

Walker 1071

Chapter 1071 The Seclusion Hall

The death of a high elder in the Ripple Mist sect went strangely unnoticed. Lin Mu had not paid much attention to it since he was busy clearing out the stores of the sect, but when there was no response, even after thirty minutes, he found it to be highly suspicious.

'If they haven't responded even now, then there is either something stopping them... or they are planning something else.' Lin Mu thought to himself.

He didn't know whether the first option was worse or the second. To him, a normal response and open conflict would be better than to dodge a hidden danger or scheme that they may be hatching.

Still, in thirty minutes, Lin Mu had basically cleared out all the resources that the Ripple mist sect had out in the open. There were more of them hidden underneath the main peak of course, and that was where he was about to head to.

"The back of the main peak is also where they built that seclusion hall... time to take a look there, too." Lin Mu muttered to himself.

~shua~

He took flight and openly entered the main peak. Standing high up in the air, he let his spirit sense check everything and found that the peak was actually empty!

"This is certainly not normal..." Lin Mu understood.

His spirit sense continued down and went to the back of the Main peak where the seclusion hall was built. It was there that he sensed the spirit sense fluctuations. And it wasn't just a handful of them, but rather thousands of them.

But at the same time, his spirit sense met resistance and couldn't go beyond a certain level of the building.

"A dense barrier like that is not something one would place in a seclusion hall. That seems more like a prison instead." Lin Mu said, as his eyes narrowed.

Approaching from the side, Lin Mu phased into the building but didn't reveal himself, instead hiding himself within the ground. There was no problem doing that, as the gap between each floor was of more than two meters.

Just this thickness of floor showed Lin Mu that this place was more of a prison than a seclusion hall.

In the first floor of the hall, he saw a few disciples that were lined up and a few elders that were taking down their names. In the second floor, he found more disciples but they were simply sitting down and waiting for something.

Lin Mu recognized most of them to be the same disciples that had been called in with the last announcement. This floor was larger than the one above and could easily accommodate ten thousand disciples at once.

And when Lin Mu tried to head to the third floor of the Seclusion hall, he faced resistance. A thick barrier made from formation arrays as well as hard rock were blocking his way. Even phase couldn't pass though it as it was a formation array.

"Wouldn't stop me much longer." Lin Mu said as his expression turned serious.

Directly placing his hand straight on the barrier, he pushed.

~CLANG~

A strange sound, as if metal pressing against metal echoed all over the area.

"What was that?" The disciples were surprised.

"Go check," One of the elders instructed a junior elder.

But when he checked everywhere he didn't find anything. After all, Lin Mu wasn't entering through any normal places, but rather he was hidden in the ground itself. And there was no way the junior elder would think there was someone in the middle of the solid ground.

~CLANG~

But the sound repeated, this time even louder.

~CLANG~

~CLANG~

The sound continued to echo until finally it seemed like something had been broken.

~KACHA~

"Go down and see if anything happened there!" The elder immediately ordered other elders.

Without caring for this, Lin Mu entered through the hole he had made in the solid rock reinforced with formation arrays.

'That was tougher than the sect's main defensive formation array... If they are using it here, then there is certainly something to hide here.' Lin Mu felt sure.

And when he finally descended into the third floor, his doubts were cleared.

"What in the..." Lin Mu was left shocked as he saw pools upon pools of blood spread around the third floor.

The third floor was the largest of them all, and easily spanned over a kilometer in area.

But that was not all that shocked Lin Mu, what shocked him was the condition of the blood pool. Some of them contained bodies of cultivators that were wearing the robes of the disciples floating in them.

Others only contained bones, and some didn't even have that.

The various pools had different levels of decomposition of corpses and all of it was being merged into the blood pool.

Breathing the very air made Lin Mu feel sick, but at the same time, it ignited the fury within him. For he recognized what these blood pools were.

"The rebirth blood... they are using their own disciples as the fuel for rebirth blood..." Lin Mu muttered as his voice turned cold.

His spirit sense scanned the entire area in a moment's notice and found several elders of the sect adding more disciples to the blood pools. They would first slit their throats and then poke out their hearts, making sure as much blood flowed out of them as possible.

"I think we will reach our quota early this time. Lord Gu Yao will be pleased." One of the elders that had Dao Shell realm fluctuations coming from him spoke.

"Indeed... after the last time's fiasco, he should be pleased with us." Another elder with spirit Qi fluctuation at the Dao Treading realm replied.

Just as these two elders were talking, three more elders appeared from the staircase nearby.

"Supreme elder! Is there any problem going on? We heard something break on the floor above." One of the elders asked.

"Oh? Nothing happened here. The sacrifices are going as normal—" Just as the man was about to complete his words, he saw something that made him stop.

Chapter 1072 Murdering The Unworthy

~SHING~

~SPLAT~

~THUD~

~BOOM~

In the dimly lit third floor of the seclusion hall, a series of noises echoed.

Each was accompanied by waves of spirit Qi and from time to time, a golden glow could be seen as well. The people waiting above in the second floor didn't even know that a battle was raging below them.

Though more than a battle, it was more accurate to call it a slaughter.

"Filthy..."

"Unworthy..."

"Traitors..."

"Fiends..."

Several words came out of Lin Mu's mouth, each tinged with the sharpest intent of murder.

And murder was indeed what was done here. Though perhaps the more orthodox powers would deem it as justice instead.

"Why is it taking so long?" One of the disciples waiting on the second floor asked.

Since the elders had been sent downstairs to check what was happening, they had been made to wait here. But it had now been five minutes and there was still no response.

The two elders who were here in the second floor were feeling the same and had just finished registering the last of the names.

"Should we check too?" A junior elder asked.

"Perhaps we sh—"

~BOOM~

And just as the elder was about to finish his word, the floor beneath them exploded!

"AHH!"

"WHAT!?"

The disciples were all startled due to it and some of them were knocked away from the explosion. They were injured of course, but were more in shock as they saw two people coming out of it.

"W-who?!" the other elders couldn't help but question.

The one who had come out was none other than Lin Mu of course, and the man grasped in his hand was the supreme elder.

The supreme elder wasn't in a good shape either. One of his arms was missing while a leg was broken and bent backwards.

