to himself.

Lin Mu walked up to a wall and entered it. He then walked along the edge of the wall towards the beast. This way, even if the beast sensed him and attacked him, he would have enough time to escape into the wall.

"Hmm, this seems a good method." Xukong praised.

Lin Mu kept walking and shortly reached the location of the sleeping beast. The beast was sleeping and its body would gently move in a rhythm along with its breathing. Lin Mu was facing the beast's back thus could not see what it was clearly.

But just from its back, Lin Mu could tell that the beast was big, very big. Even though the beast was sleeping on the ground, its body was still about two meters tall. Its fur was brown and there seemed to be some black patches and spots on it.

~HRUF~

Lin Mu suddenly retreated into the wall. The beast had let out a sound and had shifted a little bit. Lin Mu feared that it may have woken up, thus he quickly retreated back.

A few minutes later, no more sounds came, thus he walked there again. This time, he saw that the beast had changed its sleeping posture and now he could see its limbs. They were as thick as the trunks of a tree and long claws were growing from them.

There were five claws on each limb, and they were all about twelve inches long. Lin Mu went a bit more close and then witnessed the front side of the beast. What he saw shocked him.

The upper part of the beast was black and there seemed to be bone spurs coming out from it at random places.

As soon as Lin Mu saw it, he recognized it.

"The bear beast! The same one that attacked Zhou Ye." Lin Mu whispered in shock.

The beast moved a bit more, and now Lin Mu could see its head and upper torso clearly. Unlike its upper torso, its head was brown in color and seemed to be normal. There was a special pattern on it, though. The pattern started from its forehead and spread to its chin.

The pattern looked like curved lines and edged out from the base of its eyes. From there it went to the beast's ears and then came down to its neck before finally reaching the center of its chest where it formed an inverted triangle.

While Lin Mu was shocked by the beast's presence, Xukong was shocked because of something completely else.

"No... how can one of them be here? In a world such as this? This is... simply... impossible." Xukong Spike out in shock.

In fact, Xukong was so shocked that Lin Mu could actually hear his voice in his head and had clearly heard what he had said.

"Senior, what happened?" Lin Mu questioned as a drop of sweat fell off of his forehead.

"RETREAT QUICK!" Xukong spoke with urgency, yet his voice seemed to be fading away for some reason.

"What?!" Lin Mu questioned.

"I SAID RETREAT!" Xukong shouted out in Lin Mu's mind with a booming voice.

Lin Mu didn't take another prompt as he immediately merged into the wall and started running towards the fissure. He didn't stop or take a look back for even a moment as he ran all the way to the cave he had come from.

He had even subconsciously used blink multiple times and only realized it after he had reached the cave and was in front of the fire. He slumped down onto the ground and tried to catch his breath.

"What happened back there senior?" Lin Mu questioned but got no answer.

"Senior?" he spoke again.

"Senior?..." Lin Mu tried for the third time.

It took him multiple tries over ten minutes before he felt a wave of energy pass over his body. It was a familiar wave of energy and he had felt it before. It was similar to being doused with water.

'This is the same as back when senior put the ward on me.' Lin Mu realized.

A few moments later he could hear senior Xukong's voice again.

"That was close... but I was able to stop the ward from activating," Xukong spoke in a tired tone.

Lin Mu was rather surprised by this tone of voice and wondered what had happened to the ward.

"The ward? Why would it activate it here? Isn't it only supposed to activate if it's someone way above my cultivation realm?" Lin Mu questioned, but then realized it a second later.

"No way... it can't be... can it?" Lin Mu questioned in fear.

"Don't worry, the beast did not have a high enough cultivation base to activate it directly," Xukong spoke, alleviating his fear.

~Phew~

Lin Mu let out a breath of relief and calmed down, but immediately the next second senior Xukong spoke something that put him on the edge again.

"Though that beast was once indeed strong, very strong." Xukong continued.

~Gulp~

Lin Mu swelled his saliva as he tried to imagine what kind of beast could have made Senior Xukong so tense. Even old man Jing Wei who supposedly had a very high cultivation base didn't faze him. And then he also heard that senior Xukong had stopped the activation of the ward.

"The beast... if it was in its normal condition, then it would be... above the Immortal Ascension realm." Xukong revealed.

It was as if lightning had struck Lin Mu's mind as he suddenly felt dizzy again.

Chapter 159 - The Great Slumber Bear

Lin Mu could not begin to even imagine such a being. The strongest beast he had seen up until now was the Alpha steel back wolf, of course not including senior Xukong. But even then, looking at that bear beast it did not seem as if it was that strong.

