

Walker 1141

Chapter 1141 Calling Forth The Alliance's Formation Masters

Finding out the mountains were actually real was shocking to Lin Mu.

"How can they be real if they are supposed to be an illusion? They don't show any signs of being that either?" Lin Mu was muddled.

"In a way, they are and in a way they are not. This is certainly a very high leveled illusory array since it can form actual physical objects. It was definitely not set by anyone below the immortal realm." Xukong said, much to Lin Mu's surprise.

"You mean to say... the northern tribes had someone at the immortal realm come to the Xiaofan world and set it up?" Lin Mu was a bit anxious hearing this.

"It is possible, but what is also possible is that a single use immortal tool might have even been used to set this up. Something like a talisman. If they got Immortal Talismans, then even Dao Treading realm experts would be able to set it up. Though that is still a far shot." Xukong explained.

"Hmm... seems like we'll only know more once we actually get to interrogate the tribals." Lin Mu muttered.

All this information was really important and Lin Mu didn't forget to record it all in a jade slip. This was to be given to the alliance so that they could plan and prepare accordingly.

Done with this, Lin Mu first contracted none other than Jing Luo.

"I need you to get as many formation masters as you can get. I'll come fetch you guys after that. There is something big I found out." Lin Mu said in a quick message.

Jing Luo who was still at the Light Harmony sect, was a bit surprised on hearing this but didn't hesitate for more than moment.

"ALL FORMATION MASTERS GATHER UP! ORDERS FROM THE ALLIANCE LEADER LIN MU HIMSELF!" Jing Luo called out both physically and through the jade slips.

His voice echoed in the entire Light Harmony sect and was heard by everyone including the patriarchs, who quickly approached the man.

"Lin Mu contacted you?" Patriarch You Yi asked.

"YES! He seems to have found out something big and has called for formation masters." Jing Luo replied.

You Yi could easily guess what the use of formation masters would be. The most common use right now would be to set up traps.

"His will shall be done." You Yi said, and sent out his own orders as well, calling forth the sect elders that were also formation masters.

Usually they were occupied by their assigned duties, but even they were called forth now.

In less than fifteen minutes, over nine hundred formation masters had gathered in the Kong plane!

Such a number was massive and their combined abilities would put the entire Great Zhou continent to shame, perhaps.

After all, these weren't any low leveled formation masters or disciples of sects. All of these were experienced elders who had lived for at least two hundred years. And even those were merely the lesser experience elders.

There were many more with Nascent soul realm cultivation base and that was the median power among them. Even Dao Shell realm cultivators among them were above forty, with Patriarch You Yi joining himself!

"We're ready Lin Mu." Jing Luo sent the confirmation.

~shua~

Within moments of speaking, a cluster of runes appeared some distance from Jing Luo was standing. The runes glowed brightly, and Lin Mu appeared from within the mass of light.

"What did you discover, Lin Mu?" Patriarch You Yi asked.

"Take a look." Lin Mu gave the records to the man.

You Yi merely took a few seconds to glance through it while Jing Luo did the same.

"This... how could we have missed such a grave lapse in security?" Patriarch You Yi couldn't believe it.

"None are to blame for this, Patriarch You Yi. The northern tribes were clever and kept this hidden from even their own people, it seems like. They used the influence of an immortal to do this. It is not unusual for us to not realize this.

Even if couldn't tell, the illusion was there. You all will know once we're there." Lin Mu replied.

"Hmm... the northern tribes probably kept this as their last trump card or something. And seeing as it needs so many sacrifices to use, they probably couldn't activate it easily either." Jing Luo hypothesized.

"That's seems right. The northern tribes didn't have a high population in the past. At least not high enough that they could use them to open the path for long enough. From what I saw, the path is open for a little over an hour with about 90 sacrifices.

A larger army will need far longer to cross and will need to sacrifice more people. Not to mention the fact that they will be noticed if the path opens too many times." Lin Mu explained.

"Yes, it should be their conditions that probably forced them to not use it." The others agreed as well.

"Alright, let's head there now. Everyone hold on to each other. I've never taken so many people at once before." Lin Mu spoke.

