

Walker 601

Chapter 601 - Finding The Path Out

Lin Mu looked at Little Shrubby and Jing Luo who were waiting outside and nodded to them.

"Time to go!" Lin Mu spoke.

"YES!" Jing Luo exclaimed with excitement.

~ROAR~

Little Shrubby responded with his own roar, and the trio flew up. This time they were going to fly up as high as they could. The tear in the spatial fabric can appear at any place in the sky and Lin Mu would need to be there to open a portal from there to the sacred grounds.

Technically, one could leave the Minor Plane from anywhere in the area but the areas that had started to break apart first were the underground and sky. The underground was out of the option, as Jing Luo and Little shrubby would be unable to leave through that route.

Only Lin Mu with Phase might be able to leave through that route, but even then it may take him long to find the proper point which was the tether between the Minor Plane and the sacred grounds.

There would be multiple smaller tethers that would like to the main tether, and Lin Mu hoped to find one in the sky. Since the sky was so huge there were bound to be a few small tethers there.

The three of them kept on ascending and soon went past the top of the mountain. But the more they rose up the harder it was getting for them to fly. The concentration of spirit Qi in the air was now close to zero.

The way Nascent Soul realm cultivator flew is by using the ambient spirit Qi in the environment and using their own spirit Qi to create a push and pull effect. This way they would be able to fly around.

But when there was no environmental spirit Qi left, all they could do was use their own spirit Qi to create a propulsive effect. This increased the consumption of spirit Qi by at least two folds.

Plus the higher they went, the more spirit Qi would be consumed to maintain flight. That was the reason why most Nascent Soul realm cultivators did not fly too high. In fact, if there was a high concentration of spirit Qi in the air, a cultivator still might not be able to ascend past a certain limit.

~RUMBLE~

~RIP~

The minor world trembled once again as the sky shook. Lin Mu then saw the clouds suddenly dissipating, or more like leaking, into a small tear that had appeared in the spatial fabric. The tear sucked in all of the clouds like a vacuum before closing up.

The tear did not last for long, only about a second, but that was enough for Lin Mu to see the lesser void behind it.

"Not the right one, let's move to a different place." Lin Mu spoke.

Lin Mu knew the unless he saw the tether they would not be able to leave this place.

~RIP~

Another tear appeared in the sky as a black background was visible behind it. Lin Mu's eyes immediately snapped to it and squinted, his spatial perception raised to the maximum. His gaze went past the spatial fabric and the tear before managing to appear in the lesser void.

There, he saw a very faint glimmer that looked almost like a thread.

"THERE IT IS!" Lin Mu pointed.

"Is it the right one?" Jing Luo asked, since Lin Mu was pointing to a direction slightly far from the tear he was actually looking at.

"Yes, I can see the tether behind it, but it links to a different place in the sky. We just need to get to there." Lin Mu quickly explained while flying.

They changed their directions and continued flying behind Lin Mu. About a minute later, they managed to reach the place Lin Mu had pointed to.

"What now?" Jing Luo asked, seeing that there was no tear there.

"We wait, there needs to be a spatial tear here first before we can go through it." Lin Mu spoke.

"Can't you just make one on your own? Like you did before?" Jing Luo asked in confusion.

"No..." Lin Mu shook his head. "If I do that, the tether will be severed. I don't want to take that risk. At least now that we are here, we can just wait for it to open up." Lin Mu explained.

"I see..." Jing Luo nodded his head an acknowledgment.

He was not as proficient or knowledgeable about spatial theories as Lin Mu was. Lin Mu had after all gotten personal lessons from Senior Xukong himself. And if Xukong claimed himself to be second in spatial theory, no one would claim to be first in this world.

~RUMBLE~

Lin Mu and Jing Luo watched as the minor world slowly started to collapse. The earthquakes were only getting stronger and soon cracks started to appear on the ground as well.

~CRACK~

A minute later, a huge fissure that spanned from horizon to horizon opened up on the ground. The fissure split the mountain peak apart at its edges and soon started to expand.

~thud~

~thud~

~kaka~

The trees of the forest that were near the fissure all collapsed in the fissure as it expanded, and some of the rocks from the mountain also fell into it. The cliff where Lin Mu had met Jing Luo for the first time had now joined the fissure and had become a bottomless abyss.

It was then that Lin Mu's gaze was pulled to the fissure turned abyss. In the pitch black darkness, Lin Mu could feel a stream of spatial Qi coming out of the fissure. The spatial Qi was very faint but was still sensible for the ring.

Lin Mu used his spatial perception and looked at the fissure, not finding anything particular there. The spatial border was still too far deep in the underground, and there were too many obstacles for his eyes to see through.

An idea suddenly appeared in Lin Mu's mind and he spoke, "wait for me here a minute."

Chapter 602 - A Different World?

Jing Luo was taken aback by Lin Mu's words, and wondered where he was going. Little Shrubby though did not ask anything; his trust in Lin Mu was something which could not be expressed in words.

But what Jing Luo was expecting did not happen. He had thought that Lin Mu was going to fly to some place, but instead of that, he disappeared into thin air.

"Huh? Where the heck did he go?" Jing Luo said out loud, feeling confused.

He looked at Little Shrubby with a questioning gaze and only received a gesture that could be considered being a shrug. Little Shrubby could still sense the presence of his master due to the link, and thus did not worry.

And neither could he speak to explain this to Jing Luo, thus he took the easiest option. Just shrug his shoulders in ignorance. While little Shrubby had spent ten months with Jing Luo, he wasn't particularly genial with the man.

He had held a grudge ever since his defeat when they first fought, and had kept it up. He had found him many times after that but could only end up in a draw each time. Little Shrubby thought that he was improving, but could still not come out on top.

The only reason he had only become tolerant of Jing Luo was that the man had made him the four new prosthetic metal hands. They were also spirit tools and were actually at the mid grade.