Now that Lin Mu thought about it, the aura that he could feel coming off of it was weak. It almost seemed as if it was injured.

"But still senior, why would the ward activate, if it's weak now?" Lin Mu questioned.

"That is because of that beast's bloodline. That bear beast you saw there is something unique. Even for me, I have only seen a few of its kind before, and they are certainly not residents of a world such as this. A world like this cannot even handle the cultivation of one such as it, a juvenile." Xukong answered.

Lin Mu felt even more astonished as the situation was just getting more and more strange to him.

"A juvenile? Does that mean..." Lin Mu spoke and trailed off as he realized it.

"Yes, that bear beast... its a child," Xukong spoke, confirming his doubts.

"But... but... if it's a child then is its cultivation really above the Immortal ascension realm?" Lin Mu questioned again.

"Yes, even a child of its species can be above the immortal Ascension realm when its born. Though this one has been weakened too much." Xukong spoke in a slightly reminiscent tone.

"What is the name of the beast?" Lin Mu finally asked, realizing that he still did not know about the beast's name.

"That beast is called as the 'Great Slumber Bear'. It is a beast that can only be found in higher worlds and is immensely strong. So strong that even though this one does not have a high cultivation base, just its bloodline aura is enough to activate the ward I placed on you.

And let me tell you, if the ward had activated back then, while it would have scared the beast away, it would have also depleted more than half of the ward's energy." Xukong answered.

Lin Mu felt a little terrified at this aspect. He had already heard from Senior Xukong that the ward was not permanent and would deplete its energy every time it was used. But senior Xukong had told him not to worry about it at that time and had told him that it would still last a long time.

But now that he heard there was something that could deplete more than half its energy, it just made him realize what a big waste that could be. Lin Mu then thought to the bloodline of the Great slumber bear. If just its bloodline was so strong, then what kind of bloodline ability did it have.

But Xukong seemed to have read Lin Mu's thoughts as he started explaining more about it before he even asked.

"The Great Slumber bears are unique beast mostly due to their Bloodline ability. The bloodline ability is called as the 'Well of Slumber'. This ability allows them to increase their cultivation base just by sleeping. Similar to how the more water you pull out from a well, the more water you will obtain; the more the beast sleeps, the more its cultivation will increase." Xukong explained.

Lin Mu felt a bit dumbstruck at this bloodline ability. If anything, it felt a bit unfair to him.

"It is indeed a beast that has been blessed by the heavens." Lin Mu muttered to himself.

"It is not all good as you think, though. This ability also has a side effect, they cannot totally control when they sleep. It takes them many years to learn how to control the ability and only the adults of its species can fully understand it." Xukong said.

Upon hearing Senior Xukong's words, more thoughts went through Lin Mu's mind until a different thought came. Lin Mu wondered if there was anyone that had been able to acquire and assimilate the bloodline ability of a Great slumber bear.

"Senior, if its bloodline ability is this strong, then shouldn't there be other cultivators stronger than it that obtained it?" Lin Mu questioned with a strange glint in his eyes.

Xukong had seen the strange glint that Lin Mu had right now in his eyes before and was now feeling a bit uneasy.

"Yes, a lot of people have, but all of them died. That bloodline ability is not something that can be controlled by people easily. Even peerless cultivator and people who could have been said to have been blessed by heavens have perished." Xukong answered.

"Why is it so? What's so dangerous about the ability, it seems rather straightforward to me." Lin Mu questioned further.

"The reality is that the bloodline ability of beasts are not always compatible with humans and often present in ways that are harmful. Some abilities just take a long time to get used to and the side effects that its owner has in that period end up harming or killing them."

"In case of the Great Slumber bear, the side effect is the uncontrollable sleep. Once a cultivator assimilates the bloodline, it will immediately show its effects. The sleep that is induced is long... very long. So much so that the cultivator in question will die from starvation." Xukong answered.

Lin Mu once again felt perplexed at this. While he had heard that even immortals could starve from the legacy of the lost immortal. He couldn't tell how it would happen in this case, since they would instead be increasing their cultivation.

"Starvation? But how? Won't they increase their cultivation instead?" Lin Mu inquired.

"Nothing comes free and everything has a price. Although the Well of slumber ability allows one to increase their cultivation as they sleep, it also consumes their vital energy. Though it may not be immediate. First, the ability will consume the normal nutrients from their body, but after they are depleted, it will start using the vital energy of the body itself." Xukong answered.

Chapter 160 - Lin Mu's Idea

"Because the owner of the ability does not have control over it, they won't be able to wake up and if the ability does not stop on its own, then they will simply starve to death," Xukong added.