He was bleeding from several spots, and some of his teeth were missing as well.

"Speak! Where is your patriarch!?" Lin Mu questioned.

To Lin Mu, he was sure that Gu Yao was directing it. And now that he had seen the actions of the Ripple mist sect, he deemed them unworthy of living any longer. But to do that, he needed to eliminate all the elders, since they all were under the control of Gu Yao, willing or unwillingly.

Though here, he could tell that most of them were being controlled willingly. He hadn't sensed the presence of the Human Controlling Blood Curse. Which only told Lin Mu that I was probably placed on the patriarch of the Ripple Mist sect.

And thus he needed to get rid of that man too, if he wanted to stop them all.

~COUGH~

"I will never tell you!" The Dao Treading Realm supreme elder rejected.

"Very well... you chose this." Lin Mu said before stabbing his hand straight into the elder's abdomen.

~SHUA~

The supreme elder's eyes went wide as he felt the metal spirit Qi directly pouring into his Dantian and rushing into his remaining meridians. He had already felt the power of Lin Mu's golden fists and the other elders had been killed in mere singular blows.

Even he had been caught off guard and before he could react, multiple attacks rendered him incapacitated. The metal spirit Qi turned his own spirit Qi chaotic and damaged his meridians.

He couldn't even focus his mind enough to restrain that damage, as it was simply too much for him. Additionally, the thoughts of Lin Mu suddenly appearing were also absurd to him. He didn't even understand how he could enter the sect and even go all the way to their seclusion hall with no problem.

It was as if all the defensive formation arrays were nothing to him.

Unfortunately for the man, his thoughts were useless, and he was as good as dead now.

"WHO ARE YOU?!"

"LEAVE THE SUPREME ELDER!" The remaining elders stupidly called out.

They had spoken on instinct, but failed to realize how Lin Mu had already killed all the elders and had badly beaten up their supreme elder.

The disciples had noticed the dead bodies of the other elders downstairs as the hole Lin Mu had come out of left everything exposed.

But along with that, they also saw the blood pools and thousands of bodies that floated in them. Some of the weak-hearted ones directly fainted while those with weak stomachs vomited out their last meals.

Lin Mu looked gave a look to the two elders before tossing the supreme elder lightly into the air.

~WHOOSH~

Then a golden leg tore through the air, kicking the falling body of the supreme elder straight through the roof, into the first floor and then out into the sky!

~SHUA~

The supreme elder helplessly flew up into the sky and soon felt the abnormality in his body.

'My Nascent soul... Dao shell... Dao Embryo...' he couldn't even let out a peep as his body started to glow in a orange light.

~KABOOM!~

Finally, his body exploded into smithereens in the air as spirit Qi turned chaotic.

The disciples and elders watched with stunned expressions as they felt the spirit Qi fluctuations of the supreme elder disappear.

Lin Mu watched it all with a cold gaze and didn't care for it at all.

'Lowering the quantity of metal spirit Qi by half still has good effects.' Lin Mu noted.

By lowering the initial output and reducing the range of attack to point blank, he had gained the same after effect with less cost.

Lin Mu was merely testing it out and had not expected it to be this good. Though it had certainly come at an expense that others would find soul shaking. After all, he had tested this on a Dao Treading Realm expert!

Seeing the death of their supreme elder, the disciples were too shocked to move. But the remaining four elders weren't like that. One of them trusted his instincts and directly decided to run away.

~SHING~

"GAH!"

But just as he had taken a few steps into the air, a short sword stabbed through his back.

Chapter 1073 Showing The Reality

~THUD~

The dead body of the elder fell to the ground, as blood gushed out of his chest. With his heart pierced, there was not much time left for him. No voice came out of his mouth either, as his lungs felt too weak to work.

Lin Mu gestured with his finger and the short sword returned to his side, causing more blood to spill out from the elder.

The disciples who watched everything were stunned.

"W-why... Why are you doing this?" One of them couldn't help but ask.

They were terrified and were thinking that they would be killed too. After all, since Lin Mu had killed elders with such ease, there was nothing stopping him from killing them too.

"You're really asking that?" As a surprise to them though, Lin Mu actually replied.

But his reply was a question.

"Huh?" They were confused and didn't know how to react.

The actions of Lin Mu had already made them forget about some things they had seen just a few moments ago. Though on some level, they remembered it but just didn't want to believe it.

Lin Mu looked at the disciple who had asked the question and his spirit sense quickly scanned the man.

The disciples shivered as he felt a spirit sense more powerful than everything probing him. He felt as if he was naked and all of his secrets were revealed.

"Hmm... at least you're clean." Lin Mu muttered. "Fine... you all should know the truth." He continued.

"Truth? What truth?" They asked.

"The truth about what your sect has been doing... what your elders have been doing." Lin Mu replied.

The three elders that were still alive fell pale after hearing that. Out of the three, two were already under the influence of the Pills of Grace, while one was a junior elder who was caught on with greed and wanted the same as the elders.

The elders had been able to greatly progress their cultivation base, thanks to the pills of grace, and there was no way they would want to let go of such an attractive item at all. The others that knew of it got envious too and wanted to try them out.

"Look!" Lin Mu pointed to the large hole in the floor. "Look down there... see the heinous acts of your sect elders... see what they use you all for in the name of seclusion!"

~gulp~

The disciples couldn't help but feel intimidated by Lin Mu's authoritative voice, but they still turned around to take a look.

There were actually a few disciples that had already seen it all but had fainted from the sheer sight of it. Perhaps that could be a small mercy to them.

"HEAVENS!"

"WHAT IN THE NAME OF ANCESTOR IS THAT!?"

"BLOOD? AND BODIES! BONES TOO!?"

"SUI SHA! SUI SHA! THAT'S MY SUI SHA! WHAT DID THEY DO TO YOU!"

A cacophony of cries was heard as the disciples saw the scene on the third floor. The familiar bodies of their friends, companions, lovers and fellow disciples were enough to give them a good idea.

"How can this be?" A disciple fell to his knees. "This is the workings of a demonic sect... why is it happening in our sect!?" he screamed.

While this was happening, the three elders at the back tried to leave.

~SHING~

But before they could take even a single step, a black spear blocked their path.

