

Walker 1011

Chapter 1011 - Determining The Location Of The Gu Legion

Four days ended up passing as the collaboration between Wu Hei and the alliance was officially initiated. The exchange and dissemination of information was important and was done properly.

The four patriarchs of the Alliances all got to work and were made aware of the dangers that existed along with the potential locations of Gu Yao. Over the time, Wu Hei knew where the minor plane where the headquarters of the Gu Legion were obviously not and where it could be.

This allowed the alliance to narrow down the areas and with the assistance of Jingming Shang's own investigations through the tracking of goods, they deciphered that there were only three regions where the headquarters of the Gu legion could be hidden.

The Southern part of the continent was directly excluded and this was told by Wu Hei himself as he had a solid reason.

His reason behind that Gu Yao wanted to be as far from the southern region as possible due to the presence of the Sky Precepts sect. Of all the sects, they were the ones with the highest attainments in spatial element and formations.

They could very well figure out if an unknown minor plane was hiding near them with the detection tools they had.

The second major area that they exuded was the Eastern Ming Dynasty. As much as they wanted, the Eastern Ming Dynasty was simply a bit too remote for Gu Yao to control the entire Gu Legion from.

Plus, the Light Harmony sect had already combed the area and even the merchants had shown no suspicious movement of goods there. This excluded it as well.

The first area that they thought was quite likely to hold the headquarters was the Black Dawn Kingdom. Or at least somewhere in its periphery. There were plenty of reports of strange movement of goods there and even Wu Hei had told them that there were several outposts of Gu Legion and even Northern Tribes there.

The Black Dune sect immediately sent out their elders and disciples to the locations that Wu Hei revealed to be taken care of.

The second possible area was the central area of the continent. This place contained deserts, forests and even the volcanic area, making it treacherous for the normal person to tread through.

But it was also that which made it a good place for the headquarter to be hidden. But what gave them the highest suspicion about this place was the fact that this was also the place where several sects used to exist in the past.

Not to mention, many kingdoms too fell in this region and were assimilated into the current existing ones. Lin Mu learned that even the Duan Kingdom from which Duan Ke hailed from was here... or at least used to be.

And since so many powers had perished here, there was a great chance a minor plane could have been existing there for a long time. It could have been missed by the kingdoms and sects all this time and then taken advantage of by Gu Yao as he wouldn't need much effort to use their skill of carving out the world to access it.

Then there was the area that was the most surprising for Lin Mu. It was the eastern edges of the continent. This would be the area where the Kingdom of Shu, the Hong Lin Kingdom, the Ripple Mist sect and the two island nations, along with the Fenlong kingdom existed.

Since the powers here, excluding the Ripple Mist sect, were weaker than most of the continent, they didn't think that there could be a minor plane here. Especially since the Kong plane already existed there.

But then Lin Mu realized that even if there might have been a minor plane there, its presence could have been masked by the Kong plane. From what Wu Hei told, the headquarters were located in a rather small minor plane.

In fact, it was about the same size as that of the Northern Town where Lin Mu was from. Considering that size and the Kong Plane, it was the same as comparing a seed to an entire mountain.

This alarmed all the patriarch and Lin Mu, making them call King Hong immediately to raise their defenses. The Long Cloud sect sent out their people there to search the area and try to find any signs of the minor plane.

But they couldn't do it overtly either, as the sects of the alliance, excluding the Noon grass sect were all under assault by the Zither Wind Alliance.

From all this, Lin Mu and Wu Hei determined that Gu Yao most probably used their method of carving out void and used it to open up access to a minor plane. Though this also made Lin Mu doubtful about whether his suggestion of uprooting the plane from the world would work or not.

Even if the anchor from this world was removed and they were left in the void, there was a chance they survived and used their skills to open up another route into the world.

'I can't let that happen either... Seems like we'll have to totally eliminate them...' Lin Mu thought to himself at the end.

This was the most viable option, and the others agreed with him too.

But this was not the end of the surprises. Wu Hei still had one last one. It was a surprise which could have been missed if not for Wu Hei pulling out a certain document along with hundreds others.

This document was nothing but a portrait of Gu Yao.

"Huh? This is Gu Yao?" Lin Mu said in surprise.

The patriarchs all saw it and were surprised too. Lin Mu had made them a portrait of Gu Yao a long time ago so that they knew who their enemy was, but now it looked to be rather different.

"Yes... he has... changed." Wu Hei replied.

"How? Or why?" Lin Mu asked as he looked at the appearance of Gu Yao on the sheet.

He was now bald and his skin had tanned greatly as well.

Chapter 1012 - Gu Yao's Change

Lin Mu didn't know why or how the man had changed this much. The others were surprised by it too and realized that if they didn't find out now, even if Gu Yao was right in front of them, they might have missed him entirely.

"He became like this over the last year. I'm thinking it's most likely due to his cultivation technique or something." Wu Hei answered.

"That does seem like the usual suspect." Patriarch Yi spoke.

Lin Mu nodded his head as well. He was after all an example of this too. His body had changed several times due to cultivation and now he looked rather different from the past. Thought it could also be attributed partly to his own growth and aging.

He was barely fourteen when he started cultivating and now he was about twenty three.

'Almost ten years... hard to believe it.' Lin Mu thought to himself.

It was a surreal experience now that he thought of it and he would have never expected in the past he would come this far along. He had both suffered and prospered in this time. With both aspects going to the very extremes.

From a common village orphan boy, he was now the leader of an entire alliance that spanned over top sects and kingdoms. To anyone, this kind of growth would be considered stunning or downright unnatural.

The discussion continued for a while more but not before Lin Mu dropped off Wu Hei back at the mansion. He could only bring the man over for a short time to the Kong plane since there was always a chance of others finding out.

This was rather troublesome and Wu Hei couldn't do much right now since it was something that was his own doing. He was the one who had requested protection due to the assassin.

