

Walker 101

Chapter 101 - A Change

Xukong sensed the abnormality that was happening instantly. He could feel that a change had happened within Lin Mu's mind which he was not clear about. He could sense the mysterious ring responding to Lin Mu in some way.

"What!?" Xukong suddenly exclaimed as he felt the environment within the mysterious ring change.

Xukong could see that the mysterious ring had become active once again as a beam of light was being emanated by the ethereal altar. He rushed towards the ethereal altar to observe what exactly was happening with it.

While this was happening in the mysterious ring, Lin Mu was clueless about it in the real world. Right now his mind seemed to have entered a strange state where he felt as if he couldn't think straight and a myriad of thoughts were going rushing through it. He didn't notice that the people in the office were staring at him either.

"Lin Mu?" Lu Xiao called out but received no response.

Then, the sound of a door opening could be heard, and footsteps approached them.

"What did that boy say? This is wrong?" An approaching voice said.

Lu Xiao and the vice captain saw the Town head entering from another room that was attached to the office. He came in and saw the three people standing in his office. The town head recognized the new vice captain, Han Lei, but did not know who the other two people were.

Lin Mu had his head down the entire time, as if he was lost in thinking. The town head could not see Lin Mu's clearly, thus he came even closer.

"Who's this, Han Lei?" The Town head questioned.

The annoyed expression that Han Lei had on his face was still there and showed no signs of dissipating. He looked at the town head and spoke,

"They are the remaining people from the Night Vigil." Han Lei spoke in a curt tone paying no heed to the status of the Town head.

Lu Xiao was shocked upon seeing the manner in which Han Lei had spoken with the town head. All the people from the Northern town were usually respectful in talking with the town head and seldom did they behave like this. Even the Captain of the Town's guards was very respectful of the town head.

The only other person who could speak with the Town head on the same level was the Supervisor of the Spirit apple orchards Li Peng, and even that was only because he was appointed by the mayor of Wu Lim city.

The Town head paid no heed to Han Lei's tone and just looked at Lin Mu.

"What was this boy saying again?" The town head asked as if he had not heard the previous words clearly.

"He said something about this being wrong." Han Lei answered.

The Town head stroked his beard a couple of times before speaking.

"And what is this thing that's wrong?"

"Everything..." Lin Mu lightly muttered in response.

"Look at me and speak, boy. Do not disrespect me." The town head spoke in a grim tone.

The Vice captain too was feeling furious after seeing Lin Mu act like this. He was already annoyed after being ordered to do such a measly task, and now even a kid like Lin Mu was ignoring his presence and was behaving insolently.

~Thwack~

"Look up, boy!" Han Lei shouted as he slapped Lin Mu's back in anger.

Han Lei had expected for Lin Mu to stumble ahead after getting hit, but in a surprise to him, he didn't react at all. Even when he had hit Lin Mu, Han Lei felt as if he had hit a stiff surface.

'Is he... is he wearing armor beneath his clothes?' Han Lei thought.

Lin Mu finally looked up and glared at the eyes of the town head. But when the town head looked at his face and his eyes, alarm bells rang through his mind. A furious expression could be seen on Lin Mu's face, and his eyes were bloodshot.

"I SAID EVERYTHING!!!!" Lin Mu spat out.

Back in the mysterious ring, Xukong was traveling at a great speed towards the glowing ethereal altar in the distance. The altar was currently glowing with a white light, and waves of energy could be felt emanating from it.

"What is happening this time?" Xukong muttered.

"Is he going to have another bout of enlightenment?" Xukong wondered.

Soon Xukong reached the altar and saw the changes in it. The altar was no longer ethereal but had instead turned corporeal now, and even its size seemed to have increased. Large and complex runes could be seen rising from the altar and spreading around it.

Xukong looked at the runes and for the first time, found himself stumped at them. He could not recognize these runes at all. In all the tens of millions of years that he had lived, Xukong had seen countless runes and even more languages. He could say that he knew most of what there was to know about them.

"What are these runes? Wait... No! This... this can't be!" Xukong shouted as he suddenly realized something.

The runes had now stopped arising from the altar and were now moving around. Soon they had arranged themselves into multiple concentric formation arrays. The formation array was vast and the complexity of it could be seldom seen, even in the myriad of worlds.

"A True Grand Formation Array!" Xukong uttered in shock.

Xukong could not determine the function of this formation array as he could not read the runes at all. The characters which were used to write the runes were not from the Dao script and seemed to be completely different.

Unable to determine the use of the formation array, Xukong focused his attention on Lin Mu. He forced his own spirit sense to leave the mysterious ring and observed the outside world. In another surprise to Xukong, his spirit sense was easily able to leave the mysterious ring. He had expected a backlash from the world's restrictions, but somehow it did not arrive.

Suppressing his surprise for now, Xukong scanned Lin Mu's surroundings and got a grasp of the situation. While Xukong would roughly know what was in Lin Mu's environment, this was because of Lin Mu thinking about it in his mind and not because of his own spirit sense.

Xukong refrained from using his spirit sense as he knew that it would cause a backlash. This was the first time that Xukong was looking around in the world after arriving here.

Xukong saw the changes in Lin Mu's expression, but could no longer see what was happening in his mind. It was as if a barrier had been erected around his mind, which shielded his thoughts and prevented him from observing them.

In the next moment, Xukong could feel a violent presence arising within Lin Mu. The others around him could not feel it, but since Xukong was the closest he could.

"Could it be? But it's not possible, he's not even at that stage now." Xukong spoke to himself.

Xukong then directed his spirit sense towards Lin Mu's Dantian to observe the situation within it. His spirit sense passed through his abdomen and entered the dantian. At first, he felt a little obstruction upon entering, but his superior spirit sense was able to successfully enter it.

Xukong looked around the dantian, which had more than a thousand wisps of spirit qi floating around in it. These wisps of spirit qi seem to be moving in a haphazard manner, as if they were being scared by something.

Then finally, in a corner of the dantian, Xukong saw it.

There was a vague figure floating in the expanse, the spirit qi wisps were running away from it. Xukong observed closely and found that the figure was wearing some commoners clothes and its face was just a mass of shifting darkness.

The mass of darkness would sometimes morph into a masculine face and sometimes into a feminine face. The presence of Xukong's spirit sense seemed to have disturbed the figure, and it awakened.

~Screech~

A piercing sound could suddenly be heard coming from the figure's head. The sound was more close to a screech rather than a cry as it resounded in the dantian and affected the spirit qi wisps.

The spirit Qi wisps that were once running away from the figure were now going towards it with blinding speed. The figure then started absorbing the spirit qi at an immense pace, and the spirit qi in the dantian started reducing at a visible rate.

'Oh no... it is what I thought it was.' Xukong thought.

The more the figure absorbed the spirit qi, the more its features became clear. The mass of darkness that faintly resembled masculine and feminine features was now changing to get more apparent. Soon the mass of darkness turned to become actual faces.

One of the faces belonged to a rough and brawny looking man, while the other belonged to a gentle and motherly looking woman. Both the faces had certain features that resembled Lin Mu himself. The figure kept on absorbing the spirit qi, and the faces alternated between the man and woman.

"Are these... Lin Mu's parents?"

Chapter 102 - The Burning Heart Sutra

Xukong was a little shocked upon seeing the faces of Lin Mu's parents appearing on the dark figure's face.

"Why did Lin Mu never speak to me about this?" Xukong questioned himself.

'Has he been suppressing this in his mind all long, such that it has now turned into his Heart Demon?' Xukong thought to himself.

Indeed, the figure that was alternating between the two faces was none other than a Heart Demon. A Heart Demon is the product of the cultivator's emotions, memories, and guilt. They combine together and give birth to an entity that eventually becomes a Heart Demon.

A Heart Demon can gravely harm a cultivator if they don't deal with it or suppress it. Every cultivator that exists will one day develop a Heart Demon, the only difference is when. Even the most staunch, just, righteous, and willful of cultivators develop Heart Demons when they undergo their tribulations, not to say about the other common or unorthodox cultivators.

Though the reason why Xukong was so shocked was because Lin Mu was simply not at the cultivation stage where he could develop a Heart Demon. A Heart Demon also required a large quantity of spirit qi to be born, thus the earliest a cultivator could develop a heart demon was at the Core Condensation realm.

Lin Mu developing one at the Mid-stage of the Qi refining realm simply did not make sense. This was apparent since looking at the heart demon, Xukong could tell that it was not fully developed and was thus forcibly absorbing the spirit qi in Lin Mu's dantian.

"Even if it absorbs the entirety of Lin Mu's Spirit Qi stores, it still won't be able to live. Nevertheless, I have to do something." Xukong spoke inwardly.

Xukong was just about to act when suddenly, his spirit sense was pushed back because of an immense pressure.

"Wha... What?" Xukong spoke after recoiling.