~SHUA~ SHUA~ SHUA~

More spirit weapons circled them, stopping them from moving even a finger. If they tried they would be pierced at a moment's notice.

"Disciples of the Ripple Mist Sect!" Lin Mu called out. "Look at your elders, they dare to escape while you all are helpless here."

The disciples turned to look at the three elders and saw that they were dodging their eyes. Seeing that guilt look on their faces was enough to convince the disciples. After all, they had seen the arrogance of the elders before and the current face was greatly different than that.

"HOW COULD YOU ALL DO THIS!?" A disciple who had lost his Dao Companion couldn't hold back and rushed one of the elders.

He didn't even care for the spirit weapons surrounding the elders and directly punched out.

~Pow~

The punch hit the elder squarely in his face, but didn't do any damage. The pitiful disciple was far too weak to even put a scratch on the elder's face.

"UNFILIAL DISCIPLES! You dare attack your elders!" The elder yelled in response instead.

"What impudence!" Lin Mu scoffed.

~SHUA~

Curling his fingers, he controlled the spirit weapons and made them cut the elders in several places.

"ARGH!"

"NO!"

"Don't do this! We'll give you whatever you want!"

The elders pleaded for mercy while their flesh continued to be cut. The spirit weapons didn't stop there at all and sliced the flesh of their bodies bit by bit. It was not enough to kill them, but enough to send them in an agonizing spell.

~SPLAT~

Low grade spirit swords pierced through the shoulders of the three men and made them cry out in pain even more.

"Come," Lin Mu ordered as the three elders came to float in front of him with the spirit swords carrying them.

He then turned to the disciples of the Ripple Mist sect and spoke, "take a close look, I'll show you what your elders deemed worthy to sacrifice your lives for." Lin Mu said, horrifying the disciples even more.

"What... what do you want to do?" The Nascent soul realm elder questioned.

But Lin Mu didn't answer him. Instead, he extended his hand like it was a blade and directly stabbed into the abdomen of the man.

~COUGH~

The man coughed out a mouthful of blood as he felt the attack pierce his flesh, bones and enter his Dantian!

"NO!!!!" the elder cried as he felt Lin Mu's hand wrap around his Nascent soul

The elder tried to suggest, but Lin Mu gave him no chance, ripping out his Nascent soul!

Chapter 1074 Venting Their Anger

The disciples watched the scene with rapt attention as they saw a Nascent soul being drawn out.

"A Nascent soul can be pulled out like this?" They couldn't believe their eyes.

They didn't even know something like this was possible at all, and this was their first time witnessing something like this.

"No, wait! LOOK!" A disciple that was standing closer suddenly pointed.

"THE NASCENT SOUL! Why does it look like that?" The disciple who had tried to attack the elder said.

He was the closest to Lin Mu and the dead elder, merely two meters away, and saw everything clearly.

"The Nascent souls of the elders are all tainted. All those that used the pills made from the sacrifice of your fellow disciples will all have such nascent souls. This is the evidence of their crimes!" Lin Mu explained.

The disciples heard Lin Mu's words, and they felt them burning into their memory. They came closer and felt a very repulsive feeling coming from the Nascent soul that was trying to wiggle its way out of Lin Mu's grasp.

But that was all for naught, and it was a fruitless effort. Lin Mu's grip wasn't something just anyone could escape from. Even Dao Shell realm cultivators would have a great time, not to mention mere Nascent souls that had already lost most of their capabilities.

"Look! Watch it closely and remember it all." Lin Mu spoke, showing them the Nascent soul.

He pinched it in his fingers like a chick and showed it around.

The disciples couldn't help but gulp seeing this. They knew that even if this was just a Nascent soul, it could still kill them at their cultivation realm!

Only in the grasp of Lin Mu was the Nascent soul helpless, like a baby chick.

The disciples felt appalled at it all, and a feeling of betrayal filled them. The sect they had devoted their life to had done this to them. They had never expected that the glory they had felt upon joining one of the top ten sects would come crashing one day like this.

While all the disciples were coming to terms with it, a few of them felt rage.

"DIE!" A female disciple rushed out and stabbed a knife thorough the other elder's heart.

He was still suspended by the low grade spirit swords and couldn't move, thus letting the disciples have a free shot at him.

"KILL THEM ALL!" someone shouted as tens of disciples rushed towards the two remaining elders.

The junior elder watched with despair but couldn't move at all. He was too stunned to even speak and only let out a sound when seven blades were already stuck in his chest.

Lin Mu watched everything from the side and let the disciples vent their anger.

He had felt the same rage, or perhaps even greater than that, thus he knew very well how frustrating it was to be unable to deal with it.

Under the nonstop attacks of the disciples, even the Nascent souls of the elders were destroyed, and they were unable to do anything. And by the time the disciples were done with them, merely a pile of flesh was left behind, unable to be identified as a human corpse.

~THUD~ THUD ~THUD~

Having vented their rage, the disciples collapsed to the ground. Some shivered, some laughed, some cried, and some simply stared on blankly.

Lin Mu watched them with a calm face and crushed the Nascent soul that was still in his grasp.

"They deserve to know the truth, no matter how hurtful it might be..." Lin Mu muttered to himself.

~huu~

Taking a deep breath, Lin Mu decided to give the disciples a little help. His lips moved like the rustling of leaves and a harmonic chant came from them. The chant spread in the area and entered the ears of all, sending them into a calming trance.

The Calming Heart Sutra started its work and Lin Mu stopped chanting after a minute, finding it enough.

Knowing that the disciples might take a while to come out of the trance, Lin Mu decided to continue his work. With his cultivation base increase, the effect of the sutras had also increased.

Additionally, this was Lin Mu's first time using the Calming heart sutra on others, and even that on weaker cultivators, the strongest of which were barely in the core condensation realm.

This gave a deep and profound effect, making it a bit hard to estimate how long it would take for them to wake up.

Lin Mu dived into the ground and directly went to the Spirit stone mines hidden underneath the peaks. The Ripple mist sect used to have five spirit stone mines, but Gu Yao's orders for increased mining had basically depleted four of the mines, leaving only one.

Thankfully, that one was still peak grade spirit stone mines and was good enough for Lin Mu's use.