When the patriarchs were told that there was such a person going around killing their enemies they didn't know whether to concern him a friend or foe. Regardless, they decided to keep an eye out for him.

If things worked out and they found him, they would extend a hand out to him.

But that was all in the future and Lin Mu needed to continue onwards for now.

"I shouldn't hold you back any longer. You two need to go on your task too." Wu Hei spoke.

"Indeed. It has been delayed for quite a while now." Lin Mu replied.

"Between here and the Black dawn kingdom, the Gu legion and Northern tribes have several outposts, and so there are open lines of communication. If you are discovered in one of them, they will alert the others, so it's best you avoid them.

Though if you are detected... you may as well destroy them all. If possible of course." Wu Hei suggested.

"I will." Lin Mu nodded before he remembered something. "Wait, if the communication is possible, then you mean there are no jamming formations here?" he asked.

"No, the ones that exist are along the border of the Black dawn kingdom to the south. There shouldn't be any problem in you communicating with me here." Wu Hei replied.

"That'll make things easier. We will keep you updated on things." Jing Luo said.

"And I'll do the same." Wu Hei agreed.

In the end, Wu Hei gave them some reminders and let them leave. Lin Mu sent Jing Luo to the Kong plane and went back to the room they had rented. Little Shrubby had been waiting for them there... or more like taking a nap.

~shua~

Lin Mu reappeared in the room along with Jing Luo and woke up Little Shrubby in the process.

"You're back. Is it time to leave?" Little Shrubby guessed.

"Yup. We are ready." Lin Mu replied.

"Alright!" Little Shrubby said with excitement.

"We can take this route," Jing Luo spoke as he took out a map. "I gathered some information downstairs and there are several smuggling small caravans that go through this path to avoid paying taxes on the border." He revealed.

"Huh... that's neat." Lin Mu muttered. "You got this kind of information downstairs?" Lin Mu was surprised.

"There's a lot you can gain if you lighten some tongues with wine. The good for nothing nobles downstairs can't help but brag the little success they start to get." Jing Luo chuckled.

"If it works in our favor, I guess it's good." Lin Mu couldn't complain.

With their plan set, Lin Mu decided to leave at night. But before that, he wanted to do one last thing. He wanted to survey the entire capital and see if there were any 'Reborn' hidden here.

In addition to that, he also wanted to get an account of all the people who were under the grasp of the Human Controlling blood curse here. He was even looking to infiltrate the royal palace and check there.

Wu Hei had already given him the authorization token and it would allow him free entry through the formation arrays. It would save him time on unraveling it and even give him direct entry to the royal court.

While Wu Hei had already told them about the people controlled by Gu Yao in the capital, from the current revelation that even Wu Hei was not fully informed of things, there were bound to be other secrets here.

Lin Mu left the room and started his surveillance. There were six hours till night time and it was more than enough time for him to cover the entire city. In just three hours he was done with the common areas of the city and had found several people that were under the Human controlling blood curse and even more that had taken the 'pills of grace'.

And when he moved to the noble district, the number only increased more.

'Gu Yao certainly strengthened his grasp here...' Lin Mu thought as he made his way towards the royal palace.

Using phase to move through the ground left Lin Mu uninhibited, and he quickly arrived at the palace.

Chapter 1013 - An Infected Beast Under The Stables

When he appeared in the palace though, Lin Mu felt an uncomfortable aura.

"This... can't be... are they really hiding one here?" Lin Mu was surprised.

The aura he had felt was of the Invader no doubt. Lin Mu went to the source right away and found it to be hidden below the stables of the palace at the side.

'Huh... this is a rather open area... is the invader even restricted?' Lin Mu wondered.

The entrance to the underground area was hidden under hay and opening the hatch would allow one access to the short tunnel that led to there. Of course, Lin Mu had no need for this but still kept it in mind for reference.

His spirit sense spread around and quickly found the source of that uncomfortable aura.

"There it is..." Lin Mu muttered as he saw the being corrupted by the invader.

The being this time was also a beast, but it was far weaker than the ones he had seen before.

"Barely at the Infant soul stage of the Nascent Soul realm?" Lin Mu assessed the sleeping beast.

The beast looked to be about the size of a cow, but looked like a malformed dog. It had two heads and six tails. It didn't look like any beast that Lin Mu had seen before, but he guessed that it must have mutated.

"No use letting this thing continue to live..." Lin Mu muttered as he extended his hand.

'Meld'

The infected beast didn't even realize that there was someone attacking it right now. It was split apart into several segments which Lin Mu stored away into the ring before they could even touch the ground after the deactivation of meld.

~shua~

Lin Mu peered into the ring and saw the severed body of the beast writhing in the ring. The flesh and blood trembled as the invader tried to leave the body. Lin Mu decided to continue watching and saw a dark brown and grey colored Nascent soul flying out of a segment of the corpse.

~swish~

The nascent soul tried to look around for a suitable vessel to rest in, but couldn't do so. It was fully disorientated and confused at this.

'The invader took the nascent soul as a vessel? It can do this too?' Lin Mu was surprised.

So far, the invader had only lived in the body and this was the first time he was seeing it merging with a Nascent soul.

The Nascent soul tried to fly up a little to get a better view, but that turned out to be a mistake.

~SKREEEEEEEEE~

The Nascent soul couldn't even let out a cry before it was torn apart by a stray streak of spatial energy. One must know that the skies of the ring were filled with terrifying streaks of spatial energy that even Lin Mu would get injured by if not for the protection of the ring.

Even the spirit plants like the Wood spirit tulip and the Purple Sickle Amaranth didn't dare to go up high, as their instincts told them it would kill them. Though there was also the fact that Xukong was also there to prevent that.

"That's terrifying..." Lin Mu muttered, seeing the scene.

It was the first time he had seen the streaks of spatial energy actually harming something, and it showed him just how dangerous they truly were.