Since little Shrubby had reached the Nascent Soul realm as well, it was easy for him to control multiple spirit tools at once like this. Most beasts were at a disadvantage naturally when it came to using spirit weapons and spirit tools due to their different physiologies.

This also included the fact that their usage of spirit sense was inherently different. Most beasts used their spirit sense directly and did not even refine it. They mostly depended on their natural talent and the passive growth of the spirit sense to extend its range.

This led to them not having the finer motor skills needed for the spirit sense to use different spirit weapons and spirit tools. Humans though were always using different tools and weapon with their hand and thus using spirit sense to do the same came a bit more naturally to them.

Overall, it was just a question of habit and practice. Now that little Shrubby had been using the prosthetic metal hand, he had gotten habituated to it as well and could use it the same as any human would use their hand.

And with the addition of the four more prosthetic hands. Little Shrubby's capabilities had increased as well. The main thing he was happy about was the fact that he could now cook five things at once.

Jing Luo was unaware of what was running in Little Shrubby's mind, and looked at the place where Lin Mu had disappeared from. Had it not been for the collapsing minor plane, Jing Luo would have been able to tell that there were some spatial disturbances where Lin Mu had disappeared at.

But the spatial fluctuations coming from all over the minor plane were basically muddying the water and making it hard for him to perceive. If he was in fact able to perceive it, he would realize that Lin Mu had used Fade.

After using Fade, Lin Mu appeared in the paralleled world. He knew that the parallel world was like a more even mirror of the real world and the things that were hard to see were easily visible in here.

Since it was hard to tell where the spatial Qi was coming from in the depths of the fissure, Lin Mu reckoned using fade should solve his problem. And when he finally did, he could see the changes there.

"What's that? A sphere of some kind?" Lin Mu questioned.

Below Lin Mu, where the fissure was supposed to be in the real world, he could see a large illusory sphere. It was kind of like the black dots that showed the flaws in the spatial fabric or the moving ones, which designated the teleportation channels.

The only difference was that this sphere was not black and was instead white, along with being much bigger than that. Even from this distance, the sphere looked to be of a size the same as that of the mountain in the minor plane.

Lin Mu could only imagine how big it would be if he actually got closer to it. He tried to think what it could be, but could not reach a conclusion.

"What is that, senior?" Lin Mu asked, unable to think of anything.

Xukong who had been silently cultivating for a while, opened his eyes upon hearing Lin Mu's words. He used his link with Lin Mu and peered into the outside world before seeing where Lin Mu was standing.

"The parallel world? And... a world?" Xukong said.

As soon as Lin Mu heard senior Xukong's words, his eyes went wide.

"That's a world senior?!" Lin Mu questioned, surprised, visible in his tone.

"It does seem like it... but there is something wrong with it." Xukong replied.

"What could be it?" Lin Mu asked.

"Can't tell from here. There are far too many things that could have happened, just observing like this is not enough. But seeing as you are in the Parallel world and are able to see this world, it means it is quite close to the real world." Xukong spoke.

"It's not my world though, is it?" Lin Mu asked for confirmation.

"No, it's definitely not that. This is a different world... perhaps a forgotten one, or one that has been isolated." Xukong replied.

Lin Mu was intrigued by this and wondered what that world would be like. He knew that the image of the world he was seeing in the parallel world was not really accurate nor clear and he would have to see it in the actual void to know what it looked like.

~Crack~

But while he was thinking this, he saw a black crack spreading in the sky above him.

Chapter 603 - Soaring Through The Portal

As soon as the black crack appeared above him, Lin Mu knew it was time for the minor world to collapse.

"Seems like this is it... though I can't help but wonder what that world is..." Lin Mu muttered before the duration of Fade ended.

Jing Luo and Little Shrubby saw Lin Mu reappearing at the same place he was before. Jing Luo was a bit startled as he had thought Lin Mu had gone some place else rather and did not think he would be coming back in the same position.

"Where did you go?" Jing Luo asked.

"Nowhere really... just needed to take a different perspective of all this." Lin Mu said before turning to the sky.

While he was in the parallel world, he could see a black crack there, but now it was just the same sky as before. But Lin Mu could tell that the spatial fabric had already started collapse. The only difference was that it was not visible to the naked eyes... yet.

~RIP~

"It's time!" Lin Mu announced.

Jing Luo nodded his head, and a serious expression appeared on his face.

"The moment, I open the portal, you two rush along with me. It will only be open for a short while and will close as soon as the tether gets severed. Also when we arrive in the sacred grounds, we don't know where we will be or if how long we will be able to stay there." Lin Mu spoke.

"Yes, that's gonna be a problem. From what I know, the formation array in the sacred grounds spans over its entirety. It only allows those at the Core condensation realm and below into it. Even entry requires an Identity token.

What I can think will happen is... if we're lucky we will arrive together and be ejected after a bit of delay. If we are unlucky, we'll be ejected separately into the Ripple mist sect. But where... that will be hard to tell. It's supposed to send the ejected people to the entrance of the Sacred grounds in the sect, but I don't know about intruders." Jing Luo explained.

"Hmm... we'll deal with it when it comes to it." Lin Mu said with determination.

"Hahaha! I've lived here for over fifty years, I don't care what I need to do to escape. If we need to fight our way out, then so be it. Besides, they are technically part of the enemy's camp too aren't they?" Jing Luo replied.

"That's true." Lin Mu said with a chuckle.

Lin Mu felt strange right now. Even though he was about to head straight into danger and was even unsure if he would be able to escape it, he was still not fearful or anxious. Rather, he was just feeling a strange drive and excitement.

~huh~

He took a deep breath of pure air, no spirit Qi in it, and looked at the black crack expanding above them. He could faintly see the tether flickering behind it and if he focused really hard, he could even see the outline of something bigger in the distance.