Lin Mu had truly not tested how far his limit was when using himself to travel between the plane and the Xiaofan world. The max number of people he had taken before was around fifty.

"Are you sure this will be a fine senior?" Lin Mu asked once last time.

"At your current cultivation base it should be possible for you to do this. Though the cost of it will be a bit higher, of course." Xukong relied.

"Okay... that's better than doing multiple trips anyway." Lin Mu said.

If it was Lin Mu alone traveling to the Kong plane, it didn't take any spirit Qi for that. But if he was taking others with him, it took some spirit Qi as a cost. And the more there were, the higher the cost was.

"We're ready!" Everyone said a minute later.

"Hang on tight!" Lin Mu said before he activated the runes on his back.

Chapter 1142 Setting Gates And Traps

With so many people being teleported at once, the strain on Lin Mu was rather heavy. But he could still manage it.

"Easier than ripping apart a plane at least..." Lin Mu muttered to himself as he controlled the runes to take everyone with him.

The process wasn't exactly smooth and if it were weak cultivators that were going through it they might have gotten injured quite likely. Thankfully, all the formation masters here were strong and at the peak of core condensation realm at the very least.

And even among them, the majority was acutely at the nascent soul realm.

The resources provided by the alliance had given all of them a good opportunity to speed up their rate of cultivation and had made it so that many who were teetering on the edge of breakthrough finally did it.

It was a common and known fact that most cultivators will get stuck at the peak of the core condensation realm and be unable to breakthrough to the Nascent soul realm. Some of them lacked talent, some lacked the drive. But all of this could be compensated with the resources.

The Kong Plane and its resources had greatly contributed to this and had increased the number of Nascent soul realm cultivators significantly.

Everyone felt the pull on their bodies when they were being teleported and it was vastly different than using the gates to enter the Kong Plane. Thankfully, it only lasted a few seconds and when their vision returned, they had already appeared in the Xiaofan world.

~pew~

Many of them let out breaths of relief, including Lin Mu and Jing Luo.

"Is it just me, or was this a little too... rough?" Jing Luo asked.

"I felt that too," Patriarch You Yi replied.

"Its due to the fact that I alone was pulling you all. And I haven't teleported so many people at once. The strain was expected." Lin Mu spoke.

His face was a little flushed, but his breath was stable.

'It actually took twenty percent of my spirit Qi stores...' Lin Mu was a bit surprised.

This was the greatest consumption of spirit Qi in the case of teleportation that he had incurred till now.

The formation masters looked around and observed the snow covered ground and mountains. Many of them had never come this far in the north and didn't even know it would be this cold.

"Alright, I want you all to build several large teleportation gates around here. They should be about a kilometer from here, though." Lin Mu stated.

"How big do you want them to be?" Jing Luo asked.

"Enough for Little Shrubby at his full size to pass through." Lin Mu estimated according to the intended users.

"That big?" Jing Luo was surprised. "Why do you need it to be that big?" he asked curiously.

"It is for our new allies, of course. Who I'll be adding soon." Lin Mu replied.

"The one's you were going to get from the Kong Plane? Have you not done that yet?" Jing Luo asked.

"I haven't. I got occupied with this all. This was too important to just let go." Lin Mu replied.

"Oh yeah, that's true." Jing Luo agreed.

"Anything else you want to do? If this is the place that the northern tribe is going to enter from, shouldn't we add traps?" Elder Liqiang suggested.

"That's the next thing I was going to ask. Set up some restrictions and traps as you see fit." Lin Mu said.

"I'll take care of that." Elder Liqiang accepted.

With this done, the tasks were properly assigned, with one team working on the teleportation gates. This was mostly the ones who were more experienced or had built it before, including Jing Luo.

The rest focused on building the other formations that were going to be used as traps. There was, after all, a lot to do here. And it was going to take a while to set everything up, even with so many formations masters working on it.

There were some things that couldn't just be sped up with manpower and had a rate-limiting step. With all that done, Lin Mu was about to head to the Kong Plane when he got a message.

"The messenger from the Vermillion legion has arrived!" Wu Hei's voice was heard from the Jade Slip.