"This is why you need to always be careful when dealing with space." Xukong reminded.

"I know se—" But before Lin Mu could complete his words, he saw something happening.

From the remnants of Nascent soul, a dark energy came out. The energy looked like smoke and gathered up into a small cloud that was barely the size of a palm.

"The invader survived that?!" Lin Mu was shocked.

The cloud of smoke then did something surprising. It tried to pull a streak of spatial energy towards it. Xukong too watched it curiously.

The streak of spatial energy rushed towards the dark cloud and it then tried to absorb it into it.

"Huh?" Lin Mu was shocked again.

"Foolish." Xukong scoffed.

The cloud was torn apart by the spatial energy streak and was torn once more. This kept on repeating until the entire cloud was eliminated. No trace of it was left and Lin Mu's spirit sense didn't detect any change there either.

"What... why?" Lin Mu was confused as to why the cloud did that.

He could tell that it was the invader, but doing something like this was nothing but suicidal.

"The invader likely has some proficiency in space, as we know. It probably felt the spatial energy and tried to absorb it so that it could leave the world like it had in the past. But this time, it was confused.

This is no spatial spirit Qi that can be absorbed... this spatial energy is on a completely different level. Trying to absorb is a futile effort." Xukong explained.

"If... I attempt that, will it be the same?" Lin Mu asked.

"At your current level? Yes." Xukong replied. "In the future, maybe. Far into the future, no." He added.

'If I consider senior Xukong's standards of time, then... far into the future... just how many thousand years is even that?'

Lin Mu understood that a long lived being like senior Xukong perceived time differently. For him, the ten years he had spent with Lin Mu could be considered a drop in the life he had lived.

It also gave Lin Mu an idea into just how much he would have to cultivate to be able to absorb such spatial energy directly.

'It also shows the difference in starting points... Senior Xukong can do it even though this is just an avatar that doesn't have the same cultivation base as his main body.' Lin Mu thought to himself.

He withdrew his senses from the ring and left the underground area. There were no traces of him or even the invader being there and it looked like this area had been empty since the start.

Done with this little detour, Lin Mu entered the main building of the royal palace.

Chapter 1014 - Into The Black Dawn Kingdom

The royal palace of the Shuang Qian kingdom used to seem really huge to Lin Mu once upon a time, but now Lin Mu had seen sect buildings that were several times bigger than this. Even the Tri cauldron peony sect's main peak buildings were bigger than the palace.

Lin Mu's spirit sense spread around as he quickly grasped the aura of those that had taken those pills as well as those controlled by Gu Yao.

"Oh? The king is actually not controlled?" Lin Mu was surprised.

Lin Mu had originally thought that the King of the Shuang Qian kingdom would be definitely be under the control of Gu Yao, but it seemed like that was not true anymore. Though when he checked the man a bit more, he did find traces of the pills of grace on him.

"Hmm... since he's weaker, Gu Yao probably didn't deem him worthy of having the Human Controlling Blood curse on him." Lin Mu muttered, noticing the king Infant soul stage Nascent soul realm cultivation.

It was relatively weak, as there were several more people stronger than him in the palace.

'No, wait... seems like he really is rather weak. Even with the use of the pills his cultivation is still this low.' Lin Mu realized that the Shuang Qian kingdom might have just been doomed from the start.

~Sigh~

"They never stood a chance..." Lin Mu sighed and understood why even the mutated beast infected by the invader hidden here was weak too.

Finally, having caught up with everything, Lin Mu left the palace, returning to room. Once there, he quickly sent the report with all the information he had gathered to both Wu Hei and the alliance.

"All ready?" Jing Luo questioned.

"Yes, had some surprises, but we can leave now." Lin Mu answered.

"Alright. Let's head off!" Jing Luo said.

The two of them with Little Shrubby, left the city and flew out to the west. Their destination was a certain pass slightly to the north west from where they were currently. It was a path that some merchants used to smuggle in high value goods so that they wouldn't be taxed.

While something like this didn't really matter to Lin Mu and Jing Luo since they could literally just fly over the mountains, what they did care for was that this path mostly avoided any dangers that might delay them, at the very least.

Another thing being that there were no Gu Legion hideouts on this path. So they wouldn't be detected by them either.

~shua~

Little Shrubby enlarged into his full size once they were a sufficient distance away from the city.

"Let's go!" Little Shrubby said with excitement.

"Alright." Lin Mu said as he got onto Little Shrubby's back.

Jing Luo did the same, and both of them hooked into the harness.

~WHOOSH~

Little Shrubby started to run and soon picked up a speed that was faster than ever before. Jing Luo found it hard to even see anything, despite the fact that he was at the Dao Shell realm too.

His dynamic vision should have been good enough to keep up with a lot of things, but with Little Shrubby's speed it was not. Lin Mu didn't have the same problem, though. But it did strain him a little bit, which just made him take this as a training opportunity.

Their travel was barely of three hours before they ended up reaching the pass.

"That should be the one." Jing Luo said as they looked down at a narrow pass.

It was nestled between two cliffs that almost touched each other. The mountains between which the path was located were tall enough for most humans to not be able to traverse normally. At the top of the mountains, snow could even be seen, showing just how tall they were.

But if one looked beyond the mountains, they would see a vast expanse of black land.

This was the Black Dawn Kingdom!

The soil of the Black Dawn Kingdom was what gave it the name. It was rich in certain nutrients which made it grow a lot of crops. But at the same time, it gave the opportunity for many strong beasts to grow here as well.

It was said that the people of the black Dawn kingdom were rather hardy, even if it was just the commoners. To them, encounter with beasts was a normal thing and even peasants would have to fight with such beasts almost every day.

Beasts wandering into the farms and stealing their cattle was a common thing that the peasants would defend against. Over the thousands of years the kingdom had existed, its residents had already grown accustomed to this.