It didn't take long for Lin Mu to finish stripping it clean and storing it all in the ring. Leaving the mine, he came to stand in the sky above the Ripple Mist sect.

"There is still the sacred land of the Ripple Mist sect, isn't there?" Lin Mu remembered.

He closed his eyes as spatial perception activated. Opening his eyes, he looked around and saw faint traces of spatial distortions. He knew the old gate was useless to enter the sacred ground as it merely functioned as an exit unless it was the right time for its opening.

But when Lin Mu saw the right location, his brows furrowed.

"That... does not seem right." Lin Mu said.

He could barely make out the section of space that had an entry point to the Sacred land.

"It should be manageable at your level. You are far more capable than before, try opening a rift again and focus on joining the edges of the rift to the sect directly. You can use the arrays of the old gate and make them act as a temporary anchor." Xukong advised.

Chapter 1075 Making A Portal And Entering The Sacred Lands

At first, Lin Mu was unsure of being able to open the rift all the way to the sacred ground. He had already seen last time that there was a distance between the Xiaofan world and the Sacred ground in the lesser void.

And since the sacred ground had its own schedule of opening and closing, it would get farther and farther away from the Xiaofan world until it was the time for it to open. It was still several years for it to open again, thus the Sacred ground was quite some distance away.

But after hearing the words of Senior Xukong, Lin Mu felt a lot more confident and decided to try it. And the suggestion of Senior Xukong was enough to give him a method to do so with better safety, too.

There was always the issue of anchoring the rift, and usually Lin Mu would just let it float around. This method was rather unstable and the rift would not stay open for long. The world would try to stabilize the space and return it to its normal form as soon as possible.

The only exception was when a proper formation array or treasure was used to anchor it. Once that was done, the rift would become stable and the world would not consider it an anomaly.

"Alright, senior. I'll do that." Lin Mu said.

He then flew to the place where the gate of the Sacred ground was located and used his spirit sense to probe it. He quickly found the specific nodes that he needed to use and spent an hour to modify them.

With his strong spirit sense, the restrictions placed by the Ripple mist sect's formation masters were nothing.

It was a strange situation since Lin Mu was not an official formation master yet. While he had indeed learned about formations, he had not taken the formal examination. Lin Mu had wondered if he should ever do it.

But then Xukong had just told him that it was a waste of time. The certification of a formation master from this world would be useless. Only after Lin Mu was in the immortal realm, would it be better.

He would have to find the authority in charge of certification in an immortal world to get it. Only then would it be useful and his prestige would increase.

Of course, this was only if Lin Mu wanted to make use of the certification. Otherwise, there was no issue in him never taking those examinations. He could very well have the skill level of the best formation master in the entire universe and not have a certification.

As long as he used it for himself, it didn't matter.

The certification was more of a thing of convenience. If others needed a formation master for a certain task, it was easier to just look at someone's certification and know that they were good for the task rather than having to judge them by some other method.

And it wasn't just the occupation of the formation masters that had such a certification, either. A majority of other occupations did too. Though some major ones didn't, the biggest example being the beast taming occupation.

In the case of beast taming though, it was essentially because it greatly depended on the beast in question too. There were far too many inconsistencies in it, thus it was a big occupation that had no certification officially used.

Other than that, alchemists, tool refiners, weapon forgers all had certification and associations that handled it.

Once Lin Mu was done with the gate's formation array, he began the process of opening the rift.

~huu~

"Let's see how it goes..." Lin Mu took a deep breath and used spatial perception again.

He then activated the ring and directed it to open a rift. Spirit Qi started to flow into the ring and Lin Mu could tell the drain was greater.

'Its far higher than before... opening a proper portal is indeed different.' Lin Mu thought.

The ring finally activated, and its power showed its effect.

~RIP~

The air in front of Lin Mu started to tear as a small black spot appeared. Lin Mu moved his hands and gestured in a widening gesture. The small black dot was pulled along with Lin Mu's hand and turned into a long line.

Done with this, Lin Mu brought his hands together and then spread them wide part.

~HONG~

The space trembled as the black line started to expand into a window. It continued to expand as Lin Mu continued pouring more and more spirit Qi into the ring. Once it reached a sufficient size, his spirit sense quickly activate the formation array.

"LINK!"

~SHUA~

The fomentation array lit up as hundreds of thousands of runes spread all around. The Ripple mist sect seemed like it was in a spotlight with the great amount of light coming from it.

"HAAA!" Lin Mu grunted as he pulled the space forward.

~WOONG~

A humming sound was heard as runes spread from the formation array into the black window's edges. The runes were like chains and firmly latched onto the edges of the black window.

More runes appeared and strengthened the chains before starting to pull more.

~SHUA~

The black window started to expand even more, but now its color started to change too!

From the black color, it first became grey, then white. The runes continued their work and began the anchoring process. Five minutes passed like this and the white color changed to a scenery instead!

Like a dense mist parting and revealing the bountiful valley, the sacred land was revealed and the spatial rift was fully turned into a portal!

~huh~

Lin Mu took a deep breath, feeling a bit exhausted. It wasn't that his body was tired but rather his mind. This was possibly one of the most complicated procedures he had ever attempted.

"I did it..." Lin Mu muttered as he saw his handiwork.

"You did indeed. Good work!" Xukong praised.

Lin Mu nodded his head and did some more checks to ensure that the portal was all good before deciding to enter.

~SHUA~

It was like he passed through a thick membrane as the portal flicked and bulged. First his hand passed through it, and then his head. Finally the rest of his body entered, and he had successfully entered the Sacred Grounds of the Ripple Mist sect.

Lin Mu breathed in the air rich in spirit Qi and could tell that this was actually on the same level as that of the Kong plane.

"It's actually a little higher than Kong plane too..." Lin Mu estimated.

Though he also knew that this was only because the Sacred Land of the Ripple mist sect had been closed for a long time and was also smaller in size. With a smaller size, the amount of spirit Qi produced might be less, but the concentration would rise quickly too.

Lin Mu's spirit sense spread around while he soared into the air, wanting to take a proper look at the Sacred Ground.

He found himself to be in the middle of a deep valley, with rows of mountains extending in both directions.

"These are certainly man made." Lin Mu guessed.