He looked around and saw that the True Grand Formation Array had activated. The runes on it started shifting and showed a myriad of changes. It was as if the workings of the heavens were hidden within the formation and gave one a slight glance into it.

Xukong could not help but be lost within the mysteries of the True Grand Formation Array. A moment later he forcibly snapped out of his daze, as a chill went down his body.

"This is truly fearsome. It can even pull someone like me into it." Xukong spoke with a little fear in his voice.

~screech~

Xukong then heard a loud echoing screech and saw an oval mass appear over the formation array. The oval mass was making shrieking and crying noises which made one's ears hurt and hair stand on the end.

The oval mass dissipated and revealed the heart demon that was hidden within. The heart demon was floating above the formation array and seemed to be greatly distressed. It seemed to have stabilized its form temporarily after absorbing the spirit qi from Lin Mu's dantian, but probably could not maintain it for much longer.

"Why is the heart demon here?" Xukong questioned.

The heart demon's movements were being restricted by something invisible which even Xukong could not determine. Suddenly the altar that was glowing with white light started to thrum with power. Even more intense waves of energy started being released from it. Xukong was just about to brace for its impact when he discovered that the energy waves never reached him.

Xukong gazed at the altar and saw that the waves of energy were only targeting the heart demon. The energy waves would be released by the altar and then surround the heart demon into a certain kind of a shell.

"The altar is sealing the Heart Demon? No! This is something else..." Xukong uttered.

After the heart demon was completely encased within the energy shell it started floating towards the altar. It came to a halt right above the beam of white light and was veiled within it.

And then it happened...

The entire environment within the ring changed. The beam of light that was being emanated by the altar was no longer white. Instead, it had turned into a crimson shade of red. The light kept on being intensified until finally; it became blood red.

"This aura... how can it be here..." Xukong uttered in between breaths.

A violent and oppressive aura spread inside the ring and made Xukong recoil.

"There's no doubt... It is the aura of the Demonic Path!" Xukong stated before he was pushed back a large distance away.

Back in the real world. A stream of memories were currently flashing in Lin Mu's mind.

A young teenage boy was standing in the door frame while crying. He was looking at a rough and brawny man that was currently sharpening a blade with a whetstone.

"Please don't go, father." The boy requested.

"We don't have a choice, my son. I need to go hunt, we don't have any more money left." The man spoke.

Evidently, the man and the boy were a pair of father and son.

"But what if you fall sick like mother as well?" The boy spoke.

"I just have to take that risk. The town head can't offer anyone aid, and this is the middle of the winter as well. I don't know what else to do, I have to buy medicine for your mother." The man spoke with determination in his eyes.

The memories soon changed and a different scene appeared in Lin Mu's mind.

The boy was now standing over two graves alone. He fell on his knees and was kowtowing while crying.

"Why... why did this happen? If we had waited for a few more days, the medicine would have arrived." The boy yelled.

"What am I supposed to do, now that you two are gone?" The boy uttered between sobs.

The boy stayed in that position for a while before standing up. He then walked out of the courtyard and saw the scenes outside. Many other people could be seen crying and mourning. The boy then understood that he wasn't the only one in this situation, and there were others in the same condition as well.

These memories kept on replaying in Lin Mu's mind over and over again. Each time he would think what if, it didn't happen? What if they did something different? Or what if they had chosen to wait? But every time he thought about each 'What if?', the fury within Lin Mu's heart grew.

He remembered the conditions in the past and then how the town head had rejected everyone's calls for aid. He would then recall all the luxuries that the Town head was enjoying and could not help but wonder, what it was all for?

Lin Mu was unaware of the events happening within the mysterious ring. He did not even react when the spirit qi within his body started depleting rapidly. The only thing that mattered to him right now was his thoughts.

It was then that he heard a voice call out to him. The voice asked him what was so wrong, to which he could barely reply and could only whisper.

Lin Mu then heard someone slap his back and yell at him. This did not help his condition much and only helped to infuriate him more.

It was now that he looked up to glare at the voice that was calling out to him. He wanted to give a fitting response to the person who was disturbing his thoughts, disturbing his memories.

But when Lin Mu looked up, he saw the person who was currently the main target of his hate. It was the person he was pinning his previous sorrow and tragedy upon. He saw the Town Head standing in front of him looking at him with eyes that were intending to make him feel lowly.

The fury in his heart was at its peak, when Lin Mu finally mustered enough will to yell out his answer,

"I SAID EVERYTHING!!!!!"

And then, it was as if the fury within his heart could no longer be contained. Lin Mu heard something beckoning him, calling him to come to it. He chose to respond to it and saw everything slowdown. The movements of the Town head in front of him froze, and even the dust particles that were floating around in the air became still.

It was as if the world itself had stopped.

Lin Mu then felt it. Something was pulling on his mind. He let go of his inhibitions and let it happen.

He found himself in a vast empty expanse. The ground was red, as if stained by blood and even the sky seemed to be filled with crimson red clouds. A moment later Lin Mu could even smell the metallic stench of blood.

Then he saw them appear in the sky. Thousands of vague figures started appearing. They kept on increasing in number until finally they became uncountable and the sky was blotted out by them. The figures were but a dark red silhouette, though they all had different shapes and sizes.

Some were as big as mountains while others were as small as bulls. Still, even the smallest silhouette was many times bigger than Lin Mu. Some silhouettes had multiple hands and legs, some had horns, some had tails, while others had wings. There were a myriad combinations of such, and these figures were surrounding Lin Mu.

Then finally he heard them talk.

Thundering chants started echoing in the vast expanse, as the voices of all the figures melded together into an inhuman, demonic voice.

"Ignite thy heart as a furnace, let your rage fuel your strength and unleash rampage upon the worlds - Behold The Burning Heart Sutra."

Chapter 103 - Kill...

While Lin Mu was in this blood red vast expanse. Xukong was pondering on the scenario that was currently underway.

'First the Buddhist path, then the Sword path, and now the Demonic path. There has never been a technique that could combine so many cultivation paths into one, especially for polar opposites. The Demonic path opposes the first two paths. How can it exist stably alongside them?' Xukong pondered.

Xukong was no longer worried about Lin Mu since the Heart Demon had perished. His concern was that the Heart Demon would harm Lin Mu, but the mysterious ring had taken care of that and had destroyed it somehow.

Although there was an immense demonic aura spread in the mysterious ring, Xukong knew that it was the ring's doing and it was just helping Lin Mu. Xukong tried to observe the outside world with his spirit sense once again but found that it was now completely impossible to do so. Before, he could still do so even with the world's restrictions, albeit he would have had to bear the backlash.

But now the mysterious ring seemed to have locked itself down, preventing the spirit sense from leaving. Lin Mu's mind was also being shielded still, so Xukong didn't have any luck there either.

"I'll just have to wait and watch," Xukong muttered to himself.

The real world still seemed to be frozen and Lin Mu was standing in the Vast expanse in the Blood red lands, listening to the demonic amalgamation of voices talking. At first, he had felt strange upon hearing the voices.

Lin Mu had thought that he should have felt scared or fearful upon hearing such voices, but strangely he did not. Instead, the more he listened to them, the more he felt comfortable. The voices were first speaking in a language that he could somehow understand even though he had never heard it.

But later it changed into violent chants. The chants were esoteric and Lin Mu could not comprehend them, yet still somehow at the same time, he understood them. It was as if the chants resonated with his inner heart and made him understand them on a more intrinsic level.

The chants were trying to invoke something within Lin Mu. He felt the rage that was at a breaking point, suddenly growing even more. It was as if a full container of water that was about to break suddenly increased in volume.

Lin Mu subconsciously started repeating after the chants. The more he chanted, the more his rage grew, but at the same time made him feel comfortable. It was providing him a strange kind of solace. It was telling him that it was his right to be furious and the target of his rage was wrong and anyone that opposed him was to be exterminated.

Lin Mu kept on repeating the chants and felt them getting carved in his memories. They were getting clearer and clearer. Until eventually, the chants stopped and Lin Mu disappeared from the Blood red expanse.

Lin Mu saw the Town Head standing in front of him, still frozen with a grim expression, and suddenly felt the time start flowing again. The specs of dust that were suspended in the air started swirling, and the fine breathing movements of the people in the room could be felt again. Even the faint heart beats could be heard loud and clear in his ears.

An enraged smile filled with malice appeared on Lin Mu's face as he now started chanting the Burning Heart sutra. Veins popped up all over his body, as his face turned red with rage. Then, without even hesitating, Lin Mu extended his hand and grasped the face of the Town head in front of him.

The Town head and the Vice captain were too shocked to even respond, when Lin Mu's fingers dug into the face of the town head. But before he could even scream with pain, spirit qi strengthened Lin Mu's hand, and he exerted force.