Now killing a beast when they were six or seven wasn't unheard of, even if the beast was just at the first stage of the body tempering realm. The children would go out to play and bring back some beast corpses to eat later in the night.

It was good practice for the future and would also nourish their bodies.

Lin Mu passed over many villages and towns, taking in the sights. With his spirit sense, he could quickly take in the scenes of the commoners all at once. He saw their struggles and pains.

Their joys and sorrows as were well obvious to him. He felt a like he had just seen his own past in that moment.

His eyes stilled, and his heart stilled as well. His mind became tranquil as his lips started to move gently. Jing Luo who had been sitting behind, suddenly heard faint chants in his head.

He didn't even realize when he started repeating after them in his mind, even though he didn't understand the esoteric words. Unconsciously his spirit Qi started flowing smoothly in his meridians, speeding up his rate of cultivation.

But he wasn't the only one who experience this. Wherever Lin Mu passed, this effect spread.. The commoners who never cultivated before felt a clarity in their minds that they had never felt before.

Chapter 1015 - A Moment To Change Destinies

Lin Mu didn't know that he had just changed the destiny of tens of thousands of people today.

With the clarity that they had gained in that brief moment, they felt like they knew what their goals in life should be. Those that were muddled about their aims suddenly knew what they wanted.

Those that were indecisive about the royal scholar exams suddenly found the syllabus to be easy to grasp. The poor and downtrodden suddenly found their lives getting easier despite the fact that their burdens were the same.

Just that small moment was enough to elevate them, and allow them to go on; possibly allowing them to be great in the future.

The cultivators that were stuck for a long time at the same point suddenly felt their bottlenecks loosening. It was as if the very heavens were helping them as the spirit Qi started flowing into their bodies automatically.

Hundreds of people broke through at the same time.

These were the commoners, the average cultivators who would have never had the chance to join sects. Many of them were at the end of their lifespans while some were just starting their journey, which was possibly coming to a quick end.

And yet today, all of them were given a new lease on life.

Little Shrubby kept on running, unaffected by Lin Mu's chants though. He was possibly the only one here that was used to them and would not be affected easily. He had heard them more than anyone in the world possibly.

Besides, to Little Shrubby as long as he had his master, he had no other qualms. He had not to bottleneck to breakthrough, and neither did he have any sorrows. The chants were like air to him.

Six hours passed in the blink of an eye.

Little Shrubby had already crossed a quarter of the Black Dawn Kingdom in this time.

"Huh?" Lin Mu suddenly woke up from his trance.

He looked around and saw that they were now in an entirely different region. His spirit sense compared the lay of the land with the maps he had and estimated that he was near one of the major cities of the black Dawn kingdom.

The city was called as the Amber Wold city. It was named after the wold¹ it was located on. This area was slightly different from the other places and didn't have black soil. Instead, it had a faint amber layer of soil on top of it.

"The Amber Wold City, huh... been a long time since I've been here." Jing Luo had woken up by now as well.

He understood that he had just gained a lot in these brief six hours, but he didn't complain. He didn't even wonder how it happened, just accepting it as a fortunate encounter.

His cultivation base had certainly progressed and the growth of his Dao Shell had increased as well by a percent. For a mere six hours, this progress was massive.

"What did you come here for before?" Lin Mu asked.

"The last time I came here was over seventy years ago. I was still in the Qi refining realm and had come here with my uncle." Jing Luo replied.

"Oh? Did you come to find some resources again as well? Like in the Hong Lin kingdom?" Lin Mu asked curiously.

"You got that right. We came here to get some of the Ambers that can be found in this region. Amber Wold city is the biggest place to get them and they are traded in thousands here." Jing Luo replied.

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

Lin Mu cursorily glanced at the city and scanned it over with his spirit sense.

His expression turned stern after a few seconds, though.

"What happened? Did you find something?" Jing Luo questioned.

"I did... another mutant beast." Lin Mu answered.

Jing Luo's expression turned serious as well.

"How many is that now? Three?" Jing Luo said.

"Yes... one under each major city." Lin Mu spoke.

"Looks like a pattern to me." Jing Luo replied.

"Indeed. Gu Yao might be keeping them as trump cards." Lin Mu guessed.

"Of course. Release them all when push comes to shove and let them wreak havoc. The sects and kingdom's forces will be forced to deal with them while he can do whatever he wants." Jing Luo replied.

Lin Mu simply nodded in response to this. To him, Gu Yao would certainly keep a tactic like this hidden.

"You gonna deal with it?" Jing Luo asked.

"It'll just take five minutes." Lin Mu said as he disappeared.

His body rapidly descended while teleporting, undetectable to the naked eyes. He passed through the formation array of the city as if it was nothing but paper and quickly entered the ground.

He appeared in an underground cave that was clearly man made and looked at the mutated beast that was chained here. It was similar to what he had seen before and there were hundreds of thousands of runes carved into the walls and ceiling.

~clang~

The chains were tugged slightly as the beast woke up. It looked up and found Lin Mu floating there.

"GR—" But before it could even let out a roar, it was suppressed.

"Silence." Lin Mu stated as a crushing pressure descended on the beast.

The mutated beast had a strength equivalent to that of the adult soul stage of the Nascent soul realm and could very easily hurt a lot of people if it was unleashed. Not to mention, normal Nascent soul realm cultivators would not be its match at all and would be infected by it as well.

Even a Dao Shell realm cultivator would find it a bit difficult to deal with. But this city didn't have any Dao shell realm cultivators at all, which only meant that when this beast was released, it would basically be the death sentence.

Lin Mu pointed with his hand and the space around the beast froze. Waving his hand, he split apart the beast into several pieces before storing them all in the ring and letting them be purged by the spatial energy.

Wold Is a lay of open uncultivated land.

Chapter 1016 - Eliminating Threats Along The Way

Lin Mu was quite liking this method of eliminating the invader. It was fast and fierce, yet there were limitation.