There were various kinds of trees growing in the valley and many spirit beasts roaming around too. Lin Mu sensed several spirit fruits and spirit herbs here too. His spirit sense kept expanding and reached its very limit of hundred kilometers, but even then the sacred land was not fully revealed.

"It should be several times that..." Lin Mu muttered.

Withdrawing his spirit sense, he changed the direction of search and let it pierce the earth. It quickly burrowed into the soil, and scanned for any spirit stone mines.

"Nothing here. Time to move." Lin Mu said and flew ahead.

He picked a random direction and started to search for the spirit stone mines. That was his main goal in coming here after all. He also hoped to find them quick, so that he could return quickly as well.

He didn't know if Gu Yao might act upon finding about the Ripple Mist sect. There was a chance that he might have found out already. There was no guarantee.

'Little Shrubby should be able to handle if anything happens, though.' Lin Mu thought to himself.

It was one of the reason he had not brought Little Shrubby with him. Then there was also the uncertainty that if something happened to the portal, it would be hard to bring him with him.

Lin Mu was confident of escaping himself, but bringing another person, or a beast in this case could prove to be difficult. He didn't want to take that risk and thus thought that it was best for Little Shrubby to stay behind.

After about an hour, Lin Mu finally found the first spirit stone mine.

"There we go," Lin Mu said as his eyes locked onto the plain ground.

This spirit stone mine was not beneath a mountain, but rather underneath some plains.

It was a mid grade spirit stone mine though and wasn't that big either. But Lin Mu wasn't going to say no to it. He dived into the ground and only needed half an hour to extract everything he could from it.

He then moved to find the next and found it after another half an hour. This one was better than before, a peak grade spirit stone mine. But it was hidden within a mountain.

Knowing that it would take quite a while to excavate, Lin Mu decided to take a different route.

Lin Mu pulled his fist back as energy swirled within his hand.

Chapter 1076 Collapsing A Mountain

Lin Mu's hand shone in a gold light while dense energy condensed within it. Vital essence and spirit Qi swirled and merged together turning into a pink ribbon filled with great power.

Once it reached its peak, Lin Mu punched straight down from the top of the mountain!

"Boulder Collapsing First: Third Form- Devastator!"

Lin Mu had used a greater amount of spirit Qi and vital essence than normal. This was a way for him to test his new limits, as well as see how far the effect would be. After having cultivated the True Gold Body Forging Arts to the peak, Lin Mu had not gotten injured after using Boulder Collapsing Fist.

He was finally in a state where his body could handle it without much problem. But this was when he was using it on the normal level. Lin Mu could adjust the power input of the technique and it would increase the output when it was activated.

It was the backlash from that which caused damage, and right now he could handle that. But Lin Mu wondered just what was the new upper limit for it.

What was the power limit that he could use without getting injured?

A pink ribbon streaked through the air, letting off energy waves that were like the tides during a storm.

The ribbon spun in the air and easily drilled into the mountain peak.

~RUMBLE~

For the first couple of second, only a rumbling sound could be heard. The Pink ribbon was like a flaming hot poker piercing through a slab of butter, having no restrictions.

But then five seconds later, a massive change happened.

~KABOOM!!!!~

The pink ribbon of energy went as far as it could be before finally exploding!

The explosions rocked the mountain, and cracks spread across it. The upper layer of the mountain directly cracked and fell apart while the internal parts started to shift. The energy wave continued to spread, and the mountain started to crumble.

~BOOM!~

Finally, the structural integrity of the mountain fell, and it collapsed like a pile of cards.

Lin Mu observed his handiwork and nodded in approval.

"Twenty percent is actually fine..." Lin Mu was surprised.

He looked at his fist and saw no signs of damage. One must know that using twenty percent of his vital essence and spirit Qi was no small amount. It was entirely different from the past twenty percent.

Compared to the past when Lin Mu first used the Third form of the Boulder collapsing first against Gu Yao, the amount of spirit Qi and vital energy he had used now was perhaps enough to execute the same skill over a hundred times.

The Boulder collapsing fist was a skill that scaled with Lin Mu's cultivation level because its concept was plain and simple. While it was crude, it was the perfect skill for Lin Mu, who had a tough physique and a large storage of spirit Qi and vital essence.

Though this only made Lin Mu wonder about the full extent of the boulder Collapsing Fist.

'The manual was missing most of its pages, but it did say that boulder collapsing fist was merely the first level of the technique, the lowest one. If it can reach this level of power, then what are the other levels like?' Lin Wu wondered.

He somewhat knew how the next levels of the skill went as it said to increase the number of energy spirals, but Lin Mu didn't know how to even attempt that. Even maintaining a single spiral was difficult.

The three forms he had made were an extrapolation of the skill and weren't the true method of using it anyway. Still, it did give Lin Mu further insights into it, and Xukong had told Lin Mu that as long as he continued practicing, cultivating and comprehending, he might actually be able to figure out the next level on his own.

'Though there is also a chance I might find it in a higher world.' Lin Mu thought.

If he really did find it in the higher world, it might make the work really easy for him. Additionally, it wasn't like it would bring him any trouble either. From the introduction of the technique, it didn't have any warning that it must not be practiced by anyone else.

Most sects or experts that made techniques would usually put some warning there if it was only meant for specific people.

Lin Mu could possibly get some people to look for it in a higher world too. He had read in the memoirs of the Lost Immortal that there were many places in the higher worlds that held and sold Qi skills and cultivation techniques.

They even helped people find the ideal technique for them for the right place. Lin Mu reckoned that since they could do that, they may even be able to find the rest of the Boulder collapsing fist.

And just while Lin Mu was thinking all this, he felt a stream of dense spirit Qi coming from below.

"Let's get to work..." Lin Mu descended and cleared out all the debris in his way.

In a minute, the true treasure hidden underneath the mountain was revealed, the spirit stone mine!

Lin Mu's attack had shattered the spirit stone veins and made it easier for Lin Mu to store it directly in the ring.

"This is significantly faster than breaking it, like I was doing it before." Lin Mu took note.

Lin Mu ended up getting several tons of spirit stones, and also some other rare materials that were found in the spirit stone mines.

Lin Mu flew up into the sky and held a chunk of spirit stone in his hand. While flying, he absorbed the spirit Qi from the chunk in his hand, restoring all that he had used. His stomach was also restoring the vital essence he had used up and released the massive amounts of vital essence that was stored in it.