~crack~ ~squelch~

A sickening crack and squelching sound could be heard as the town head's head turned to mush in Lin Mu's hand. The force of the grip was so strong that it splattered blood and brains all over the place. Even on Lin Mu's face, one could see the splatter of blood along with a few pieces of white brain matter on his forehead.

Still, even in a condition like this, a malefic smile was blooming on his face.

Lu Xiao, who was watching the entire incident with dread, had now collapsed on the floor, his pants wet with his urine. He had evidently been frightened enough to pee himself.

Han Lei was barely able to take control of his wits as he recoiled in horror.

"What... what... what have you done!?" Han Lei spoke with difficulty.

Even though he himself was a cultivator, Han Lei had never experienced a scene like this before. The raw strength that Lin Mu showed was extremely horrifying to him. Even for a peak stage Qi refining realm cultivator, crushing a person's head in this manner was impossible, they would have to use a martial technique or a weapon to get the same effort.

Though what shocked Han Lei, even more, was how easily the Town head was killed. He knew something that few people in this town knew. He knew that the Town head was a spirit qi cultivator as well, that too one at the Late stage of the qi refining realm. He had always hidden his cultivation from everyone in the town, thus barely anyone knew about his strength.

The town head's cultivation was also why the captain and vice captain of the town's guards were so respectful of him. But seeing a person being killed like this made him doubt reality.

Han Lei was suspicious of Lin Mu from the start, as he had heard that he had broken down doors with ease last night. He had heard this from the other members of the Night vigil but never expected for him to be so strong as to instantly kill a cultivator.

Suddenly the gears in his mind started moving at great speed as he connected the string of incidents.

"You... you were the one who killed our men and also raided the old warehouse." Han Lei spoke in a stunned tone.

Unfortunately for Han Lei, he had made a mistake when he said that. In his shock, he had given away his secrets and confirmed Lin Mu's conjectures. Though Han Lei was not the one to be completely blamed for his mistake. Perhaps if it was someone else in his position and witnessed the same set of events, even they would respond in the same way.

Though Han Lei having said that only sealed his fate in the hands of Lin Mu.

"Ah... this only makes it easier for me." Lin Mu uttered in a hoarse voice.

Han Lei drew his sword from his hilt and pointed it at Lin Mu.

"Don't! Don't move." Han Lei spoke shakily.

Lin Mu paid no heed to his words and simply withdrew his own sword from his hilt in response. He swung it towards Han Lei who blocked it with his own sword but found it almost impossible to do so. The force of Lin Mu's attack was nearly enough to blow his sword out of his hand.

Knowing that he won't be able to handle this on his own, Han Lei started to think of possible solutions. His eyes then wandered towards the collapsed Lu Xiao, as an idea popped into his mind. He strengthened his legs with spirit qi and lunged towards Lu Xiao.

Lin Mu instantly followed him. He didn't even need to strengthen his legs with spirit qi as even his own raw strength was currently enough. But even still, he was a tad too late as Han Lei reached Lu Xiao and held him up in front of him as a shield.

"Don't you dare move, or I'll kill your friend here." Han Lei spoke as he placed his sword at Lu Xiao's neck.

"Wha..." was all Lu Xiao could utter before he zipped up his lips in fear.

The chattering of his teeth could be heard as he shivered with utter terror. One could tell that this day would continue haunting him for years to come and would become his worst nightmare. That is, 'if' he were to survive today.

The smile on Lin Mu's face dulled a little upon seeing this as he spoke,

"Futile effort..."

Then, in the next instant, Lin Mu's body turned blurry for a moment as he disappeared from in front of Han Lei. Han Lei's eyes turned wide open upon seeing this phenomenon and then became forever stuck that way.

A sword was now pierced through his head. It entered from the base of his neck and popped out through the top of his head. The tip of the blade was just a few millimeters away from Lu Xiao's own head, but he was unaware as he could not see behind him.

The now dead body of Han Lei slumped down on the ground, freeing Lu Xiao.

Chapter 104 - Returning To His Senses

A minute ago.

Xukong had finally felt the barrier surrounding the mysterious ring disappear. He had been trying to contact Lin Mu's mind but was unsuccessful as the shield surrounding it was still present, but now that his spirit sense could leave the ring he could at least observe what was happening outside.

As soon as Xukong's spirit sense left the ring he saw the Town head's skull getting crushed in Lin Mu's hand. He was surprised by this sudden development. But not because Lin Mu had killed someone, instead because of how quickly and effortlessly he had done it.

Xukong then saw the expression on Lin Mu's face and the condition of his body. The malevolent smile on his face, accompanied by the blood-shot eyes and the strained veins, only made him think of one thing.

"Demonic Might! He's actually able to replicate the innate ability of the demon race." Xukong exclaimed.

'Is this the new ability that he received from the ring? Is that why there was the aura of the Demonic path in the ring?' Xukong wondered.

There were many more questions that were popping up in his mind, questions to which he could not find the answers to right now. But that was the least of his concerns. Xukong knew about the ability 'Demonic Might' and knew the side effects that came with it.

'Will he be able to bear them... No. He doesn't have enough spirit qi to even reach that point. He should be exhausted anytime now.' Xukong thought.

Xukong next saw Han Lei revealing his secret and taking Lu Xiao hostage. He then saw Lin Mu blink and appear behind him, swiftly killing him.

'This is a little strange. His senses should have become dull after using the ability, but they seem to be normal still. Is this ability not Demonic Might?' Xukong wondered.

Lin Mu was standing over the dead body of Han Lei and the now unconscious Lu Xiao. Evidently, the entire ordeal had been extremely intense for Lu Xiao, and he had fainted due to the shock.

Lin Mu pulled out the short sword that was still stuck in Han Lei's skull and splattered more blood on the floor. Even though he had killed both the people in the room, he still did not feel satisfied. He wanted more.

The comfort that he felt while killing them was only temporary and lasted for a few minutes before fading away. The rage within him was still seething and demanded more.

Lin Mu looked over to the unconscious Lu Xiao.

"It'll be a bother to explain this to him, and there are more people outside the building. Better just kill him and be done with this." Lin Mu spoke to himself.

Xukong heard Lin Mu's muttering and tried to warn Lin Mu, but was unsuccessful as the shield in his mind was still there.

'It's the ability! It's clouding his mind and preventing me from talking to him.' Xukong understood.

Lin Mu was just about to stab his blade through Lu Xiao's heart when he suddenly stumbled back. His head felt like it was spinning and a wave of intense exhaustion washed over him. Lin Mu held on to the wall nearby and collapsed onto the floor.

"Wha... What's happening?" Lin Mu uttered before fainting.

"Ah, so his spirit qi finally ran out. Just in time, or he would have just complicated the situation more and increased his own work." Xukong said with a relieved tone.

'Let's see how long it takes for him to recover. I'll need to keep a lookout, though I don't know for how long I would be able to do that. The world's restrictions should be returning soon.' Xukong concluded.

Xukong had realized that the reason why the world's restrictions were not affecting his spirit sense. It was because of the mysterious ring. His conjecture proved to be right when the environment within the mysterious ring started to revert to normal.

The altar returned to an ethereal state, and the beam of light that was being emanated from it was also stopped. Even the True Grand Formation Array faded away as if it never existed. Xukong then felt the world's restrictions acting as his spirit sense was forced to retreat back into the ring.

'We'll just have to leave it up to luck now. If someone discovers him, he'll just have to deal with it.' Xukong thought.

Fortunately for Lin Mu, it seemed like people seldom came to the town head's office, as even after an hour, no one came to check up on them. Not even a clerk or staffer came to pay a visit. From this, one could tell that the mayor was either very reserved or was overbearing enough that the people avoided him.

Lin Mu eventually woke up feeling fatigued. His body was aching and felt sore as if he had overexerted himself in training. He looked around and saw the aftermath of his fight. It was then that the memories came to him.

All that he had previously done hit him like a tsunami.

"How did I do this? And why would I even think of killing Lu Xiao?" Lin Mu spoke to himself with dread.

"Finally, you're awake. All that has happened is due to the new ability that you obtained." Xukong answered.

"A new ability? The Burning Heart Sutra!" Lin Mu recalled.

"So it's called the Burning Heart Sutra. A fitting name for its effects, I must say." Xukong replied.

"Do you know about it, senior?" Lin Mu asked with a desperate tone.

Lin Mu had been feeling a little sick due to what he had done, and his mind was not in the right condition right now either. He was desperate for answers because although he could remember the chants for the Burning heart sutra, its effects were much more dangerous than he thought.

When he had received the Calming heart sutra and the Severing heart sutra, nothing of such sort had occurred. The effects of Burning heart sutra were the most impactful, or rather one could even say overbearing.

Xukong knew what was going through Lin Mu's mind and knew that he would have to counsel him for a little bit soon. But for now, he needed to deal with this situation first. He may have forgotten that if someone discovered them here, they would be caught red handed.