Extending his hand up, Lin Mu channeled his spirit Qi into the mysterious ring, urging it to open a portal linking to the sacred grounds.

~Hum~

The ring responded immediately as spirit Qi started being drained from his body at a rapid rate. Thankfully, he was now at the Adolescent Soul stage of the Nascent Soul realm and his spirit qi capacity had increased by multiple times.

If this was Lin Mu of the past when he was at the Infant stage of the Nascent Soul realm, it would have taken nearly all of his spirit Qi to open it. Opening this portal was much more difficult than when he actually got into this minor plane.

Before the spatial borders had been destabilizing due to the tribulation lightning, but now they were destabilizing due to a world collapse. There were completely different parameters in play and this one was more dangerous than the one before.

Still, Lin Mu was determined to come out of this alive and succeed.

~shua~

A massive wave of energy was released from Lin Mu, which then cleaved the space above them into two. Unlike the black crack before, a swirling gray portal was spinning there now.

"NOW!" Lin Mu shouted before speeding into the portal and disappearing.

Jing Luo and Little Shrubby moved to the tone of his voice and disappeared into the portal along with him. They felt a strong tug on their body, and were then squeezed. It was as if someone had put them in clothes that were two sizes too small for them.

They could not move their hands or legs and their necks were scrunched up. It was very uncomfortable, but nothing that they could not bear through. Lin Mu though was having a completely different experience.

While he was also feeling a bit uncomfortable, he was relatively free to move his hands, legs and neck. He could tell that they were passing through what could be said to be a teleportation channel of some kind which the ring had made using the tether that linked the Minor Plane and the sacred grounds.

"This... is marvelous..." Lin Mu muttered upon seeing the many lights that flicked by.

He looked to his sides and saw Jing Luo and Little Shrubby who were frozen like statues, before turning to look at the back. There he saw the remnants of the minor plane being destroyed. This was his first time witnessing a world collapse, and he had to say it was quite unique.

It looked both beautiful and terrifying at the same time to him. The minor plane's borders were breaking apart and its insides were falling out into the lesser void. The speed of collapse was rather fast and not even five seconds later, the minor plane was no more.

But when the minor plane finally disappeared, Lin Mu could see something hidden beneath it.

"Is that... the world we saw before?" Lin Mu muttered.

Chapter 604 - Remnant Of The Ocean World

Lin Mu observed the world... or rather remnants of a world that he had seen in the parallel world before.

"That does seem like it... but that is not a Minor plane... that is definitely an entire world." Xukong spoke.

"But how is it in the lesser void, then? Isn't a proper world supposed to be in the great void?" Lin Mu questioned.

"This is probably just a fragment of it that entered the lesser void upon its collapse." Xukong replied.

Lin Mu hummed in response and kept on observing. He could see several large chunks of rocks that were bigger than entire mountain ranges floating in the lesser void. Along with that, there were some remains of plants and animals there, too.

These remains were completely deteriorated by the many forces they had to go through during the collapse and were barely holding on now.

"Wait! What's that?" Lin Mu spotted something else coming up from behind the remnant of the world.

"Ice?" Lin Mu recognized.

Floating behind the large rock was what could basically be called as an iceberg. It was about half the size of the rock and was partially hidden by the remnant of the world, which is why Lin Mu did not spot it the first time.

"Why would there be ice here? And that too such a large amount of it?" Lin Mu replied.

Lin Mu narrowed his eyes and tried to make out the finer details on the rock and the iceberg. But it was getting harder by the second, as they were getting farther and farther from it.

While Lin Mu was unable to identify anything on the rock, he did spot something on the large iceberg. It was a grayish black dot embedded into the iceberg. It even seemed familiar to Lin Mu.

"Heavy Depths Iron ore?" Lin Mu recognized.

"That's it!" Xukong suddenly exclaimed.

"You know something, senior?" Lin Mu questioned.

"Remember, I told you about the origin of Heavy Depths Iron ore?" Xukong asked.

"Yes, I remember clearly. It is formed at the bottom of oceans and the bigger the ocean the bigger the size of the Heavy Depths Iron Ore will be." Lin Mu replied.

"Exactly! That large rock you see there and the iceberg; that is the remnant of the Ocean World I hypothesized was near your world." Xukong revealed.

Lin Mu was surprised at first upon hearing this, but then he felt curious about it.

"There should have been a lot of treasure and resource in the world right, senior?" Lin Mu questioned.

"Yes, there should be. Even a collapsed world's remnant should have some." Xukong replied.

~Sigh~

"It would have been good if we were able to get to the remnant and obtain them." Lin Mu said with a sigh.

"Don't worry. Now that we have the confirmation that the ocean world really did exist besides your world and that the Heavy Depths Iron ore was not just something random lost in the lesser void, we will find a way to get to the main remnant of the Ocean World." Xukong said with assurance.

Lin Mu nodded his head and accepted it for now. He knew it would be no use worrying about something that was extremely far from him, and it was better to look at the present instead. But unknown to him, Xukong was far more excited than him.

'If he can really manage to get there, he might actually be able to find that...'
Xukong thought to himself.

~Rumble~

Lin Mu suddenly felt his body shake as the teleportation channel around them shook as well. It was like a glass tube that linked two places, and currently, it looked like something was hammering on its sides.

"What's happening?" Lin Mu wondered.

He looked at Jing Luo and Little Shrubby and found them to be shaking as well. While they could not show any expressions on their faces due to being frozen like statues, Lin Mu could still feel the emotions coming from Little Shrubby.

Jing Luo and Little Shrubby were feeling vibrations that were stronger than him currently. The only difference was that it was hard to tell as they were frozen like statues. Lin Mu knew that this was the spatial turbulence and a normal part of the lesser void.