By the time Lin Mu reached the next spirit stone mine, he was in peak condition again!

Chapter 1077 A Strange Spirit Qi Spring And The Border Of The Sacred Grounds

Lin Mu continued his work for several hours and in 20 hours, he had uprooted and stored five spirit stone mines.

Of these five, three were peak grade spirit stone mines while two were high grade spirit stone mine. This was a great fortune, and Lin Mu could understand how the Ripple Mist sect became such a top sect.

"If I recall correctly... even the Long Cloud sect doesn't have a sacred ground with so many spirit stone mines in them." Lin Mu had heard from Patriarch of the Long Cloud sect, Yi You that they too had a sacred ground.

But their sacred ground wasn't the best one. It merely had a single peak grade spirit stone mine hidden in it and two high grade spirit stone mines. Just compared to the Ripple Mist sect, it seemed to be inferior.

And yet, the Long Cloud sect was ranked higher than the Ripple Mist sect.

'I guess just the spirit stones and resources are not enough, the techniques and guidance is too...' Lin Mu could only attribute that to the ranking of the Long Cloud sect.

Of the top sects, not all of them had sacred ground. For example, the Noon Grass sect, the West Ocean Sect, the Light Harmony sect, didn't have Sacred grounds. That was also one of the reason why they were ranked at the bottom of the ranking.

Other than them, all the sects had their own sacred grounds. Though the quality of their sacred grounds was debatable since the accurate information about them was unavailable. After all, no sect would like to show their secrets like that.

Seeing the Ripple Mist sect's sacred ground proved that to Lin Mu.

"No wonder the Kong Plane helped them so much. It is far better than any of their sacred grounds..." Lin Mu muttered to himself and continued on his way.

He had traveled nearly a thousand kilometers by now and was nearing the edge of the Sacred ground.

Lin Mu's senses could soon feel the end of the sacred ground. This was also where Lin Mu found the last spirit stone mine.

"This spirit stone mines seems to be rather weak..." Lin Mu muttered.

He could tell that the spirit Qi fluctuations coming from here were even weaker than that of a low grade spirit stone mine.

"It might be a newly formed one." Xukong spoke.

"Perhaps..." Lin Mu said as he descended to check.

This spirit stone mine wasn't in a mountain, thus he didn't need to do what he had been doing all along. Rather, it was located within a lake!

The lake wasn't that big either, being merely a hundred meters wide. But the spirit Qi got saturated in the water, giving rise to some unique effects. All the plants around the lake were lush, and the fishes and aquatic beasts living in the lake had become vibrant.

Their scales reflected clearly and a fresh aura could be felt from them, too.

This was one of the signs of a newly formed spirit stone mine. A mine that was more matures would be more isolated and would not leak out this much spirit Qi. It could even be said that a spirit stone mine that leaked spirit Qi was a defective one.

Descending into the water, Lin Mu scared away the fishes and beasts with just a hint of his aura. The creatures rushed to the edges of the lake, scared of coming close to Lin Mu. If they could, they might have already jumped out of the water and ran away.

Thankfully for them, Lin Mu didn't stay in the lake for long and descend further, entering the ground below it.

From there, Lin Mu didn't have to go much deep. Merely three meters from the lake bed, he ended up in the spirit stone mine.

"No wonder..." Lin Mu muttered.

In front of him wasn't actually a spirit stone mine, but rather a spirit Qi spring. Though along with the spirit Qi spring, he could already see clusters of spirit stones condensing at the bottom of the spring.

"It is indeed a newly formed spirit stone mine." Xukong nodded his head.

Lin Mu spread his spirit sense and discovered some unusual things here though.

Narrowing his eyes, he moved around and found some strange structural formations.

"This wall... why does it seem so smooth?" Lin Mu was confused.

One side of the cave was like a smooth curved wall that went all the way to the top and then met the ceiling. From there, it turned uneven and looked like the natural cave surface, like it should.

Lin Mu looked at the bottom of the spirit Qi spring, where it connected to the smooth wall, and saw that the number of spirit stones here was higher. In fact, they had condensed enough to form an almost flat slab of spirit stone.

Using his spirit sense, Lin Mu scanned it and discovered that the slab of spirit stone actually went deeper into the wall.

"No, that's not all. The grade of spirit stone is higher too." Lin Mu noticed.

The rest of the spirit stones here were low grade ones, but the ones here were mid grade.

Just as Lin Mu was wondering about the reason for this strange formation, his spirit sense picked up on something else.

"Spatial fluctuations!" Lin Mu understood.

"This must have been the place from where the fragment of the sacred ground was cut off in the past." Xukong guessed.

"Indeed, senior. This place must have been part of the mine in the fragment, but was cut off and finally developed into a spirit Qi spring again." Lin Mu nodded his head.

Lin Mu decided to see the edge of the sacred ground himself this time. He wanted to see how the difference in void would be here and hope to learn from it.

Passing through the walls, he reached an invisible barrier which he crossed with the ring's help and peered into the Lesser Void.

But what he saw there stunned him.

Chapter 1078 A World Fragment

Lin Mu's ring had managed to open a rift in the barrier of the Sacred Land. This gave him direct access to the Lesser void outside and also allowed him to see all that existed beyond it.

Originally, Xukong only intended for Lin Mu to bask in the sensations of the Lesser void and improve his understanding of the Spatial element. Till before, Xukong knew that Lin Mu needed to comprehend what he had on his own.

Thus, even if he had gotten him to check the void, it would not be useful as his perception would simply not be on that level. It was the same as giving an elementary school student the work of a college student.

They might be able to read the content, but they would probably not understand anything. It was the same for Lin Mu. Until he learned and digested what he had already been taught, it would not be beneficial for him.

But now, it was the perfect time.

Still, Lin Mu ended up encountering something he had not expected at all, and neither had Xukong.

"Is that..." Lin Mu muttered in surprised.

"It is indeed..." Xukong confirmed.

"The remnant of the Oceanic world..." Lin Mu said as he observed the large fragment floating in the lesser void.

It was bigger than anything he had seen before, and dwarfed the sacred land, with it being less than 1% its size. It was the same as an ant comparing itself to a mountain range.

