

Walker Of The Worlds

Chapter 1 - Lin Mu

"Lin Mu, stop lazing around we still have a lot of trees left to harvest in today's quota, we barely filled our quota yesterday and I don't want to anger the supervisor again, he will definitely cut our wages this time."

Hearing the voice calling him, a youthful-looking boy of about 16 years of age and having short hair turned around towards the man that had just called him. Seeing the man's tense look, the boy gulped and answered;

"I'm not lazing around uncle Yuan Tu, I'm just trying to be careful not to damage the spirit apples while plucking them from the trees."

The man named Yuan Tu, upon hearing the boy's reply, had a tint of annoyance in his eyes as he thought that the boy was merely giving excuses for his slow pace in harvesting the spirit apples from the trees. Remembering yesterday's scolding that he got from the supervisor for being the group leader of the slowest harvesting group out of a hundred this week, he knew that if his group did not exceed their quota that day they will definitely never be able to receive their bonus wages of that week.

"Hasten your pace and stop giving excuses or you will be the one to bear the penalty that we'll receive for incomplete work"

Not giving the boy another chance to reply, the man walked away to another tree to work. The boy heard Yuan Tu's threat and quickened his pace of plucking the spirit apples from the tree. After that he placed them in his basket and then when the basket was full, he carefully transferred them to the wheelbarrow, which would then be sent to the main collection cart.

Spirit apples were the main produce of the Northern town, which was rather lucrative and were sent to Wu Lim city, which was the main city. Wu Lim city had four satellite towns, each named according to their locations and each having their own specialty. Spirit apples were very expensive for common peasants, with each apple costing a gold coin, which only the people from the city could afford to buy. While the peasants that harvested them only received four silver coins every day, it would take them nearly a whole month's wages to buy just one, thus they had to be careful not to damage, bruise or scratch the apples as this resulted in the spirit apples slowly losing their spirit qi making them lose value.

Two hours later, Lin Mu had done four trips to the cart, emptying his basket along with the others. The wheelbarrow was nearly full when Yuan Tu walked towards the cart and emptied his basket that ended up completely filling the wheelbarrow.

Looking at the filled wheelbarrow, Yuan Tu took a breath of relief as the day's quota was finally completed two hours before sundown, which gave them plenty of time to harvest more spirit apples that day. He thought that they may at last get their bonus wages this week. Thinking of this made a slight smile appear on Yuan Tu's face and he looked towards Lin Mu...

"Looks like you finally picked up the pace, now that we have finished today's quota you can go and send the wheelbarrow to the main collecting cart, the rest of us will continue harvesting."

Looking at the heavy-looking wheelbarrow Lin Mu furrowed his brows and knew that it will be difficult for him to move it all the way to the collecting cart and would take him at least 45 minutes to come back during which the rest of the 5 people of the group would be the only ones receiving the higher bonus pay, with him not having him much time to earn his.

"Uncle Yuan Tu, this wheelbarrow is very heavy for me, can't you bring it to the main cart?"

Yuan Tu had the greed of higher wages in his mind, and hence definitely did not want to waste his time in sending the wheelbarrow back.

"Can't you just do as I asked Lin Mu? If you keep on shirking from hard work you'll never get strong, in the time you spent talking you could have very well been on your way to the collecting cart." Yuan Tu spoke, feeling annoyed.

Looking at the annoyed look in Yuan Tu's eyes, Lin Mu knew it would be useless to argue any further and that he would just have to rush back as fast as possible so that he could work more. Having thought of that, Lin Mu started pushing the wheelbarrow towards the location of the collecting cart.

5 minutes later Lin Mu started getting tired and was about to slow down his pace when a stone came under the wheelbarrow making it start to tilt. Lin Mu was unable to handle the heavy wheelbarrow and lost control of it, making it fall with a loud noise.

With a horrified expression on his face, Lin Mu was left standing, while the other workers heard the voice and gathered around, feeling shocked at the sight of a fallen wheelbarrow. All the spirit apples that were in it were now scattered around in the dirt, with many scratched and damaged.