~Sigh~

"If only it worked on all..." Lin Mu muttered to himself.

While meld seemed rather strong, there were still limitations to it. The broader the area of effect, the greater the consumption for Lin Mu. Not to mention that if he used Meld on beings with cultivation base, they could actually resist it.

The level of resistant varied depending on the difference there was between Lin Mu's own cultivation base and the other being on which the skill was being used. Right now, Lin Mu could use Meld on those at the Nascent soul realm with no problem at all.

He reckoned that he would be able to use it on enemies at the Dao Shell realm as well, though the stronger one's might be able to resist it a bit more and struggle, making him expend more spirit Qi on it.

It was a skill that was best to be used in limit or it could greatly exhaust Lin Mu. After all, Meld didn't use a set amount of spirit Qi like his other skills. Rather, it used up a percentage of his entire spirit Qi at once.

It could quickly get out of hand if Lin Mu didn't regulate it well enough.

Lin Mu glanced at his hand momentarily, looking at the ring. His gaze lingered for a second more before his body disappeared once more, reappearing in the skies above the Amber Wold City.

"Oh? You're done way quicker than I thought." Jing Luo spoke.

"Mhmm... let's continue." Lin Mu said before taking a pause. "Should we... pass through the major cities on the way?" he asked.

Jing Luo's brows furrowed, but he understood Lin Mu's question.

"You really think there would be more of them?" Jing Luo asked.

"Yes. The pattern seems to be there. We can't just let them all be unsafe like this." Lin Mu replied.

"Alright. If it's only going to take this much time, then we may as well." Jing Luo stated.

"I'll inform the alliance later, and get them to do a formal search later on." Lin Mu said as he got onto Little Shrubby's back.

"Yeah, though I doubt it is the same for other regions, too. The Black Dawn Kingdom and the Shuang Qian Kingdom are greatly under the influence of the Gu Legion, so it makes sense that they were able to hide such beings without alerting anyone.

Plus, we've passed over other cities before too, right? And you didn't sense anything there." Jing Luo replied.

Lin Mu thought over it and found it to be a valid assumption.

"Besides, I doubt these 'reborn' are that easy to make. Even Gu Yao should be having a limited supply of them. Perhaps he can make a lot of them, but he will still need time to make them I presume." Jing Luo added.

Lin Mu thought over to how weak the two Reborn he saw in the Black Dawn Kingdom were and reckoned that they were simply new reborn or inferior 'products'.

"You are probably right. Maybe we'll find more clues later." Lin Mu said.

"Yeah. And you have the remains of these Reborn too, right? The more you have, the easier it would be for Duan Ke and Grandfather to track them down." Jing Luo stated.

Hearing this Lin Mu's eyes lit up, and he felt even more motivated.

"Let's go, Little Shrubby!" Lin Mu ordered, directing Little Shrubby towards the next city.

The next city was about thirty minutes away for Little Shrubby, and upon arriving, Lin Mu quickly scanned the entire area inch by inch. He didn't want to miss a mutated beast, just because it was hidden a bit too deep.

The people of the city felt a strange feeling that day and goosebumps appeared on nearly everyone.

"Why did it get chilly all of a sudden?" someone said.

But a moment later, the goosebumps faded and so did the uncomfortable feeling. They were unaware that it was Lin Mu's spirit sense that had just passed over them.

Even those that had higher cultivation bases only felt the spirit Qi in the air go still for a moment, before it returned to normal. The time duration was far too short for them to tell what exactly had happened.

They could only guess that it was some natural phenomenon.

After all, not many would think that someone like Lin Mu at the Dao Shell realm was scanning the entire city at once with his spirit sense.

"Hmm... nothing here." Lin Mu said as his brows eased.

"See, I told you. Even Gu Yao with his power, can't afford to put them in every city." Jing Luo spoke.

"Though I did find others controlled by Gu Yao here too." Lin Mu said.

"Oh yeah, those... will just need to be marked for now." Jing Luo replied.

Lin Mu nodded his head before asking Little Shrubby to continue onwards. They passed over six more cities and didn't find anymore Reborn. Though Lin Mu's list of people controlled by Gu Yao only increased.

This encompassed both the people under the Human Controlling Blood curse, who were under Gu Yao's direct control, and those that were addicted to the pills of grace. Albeit the number of those under the Human Controlling Blood curse was rather low.

It was both a good and bad thing, but there was little they could do about it right now.

Thus, Lin Mu continued on his journey and finally reached the northern end of the Black Dawn Kingdom.

~huu~

"We're finally here..." Lin Mu muttered as he observed the vast plains.

Yellow grass and shrubs covered the plains, making it look like a yellow and black sea. The contrast between the soil and vegetation was rather unique.

"Now where do we go from here?" Lin Mu questioned Jing Luo.

There was nothing here and Lin Mu couldn't sense any spatial fluctuations here either.

Chapter 1017 - An Unexpected Village

Jing Luo gazed at the yellow plains with a hint of nostalgia in his eyes before turning to Lin Mu.

"A bit further... at least until we hit the ocean. Then we need to search along the coast." Jing Luo answered.

"Alright." Lin Mu said as they continued onwards.

The yellow plains went by really quick. If one observed from their point of view, it looked like a yellow blanket was quickly being pulled back. The more it was pulled back, the more the blue bedsheets hidden underneath could be seen.

These blue bedsheets was, of course, the ocean.

At first it was like a distant blue line which soon expanded into a blue crescent. The closer they got, the bigger the ocean got. And when they were finally at it, they witnessed the endless ocean, the ends of which could not be seen at all.

There was mist floating around the area, making it only harder to see. If not for Lin Mu's spirit sense, he wouldn't be able to even tell how vast the ocean really was.

"This is the side of the continent that not many get to see." Jing Luo said as he got off Little Shrubby's back.