The fragment was perhaps about a third the size of the entire Xiaofan world and was greatly damaged. A part of it was curved, like it had been broken off from a sphere, and the other side of it was jagged and crooked, with deep valleys that ran across it and a dark abyss the depths of which could not be seen.

But that was not all, as half of the entire fragment was covered with what looked like ice. It was a bit hard to see in the darkness of the void, but Lin Mu's spatial perception at least allowed him to see the outline of the world.

Lin Mu's spirit sense extended and spread into the lesser void, but was unable to reach the fragment of the world. It was simply too far. Its large size made it look like it was close, but it was not.

"What do we do now, senior?" Lin Mu was at a loss for words now.

He had seen another fragment of the oceanic world in the past, when he was escaping from the broken fragment of the sacred grounds with Jing Luo. But that fragment was certainly smaller than this.

Another thing was that, Lin Mu could feel strange energy fluctuations coming from the fragment in front of him. He didn't know what they were, as they were different from anything he had ever felt.

"Hmm... you now have a few options to choose from here. You can either turn back and return to the Xiaofan world and do what you have been doing till now; you can stay here and ponder on the void, and improve your understanding; or... you can step into the lesser void and go to the world fragment, test out your luck and gain some fortune." Xukong suggested.

Lin Mu didn't answer Senior Xukong right away. Rather, he sat down and thought about it. He stroked his chin as several scenarios went through his mind. He knew very well what the dangers of the lesser void were and also knew how risky it was to enter it directly.

But at the same time, he also knew the potential treasures that could be hiding in the world fragment. Lin Mu had not only heard about it from senior Xukong but also the Lost Immortal's memoirs.

After about ten minutes, Lin Mu made up his mind.

"I've made my decision... if I am to grow strong quickly, I will have to take risks. Without risk and effort, it would be useless to wish for greatness." Lin Mu stated.

"Very well... you chose well." Xukong was content with Lin Mu's choice.

'If he really finds that there... I might actually be able to do something when that time arrives.' Xukong thought to himself, as he too looked at the world fragment.

This time it was different, since Xukong wasn't looking through Lin Mu's memories, but rather he was directly peering into the void. His eyes gazed across the empty expanse of the void and went past an unknown amount of distance to gaze at the same scene that Lin Mu was looking at.

"At least I've reached a point where I can observe the void directly with this avatar... but it also means 'that' will happen soon..." Xukong muttered to himself.

Lin Mu was unaware of Xukong's thoughts and was preparing himself now. He couldn't just jump straight into the lesser void and needed to prepare some things.

He first returned to the sacred land and raised his hand while the ring hummed slightly.

~SHUA~

Soon, wind started to churn around Lin Mu and was rushing towards the ring on his hand. He stood like this for about ten minutes and only stopped when the surrounding area had basically become a tornado.

"That should be enough air for a few months." Lin Mu muttered.

He knew that there wasn't really much air in the lesser void and it was spread around very lightly. Even if he didn't need to breathe for several hours after taking a single breath, Lin Mu wasn't free from breathing entirely.

He would need to take a breath after some time, eventually. And since he didn't know how long it will take him to reach the world fragment, he decided to be prepared.

"If something truly happens, I can always open a rift and leave this place. Though the location might end up being someplace random." Lin Mu thought out loud.

He then checked the area around the rift that he had opened and ensured that there wasn't any chaotic space that would tear him to shreds.

Chapter 1079 Entering The Lesser Void

It took Lin Mu about thirty minutes to prepare everything and once he was done, he stepped into the lesser void freely for the first time.

~shua~

The air shifted slightly as Lin Mu passed through the rift in the border of the sacred land. He could feel the difference almost instantly.

'The absence of air... is strange. Not having it on my skin is unusual...' Lin Mu thought to himself.

It was a feeling that he had never felt before. And could not have even imagined in the past, as there was simply no way for him to experience this.

For a normal human, a near vacuum like this would kill them in less than a minute or two. Even for cultivators, traversing the void was not without danger and they wouldn't last long without protection.

But Lin Mu was an entirely different case. Not only did he have an affinity with the spatial element, which would help him avoid the chaotic areas in the lesser void and dodge the pockets of chaotic spatial energy that were common in the void, but it would also be safe from the cold and the near vacuum of the void.

Lin Mu's two techniques, the Mortal Strengthening scripture and the True Gold body forging arts, both provided him great durability and endurance. The armor of the Mortal Strengthening scripture prevented his body from directly coming in contact with the airless environment of the void while the gold body Lin Mu obtained from the True Gold Body forging arts just made him impervious to most damage.

Even if didn't have the armor of the mortal strengthening scripture, he would be fine.

"The absence of spirit Qi is also unnerving." Lin Mu said after he had traveled a certain distance from the border of the Sacred ground.

"You will get used to it after a while. Many cultivators can't adapt to it right away. Some even make the mistake of using their spirit Qi excessively, causing an imbalance in their body." Xukong replied.

Lin Mu nodded his head and flew towards the world fragment. This made him learn another fact.

"Moving here is so easy!" Lin Mu said in surprise.

"There is no gravity, nor air resistance here. Even if you don't use spirit Qi to fly, you will still float around. And if you fly using it, you will fly faster with no air resistance and gravity pulling you down.

Your spirit Qi consumption will actually be reduced, if you get the grasp of it." Xukong explained.

Finding this to be rather enlightening, Lin Mu increased his speed of flying. It took him about an hour before he finally got the right output of spirit Qi.

Usually in the normal world, the way Nascent soul realm experts flew was by pushing and pulling spirit Qi in the air around them at the same time. But in the void, the method would change.

They would simply need to expel their own spirit Qi to move.

One might think that this might end up exhausting their spirit Qi more, as they were simply expressing it and not absorbing it. But it was not exactly that, at least not for all.

For most cultivators, they simply couldn't absorb the spirit Qi at the same rate at which they were using it to fly. Unless one had a high absorption speed like Lin Mu, something like that was very difficult.

But in the void, they only needed to expel spirit Qi at certain intervals. As the momentum they gained would last for a long time. One could even stop using their spirit Qi after a certain time entirely and they would keep their momentum, moving for a long time.

As long as they were not interrupted, they would go on for months or even years.