Hearing this, Lin Mu stopped in his tracks and instead of heading to the wild areas of the Kong Plane went to the nexus. There he took the teleportation gate to the Shuang Qian capital and went to meet Wu Hei.

In less than three minutes, Lin Mu was in the mansion and directly phased through the walls to appear next to Wu Hei.

"I'm here." Lin Mu said, startling the man for a moment.

"Ah! Perfect." Wu Hei said as he handed the letter to Lin Mu.

"You haven't opened it yet?" Lin Mu asked.

"No... it just arrived five minutes ago. And you appeared rather quickly too, so you may as well open it." Wu Hei replied.

"Okay..." Lin Mu replied before taking a deep breath and cracking the seal on the letter.

~huh~

'Here we go...' Lin Mu hoped for the best.

"Lieutenant Wu Teng was been posted in the western section of the pearl's belt and is... alive... He's Alive!" Lin Mu exclaimed.

"HE IS?" Wu Hei was shocked.

While he was hoping for this, he had still accepted the fact that he might never see his brother again. But against all odds,, he had still survived.

"Indeed..." Lin Mu nodded his head while continuing to read. "And it seems like he isn't the only one under the control of Gu Yao that is alive." He added.

"That's good... but what is their condition?" Wu Hei asked.

"It says here that Wu Teng and several more members are currently in the infirmary of the Vermillion legion. They are being treated for sudden onset amnesia." Lin Mu answered. "The infirmary is strained and overwhelmed due to many soldiers experiencing this, along with several higher ups that died."

Chapter 1143 Wu Teng's Survival And A Secret Gambler

With the good news that they had gotten, Lin Mu and Wu Hei were certainly pleased. But this good news also left them questioning several things.

"Why is it that some of them died while Wu Teng and the others are still alive?" Wu Hei couldn't help but wonder.

"Hmm... we can't say for sure until we see them in person, but from the information that is given here, the ones that died are all those in the Nascent soul realm." Lin Mu said.

As soon as Wu Hei heard this, an idea appeared in his mind.

"Hang on... only Nascent soul realm?" Wu Hei furrowed his brows.

Lin Mu watched on as Wu Hei thought of something to himself. But after not speaking for a minute, Lin Mu decided to ask him.

"Did you figure out something?" Lin Mu questioned.

"Perhaps... but I'll need to confirm it." Wu Hei answered.

"We can do that." Lin Mu replied.

"Yes... but to do that, we need to go somewhere." Wu Hei spoke.

"Where? No place is too far for us now." Lin Mu replied.

"Prison."

...

Lin Mu had not expected that he would be making a trip to the Great Zhou Empire's capital for such a reason before.

Wu Hei had told him that they needed to go to a prison, but the prison he was talking about was located in the capital. It was none other than the biggest prison on the entire continent.

This was where most of the prisoners with life sentences were kept. These were the ones that weren't deemed worthy of an execution and had crimes that weren't that heinous. Though it was also the place that housed the nobles and aristocrats that could not be placed in other prisons.

These people usually had enough of an influence that they might just escape using that, thus it was best to keep them under close observation of those that could not be easily bribed.

"So who are we here for?" Lin Mu asked as he walked through the stone corridors of the prison.

"A man named Lu Gan." Wu Hei replied.

"Lu Gan? Hmm... I don't think I know of him." Lin Mu spoke.

"He's not someone you would have come across. Besides, he's been in prison for over twenty years now." Wu Hei replied.

"Twenty years?" Lin Mu was surprised.

But after thinking about it, found it to be strange.

"Wait, if he was in here for twenty years, what use is he to us?" Lin Mu asked.

"Well, since we are looking to test out that theory, we need someone that was under control of Gu Yao and still isolated from others. Someone who was not found out by anyone else." Wu Hei answered.

"He was under Gu Yao's control? Why would he get a prisoner under his control?" Lin Mu couldn't help but ask. "And even if he did, why let him stay in prison even now?"

"It's the place he's supposed to be... it's basically a home to him, a place where he can be safe." Wu Hei replied.

"Home? In a prison? That's ridiculous." Lin Mu chuckled.