Lin Mu felt enlightened at this and started to think further on the idea that he had had. The gears and cogs in his head moved and a stream of ideas passed through it until finally, he had another doubt.

"You said that they end up sleeping for a long time, right? Then what was the longest time a cultivator has slept for and what was the shortest?" Lin Mu asked.

"Hmm... From what I know, the longest a cultivator was able to survive was about five hundred years while the shortest time in which one was able to wake up was six months." Xukong answered as he jogged his memories.

"I see..." Lin Mu muttered as he now had a hand on his chin and was thinking deeply.

Lin Mu had completely forgotten about the dangerous incident that had happened a short while ago and was completely engrossed in his thoughts.

He stayed like that for two hours and the fire in front of him crackled. Lin Mu had Even forgotten about his hunger and could not think of anything except for what was going through his mind.

Finally, Lin Mu snapped out of his strange state and looked back at the end of the cave.

"Senior Xukong, I have come to a decision. You said before that I need to forge my own path and learn to take risks; that time has now come." Lin Mu declared as a determined expression appeared on his face.

Xukong suddenly had a bad premonition and was actually dreading what Lin Mu was about to say. While he had indeed told Lin Mu to do that, this was proving to be rather unnerving to him, and couldn't tell why. In all the countless years that he had lived, this was one of the handfuls of situations when he had felt nervous.

"And... what have you decided?" Xukong spoke in a calm tone that kind of seemed to be forced.

"I will learn and cultivate the technique that was created by the Lost immortal." Lin Mu answered.

Xukong suddenly connected the dots and links started forming in his mind. He then realized what Lin Mu was probably thinking and was getting at.

"Don't tell me you..." Xukong muttered.

"Yes, with the help of the lost immortal's technique I will resolve the flaws of the 'Well of Slumber'." Lin Mu affirmed.

After confirming Lin Mu's words, Xukong started doubting his own judgment. He wondered if he should stop Lin Mu right here and now, or should he let him proceed. But still, whatever he did, Xukong realized that they still did not know fully about the condition of the juvenile Great slumber bear.

"Wait before you go ahead, we still don't know much about this beast. You saw it strange condition and we also know about the Invader. Unless we know the complete story, it will be immensely dangerous for us to proceed." Xukong spoke in an urgent tone.

Hearing Senior Xukong's words calmed Lin My down and enlightened him to the current situation.

"I apologize Senior, I was getting ahead of myself. I still need to learn a lot." Lin Mu apologized.

Lin Mu didn't apologize because he thought he had wronged senior Xukong, but rather because he realized that he was close to making a mistake which could cost him rather dearly.

~Sigh~

Xukong secretly sighed to himself and was relieved after hearing Lin Mu.

'At least, he stopped fast enough.' Xukong thought to himself.

Xukong stayed silent for a few seconds and thought over Lin Mu's idea. Now that he thought about it, the idea did seem to be possible. If the Lost immortal's technique worked as he had intended to, then Lin Mu should be able to overcome the flaws of the Bloodline ability.

While the side effects of the Well of Slumber were rather dangerous, its advantage was great as well. If Lin Mu could somehow get total control over the ability, his prospects would rise up to the heavens. He would have accomplished what countless others had failed to do.

"Senior, will the ward activate again if I go near the Great slumber bear?" Lin Mu questioned.

"No, it should not activate in response to it anymore." Xukong replied.

"Then I guess we can return to the other cave and then investigate further." Lin Mu replied.

"Alright, but you still have to be extremely careful. Not only are we dealing with an immensely strong beast but also an unknown Invader." Xukong responded with concern.

Lin Mu simply nodded and walked towards the fissure that was at the end of the cave. He took a deep breath and then triggered the third skill Phase. He entered the wall and followed the fissure all the way to the other end of the cave.

He soon appeared in the other cave and deactivated the skill. He calmly and carefully walked to the location of the Great slumber bear and avoided making any noise. Once Lin Mu was close enough and his spirit sense could detect its position, he stopped.

Lin Mu then walked towards the wall on the opposite side and entered it. He then continued his journey all the way along the wall until he arrived opposite to the Great slumber bear. He spread his spirit sense over the beast and ensured that it was still asleep.

Once that was done, Lin Mu very carefully stepped out of the wall. Now he could finally look at the bear clearly. Although it was still dark in the cave, with the help of spirit sense, it wasn't much of an issue. Lin Mu could now see the most eye-catching part of the beast that was the inverted triangular pattern on its chest.

Suddenly the bear trembled for a moment and let out a low growl. Lin Mu was about to retreat, but then saw something strange.

Black smoke was rising from the Great slumber Bear's body.