"Indeed... it's like a different world." Lin Mu muttered.

There didn't seem to be many beasts here either, and the area looked a bit desolate.

This area was considered to be restricted to most humans of the Black Dawn Kingdom. They all knew about the Northern Tribes and didn't want to be close to the area that they supposedly lived in.

The Forbidden kingdom was beyond this ocean and even if it was unlikely for them to cross over from here, they still didn't feel comfortable. That was the main reason why there were no settlements here.

The beasts also seemed to be in an agreement from what Lin Mu could see. The beasts that resided here were rather weak, with most of them being in the body tempering realm. And the only ones in the Qi refining realm he found were aquatic beasts living in the ocean.

"Now we just search around here?" Lin Mu asked.

"Yes... or at least I hope so." Jing Luo replied.

"Okay, let's begin." Lin Mu said as the trio of men and beast walked along the coast.

This time, they couldn't use Little Shrubby's speed as Lin Mu needed to focus on fine spatial fluctuations that would get muffled if they ran on Little Shrubby's back. The Jing clan was afraid that their hidden ancestral grounds could be found and they were a bit paranoid.

Which was why they set up the best isolating and masking formation arrays that they could.

Even Lin Mu would need to put effort into finding it.

The token that Jing Luo had forged only provided the entry to the ancestral grounds but couldn't find them. The location of the ancestral grounds was always kept hidden, and only the patriarch of the Jing Clan would know it.

This was so that no one could threaten, blackmail or torture the information out of a clan member. And if this happened to the patriarch, it would mean that the clan was already at an endpoint and there was no chance to survive, thus it wouldn't matter anyway.

Lin Mu and Jing Luo decided to start from the very western tip of the Black Dawn Kingdom's northern coast and then head east from there. Upon reaching their first start point, they were surprised to see a village there.

"Huh? There's actually a village here?" Lin Mu said with surprise.

"I don't think there was one here before..." Jing Luo replied as he checked the maps. "Yeah... there's nothing."

Looking at the village, Lin Mu could tell that the village was newly built. Most of the huts were made out of straw and mud, with only a few houses made from stone and wood. There weren't that many houses here either, only about forty.

And considering that they were rather small in size too, the village was easily condensed in an area of two hundred meters. There were small rafts that the villagers were using to fish in the ocean too.

This was unusual since no normal peasant would dare to get near the coast due to the danger of aquatic beasts. They were considered to be far more dangerous than land beasts, mostly due to the fact that once they decided to target them, there would be less chance of escape.

After all, humans were way faster on land than they were in water. Even if they had a raft, there wasn't a good chance of escape. Most Aquatic beasts would be able to wreck the rafts with a causal attack.

Lin Mu observed the villagers, who seemed to be rather rugged looking. They were even more rugged than the average Black Dawn Kingdom commoner. Their skins had an even tan, as if they spent most of their time out under the sun.

Looking at the sky, Lin Mu could actually see a clear sun out too, which was different from the misty look on the other areas of the coast where the skies were cloudy.

"Definitely a different area, huh..." Jing Luo said.

~step~step~step~

But while they were wondering about the village, a few people approached them from the behind.

"Travelers? This far?" one of the villager said upon seeing Lin Mu and Jing Luo.

"AHH!!!!!" But soon a scream could also be heard as their eyes went to the beast that was standing some distance away.

"BEAST! SPIRIT BEAST!" The villagers cried out.

Lin Mu and Jing Luo felt a little awkward at this. They had not expected to find a village here, and thus Lin Mu had not sent Little Shrubby away either.

"Calm down, he is my tamed beast." Lin Mu said as he lightly floated into the air.

Looking at his handsome face and the aura exuding from his body, the villagers quickly understood the situation.

"Ah! Forgive us, Lord Cultivators!" The villagers hurriedly bowed.

Chapter 1018 - A Northern Tribe Village

Lin Mu gazed at the villagers that had appeared and found them to be a bit different.

The villagers hurriedly crossed their hands and bowed. Seeing this strange method of paying respects Lin Mu was startled.

Jing Luo who saw it also got alerted, his eyes went wide while the veins on his arms bulged.

'This method of greeting... isn't this...'

"Lord Cultivators, may we have the grace of knowing which tribe are you from?" the villager questioned.

"They are..." Jing Luo muttered as faint spirit Qi waves came from his body.

But just as he was about to act, he heard a voice.

"Hang on... let's not act so fast." Lin Mu spoke lightly.

Jing Luo stopped and lowered his hand that was half way raised. The villagers couldn't see it with their heads bowed, or they would have been alerted as well.

Lin Mu looked at the villagers who were obediently bowing and thought to himself before speaking, "we cannot tell you that."

The villagers trembled slightly before replying, "pardon us for the disrespect. It's just that... we wanted to ask where we are."

'Huh?' Both Lin Mu and Jing Luo were confused upon hearing this but didn't show it on their faces.

"Hmm... before I answer that, I'd like to ask what you all are doing here? I don't recall there being a village here." Lin Mu said, pretending to be familiar.

The villagers were a bit startled, and slight hesitation could be seen on their faces.

"Forgive us my lords, but... it would be better if you talk to our village head first. We do not have the authority to speak to someone of your ranks." The villagers stated.

"Very well, take us to him." Lin Mu replied, not minding this since more information was his goal anyway.

The villagers then brought Lin Mu and Jing Luo to the village, while Little Shrubby stayed behind. He was simply too... eye catching and Lin Mu didn't want there to be additional disturbances, just in case.

The other villagers were surprised to see Lin Mu and Jing Luo here. But they didn't dare to talk or gossip in their presence. They simply bowed their heads while doing the same gesture as the previous ones.

Lin Mu lightly gazed at them as he confirmed his suspicion.

'Sure enough... they are from the Northern tribes...'

The villagers brought them to the very back of the village. This was located along a small cliff that rose at the very side of the ocean shore. Here the second largest building in the village stood.