But this was also something that could easily turn deadly and claim their lives. Lin Mu needed to be sure that the integrity of the teleportation channel was decent or they may not reach their destination in one piece.

~Crackle~

Lin Mu felt a strange fluctuation from behind him and looked back.

"THE CHANNEL HAS ALREADY STARTED TO COLLAPSE?" Lin Mu said out loud.

Thankfully, his voice couldn't really be heard by the other two right now, or they would have probably become terrified and anxious. Which was something that would not have helped them in this situation anyway.

Lin Mu could see that the far ends of the teleportation channel were breaking apart and that had resulted in a domino effect. It had started from the minor plane and was now rapidly approaching them.

"It will be fine, you are already quite far from it." Xukong assured.

Lin Mu couldn't help but still feel a bit anxious about it, but nodded his head before turning to look at the front. The faint outline that he had seen back in the minor plane was now fully visible to him.

"Is that the sacred grounds?" Lin Mu said.

He could see what looked like a flat ground that was floating in the lesser void. It was covered with a translucent dome which was probably the Sacred ground's spatial borders. The teleportation channel was taking them to the very edge of the sacred ground, from what Lin Wu could see.

"Is that where we will be landing?" Lin Mu wondered.

~Zoom~

Lin Mu suddenly felt his speed increase, as if an additional force was acting on him. This force was pulling him toward the sacred grounds now. With the addition of it, Lin Mu, Jing Luo, and Little Shrubby reached the border of the sacred grounds in an instant.

Chapter 605 - Sky Diving?

~KABOOM~

A massive explosion was heard up in the sky as all the spirit beasts below ran away in fright. The strange thing was though, there were no effects of the explosion such as fire or smoke.

All that could be experienced was the noise caused by it. But if one looked up at the sky, they would see what was the actual source behind it. A black hole had been carved out into the sky and it was surrounded by cracks.

It looked like someone had broken the windscreen of a car with a ball of some kind. But that was just one of the things that were behind it, in addition to that, there were three bodies currently falling from the sky.

They were hard to see at first, but soon they became apparent. These three bodies were none other than Lin Mu, Jing Luo and Little Shrubby.

"What the hell! Why can't I fly?" Lin Mu suddenly exclaimed.

Upon breaking through the border of the Sacred grounds, Lin Mu along with Little Shrubby and Jing Luo had started to fall. At the start, because they were still reeling from the impact and the shock, they had not reacted.

Jing Luo and Little Shrubby were still affected slightly because of the restrictions applied to them during the transport through the teleportation channel. They had not yet recovered from that and thus were unable to move.

Only Lin Mu was the person who was able to move now. And he tried to fly since they were quite up high in the sky. But then the shock of being unable to fly was delivered to him.

"It must be a limiter on the sacred grounds. Since it does not allow anyone from the Nascent Soul realm above to enter it, it would obviously not allow you to fly. Try and use your spirit weapons." Xukong Spoke.

Lin Mu immediately withdrew his spirit sword from the ring, but then found it to be unable to fly either.

"This doesn't work either!" Lin Mu said, feeling a bit anxious now.

While he knew he might be able to bear a fall of this height due to his innate defenses and the Mortal strengthening scripture, Little Shrubby and Jing Luo might not be able to do the same.

Lin Mu also had another way of bypassing this fall since he could just use Fade to enter the parallel world and fly down there.

'If I can get down first, I might be able to catch them somehow.' Lin Mu thought and used fade.

In the next moment, he appeared in the parallel world and tried to fly.

"Why can't I fly here either?!" Lin Mu was stunned again.

"This shouldn't have happened, unless... this is just how fade works." Xukong said.

As soon as Lin Mu heard Xukong's words, it clicked to him.

"Of course! Fade only allows me to enter a place parallel to this, the rules stay the same though." Lin Mu understood another restriction of fade today.

"But why do the spirit weapons don't work either? Even the Qi refining realm cultivators can use them." Lin Mu questioned.

"Many such inheritance and trial grounds prevent flying so that the contenders have to follow a set route. This also prevents them from cheating and finding a loophole to an otherwise complex test." Xukong answered.

Lin Mu was reminded of the various trials grounds that the Lost immortal had gone through and realized that this was understandable. Flying made a lot of tasks easier and if that was restricted, a cultivator would have a hard time doing what they normally did.

Reappearing in the real world, Lin Mu thought of some other solutions. He was falling for about forty seconds now and still had not reached the ground. In fact, Lin Mu could see the ground was still a minute away.

His brain ran at lightning speed and the first thing he thought of was his other skills.

'Blink! Yes, Blink should help!' Lin Mu thought.

He then used blink, but it did nothing except for moving him a distance away from his previous location. He blinked several times, but there was no reduction in his speed. He even tried to blink to a position lower than him and higher, but there was still no difference.

"Dammit, this doesn't work either..." Lin Mu cursed.

He then thought of Phase but using it would be tricky. If he kept on falling like this while using phase, he might end up quite far deep into the ground and would not have enough time to come back up.

It was now that it hit him.

"I've got it all wrong! I just need to get down faster than them." Lin Mu remembered.

In the anxiety and rush of falling down, Lin Mu had forgotten what he had thought of literally ten seconds ago. But now that he remembered it he knew the way to proceed.

"Blink it is..." Lin Mu muttered before starting to use blink non stop to increase his speed of falling. Currently, it would still take Jing Luo and Little Shrubby about thirty seconds to reach the ground, but Lin Mu was already there.

~BOOM~

A crater was instantly cratered upon him, hitting the ground and he was directly embedded into it.

~CRACK~

A cracking sound could also be heard coming from the ground, and this was actually from Lin Mu himself. His Mortal Strengthening scripture's Armor now had long cracks going all the way from the top of his head to his legs.

"Damn, that still hurts!" Lin Mu gritted his teeth and forcibly pulled himself out of the ground.