"I do know some things about it, but now's not the time. First, you need to deal with the scenario here. Anyone could come here and discover you." Xukong spoke.

Lin Mu then realized the severity of the situation and became even more stressed.

~sigh~

"First you need to replenish your spirit qi. Eat the spirit apples that you have stored in the ring." Xukong suggested after sighing.

Lin Mu heeded Senior Xukong's advice and withdrew three spirit apples from the ring and started eating them. In a couple of minutes, the spirit apples had disappeared down his stomach. He then started chanting the severing heart sutra and assimilated the spirit qi that was being released into his stomach.

Two minutes later he had replenished a part of his spirit qi store and had obtained around a hundred wisps. Another big thing he noticed was that after using the severing heart sutra, a portion of his stress had disappeared.

Lin Mu then informed senior Xukong about this effect and asked for more advice.

"Hmm, it was expected. The Buddhist path and the Sword path are the opposites of the Demonic path, of course." Xukong said.

"What are these paths you're talking about?" Lin Mu asked.

"I'll explain them to you later. Just know that the Calming heart sutra and Severing heart sutra can most likely help you recover from the aftereffects of the Burning heart sutra." Xukong urged.

Lin Mu nodded in understanding and tried chanting the calming heart sutra. In another surprise to him, the effect of the calming heart sutra was even better than the Severing heart sutra as he instantly felt better. His normal state of mind returned and his thoughts became sharp again.

Lin Mu now started to think of possible solutions to his current situation. He had killed the Town head and the Han Lei, and there was no chance that this wouldn't become huge news for the town. Even if he hid their bodies and cleaned up the scene, there would still be people who would have seen him enter the town center.

The staffers and the mercenaries had all seen them enter the building, so it would be incredibly suspicious if he left in front of them. There was another problem in front of him though, Lu Xiao. He was innocent and had witnessed him kill the two people, thus if he reported to others it would become difficult for him.

'Is that why the previous me wanted to kill Lu Xiao? Just so that I wouldn't have to deal with the extra load. Well, it may work, but I don't want to kill him just because of this.' Lin Mu thought.

"You do have something that can help you not only deal with this situation but also potentially turn it around in your favor," Xukong spoke.

Chapter 105 - Finding A Solution

A glint of joy appeared in Lin Mu's eyes upon hearing senior Xukong's words.

"What is it senior Xukong?" Lin Mu asked with a bated breath.

"You remember how the mercenaries disappeared?" Xukong replied.

Lin Mu suddenly realized what senior Xukong was meaning and hurriedly replied.

"Of course. The memory confounding powder!" Lin Mu exclaimed.

"Indeed, if you use it correctly, you will not only be able to erase people's memories but also alter their perception by changing the scene," Xukong explained.

"Yes, senior. This way I can also spare Lu Xiao by erasing his memories. But will this be effective though, as an hour has already passed?" Lin Mu said with concern.

"It should be no problem in using it on Lu Xiao, as he's been unconscious the entire time. His memories will still be at that point. But in the case of the mercenaries and the staffers, the main function of the memory confounding powder would be to confuse them." Xukong explained.

"So the crucial point would be to somehow change their perspectives. This will be a little difficult if I want to plot a good scheme." Lin Mu muttered.

'Guess, for now, I'll just use it on Lu Xiao first.' Lin Mu thought.

Lin Mu then thought about how to use the memory confounding poison and realized that he didn't know the specifics of it. Thus he turned to senior Xukong again.

"How should I use the memory confounding powder, then senior? I mean, wouldn't it affect me as well?" Lin Mu questioned.

"You just need to cover your mouth and nose, to prevent it from being inhaled. As for how to use it, you just sprinkle a very minute amount as it is very potent. The amount you have in that vial is enough for more than five hundred people." Xukong answered.

"Now then, to use it on Lu Xiao. You just need to partially open the cap of the vial and bring it close to his nose for a second. After that, just open his eyelids and see if his pupils are dilated or not. If they are, then it means that it is working." Xukong instructed.

Lin Mu thus listened to senior Xukong's instructions and withdrew the vial of the memory confounding powder. He cleaned his face of the blood and then used a piece of cloth to cover his mouth and nose. An idea then struck him and he withdrew the featureless mask he had received from Hei Shi. He then put it on his face as an extra precaution.

"That's good. If push comes to shove, you will at least be able to hide your identity. Also, I would suggest you change your clothes as well." Xukong advised.

Lin Mu understood the value of the advice and chose to follow it. He then opened the vial of the memory confounding powder and used it on Lu Xiao for a second. He then quickly closed the cap and opened Lu Xiao's eyelids to check upon him. Sure enough, his pupils became dilated, and the effect had taken place.

Lin Mu then decided to clean up the office. He first put the bodies of the Town head and Han Lei in the ring. He now had a daunting task ahead of him. He had to clean the blood splatter and small pieces of flesh that had spread around.

Lin Mu had already cleaned the blood from his face when he changed his clothes, thus he had one less thing to do. He then took out some cloths from the ring and started cleaning the office. But to his misfortune the blood had already stained the wooden floor and the walls, thus making it impossible for him to clean it.

"This won't work. I need help." Lin Mu muttered.

"You can try asking that Hei Shi girl. She is supposed to be tailing you, isn't she?" Xukong spoke.

"Oh yeah, that's true. But the problem would be to leave this place." Lin Mu replied.

"Hmm, you can try spreading the memory confounding powder from the window. It will affect more people, but it should be fine and would only add to the chaos." Xukong suggested.

Lin Mu thought it over and decided to do it. He went to the large window that faced the street in front and opened it. He slightly peeked into it to make sure that no one saw him. He found out that there was an awning below the window that hid it from the people below, thus he could easily spread the memory confounding powder from there.

Lin Mu thus checked the flow of wind first and then started to lightly sprinkle the memory confounding powder from the window. He couldn't tell if it was effective or not, but the sounds of the people below had reduced at least. He then spread some powder in the hallway outside the office as well. That way if someone went to the office they would be affected too.

"Now to find Hei Shi. I don't know where she is, so it would be a little difficult." Said Lin Mu.

Lin Mu then walked over to the balcony that was located over to the side and slid the door open. He looked around and made sure that no one was watching. The balcony was diagonal to the entrance of the building and was near the roof of another building near it.

Lin Mu extended his spirit sense and then braced himself. Taking a deep breath, he jumped off the balcony and blinked over to the other roof. By teleporting himself, he avoided making any noise and safely reached it.

Lin Mu laid low and looked around for Hei Shi. Finding her was turning out to be a hassle. She had told him to hold up three fingers in case of an emergency, but that would only work if she could see him. It was currently useless in this situation.

'Don't tell me do I need to go to the safe house to request assistance?' Lin Mu thought.

It was now that he observed a carriage approaching the town center from the other end of the street. He found the carriage familiar and then saw the man that was driving it. It was the same man he had greeted in the shop above the safe house; it was the same man who was dressed in the clothes of the high official.

"I think I can do something now." Lin Mu said to himself.

Lin Mu waited for the carriage to pass by the building and then blinked on to its roof. The roof of the carriage had raised ends, thus people could not see him. He crawled to the front and called out in a low voice to the driver.

The driver did not seem to listen to him when he spoke a couple of times, thus he then used his spirit sense to alert him. Lin Mu had already known that the driver was a cultivator too. As soon as his spirit sense touched the driver he shivered and looked above him. There Lin Mu was showing his hand from above the carriage.

"It's me, Lin Mu. We met in the morning." Lin Mu said.

The driver narrowed his eyes in response.

"Come down, once I turn into an alley." The carriage driver said.

The driver then turned the carriage into the nearest alley and Lin Mu jumped down to his side.

The driver turned to look at Lin Mu and spoke.

"What are you doing out here? We were just about to come to get you?"

Lin Mu tilted his head in confusion upon hearing this.

"What do you mean come to get me?" Lin Mu questioned.

"Hei Shi did not see you come out of the town center for a thirty minutes, thus she came to report to us. The leader then told us to initiate a rescue mission." The driver answered.

Just as the driver completed his sentence the door of the carriage opened and out walked Hei Wan along with two more people.

"Seems like we were worried for nothing." Hei Wan spoke.

"How did you come out Hei Shi has been watching the entrance all this while?" Said Hei Bao, who was also in high-quality clothes right now without his mask.

The last person to walk out of the carriage was another person who was wearing a mask. They did not speak anything and just stood to the side. Lin Mu determined him to be the same man who had come to interrupt their meeting in the morning.

"No, there's actually an even greater problem." Lin Mu spoke.

"What kind of problem?" Hei Bao questioned.

"It would be better if I show you in the carriage." Lin Mu spoke upon seeing a few commoners entering the alley.

All of them nodded and then entered the carriage, except for the driver who instead pretended to check the horses instead. After everyone entered the carriage and they closed the door. The windows of the carriage were already covered, thus there was no fear of anyone seeing in.