Even then, it was merely a shack built with straw, stone and some wood. It took the support of the cliff and had a slanted roof.

"Village head, lord cultivators are here!" The villagers called out.

~thud~

The sound of sudden movement came from inside as frantic footsteps could also be heard.

~Creak~

The door of the shack opened quickly as a nervous looking face looked out. Lin Mu observed it too and saw that it was a middle aged man. He too had dark tanned skin, but in addition to that, he also had what looked like a small tattoo on the side of his forehead.

He had long hair, a small bunch of it being braided while the rest laid free. There were three beads in the braid as well that looked to be made from stone and shells.

Recognizing this particular way of dressing up, Lin Mu understood who this person was.

'One of the lowest ranked Northern Tribe warrior.' Lin Mu understood.

The northern tribes had many customs and rituals, one of which was the way someone's rank was designated.

The different ranks all wore beads in their hair, and the number and quality of the beads decided what their designation would be. The man in front of them who was said to be the village head was barely at the lowest rank of an official Northern Tribe Warrior.

This rank needed for one to be at the very least, the seventh stage of the body tempering realm. Lin Mu found that this man was the strongest among all the villagers and the only one at this strength as well.

There was no threat to Lin Mu, nor Jing Luo here, which was why Lin Mu stopped him from acting. If they wanted, to they could eliminate all these villagers with a casual wave of their hand.

But Lin Mu didn't want that. He understood that there was something strange happening here and it would be in their best interest to know how exactly did these villagers that were from the northern Tribes ended up here.

If these villagers had a cultivation base, Lin Mu would have at least understood. But these were far too weak to even be able to cross over from the forbidden continent. Lin Mu reckoned that they would have perished in the harsh weather even before they crossed the pears belt.

Not to mention, Lin Mu greatly doubted that the Northern tribes would really send such weak people here. It wasn't that it was completely impossible, but the fact that it would not be worth for them to put the resources to send them here.

This was the point that made Lin Mu wonder about it all and also why the villagers were still alive now.

"L-lord cultivators! Y-you're finally here!" The village head spoke with difficulty.

Lin Mu could tell that the man was really surprised.

'It's almost as if... he's glad we're here?' Lin Mu felt.

"Have you come to finally take us back?" the village head questioned.

Hearing this a few ideas appeared in Lin Mu's mind but he didn't dare to confirm either of them.

"Hmm... perhaps. But I'd like to know what's happening here and why are all of you here?" Lin Mu questioned.

Hearing this, clear shock could be seen on the village head's face.. As if what Lin Mu had asked was shattering his heart or killing his hopes.

Chapter 1019 - A Reason For Arrival

An encounter with the Northern Tribes' commoners was certainly not what Lin Mu had expected today.

He would have understood if it were the Northern Tribes' cultivators or soldiers, but these were clearly the peasants.

But after the village head explained everything to Lin Mu and Jing Luo, they understood why such a strange situation had taken place and why the village was here.

"So you're telling me a priest from the Kiwa tribe came and told you that he would take your village to a better land?" Lin Mu asked after hearing the account from the village head.

"Y-yes, my lord!" The village head hurriedly replied.

"Hmm..." Lin Mu rubbed his chin as he thought over the entire thing which seemed a bit absurd to him.

What had happened to these villagers seemed a bit of a pity to Lin Mu.

The village head was apparently from one of the many subordinate villages under the Kiwa tribe. The Kiwa Tribe was one of the big clans of the Northern Tribes and its patriarch was one of the Dao Treading realm members.

Lin Mu knew all this since he had gotten quite a lot of information from Ku Waowen.

The village this man lived in was among the very small ones and only had a population of barely two hundred. They lived in a bad patch of land and didn't have many resources. They could barely even afford to feed themselves not to mention trade.

The land was barren and frozen, not allowing them to grow any crops. Their only means of sustenance were the lakes near their village that had plenty of fish. Thus their village was a fishing village that greatly depended on it.

Thus upon hearing that a priest from the Kiwa tribe was offering them a chance to relocate to a better place, the village head took it right away.

The land in the Forbidden continent was harsh, and the land which was fertile and could grow things was the most valuable. Thus according to the laws of the Northern Tribes, it was strictly forbidden for the villagers to move their village without the permission of a priest or a tribe chieftain.

Besides, the villagers were not in a position of moving around anywhere nearby either as their village was already in a good place for their region. If they went anywhere else, they would only be moving in a bad area.

All the areas that were good were long since occupied. And the few that were still free were in distant locations and filled with dangers.

The priest offered to move the villagers on one condition, it being that they do not ask any questions and if anyone else asks them, not to answer them either. The priest then took them to a particular location, that was an old shrine.

The shrine was big enough to accommodate all the villagers and contained a large formation array. One by one, the villagers were sent into it and they all disappeared. They were told that this thing would take them to the best location for them.

"When you arrived you say there were only eighty of you left?" Lin Mu questioned.

"Yes... I... we... don't know where the others went. We tried searching around in the past years, but were unable to get any traces of them." The Village head spoke. "We feared... they had died during whatever happened at the time." He added, his voice feeling heavy.

"I see.. And that's how you all ended up making a village here?" Lin Mu asked.

"Yes, my lords." The village head confirmed.

Silence descended in the room as the village head waited for Lin Mu's response. But instead of him, he got a question from someone else.

"This place you all arrived at... we'd like you to take us there." Jing Luo stated.

"O-of course! It would be our pleasure!" The village head replied.

Lin Mu and Jing Luo turned around and started to walk, while the Village head quickly hurried behind them.

"Umm... my lords, the place is a bit far from here. Would it be fine if I take some supplies with me?" the village head asked.

"How far is it approximately from here?" Lin Mu asked.

"About two hundred kilometers." The Village head answered.