The ground tore like paper under Lin Mu's hands and he stood up. Unfortunately, it took him five seconds to get out of the crater and Jing Luo and Little Shrubby had gotten even more close. Lin Mu could not think of anything to cushion their fall either.

"What do I do?!" Lin Mu said out loud.

Chapter 606 - Ejected

But at this very moment, a change happened. Jing Luo flipped in mid air and pulled out multiple talismans. He then threw half of them at Little Shrubby and half he used on himself.

~HUALA~

The talismans all activated and a strong wind was created by them. The wind surrounded Little Shrubby and Jing Luo, creating a vortex around them. This vortex was spinning in an opposite direction and thus slowed down the speed of their fall.

But by the time they were a hundred meters from the ground, they could already manage their fall. Little Shrubby managed to snap out of the frozen state as well and broke his fall using his own ability.

~boom~

Flames burst from his paws and propelled him upwards, automatically slowing him down even further.

~thud~

~Thud~

The two of them landed safely on the ground next to Lin Mu and looked at him.

~pew~

Lin Mu took a breath of relief and felt much better than before. But he still couldn't help but feel a strange sensation at the back of his head.

"Are you guys okay?" Lin Mu questioned, feeling concerned.

~Growl~

"I'm good." Little Shrubby said through his link.

"I'm fine. Didn't think I would need to use the wind vortex talismans so soon. Even used up my entire supply." Jing Luo replied.

"Thankfully you had them, or I don't think both of you would have been able to come out of this unharmed." Lin Mu stated.

"That's true. I never expected to be frozen like that in the lesser void... at least now I can say proudly that I survived the void." Jing Luo said with a chuckle.

"Wait, did you see anything in the void?" Lin Mu asked.

"No, once I was frozen, everything went black for me. I could not feel anything, nor could I hear anything. It was a strange feeling and very uncomfortable. I don't think I want to experience that again." Jing Luo said with a shake of his head.

Jing Luo then looked at the large crater to the side and the Lin Mu sized hole that was created in the center of it.

"Seems like someone had a rather rough landing..." Jing Luo said.

"It could have been better yes, but it was not." Lin Mu replied, remembering the feeling of the crash again.

~GRRR~

Little Shrubby let out a low growl and lifted his paw.

"I can't fly," He stated.

"What's he saying?" Jing Luo questioned.

"That he can't fly... or rather, I think none of us can fly here. Not even the spirit weapons work here and can only be wielded normally using hands." Lin Mu answered.

Jing Luo furrowed his brows in response and tried to fly on his own, realizing that he truly could not fly.

"There are restrictions here." Lin Mu stated.

"Looks like it. But... why are we still here? The Sacred Grounds should have expelled us by now." Jing Luo stated.

"Oh yes! I was wondering about it too. Are the formation arrays not working?" Lin Mu wondered.

He closed his eyes and spread his spirit sense around, trying to sense any formation that might be set up here. The overall formation array of the sacred ground was too big and Lin Mu would not be able to see it unless it was at the very center or at a node.

"It won't work. We will need to get close to one of the nodes to even be able to sense a formation array like this. Plus, the true location of those formations might be deep underground. Since the minor plane we were in was part of this world, then I'm sure the formation arrays are set up underground.

Only by doing that would they be able to freely harness the spirit Qi from the spirit stone mines that are hidden deep beneath the ground." Jing Luo spoke.

"Hmm... does this mean we will be able to stay here in the Sacred grounds?" Lin Mu said as his eyes lit up.

But then...

~Hummm~

Thousands of runes suddenly appeared in the sky as they formed into a formation array.

"I spoke too soon..." Lin Mu said with a wry smile.

The spirit Qi in the air started to stir as the formation array fully activated. Lin Mu, Jing Luo and Little Shrubby all three of them felt a force pushing them into themselves. The force started to get stronger and in a few seconds, they disappeared into thin air.

Lin Mu was able to perceive all that was happening and knew that it was the space opening up and using the gate of the sacred grounds to send them back. He could even see the lesser void for a fraction of second again, but was moved to the ejection site pretty quickly. Since he was still able to move, Lin Mu took this opportunity to put on a mask from his ring.

In a certain area of the Ripple mist sect, several disciples were working on their tasks. There were even some Nascent Soul realm elders among them that were doing the more complex and difficult tasks.

"We need to be quick and find out the reason behind all these abnormalities. The Sect patriarch has ordered us to strictly check for any discrepancy!" The Elder who was the supervisor here, announced.

"Yes, elder!" The disciples responded.

Thousand of runes could be seen floating around in a formation array as disciples worked on them. There were several runes that were fluctuating abnormally, and those were the ones that the disciples focused on.

~Weeng~

But then all of a sudden, a loud whirring sound was heard.

"What's happening?" The disciples said out loud.

They did not know what this was as it was not done by them.

"The gate! It's opening!" The Elder Pointed to the center of the area.

~thud~

~thud~

~thud~

The sound of three people hitting the ground was heard as everyone nearby turned to look at them.

"People? How?"

Chapter 607 - The Distressed Ripple Mist Sect

The people of the Ripple Mist sect had been sensing some abnormalities with the Sacred ground and thus the patriarch of the sect had ordered the elders to check upon it. The first thing they checked was the gate of the sacred ground and it was normal and thus the only other option for them that was left was the formation array instead.

Now, this was a troublesome matter for them. The formation array of the sacred grounds was set up in multiple parts. The main part of it that composed of over fifty percent of the formation array was entirely based in the sacred grounds itself.

And that was the part which could not be touched by the elders, and they could not send the disciples in either, as the time period of the sacred grounds opening was over as well. In fact, the only reason why they found out about this due to the disciples who had been chosen to enter the scared trials.