"So can you show us now?" Hei Wan asked.

Lin Mu nodded and withdrew the bodies of the Town head and Han Lei, much to the shock of everyone.

Chapter 106 - Initiating The Plan

The people in the carriage could not believe their eyes currently. All this time they had been worried that something had happened to Lin Mu. They were thinking that his identity had been found out, and that he had been caught or something.

When Hei Shi reported to Hei Wan and Hei Bao, they had been prepared for the worst. But now that Lin Mu was right in front of them and had even shown them such a shocking thing, they could not help but gasp.

"If this the Vice captain Han Lei, they who is the other person?" Hei Wan questioned.

The Town head's skull was completely crushed and was as good as gone. Thus it was no wonder that they were currently unable to recognize him. There was also the fact that he was differently dressed right now, as usually when he appeared in public he would be dressed in the commoner's clothes and not in high-quality clothes like the ones he was in right now.

"This is the Town head." Lin Mu answered with a straight face.

"This is the Town head?... Wha.. What happened to him?" Hei Bao spoke, stuttering.

"I-I... lost control over myself and killed them." Lin Mu answered.

Lin Mu could not exactly explain why he did it, thus this was the closest manner in which he could explain it in. Though even after Lin Mu's explanation, their shock did not reduce even a little bit. Instead, it increased even more.

'What kind of kid is he? Even if he's at the peak of the Qi refining realm, this isn't something that's easily accomplished.' Hei Wan thought while looking at the nearly headless Town Head.

"Lost control? But how..." Hei Bao was just about to ask further when suddenly Hei Wan tapped his arm.

Hei Bao reeled his words back in and sealed his lips upon understanding Hei Wan's gesture. Hei Wan was even gesturing to Hei Bao with her eyes while thinking something.

Lin Mu was still thinking of how to explain this further, thus did not notice their little interaction.

"So... what exactly is the situation right now?" Hei Wan spoke after measuring her every word.

"Let me explain then..." Lin Mu said and then started to explain everything that happened while omitting certain parts and altering some.

Lin Mu told them about how he found out about their involvement and confirmed that they are part of the culprits. He also then told them a little about how he lost his self-control. He told them how he saw all the luxuries in the town head's office and how he had denied any aid to the people last year when they were suffering from the plague.

Both Hei Wan and Hei Bao patiently listened to his explanation and did not interrupt him even once. Lin Mu was expecting them to ask him more questions or to clarify his claims, but surprisingly they did not and just accepted everything straight away.

"Okay, so we just need a plan to help turn this situation around." Hei Wan spoke after Lin Mu finished speaking.

"Yes." Lin Mu responded.

Silence descended in the carriage once again as everyone started to think of possible solutions and approaches to this scenario now. They thought for five minutes and then the first person to respond was the masked man who was silent all this while until now.

"The memory confounding powder is already in effect, right? Then we only need to plant some kind of incriminating evidence in the town head's office. The others will just think that it was the work of the same people that were behind the mercenaries' disappearance." The masked man spoke.

"That is indeed a valid method we could use, but we still need to figure out more. If they investigate it deeply, they will easily end up finding out that this was false." Han Wei spoke.

"We need to make them think that it was the same people who are the actual culprits. This way not only will we expose them to the public, but the actual culprits will also be confused and may even start to suspect their own people if we're lucky." Hei Bao suggested.

"Yes! I can do that. I still have the clothes that the culprits wore. I can just show myself to the public disguised as the culprits and then appear to the others as myself. I'll also be able to plant Lu Xiao in there and make it seem as if he was attacked by the culprits while escaping." Lin Mu explained.

Hei Wan's eyes lit up upon hearing this, and the gears in her mind started working.

"This could work." Hei Wan said while nodding.

They then spent five more minutes discussing the more finer points of the plan before separating. After the addition of a few more suggestions from Hei Wan and Hei Bao, the plan was now completely formulated.

According to the plan Lin Mu was supposed to go first, thus he left the carriage and went away. The door of the carriage closed behind him and a serious expression appeared on Hei Wan and Hei Bao's face. Hei Wan suddenly slumped on the seat, as if relieved by something. Han Bao saw this but did not ask about it, instead, he spoke.

"Do you really think this plan will be successful?" Hei Bao questioned.

"It has to. We don't really have a choice after what he did..." Hei Wan replied.

Hei Bao went silent for a moment before speaking again.

"Why did you interrupt me before?" Hei Bao asked.

"At first when I met him in the morning, I was expecting him to be like the other talented cultivators from the sects and the Nobel families. But talking with him made me think that he was humble and reserved."

"But now... seeing this, I can't say the same. You saw the Town head's corpse. That is not something that can be done by just any cultivator, just the raw strength required would be massive. He even said that

he only did this because he lost self-control. This only means that he's hiding much more than we thought." Hei Wan explained.

"But he lost control due to a righteous cause." Hei Bao spoke.

"Do you really think that? Were you not able to feel the change in his aura when he was explaining to us? It was subtle, but I could still feel the killing intent that was hidden within it. That killing intent was strong, very strong.

So strong that I've only felt something like that once before." Hei Wan replied.

'So that's why she felt relieved upon Lin Mu's departure.' Hei Bao thought to himself.

"You mean when Old Man Jing came to the Lord's mansion?" Hei Bao asked.

"Yes. His killing intent, while not exactly the same intensity as old man Jing, was still very oppressive. It felt as if a poisoned dagger hidden in the dark." Hei Wan answered.

Hei Bao fell silent after hearing Hei Wan's answer and thought about it. Lin Mu was on his way back to the Town head's office and was unaware of the conversation that had just happened between Hei Wan and Hei Bao.

Lin Mu was currently standing on the roof of a building and was waiting for the right moment to jump. The plan they had decided upon was that, Hei Wan was going to act as a High official from the Wu Lim city, who had come to pay a visit.

They would walk up to the office and discover Lu Xiao lying in the corridor. Then Lin Mu would show himself in the culprits' clothes and influence the mercenaries who due to the influence of the memory confounding powder would not be able to clearly remember it.

And when the time would come for it to be revealed, the Hei corps would manipulate the perception of the people and make it seem as if it was the actual culprits who had done this. Lin Mu would also be placing the corpses of the Town Head and Han Lei back in the office.

Lin Mu waited on the roof until he saw the carriage approach the town center. He then jumped from the roof and blinked to the balcony of the office. Once inside the office, he changed into the clothes of the previous culprits and place down the bodies as they were before.

Lin Mu then placed the unconscious Lu Xiao outside the office in the corridor, making it seem as if he was running away. He even inflicted some slight cuts on his body, just to make it seem more convincing. While this would hurt Lu Xiao a little bit right now, it wouldn't matter in the long run.

After this was done, Lin Mu just waited in the corridor. A minute later the sound of footsteps appeared, as a staffer guided Hei Wan and Hei Bao upstairs. They saw Lin Mu standing over Lu Xiao With a sword in his hand just about to kill him.

"WHO ARE YOU?!" Shouted the staffer.

"Stay behind, he's dangerous." Hei Bao ordered as he pretended to come forward.

Chapter 107 - A Hidden Safe

The staffer then saw the sword that was drenched with blood and the injured Lu Xiao. He realized the severity of the situation as fear appeared on his face.

"I'll... go call the guards." The staffer said as he turned back to run downstairs, without even being prompted to.

A few seconds later the staffer was gone, as he shouted out for help.

"Well, that was easy. Onto the next part then." Lin Mu spoke.

The others nodded, and Lin Mu turned around to go out through another balcony that opened to the front of the town center. This balcony opened above the mercenaries that were standing outside the town center. This was also the very balcony that the mayor used for giving his announcements and orders to the common people.

Lin Mu made sure that he made enough noise to attract attention. To do this, he slammed open the door of the balcony and walked onto it. The noise of the doors slamming attracted the attention of the people as they looked up at the balcony.

"Is the mayor going to do an announcement today?" A commoner said.

"Huh, has he finally decided to see us?" A mercenary spoke with dull eyes. Evidently, he was under the effect of the memory confounding powder.

"No! Who is that?" A few people shouted after seeing Lin Mu appear on the balcony disguised in the black clothes of the culprits.

People pointed at Lin Mu, and he noticed this.

'At least they see me.' Lin Mu thought.

Lin Mu then looked to the side and jumped onto the lower roof that was to the side. Then from there he ran forward and leaped on to the building that was next to him. Lin Mu would have taken this route before instead of leaving from the office, as this was much easier, but the people would have seen him.

But now that very fact was helping him. Lin Mu ensured that he made flamboyant moves so that the people remembered him here. It was now that Hei Bao appeared from on the balcony and looked at Lin Mu.

"Catch him! He murdered the Town Head and the Vice Captain." Hei Bao shouted.