It was very similar to flying in the space, but the void came with even more dangers.

Then there was also the fact that the void was far darker than the space. The space, at least had stars and other celestial bodies lighting it up to a certain extent. But the void didn't have that.

It did have flickers of spatial energy and other chaotic phenomena from time to time, but it was never enough to illuminate.

The empty darkness made one feel rather lonely and uncomfortable.

Having a strong spirit sense was important when traversing the void, as it would often be the chief way of observing and 'seeing' things. Without it, one would be truly blind.

And even if there was light in the void, there were plenty of dangers that were invisible to the eye. Even spirit sense would have a hard time sensing some of them, and there were even a few that were simply imperceptible.

If one encountered them, they could only blame their luck and perish.

Lin Mu had his spatial perception on fully power and was also using his spirit sense at the full range. He observed every small change that happened in the void and felt the faint flow of the spatial energy.

It was very hard to sense, and he could only feel it in intervals.

Spatial energy was a highly refined and condensed form of the spatial Spirit Qi. It was something that couldn't be used directly by most beings and would need to be processed into spatial Qi first.

Thus, most people feared it rather than consider it valuable. Spatial energy could kill one without them even knowing, and even immortals and celestials were not safe from it.

Lin Mu spent several hours in traveling like this and comprehended a lot. He felt his understanding of the space increase little by little and his perception improved as well.

His lone body floated in the void and eventually reached the destination that he had chosen.

Lin Mu opened his eyes when he felt the faint gravitational pull of the world fragment.

"Even at a distance this far, the gravity can still affect me?" Lin Mu was surprised to discover this concept.

He continued on and finally started to descend to the surface of the world fragment.

Chapter 1080 Traversing The World Fragment

Lin Mu could feel the gravity getting stronger the closer he got to the world fragment. And by the time he reached the very surface, he was surprised to find out the gravity was far greater than he had thought.

"It's nearly double the gravity of Xiaofan world?" Lin Mu muttered in surprise and confusion.

From the concepts he had learned from senior Xukong, he knew that the greater the mass of an object, the greater the gravity it could produce. But as far as he knew from observing, the world fragment was merely a third of the Xiaofan world's entire size.

Thus, it didn't make sense that the gravity of the world fragment was nearly double.

Xukong heard Lin Mu's confusion and spoke, "the density of objects can also affect gravity. Something can have smaller volume but still be great in mass. Just like how gold is heavier than iron."

Lin Mu understood upon hearing it, but it only made him marvel that much at the world fragment.

"If it can really produce this much gravity being only a third of Xiaofan world, then doesn't it meant that this third has the same mass as nearly two Xiaofan worlds?" Lin Mu concluded.

"Indeed. Though there are other factors that can also affect it. I shall leave it up to you to learn and discover them." Xukong replied.

"Of course, senior." Lin Mu accepted.

He much preferred learning and exploring things on his own, and wouldn't have it some other way.

Having stepped onto the surface of the Xiaofan world, Lin Mu first did some tests. He sensed the spirit Qi in the area and found it to be very sparse. It was barely ten percent of what it was in the Northern Town when he used to live there.

The air in the surrounding was also non existent, though it did exist.

~hoo~

Lin Mu took a deep breath as the ring released more air from its storage. The air exited it and was trapped within the armor of the mortal strengthening scripture. It was functioning like Lin Mu's very own space suit.

The air moved along the surface of his robes and entered his nose. This allowed Lin Mu to breath with no problems. Though he might have some issues of the armor if the mortal strengthening scripture were to break.

Lin Mu looked around the area and found himself to be on top of an old mountain. He could tell from the layout that this might have been a great underwater mountain range once upon a time.

There were groves and crevices made on it from water currents constantly eroding it. And this was merely one of the tens of thousands of mountains that dotted the surface of the world fragment.

"Now then, where do we go now?" Lin Mu wondered.

He thought over all that he had seen from the distance and was interested in the frozen part of the world fragment. The rest of the area seemed to be barren, but the frozen part had great caps of ice.

That was also where Lin Mu had felt the strange energy coming from.

"Let's head there then." Lin Mu decided.

~step~

~shua~

Lin Mu stomped on the ground and shot forward at a great speed, covering several kilometers within a minute. He would soar across the surface, drawing an arc in the air before landing on the ground and stomping again.

He had taken a page from Little Shrubby and used this method to move faster. This was actually faster than his peak flying speed. And since he didn't have Little Shrubby with him here, he needed to depend on himself to traverse the land.

Lin Mu continued to move while letting his spirit sense scan everything within his range. He also kept on sensing the faint changes in the void and the flow of spatial energy within it.

His compression of the spatial element increased bit by bit while he traveled. It might not be the most ideal condition, but it was better than nothing.

Minutes turned into hours, and hours turned into days.

By the time Lin Mu reached the icy caps of the World Fragment, it had already been three days.

~huu~

Lin Mu took a deep breath and felt the gravity increase on his body.

"This is certainly not normal..." Lin Mu muttered to himself.

He was safe from the cold but could tell from his spirit sense that the temperature here was actually lower than the coldest place in the forbidden continent of the Xiaofan world!

If not for the protective isolation of the Mortal Strengthening scripture and his strong body, Lin Mu might have frozen here.

'Even Little Shrubby might have been affected by this cold. He might not freeze, but his speed and control of spirit Qi would have certainly fallen.' Lin Mu thought to himself.

There were large frozen valleys spanning across thousands of kilometers while a dark abyss waited at the bottom of them. It gave one an eerie feeling if they looked at the bottom. It didn't help that the lesser void itself was very dark and the light coming from Lin Mu was not enough to go farther than a hundred meters.

A few orbs of fire burned around Lin Mu, illuminating the path for him.

It wasn't that he couldn't just use spirit sense to observe everything, but rather he wanted light so that he could tell the color of things and tell more details that couldn't be fully understood with just spirit sense.

Spirit sense basically let him see things in black and white and didn't give other details. It was similar to using a sense of touch to chart out one's environment.

"Let's see where that energy is coming from..." Lin Mu muttered as he sat down to sense it properly.

After about half an hour, he found and followed the energy waves to its source. Along the way, Lin Mu found the spirit Qi getting denser as well.