Inside there they found out that the spirit Qi concentration in many areas was far lower than normal and the number of resources they got this time was the lowest in fifty years. The sect's elders had prepared the disciples thoroughly so that they could get more this time around, but it still did not help.

This had bothered the sect patriarch very much, along with the high elders. The lower elders though, were a bit confused as to why the patriarch and the others were so obsessed about the resources.

Sure they were valuable, but it was not like the Ripple mist sect was in a dire need of them. Even if the amount that they got from the sacred grounds was lesser than it used to be, the resources they had gotten over the years were still plenty.

After all, not all of the resources that were obtained from the sacred grounds were used. Usually, only fifty percent of them were used while the rest were conserved for later times. Due to this, the sect had quite a stockpile of them.

But for the past year or so, the elders and the patriarch have been a bit obsessive about resources, so much so that they had increased the exploratory and harvest missions by two fold. In addition to this, the sect also started to take the bounty requests which it usually did not.

But then about a month ago, the formation array of the Sacred grounds started to react rather strangely. There were multiple break downs that appeared around the gate of the sacred grounds.

As soon as the elders saw this, they knew the situation was dire. If the outer formation were affected to this extent, it meant that the internal formation array of the sacred grounds was vastly affected too.

The patriarch was infuriated and had thus ordered them to fix it as soon as possible, which was what they were doing right now. But they had never expected for the gate of the sacred grounds to suddenly activate.

Usually, it only activates to allow the disciples to enter or exit the sacred grounds. And it occasionally ejected some disciples from the trials too. This was originally a feature to prevent intruders from entering the sacred grounds, but had not been utilized for that in a long time.

The sect never had an intruder in the past fifty years and thus the only time someone was ejected was due to a disciple's breakthrough to the Nascent Soul realm in the sacred grounds.

There were many disciples who were at the peak of the core condensation realm and they delayed their breakthrough for the sacred trials, Senior Sister Bi was one such example and had taken advantage of the opportunities in the sacred grounds to have her breakthrough to the Nascent Soul realm there.

Not only did she manage to successfully break through to the Nascent Soul realm, but due to the high concentration of spirit Qi in the sacred grounds and the resources she had obtained there, she even managed to progress quite far into the Infant Soul stage.

In fact, the elders even thought that it would not be long before she would break through to the Child Soul stage of the Nascent Soul realm. Perhaps two years later, the sect would have another cultivator at the Child Soul stage.

But now the appearance of three Nascent Soul realm spirit Qi fluctuations at the gate, that too nine months after the trial had ended was shocking to the elders and disciples here.

"Huh? A beast?" one of the disciples said.

The first being they saw was none other than Little Shrubby, who was at the Nascent Soul realm.

"Did one of the beasts accidentally get ejected from the sacred grounds due to the malfunction?" someone else wondered.

"NO! There are two men there too!" A junior elder spotted Lin Mu and Jing Luo, who had finally appeared fully.

"How is this possible?" The elder who was the supervisor couldn't help but say in shock.

Finally, everyone saw the people who had appeared clearly. There were two men, one of them was wearing a mask while the other man was big and muscular. The third was not even a human being a Liger like beast with red and black fur.

"Oh my, more than I expected..." Lin Mu muttered.

Jing Luo's eyes darted around and he saw all the formations that were currently being worked on by the disciples.

"Looks like our plan had been affecting the formation arrays of the sacred grounds." Jing Luo said in a low voice.

"No wonder they are here. I thought we may at least get to surprise them and get a head start." Lin Mu replied.

"Kill?" Little Shrubby asked as his claws extended and started to heat up.

Lin Mu looked around as his spirit sense spread fully. Everyone that was in the range was currently in the range of his spirit sense, and they could feel the pressure exuding from the spirit sense as well.

Chapter 608 - Crossing The Sect

Lin Mu's spirit sense observed the cultivators in his range and he realized that there were three Nascent Soul realm cultivators here, along with twenty core condensation realm cultivators and over forty Qi refining realm cultivators.

The Core condensation realm cultivators were the ones mainly dealing with the formations, while the nascent Soul realm cultivators mostly supervised and dealt with the formations that were the most complex.

The Qi refining realm cultivators were mostly there to do chores and menial tasks. They would hand the materials and tools to the core condensation realm cultivators as needed and would also supply the spirit Qi when needed for testing.

But currently, all of them were under the pressure exerted by Lin Mu's spirit sense. Lin Mu himself did not know that his spirit sense was doing this.

"A-adolescent stage of the Nascent Soul realm?" the surprising elder stated.

He focused on the spirit Qi fluctuation coming from the other two and realized that they were not weak either.

"A beast at the Infant Soul stage and another cultivator at the Adolescent Soul stage of the Nascent Soul realm... how are they here?" He added.

"Are they from our sect?" An elder who found this all unbelievable said.

They could not imagine there being intruders in the sect or even in the sacred grounds and thus thought of the only other option which was none other than them being some disciples or elders of the sect that were here instead.

"No! They are not from our sect! I don't recognize any elder to be like them and they are far too strong to be disciples!" The supervising elder uttered out loud.

He did not even consider Little Shrubby in it, as he was a beast and would obviously not be a disciple.

~Sigh~

"Looks like we got to hurry..." Lin Mu said with a sigh before chanting something.

The supervising elder, who had gotten agitated along with the others, suddenly became dazed as his eyes went dull and facial expression blank. Jing Luo looked at it with an incredulous expression and spoke.

"What did you do to them?" He asked.

"Just bought us some time... let's get as far away as possible. The others may arrive soon too," Lin Mu replied as he gazed at little shrubby.

Shrubby instantly understood what Lin Mu meant, and the harness appeared on his back. Jing Luo narrowed his eyes upon seeing this as it was the first time Little Shrubby had shown the harness, as Lin Mu had not needed to ride on his back at the Minor plane before.