The people who were not paying attention to Hei Bao were now definitely paying attention to him. Some of them had seen him enter the town center along with Hei Wan and knew that he was important seeing the respectful treatment they got from the staffers.

Shocked expressions appeared on everyone's faces, which eventually changed to horror. It was only now that Hei Bao's words clicked into their minds.

"WHAT! What did he say?" Someone shouted.

"The town Head and the vice captain has been murdered!" Someone shouted while running away, intending to alarm the rest of the people.

Hei Bao then followed Lin Mu the same way he had gone by jumping down onto the lower roof and tailing after him. They passed over the roof of the buildings and houses, making people not able to track them.

Unknown to the people, Lin Mu and Hei Bao had stopped after a few buildings, and Lin Mu had changed into different clothes. He would change into his normal clothes after he was inside the town center.

"You need to get back to the town center now. Make sure no one sees you." Hei Bao spoke.

"Yes." Said Lin Mu, while nodding his head.

Lin Mu then got on to the ground in a separate alley and returned to the area where the town center was. He climbed back to the roof using the previous building where he had climbed onto the carriage from and then blinked onto the balcony of the town head's office.

The crowd of people were still alarmed and were no longer paying attention to the balcony, thus it was easy for him to enter back again. After entering the office, he quickly changed back into his normal clothes and peeked outside the room into the hallway.

Lin Mu saw that some guards and Hei Wan were standing outside and had not checked the office yet. Lin Mu had spread the memory confounding powder outside the hallway, thus anyone approaching would be affected. He had already informed Hei Wan about this, thus he was not worried.

Now he just had to pretend to hide in the other room that was attached to the office. Lin Mu opened the door and walked in, only to see that the room he had walked into was a bedroom. It was also luxuriously decorated similar to the office, with paintings and precious vases.

There was a large bed at the other end of the room. It was covered with Veils on all four sides and had silk sheets and pillows placed on it. There were elegantly carved wardrobes and cupboards placed along the walls.

Lin Mu knew that Hei Wan was delaying for time as much as she could so that Lin Mu could return and check the office. The Return of Hei Bao was the signal that they had set for the guards to enter the office. Lin Mu still had a few minutes until they would come in.

During this time, he decided to look around the bedroom and get a better gauge of it. He wanted to see if there were any more pieces of evidence or clues kept in the room that would help them identify the culprits.

But the problem was that Lin Mu could not mess up the room too much, or the guards may end up suspecting him. Though they still had another plan to deal with it if it came to it. They were intending to pin everything on the culprits.

Lin Mu started by checking the cupboards. There were some miscellaneous items kept in there, such as trinkets, paper scrolls, and brushes. He then checked the wardrobes and only found clothes kept in them. The clothes were luxurious and one could easily tell that they would be worth a small fortune alone.

"What opulence! That greedy swine!" Lin Mu cursed with anger.

Lin Mu did not notice that when he did this, a faint wave of demonic aura emanated from him and spread around the room and then quickly faded. Unknown to him, one of the ink paintings that were hanging on the wall had an additional character appear on it when the demonic aura touched it.

While looking around the room, Lin Mu went past this painting and even gazed at it. But still, he could not tell any difference in it and just thought of it as the same as other ones. He had looked around the entire room but still could not find anything useful.

"Are you forgetting again? Use your spirit sense!" Xukong chided.

"Ah, yes senior." Lin Mu hastily replied.

In all that had happened, Lin Mu's mind was too occupied to think of using his spirit sense. He thus extended his spirit sense and started to scan the entire room again. But this time it was much faster.

Eventually, he ended up finding something. There was a faint spirit qi coming from behind the bed. Lin Mu went to it and pushed it aside. Although the bed was big and rather heavy, it was still nothing compared to Lin mu's strength.

After pushing the bed aside, Lin Mu saw a safe that was hidden behind it. The safe seemed to be made of some kind of metal and had a small slot at its front, most likely for a key. It was this safe from which the spirit qi was coming from.

"Where could the key be?" Lin Mu wondered.

Lin Mu could have destroyed the safe, but doing so could prove problematic, thus he wanted to look for the key first. If he could not find it, then perhaps he could choose this method of opening it.

Lin Mu had already checked the body of the Town Head, thus knew that he did not have it on his body. The only things he had on himself were a money pouch and a wooden seal. Lin Mu withdrew both of them and checked them.

The pouch had around some gold and silver coins, but nothing else. While the seal was a wooden one that the Town head used to stamp documents and used as identity proof. Lin Mu held the seal and felt that it was much heavier than it should be.

Lin Mu then probed it with his spirit sense and discovered that there was something hidden inside it. He pulled on the seal and it separated into two parts, revealing the item hidden within. This item was nothing else but the very key that he was looking for.

It was a metal key that had a unique pattern engraved at the end of it. Lin Mu inserted the key into the key slot and turned it. A clicking sound was heard as the door of the safe unlocked. He pulled on it and moved it aside. Unlike a normal door, instead of swiveling to a side, the entire door detached from the safe.

"That's a strange design." Lin Mu muttered.

But when Lin Mu looked inside the safe, his eyes went wide with surprise.

Chapter 108 - Gathering Clues

Lin Mu felt the dense spirit qi wafting out of the safe as soon as he removed the door. He looked inside and saw that the safe had two compartments. The upper compartment was the source of the spirit qi. He extended his hand and pulled out a small box that seemed to be leaking the spirit qi.

Lin Mu opened the box and found three spirit stones kept inside it. These spirit stones seemed different from the ones that he already had. These spirit stones seemed to be filled with much more dense spirit qi than the other spirit stones.

"Are these mid-quality spirit stones?" Lin Mu muttered.

"Yes, they are indeed mid-quality spirit stones. But they don't seem to be stable." Xukong replied.

"They're not stable?" Lin Mu questioned.

"You see how there is the spirit qi that is being released out of the spirit stones, that should not happen. A proper mid-quality spirit stone should not release any spirit qi and should keep it completely contained within it. These ones are damaged." Xukong answered.

"What do I do with them then, senior? I mean won't they lose all of the spirit qi and become useless." Lin Mu asked.

"You don't have to worry about that. Just put them in the ring, they won't leak any spirit qi in there." Xukong replied.

Lin Mu followed senior Xukong's advice and stored them in the ring. Then it came the turn for the next item, which had pulled his eyes the moment he had opened. This thing was shining and was very prominent to one's eyes, they were solid gold bars.

The gold bars occupied most of the upper compartment, and only a small part was taken up by the box that had the mid quality spirit stones. Lin Mu counted them and found there to be forty of these gold bars.

Each of these gold bars was the thickness of a finger and was the size of a palm. There was a special pattern engraved on each of the gold bars. The engraving read: Shuang Qian. But after reading them, Lin Mu once again felt anger rising within him.

"Where did the Town Head get all this gold? And these engravings they are of the name of this kingdom. Was he hiding all this wealth from everyone?" Lin Mu spoke with a grim tone.

"Seems like it is indeed as you thought. But now is not the time for this, you can think about it later, for now, focus on your task." Xukong advised.

Lin Mu chanted the calming heart sutra and dissipated his anger.

"You are right senior." Lin Mu replied.

Lin Mu then checked the bottom compartment of the safe and found that it was filled with documents, scrolls, letters, and some long books. Lin Mu decided to just store all of them into the ring for now and check them later, as he did not think he had much time left.

Wanting to see if they were coming close, Lin Mu went back to the door and observed the hallway with his spirit sense. Confirming that there was no one outside he took another peek. In a surprise to him, there was no one outside in the hallway. Even the unconscious Lu Xiao seemed to have been taken somewhere.

"Where did they go? Are they not going to come to check?" Lin Mu wondered.

"Seems like you have more time. You should also check the office as well." Xukong spoke.

Lin Mu nodded and decided to check the office thoroughly. He extended his spirit sense and scanner every inch of the office closely. There were many documents and items in the office, thus it was hard for him to determine which ones were useful.

There were no traces of spirit qi in the office at least, though. Lin Mu did not find any hidden compartments or such either, thus he just decided to check the more obvious places. The first place he checked was the Town Head's desk.

There was a pyramidal pile of scrolls kept in a small stand on the desk, along with several ledgers and books. The scrolls were all already opened, thus Lin Mu took a quick glance at them. He found out that all of them were letters.

Most of them were just normal report letters between the guards, the merchants, and the other important people of the town. Though there was one letter that caught his eye. This letter was addressed to a certain 'Li Peng'.

"Li Peng? Isn't that the supervisor of the Spirit Apple orchards?" Lin Mu muttered to himself.

Storing all of the scrolls and documents into the ring, he decided to take a deeper look later.

'Perhaps the Hei corps would be useful in this matter.' Lin Mu thought.

There were other ledgers which seemed to be used for keeping accounts. But Lin Mu was unable to understand these, as he had zero experience with things such as these. He just decided to keep them for now and let the Hei corps take a look.