As more and more people gathered, the supervisor seeing the commotion also came over to see what happened and why the peasants were not working. Seeing the supervisor approach made the people quiet down, and they gave way for the supervisor to come. Looking at the debacle in front of him, the supervisor Li Peng was shocked at first, but then anger started to seethe within him.

"WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS MESS? COME OUT NOW."

The surrounding people did not want to get involved, thus they quickly pointed towards the frozen Lin Mu. Lin Mu was now even more horrified seeing the supervisor and started to fall in despair.

"YOU IMBECILE DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU HAVE DONE, HOW BIG OF A LOSS YOU'VE CAUSED, WHERE IS YOUR GROUP LEADER CALL HIM."

The supervisor shouted with spittle flying all over, which only made the people quickly call over Yuan Tu quickly. Yuan Tu, who was already on his way to see what had happened, looked at the supervisor's now angry red face, and became pale with fear. He hesitated in approaching him.

"LOOK WHAT YOUR GROUP MEMBER HAS DONE, A WHOLE WHEELBARROW'S WORTH OF SPIRIT APPLES ARE NOW USELESS, THIS IS MORE THAN A 1000 GOLD COINS WORTH OF LOSS. WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO SAY ABOUT THIS, HOW WILL THIS LOSS BE COMPENSATED?"

Upon hearing the supervisors shout about compensation, Yuan Tu became even more frightened, and his ears were already ringing from the shouting which made it even more difficult for him to talk.

"I... I... I my lord not all apples are damaged. We can still sell the rest of them, please spare us just this once, we'll never make such a mistake ever again."

Li Peng, now calmed down a little bit and glanced at the spirit apples. He saw that some were indeed still redeemable, but the rest were still damaged apples that were worth at least 700 gold coins.

With a stern expression he spoke, "Even if you exclude the apples that are undamaged the loss is still more than 700 gold coins, when the mayor hears about this he will not be happy, you cannot be spared."

Li Peng thought about how to compensate for the over 700 gold coins' worth of damage. He knew that he'll probably have to dock a whole month's wages from every peasant working here, but it still wouldn't be enough. At this point, he looked at Lin Mu.

"Every peasant working here will lose one months' worth of wages in compensation for the loss and for the rest of it, as the boy caused this mistake, all his property will be seized and sold off to pay for it."

Hearing the supervisor's order each and every person turned pale with despair and then started to feel angry against Lin Mu as it was his mistake which had just caused them to lose everything they worked for that entire month. Lin Mu now having heard the order

had tears in his eyes as he knew he would be losing everything he had, even the house that his parents had left him when they died last year.

"Guards, seize this boy and his group leader, go to the boy's property and seize all valuables and the house, then throw the boy out of the town, then bring the group leader to the square for 10 lashes."

One of the guards seized Lin Mu and others restrained Yuan Tu and then took them away for their punishments. Yuan Tu had a hateful look on his face as he looked at Lin Mu and gritted his teeth, swearing to have revenge on the kid. The other peasants also looked at Lin Mu with hateful gazes. Lin Mu tried to struggle but there was no way he would be able to overpower a guard having the strength of sixth stage of body tempering, he himself was only at the second stage of body tempering as he had never actually trained properly before with a tempering technique.

The guards dragged Lin Mu to his house and ransacked the house, taking everything of value in there. Though there was not much there to begin with as most of the valuables had been sold off in exchange for medicine when Lin Mu's mother fell sick during the last years' plague. The only thing worth something was the house itself and the land that it was built on.

Lin Mu watched as his whole world was ripped apart and started tearing up and sniffing. After checking that all valuables have been taken, the guard sealed the courtyard entrance of the house and went back to report to the supervisor, while one guard brought Lin Mu to the edge of the town and threw him away and then turned back to head to his post.

Lin Mu lied there on the ground for hours before he got up, no longer crying. He had a dull look in his eyes and walked aimlessly out of the town towards the forest. After walking for an hour, he found himself in front of the apple tree he used to play at when he was a child. There was a small stream nearby where he would catch fish and play in the water with his friends. Now tired and exhausted, he sat below the tree with his back to the tree and fell asleep under the night sky and the moon hiding in the clouds.

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