Hearing this, Lin Mu understood why the village head was a bit afraid. This distance was rather long even for a seventh stage body tempering realm warrior like the village head and it would take him a couple of days to travel that much.

Besides, there was also the fact that there was a difference in status between that man and Lin Mu, thus he didn't think that Lin Mu would lower himself to carry him or something.

But he was in for a surprise.

Lin Mu looked at Jing Luo and spoke, "take that out."

~shua~

Jing Luo waved his hand and an old item that Lin Mu had not seen for a while appeared.

"This..." The village head was shocked.

In front of him was a boat that was better than anything he had ever seen in his lifetime. And not just that, it was a boat that could float in the air.

He rubbed his eyes, thinking that he might have still need dreaming. But then realized that it was all real.

'A boat like this... a spirit vehicle... just who are these esteemed lords? Are they from the capital?' the village head wondered.

"Get in." Lin Mu ordered.

"Right away!" the village head said before jumping into the spirit boat.

Jing Luo and Lin Mu did the same as the boat started to rise up. The other villagers too saw it and were stunned. Some of them directly kneeled on the ground and kowtowed, saying things in a language Lin Mu didn't understand.

Though he could tell that they were basically nothing but prayers for the Northern Tribes.

~whoosh~

The spirit boat flew away at a rapid speed.

"You said it is in the south from here?" Lin Mu questioned.

"Y-yes.." The village head answered, trying to keep his composure.

Chapter 1020 - An Old Array

The village head was still not able to believe that he was flying at such a fast speed. And not just that, but that he was now riding in a spirit boat!

He had once been to the capital of the Northern Tribes before and had seen the power of the great elders there. They spirit tools that could achieve the same and he once dreamed about experiencing them.

And now he finally had the opportunity to do so.

The journey that would have taken him over two days to complete was finished in less than thirty minutes now!

The village head thought that this was rather fast, not knowing that Lin Mu and Jing Luo were able to go many times faster than this, but doing so would probably not be fine for the village head, with no cultivation base.

"There! That's the place!" The village head pointed.

But when Lin Mu looked at the place, he was confused.

"There's... nothing here." Lin Mu spoke.

"On the ground, there are some writings on the ground." The village head replied. "We'll need to go down."

Lin Mu landed the Spirit boat and looked around the area. This place was on a wide hill and was covered with grasses and shrubs like most of the other places. It looked rather normal and if one didn't visit this place before, they wouldn't even be able to tell that this place was special.

Lin Mu's spirit sense spread around and checked the ground.

'There is indeed inscriptions below this...' Lin Mu realized.

Jing Luo too detected it and cleared out the soil with a wave of his hand.

It turns out that there was actually a broken rock platform below the soil layer. Over the years, an inch thick layer of soil had settled on it making it hard to differentiate. But now the hidden runes were all visible.

Lin Mu's spirit sense traced the edges of the platform and found that it was at least a hundred meters wide. Its original shape was impossible to make out due to how much damage it had sustained.

"I don't recognize these inscriptions. Can you?" Jing Luo asked.

Lin Mu tried to read the damaged runes and barely managed to tell their functions. They were simply too faded to differentiate and since there were runes in the Dao Script included in it too, the meaning of the runes would become difficult to decipher if it was not intact.

"A Teleportation array..." Lin Mu muttered.

"It really is that?" Jing Luo was surprised.

He knew of the history of the Great Zhou Empire and how the Northern Tribes had tried to invade the empire with the use of hundred of teleportation formations in the past. Nearly all of them were destroyed over the years, either by the kingdoms or the sects.

But there were still a few that were hidden all this time, lucky to have been missed.

"An old one... from the last great war..." Jing Luo spoke.

"Indeed." Lin Mu nodded his head.

The village head didn't know what Lin Mu and Jing Luo were talking about but didn't interfere in it. He simply stood there silently, so as to not offend two cultivators who might be elders.

He was not a fool and could tell the difference in power between the other warriors and cultivators he had seen in the past and Lin Mu. There was simply an aura that made him feel suppressed, even if he was not being targeted.

He had only felt that when he faced great beasts in the wild and escaped by the skin of his teeth.

"Is this still functional?" Jing Luo questioned.

"Doesn't seem like it." Lin Mu said, but still tried to inject some spirit Qi into the rune, testing if they were even receptive.

After a few seconds, Lin Mu shook his head.

"Yeah, it is completely damaged. There is no repairing it." Lin Mu stated.

~Phew~

"That is for the best. We don't want them coming here." Jing Luo replied.

Hearing this, the village head was a bit confused.

'Were we not supposed to come here? But it was the priest who told us to...' he thought.

"I want to check a bit more. Let's wait a bit." Lin Mu spoke to Jing Luo.

"Sure go ahead." Jing Luo agreed.

Lin Mu closed his eyes for a few seconds before opening them. His vision turned blurry for a moment as the scene in front of him changed.

'Hmm... no traces of any spatial fluctuations at all... though it has been nearly two years since these villagers arrived here, so it does kind of make sense.' Lin Mu thought.

The village head had told them when they had arrived here. They had tried to find other places to live but were unable to go past a certain distance due to the beasts that lived there.

One of their relatively strong members had set out to find more places, but had almost died from the beasts that wandered the plains. After that, they simply didn't dare to go any further and decided to live here at the coast where there were few beasts.

And even the beasts that did exist here were weak enough to not threaten the lives of the villagers.

Even the aquatic beasts were relatively tame as long as they didn't wander out into the ocean too much. And they didn't need to either, as there were plenty of fish and other aquatic beasts just next to the coast.

The villagers realized that while they may have been isolated from the others, they still got what they had set out for... better land.

Though it was another fact that they barely had any seeds to start farming with. Right now, they were only cultivating some wild vegetables they had found and still depended on the ocean for their sustenance.

Having checked the entire platform in detail, Lin Mu concluded that the arrival of the villagers might have whittled down the last bit of the durability the runes had.