Lin Mu ransacked the entire office and found a few peculiar things. The first one was a long key which he did not know the use for. The second was a decorative Javelin that was placed on the wall behind the desk. The third and the final item was a pot of wine that seemed to be extremely fragrant.

Lin Mu decided to keep these items in the ring as well. It was now that the sound of something falling came from behind him. He quickly turned around and saw a small stone lying on the floor. He picked it up and saw that it was actually wrapped with a cloth.

Lin Mu opened the cloth and found that there was something written on it.

"This is Hei Shi. In a couple of minutes, an entire guard squadron will be entering the town center. There will be more guards than we thought, so be careful."

"Seems like something changed." Lin Mu spoke.

"You must be ready for there to be cultivators within them. If they find out about you being a cultivator as well they may suspect you." Xukong replied.

"Yes, Senior." Lin Mu responded.

Lin Mu then restored the few things that were a little out of order in the office and then returned to the bedroom. He closed and locked the door of the safe and put the bed in front of it, blocking it. He then laid down against the wall and pretend to be unconscious.

A minute later, the sound of a door slamming open came from the office. The sounds of multiple footsteps resounded within the room, spreading along with the shouts of the guards. Lin Mu heard the shouts of shock and horror, presumably because they noticed the dead bodies of the Town head and Han Lei.

"SILENCE." A voice shouted.

Lin Mu felt like he had heard this voice before, but could not exactly remember where. He thought that it belonged to the captain at first, but then rejected this thought as it was much more different and lower-pitched.

A few seconds later, the door of the bedroom also slammed open, and the guards entered the room.

"Over here, we found the boy." Shouted the guard that had entered the bedroom.

"He's unconscious as well." Another guard informed.

Then, Lin Mu heard some different footsteps enter the bedroom. He felt that these were different than those of the guards because the noise made by their boots was different. If the guards were wearing thick leather boots, then this person seemed to be wearing fur boots instead.

The footsteps came to Lin Mu's side and halted. Lin Mu used his spirit sense to observe the scene and was a little surprised to see the person who was standing beside him. This person was not a Guard instead, it was the supervisor Li Peng.

'What is he doing here?' Lin Mu wondered.

Li Peng scanned Lin Mu with his eyes and then turned to look at the guards.

"Carry him out and treat his injuries. Also, call in high official Hei Wan. She will want to look at the scene." Li Peng ordered.

"Yes, sir." The guards responded respectfully.

The two guards then picked Lin Mu up and carried him downstairs towards the first floor of the town center. While on the way, Lin Mu was observing the entire time. He also saw Hei Wan standing alongside Hei Bao outside the Town Head's office.

The guards halted near Hei Wan for a moment before speaking.

"Sir supervisor invites madam inside." The guard respectfully spoke.

Lin Mu could see that Hei Wan was looking at him, waiting for him to give a signal. Understanding this, Lin Mu decided to open his eyes.

"Huh... Where am I?" Lin Mu muttered, pretending to wake up.

The guards heard his voice and looked at the now awake Lin Mu. Hei Wan also looked at Lin Mu and signaled to him with her spirit sense. Lin Mu felt the spirit sense touch him and faintly nodded.

"What happened to this Boy?" Hei Wan asked.

Chapter 109 - Hei Wan Investigates

The guards gulped for a moment before responding.

"He was discovered hiding within the Town Head's bedroom, unconscious. The supervisor has ordered for us to take him to the healers so that he can be checked and treated for any injuries." One of the Guards respectfully spoke.

"You won't be doing that. He doesn't have any injuries." Hei Wan spoke.

The guards felt stressed upon hearing Hei Wan's words. They could not decide whose orders to listen to the Supervisors or high official Hei Wan's.

"But... But madam, we have been ordered." The second guard spoke after gathering a little bit of courage.

Hei Wan's presence turned grim as she spoke again.

"You dare defy my orders? Just do as I say. I'll question this boy myself later." Hei Wan ordered.

"Yes, Madam." The Guards responded with fear in their voice.

The guards then put Lin Mu down on the side of a wall and guided Hei Wan inside the office. Lin Mu let out a sigh as he propped himself against the wall in a more comfortable manner.

'Seems like it's going according to the plan. Now I just have to wait.' Lin Mu thought.

"But what is Hei Wan's actual identity, such that she's actually able to exert her influence and command the guards." Lin Mu muttered to himself.

Inside the town head's office, Hei Wan was looking at the corpses that were lying on the ground. Although she had already seen them before, seeing them again was nothing less than impactful.

'Lin Mu must've been really enraged to crush the Town Head's skull like that. We need to investigate this in depth.' Hei Wan thought.

"So this is the town head and the Vice captain Han Lei." Hei Wan spoke.

"Yes, madam." The Guard replied.

Hei Wan nodded and gestured for them to continue. The guard then brought her to the bedroom where the supervisor Li Peng and a few more guards were waiting for her. Li Peng looked at the face of Hei Wan that was hidden behind a veil and showed a mild smile.

"Greetings, madam Hei Wan." Li Peng greeted respectfully while cupping his hands.

"Greetings. So what is this that I'm witnessing the first day I enter the Northern town." Hei Wan spoke in a cold tone.

Sweat appeared on Li Pen's forehead upon hearing Hei Wan's words, and he seemed to have become a little alarmed. He took a deep breath before speaking.

"This was very unfortunate, but we don't know why it happened." Li Peng spoke.

"Hmm, is that all you have to say? You don't have any potential suspects?" Hei Wan questioned.

"No, madam. We still have to investigate to get an idea." Li Peng answered nervously.

~harrumph~

"Have you become dull after coming to the Northern Town, Li Peng? Do you even know why I'm here?" Hei Wan questioned further, with a harrumph.

"No... no. I thought you were just passing by." Li Peng spoke hurriedly.

A sharp expression appeared in Hei Wan's face that was hidden by the veil, yet it could still be felt by Li Peng.

"If I was passing through, where would I be going to from here? TO THE FOREST?" Hei Wan chided.

"I'm here to investigate the reports of the disappearances and other incidents that have recently happened, You buffoon." Hei Wan declared.

"Ah yes, madam. This servant's mind has become muddled with age and could not think properly." Li Peng hurriedly apologized while bowing.

~Hmmpm~

"Can't you tell, the person who did this is most likely the same person who is responsible for the disappearances." Hei Wan spoke.

"They are?" Li Peng asked, with a dumbfounded expression.

Li Peng honestly had little idea of what had happened in the town these days. While he had known about the incidents and had asked the town head about it, the answer that he got from him was completely different.

The Town head had replied to him that the incident was a mere hoax and that the mercenaries were instead faking it, just so that they could get compensation. That they were just trying to scam out some benefits from the town while they were here. As for the disappearances of the previous vice captain, he just attributed it to a Spirit Beast attack.

Li Peng himself was busy with tallying up the accounts and the ledgers of the spirit apple harvest. He had been spending the time after the harvest ended, cooped up in his office working on it. The mayor of Wu Lim city has been stressing on him more than usual this time and it made him feel likely the mayor was perhaps desperate for money. Though he could not find a reason for that.

"You idiot, my subordinate Hei Bao chased after him and saw his appearance. Other people outside along with the guards saw it too. And by just asking a few questions to the mercenaries, I found out that some of them had seen a similar person in the camp before." Hei Wan answered.

The last part of Hei Wan asking the mercenaries was a lie, but Hei Wan knew that Li Peng would not even dare to think about questioning her words. While Hei Wan did have the power to suppress the town head and the guards on her own, she could not do so without any valid reason.

If the Mayor decided to look into her actions, she may end up in trouble, which would furtherer harm her lord's plans. But now that she had an excuse to act, she could do whatever she wanted with the excused for investigation.

"So the reports about the mercenaries' disappearances are true?" Li Peng asked with genuine concern.

Seeing the change in Li Peng's tone, Hei Wan knew that she had managed to convince the man and that he was now up for it.

"Of course it was, I don't know what the captain, vice captain, and the town head have been doing these days, but it's certain that they have been slacking off." Hei Wan answered.

"Look around the office, you can clearly tell that the murderer was originally here to steal something. He probably had to kill the vice captain and town head because they probably discovered him, or that they had the item he wanted." Hei Wan explained.

After hearing Hei Wan's words, realization dawned in Li Peng's mind. He took another look around the bedroom and the office and indeed found that certain things seemed to be missing, while others seemed to have been moved around.

"Check the office and the bedroom. Find out what's missing and make a list." Li Peng ordered to the guards.

"YES, SIR!" The guards responded in unison before scurrying to carry out Li Peng's orders.

Hei Wan nodded in acknowledgment and allowed the guards to do their work. She then turned to Li Peng and looked at him.

"What do we know about the boy?" Hei Wan questioned.