The only thing that Little Shrubby had even shown Jing Luo was the Spatial storage belt that he wore on his neck as a collar and the prosthetic spirit tool. But then he saw Lin Mu climbing on top of Little Shrubby and strapping into the Harness.

Jing Luo understood the use of the Harness. He had seen Little Shrubby's speed and knew how fast he was. He was way faster than him, or perhaps anyone in the Nascent Soul realm. Plus, he was sure that Little Shrubby had not used his full speed yet.

Whenever they battled, Little Shrubby used short bursts of speed. For him to reach his top speed, he would have to run in a straight line for a long time to be able to do that and thus had never used it in the minor plane.

There was simply not enough space there. If Little Shrubby started running, he would not even reach half way to his full speed before crossing the entire length of the Minor plane, running out of space to run.

The elders and disciples of the Ripple mist sect were still in a daze and looked like they would be for a while.

"Where do we go now?" Jing Luo questioned.

"Out of here. Anywhere but first we just need to get as far away as possible." Lin Mu replied.

Jing Luo nodded his head and flew up. Little Shrubby pawed the ground and pushed ahead. He didn't go at its full speed from the start, since that would create a lot of noise. Instead, it started to leap across the area while running, while creating barely any sound.

Even now, Little Shrubby was moving at a speed faster than at which it flew. While Lin Mu could fly faster than this, that would let out a lot of spirit Qi fluctuations and attract quite a bit of attention.

Even now, there were several people who had noticed them.

"Who's that flying in the air?" A disciple who was at the Qi refining realm asked his companions.

"If they can fly, then they must be a Nascent Soul realm elder." One of the companions answered.

~Whoosh~

And just as the disciples were speaking about this, they felt a strong gust of wind rush by.

"WHAT IN THE NAME OF HEAVENS WAS THAT?!" The disciples who were knocked back couldn't help but say.

They moved their eyes to catch a glimpse but could only see a red blur moving at a blinding speed.

"Is that an elder too?" Someone questioned.

"I think that was a beast?" Another disciple wondered.

"A tamed beast? That too at the Nascent Soul realm? I highly doubt they are one of the few that our sect has." A senior disciple who was at the Core Condensation realm spoke.

"Who do you think they are then, senior brother?" A junior disciple questioned.

"I think that elder was not wearing the robes of our sect either," someone noticed.

The Senior Disciple narrowed his eyes as he thought of something. He then pulled out a jade slip and held it in his hand. Closing his eyes, he sent a message and then put the jade slip away.

"Let's see who they really are..." The senior disciple spoke.

By now, Lin Mu, Little Shrubby, and Jing Luo had already crossed a quarter of the Ripple Mist sect. The gate of the sacred ground was located far too deep into the sect, plus they needed to cross several barriers too.

Chapter 609 - The Sect's Barriers

The Ripple mist sect had different barriers for security in different sections of the sect. This was to prevent those who did not have access or were not authorized to enter those areas from proceeding.

Only if one had the right identity token would one be able to enter that area. But there were still some peculiarities to this. There were several areas that were considered to be public and did not need an identity token except for the most basic one to enter.

This would be the token needed for a person to enter the sect's boundaries. Lin Mu did not need this, as the formation pretty much recognized him as part of the natural 'fauna'. As for Jing Luo, he already had

a fake identity token that he had made during the time when Lin Mu was absorbing the spirit Qi of the minor plane.

He had made this fake token from the remnants of the cultivators he had found when he originally came to the minor plane. One could see from how Jing Luo had the Wind vortex talismans and the fake identity token, that he was quite prepared.

Another thing about the barriers was that if one was inside it, some of them actually did not need the token to exit it. They only needed the tokens for the entry. The gate of the Sacred grounds was under one such area that only needed the token for the entrance and not exit and as such Lin Mu and Jing Luo were able to leave rather easily.

After exiting this area, they ended up in the public area of the sect, which did not need anything specific, so they were able to travel with ease. Theoretically, they could just travel in the common area of the sect and exit it without actually triggering anything.

But this was not possible, as that would mean they would need to go around a long path and would get seen by a lot of people. Rather than that, it was easier for them to just go straight through the sect.

After reaching one such area, Lin Mu and Jing Luo had to stop.

"Let me take care of this barrier," Jing Luo said before walking up to it and placing his hand on it.

His spirit sense extended into the formation nodes while with his left hand he withdrew a couple of spirit tools that were used with the formations. Jing Luo had a talisman in his left hand and he then slapped it on top of the surface of the barrier.

He then took out a cuboid stone and let it float in front of him.

~hum~

Under the effect of the talisman, the nodes of the formation became revealed to the naked eye and his spirit sense started to make changes to them. After a certain amount of changes were done, Jing Luo used the cuboid stone to tap the node, which would then deactivate it.

He did this five times in five minutes before finally stopping.

~shua~

The barrier in front of them disappeared, and they were able to continue onward. Lin Mu knew about the method that Jing Luo had just used as it was included in the jade slip that he had given him.

Lin Mu had a lot of time to study it all, but was barely half way through it. There was no way he would be able to go through everything in that jade slip as that had taken over fifty years to be made.

Lin Mu would need even more time than that if he wanted to internalize it and fully become proficient in it, it would take him years to do that. Thus Jing Luo, taking care of these formations right now was a better choice and would save them a lot of time.

Haven gone past the barrier, Lin Mu and Jing Luo continued their journey. Thankfully, the Ripple Mist Sect was rather vast and the number of disciples currently around were rather sparse.

Still, Lin Mu knew that some of them had noticed them while traveling and that there was also a chance that their existence had been revealed to the sect by now. Lin Mu had used the severing heart sutra on all of the elders and the disciples at the gate of the sacred ground and had put them in a daze.

At his current level, Lin Mu knew that all cultivators up to the core condensation realm should be dazed for at least ten minutes if no one woke them up and as for the Nascent Soul realm cultivators he didn't really have a proper idea. When he had used the severing heart sutra of Jing Luo, it had only worked for a mere second before he had managed to snap out of it.

But considering that Lin Mu was at the Adolescence Stage of the Nascent Soul realm, and that the elders at the gate were only at the Infant Soul stage, Lin Mu reckoned that they would be dazed for at least five minutes and perhaps even more.

'The best would be if they stay like that for as long as possible... at least until we are half way through the sect.' Lin Mu thought.

"Who's that? Did our sect have a guest?" Some of the disciples in the distance spoke.

Lin Mu could hear them clearly at this distance and just ignored them, not even looking at them. His spirit sense was spread around in a circle and was observing everything just in case.

And since they were just passing without doing much, the disciples did not think that they were intruders, either. But when they came across another barrier and had to stop there, the disciples nearby saw it.

Jing Luo and Lin Mu looked at each other and then at the disciples, the same idea appearing in their minds. But just when they were about to act, one of the disciples approached them on his own.

Chapter 610 - A Foolish Disciple?

Lin Mu and Jing Luo became a bit confused the moment they saw the disciple appraising them. They were originally going to seize the identity tokens of these disciples with the hope that there would be one of them that could allow them to pass through the barrier.

While Jing Luo could unlock this one on his own as well, it would take him a few extra minutes that they did not really have. Thus, this would be the fastest way for them to progress further.

But then this disciple who was wearing the robes of the inner court approach them with a smile on his face.

"Would honored guests allow me to provide some help?" the Disciple asked.

Lin Mu narrowed his eyes and scanned the disciple with his spirit sense, finding that he was the early stage of the core condensation realm. He didn't know what to do, but then thought of going along with it.

He gestured to Jing Luo to pause before speaking.

"We want to go past this place but we have been given the wrong kind of token it seems." Lin Mu flashed the token that they had.

"Tsk tsk~ Seems like the disciples at the registry messed up again. Let me help the honored guests then,"
The disciple replied.

"Oh! That would be really nice." Lin Mu said, feeling surprised.

"Please, the honor is all mine. The sect would be losing its credibility if I let honored guests be displeased." The disciple stated.

He then took out his own token and waved it at the barrier, which then opened up a gate for them.

Jing Luo was honestly quite stunned by this and had not expected this to happen. He had been ready to fight and get the identity token, but now they had been mistaken for 'Honored Guests' somehow.

He didn't know whether this disciple was truly mistaken or was acting pragmatically to save himself and his fellow disciples.

Lin Mu on the other hand, nodded his head and went through the gate along with Little Shrubby and Jing Luo.

~thud~

"Take this as a gift," Lin Mu said as he threw a fist sized stone to the disciple from past the gate.

The disciple caught it and did not recognize what it was first. But then he could feel the spirit Qi from the stone entering his hand.

"M-Mid grade spirit stone? This is a mid grade spirit stone? There can be a mid grade spirit stone of this SIZE?" The disciple couldn't help but say.

His fellow disciples, who were hesitant to approach Lin Mu were stunned as well.

"Dammit! We should have gone forward to help instead." They couldn't help but regret it.

But just as Lin Mu and Jing Luo had left the area, a group of Nascent Soul realm elders arrived at the scene. The disciple who had helped Lin Mu proceed was showing off the spirit stone to his companions and bragging.

"See! You guys just don't know when to take an opportunity." The disciple said.

"Humph! We just didn't go talk to them since we didn't know who they were." One of the other disciples stated.

"Didn't you see how strange they were? One of them was riding on that beast while wearing a mask too while the other man was built like a hill!" Another one commented.

"Exactly, and what if they were intruders and not guests at all? What would you have done then?" a female disciple snorted.

"Pfft~ you guys are just envious. How would someone even enter our sect like that? And didn't you see, they were leaving the area... not entering it. They would have surely been found if they were entering." The disciple replied.

"WHAT DID YOU JUST SAY!? A man on a beast and wearing a mask?" The Nascent Soul elder who just appearing in the sky, questioned out loud.

"Ah!" All the disciples were startled by the sudden appearance of the elders and looked up.

"E-Elders! Greetings!" They all cupped their hands in greeting.

"Repeat what you just said," The elder who had spoken before stated. The other elders also descended along with him while looking around.

The disciples then repeated the incident that had just happened with Lin Mu appearing and the disciple helping them. As soon as the elders heard it they were stunned first but then rage became visible on their faces.

"YOU FOOLS!" The elder hundred while pointing at the disciple.

"Do you know what you just did!? You let an intruder escape!" A second elder said.

"Wait, they really were intruders?" The female disciple who had commented earlier questioned as her face went pale.

"YES! They are intruders that not only infiltrated our sect but also our sacred grounds! They hypnotized the elders at the sacred ground's gate before escaping." The first elder explained.

~Thud~

All of the disciples went white with fear and the one who had helped Lin Mu directly fell to the ground.

"Did they say anything about where they were going?" The elders asked.

"No, they just said they were leaving the area." The disciples spoke, while the one who had helped Lin Mu was frozen on the ground in shock.

"GAH! You lot are useless," The elder said, feeling infuriated.

"We're not out of luck yet. The other teams of elders should encounter them if they are leaving the sect from that end." The second elder commented.

"Let's hope so..." The infuriated elder said before looking at the disciple who had helped Lin Mu. "And you! Go and report to the discipline hall and confess your crimes. I'll come to see you later personally!" The elder said before flying away in the direction that Lin Mu had gone into.

~thud~

The disciple directly fainted upon hearing the verdict, while his fellow disciples could only sign in pity. But on the other hand, they felt lucky that they did not help Lin Mu nor did anything problematic, except for getting scolded, they didn't really get any punishment.

As for the disciple who had helped Lin Mu, his fate was probably sealed now.