"We found him unconscious and hiding in a corner of the bedroom. He was part of a night vigil that was organized by the residents of the eastern district. They were asked to come report to the town head." Li Peng answered.

"Anything else, I should know?" Hei Wan reiterated.

Li Peng gulped and took a deep breath, showing his hesitation. Hei Wan noticed this and wondered what it was about.

"Go on, you can speak freely." Hei Wan spoke.

"Forgive this servant for his insolence." Li Peng apologized in anticipation.

"I know the boy. He's named Lin Mu, and I've met him before once." Li Peng spoke.

Hei Wan narrowed her eyes upon hearing Li Peng's words.

'Li Peng has met Lin Mu before? But how? Lin Mu didn't tell us about that.' Hei Wan wondered.

"So where and how did you meet Lin Mu?" Hei Wan asked.

"This servant met the boy, Lin Mu, a little over two months ago. He was punished for causing losses in the orchard, and his property was seized in compensation. Later on, he had a conflict with a man named Yuan Tu, and I resolved the conflict." Li Peng answered.

This information was completely new to Hei Wan and made her wonder what other things about Lin Mu were hidden.

"Explain to me in detail." Hei Wan ordered.

Following Hei Wan's orders, Li Peng began to explain the string of events from the very start. How Lin Mu worked in the orchards, the accident, the conflict, him being kicked out of the town; him returning and getting in conflict with Yuan Tu, and finally Yuan Tu being punished.

While Hei Wan showed nothing on her face, currently she was feeling very shocked internally. She had not expected for Lin Mu to be a normal commoner just two months ago.

"How did he become such a strong cultivator in a short span of time?" Hei Wan muttered.

'If this is true then, his background must be nothing to scoff at. Anyone that can allow a commoner like him to progress so fast must be an incredible master. Just the resources required must be immense.' Hei Wan thought.

Li Peng then gulped and spoke.

"Does mistress also think that this boy, Lin Mu, is suspicious?" Li Peng asked.

Chapter 110 - The Plan Succeeds

At that moment after hearing Li Peng's question, Hei Wan was stunned, but she did not let him see that. To Li Peng, it only seemed like Hei Wan was thinking deeply. Hei Wan could not let Li Peng get suspicious of Lin Mu as it would lead to many complications.

Hei Wan thus thought for a minute before speaking. During this time, Li Peng patiently waited in silence without disturbing her.

"I don't really think that he's that suspicious. Why do you think that?" Hei Wan spoke.

"Lin Mu was able to survive the attack when even the vice captain and the town head could not. Also, he was hiding in the bedroom and somehow the culprit did not find him? I doubt that." Li Peng replied.

"Your doubts are valid up to a certain point, but all you have right now is circumstantial evidence. That other man Lu Xiao was able to survive as well by running out. Though the culprit was very close to killing him and would have if we had not come upon him." Hei Wan spoke.

"Besides, didn't you say the boy is an orphan and was poor? Even if he was able to increase his strength, do you think it would be enough to defeat a cultivator like the vice captain Han Lei?" Hei Wan added.

Li Peng thought for a few seconds before nodding.

"Madam is right, we still don't have all the facts. It will be hasty of me to jump to conclusions." Li Peng replied.

"I will be interrogating Lin Mu myself, so you don't need to worry, we'll get the facts. Oh! And also Lin Mu is awake now." Hei Wan spoke.

Li Peng looked a little surprised upon hearing this.

"He is awake? That's good we can ask him right away." Li Peng replied.

"Not so fast. I think there are some problems with him. He didn't seem mentally fine when he woke up. Let him rest for a bit until then we'll check this place." Hei Wan declared.

"As the madam wishes." Li Peng responded with cupped hands.

Li Peng then turned to look at the guards that were standing near him and gestured to them. One of the guards approached him and stood in front of him respectfully.

"Reporting! We have an initial list of the items that currently seem to be missing." The guard reported.

The Guard then started to list all the things that they had found out. This included the letters that were on the town head's desk, the decorative javelin, the town head's personal seal, and the ledgers.

Li Peng and Hei Wan heard the report with their full attention as the gears within their minds started to turn and they started formulating their theories. Soon the guard had finished reporting and then took his leave to continue his task.

"It is indeed as you think, madam Hei Wan. The culprit stole a lot of documents and letters. His motive seemed to be related to official matters, perhaps." Li Peng spoke.

"I think that's not all. If he just wanted the documents, he could have done this when there was no one in the office. But instead, he chose to steal when there were four people in here, why would this be so." Hei Wan spoke.

"Perhaps he was hiding here and was unwittingly discovered?" Li Peng replied.

Hei Wan shook her head in response to Li Peng's words.

"No, he left two people alive after murdering the town head and the vice captain. This does not seem like a mistake or an unwilling thing on his part. Think about what's been happening in the town these few days and also last night's incident of the sleeping residents." Hei Wan replied.

Li Peng thought for a minute with furrowed brows until when suddenly a shocked expression appeared on his face.

"The culprit, he was here to make a statement!" Li Peng exclaimed.

'Now he's right where we want him.' Hei Wan thought inwardly with a chuckle.

"Exactly, the culprit was probably giving us a warning about not to interfere in their matters. It seems like it is an organization that is doing this and not just a few people." Hei Wan explained.

"If it is indeed as you say then we need to inform the Mayor." Li Peng spoke in a nervous tone.

"That's exactly why I'm here. The culprit is clearly a cultivator and would have been too much for you people to handle. But now that I'm here, I'll look over this matter personally, so you don't have to worry." Hei Wan replied.

Li Peng still did not seem completely convinced as it could be seen on his face.

"If you think that I don't have the strength of the manpower, don't worry. I brought six cultivators with me this time. We should be able to handle most that can come our way." Hei Wan added.

Li Peng nodded in response and accepted her words.

"Now then, let's go and check up on Lin Mu. This should be bough time for him to gather his mental faculties." Hei Wan ordered.

Li Peng and Hei Wan thus left the office and walked outside to where Lin Mu was sitting on the ground. As soon as Hei Wan saw Lin Mu, she extended her spirit sense and touched him two times. Lin Mu felt that and gently nodded in response.

This was a signal that they had decided upon if things went according to their plan. If they were good, then Hei Wan would do it two times, if they were bad she would do it three times. And just in case everything went south, she would tap in four times.

The last signal meant that Lin Mu need to run away as soon as he got it. But fortunately, everything seems to have gone according to plan, and they did not need to worry as much. Hei Wan and Li Peng came to stand in front of Lin Mu, who also stood up in response.

Hei Wan was the first one to speak as she wanted to lead this conversation so that she could keep it within the limits that they wanted.

"How did you come here, Lin Mu?" Hei Wan questioned.

Lin Mu looked at Li Peng who nodded and gestured him to answer. Li Peng internally felt a little hint of approval for Lin Mu.

'At least the boy still knows how to respect.' Li Peng thought,

Lin Mu did not know this, but his little gesture of doing this had already swayed the mind of Li Peng in his favor.

"I-I was asked to report to the town head. We came here along with vice captain Han Lei." Lin Mu spoke.

Lin Mu then took a pause, as if he was thinking something. A confused and perplexed expression soon appeared on his face.

"I... I can't seem to remember what happened after we entered the building. I'm sorry but I don't know what happened." Lin Mu explained.

A complex expression now dressed Li Peng's face after hearing Lin Mu's response.

"What do you mean you can't remember?" Li Peng spoke.

Just at this moment, as Li Peng spoke, the two guards that were standing at the doors suddenly stumbled onto the ground. Hei Wan and Li Peng instantly turned around to look.

"What are you two doing?" Li Peng questioned.

Dull and blank expressions could be seen on the two guards' faces, and soon more sounds came from inside the office. The loud noise of objects crashing came from inside the office along with the groans of the guards.

Li Peng now felt extremely alarmed and was just about to check when someone stopped him.

"WAIT! There could be danger inside. Let me go first." Hei Bao spoke in urgency.

Hei Wan also nodded in response and spoke,

"Let Hei Bao go first, he's a cultivator."

Li Peng nodded in understanding and let Hei Bao go ahead. Hei Bao opened the door of the office with his sword drawn. All four of them saw the scene inside the office and felt stunned. Nearly all of the guards seem to be lying on the ground along with a few items that were scattered around.

One could tell that they had collapsed on the ground, and whatever items they had in their hands had fallen along with them.

Hei Bao checked up on the guards and found that they were awake. But when he tried to speak to them, he discovered that they did not respond and seemed to be in a strange kind of a daze. He tried this with nearly everyone, and the only person who seemed a little responsive was the Captain of the guards.

"What is happening here?" Li Peng questioned.

"We need to leave this place right now. My best guess is that they've been poisoned by something." Hei Wan answered.

Hei Bao tried asking the guard captain who was still a little normal a few questions. But all he got in response was,

"Where am I?" The captain spoke.