"Well, you know what they say... home is the place where you feel safe at. And for Lu Gan, prison is the safest. If he gets out, he will be killed within minutes of leaving it." Wu Hei stated.

"He has enemies?" Lin Mu questioned.

"Indeed... far too many. Lu Gan was, or rather is... a big businessman. But he was also a great gambler. His skills were certainly top notch in gambling and got him a lot of gains. He was so good that others

would loan him money so that he could multiply it for them and also get a cut from it." Wu Hei answered.

"Hmm... that's something... but what'd he do to get in prison?" Lin Mu asked.

"He offended the very people that loaned him the money. Or rather... he almost bankrupted them. Lu Gan was not just a businessman and gambler, but also a big con artist. All his wins weren't just due to his skill, but rather due to the fact that it was all an elaborate setup.

Lu Gan was secretly the owner of many gambling dens and was manipulating a lot of things. He made it so that the wins were always skewed in his favor. This gave him a cut of profits that he could pour back in." Wu Hei replied.

"That isn't really sustainable, though." Lin Mu could see the fallacy of this plan.

"Indeed. It wasn't something he could keep up. His final goal was to get the aristocrats to loan him a massive amount, which he would never repay. And he never did either. He faked his death and disappeared with the amount.

No one knew that he was in the prison this entire time." Wu Hei explained.

"How would he do that? You said that he would be killed if he stepped out," Lin Mu asked in confusion.

"You see... Lu Gao had another identity... the name Lu Gao itself was just something he had made up. Lu Gao was actually the illegitimate son of the emperor." Wu Hei revealed.

"What?!" Lin Mu was stunned.

"Yes... he is actually the oldest son too... but due to being born from a maid, could not be shown legally. Even the emperor's many wives and concubines don't know about Lu Gao. And neither do the princes.

The Emperor had made sure to keep it a deep secret. Which was only helped with the fact that the man never interacted with Lu Gao directly." Wu Hei explained further. "Still, the emperor gave Lu Gao enough fortune to set up his businesses... and Lu Gao went ahead and made gambling dens instead.

It was also the Emperor's favor that he managed to stay in prison. There is a great chance that the moment he gets out, he'd be found out. His true identity is also what is a shackle on him and would keep him scared enough to never leave this place." Wu Hei elaborated.

Chapter 1144 Lu Gao

Lu Gao's existence was rather unique, and it was also a mystery to Lin Mu as to why others didn't find out about him earlier. After all, an illegitimate son of the emperor was still important enough for the alliance to have some records on him.

'I certainly didn't read about him in any of the documents... strange.' Lin Mu thought to himself.

Looking at Wu Hei, Lin Mu now wondered how he knew of it.

"How did you find out about this Wu Hei? Even the alliance didn't know about it." Lin Mu questioned.

"I wouldn't have known of it either, if not for the fact that the Gu clan had worked with the emperor before." Wu Hei spoke.

"Huh?" Lin Mu was not expecting this.

"You do know of the Gu clan and its workings over fifty years ago right?" Wu Hei asked.

"I've been made aware of them, yes." Lin Mu replied. "And wasn't it the emperor himself that got them eliminated in the end?"

"Yes... but what many don't know is that the emperor made a lot many deals with the Gu clan than were let on. Several of them were highly sensitive and if the information about them was leaked, the empire might have been compromised.

That was one of the reasons why the Emperor could not let the Gu clan exist for any longer." Wu Hei explained.

"I see... then did the emperor make use of the Gu clan in this, too?" Lin Mu asked again.

"Yes... The emperor needed to get Lu Gao several resources and more. For this, he couldn't use his own people as it would have a great chance of revealing his position and the existence of Lu Gao.

Thus, he made use of the one power that would do anything as long as they were paid... this being the Gu clan.

It was the Gu clan that transferred the wealth to Lu Gao as an intermediary, as well as helping him set up the Gambling dens." Wu Hei explained further.

"No wonder... and since the Gu clan was gone and most of their information eliminated, there was no way for others to find out either." Lin Mu nodded his head.

"Yeah. After the return of Gu Yao, and the rise of the Gu Legion, he made sure to bring in all the old debts. Lu Gao was one of the best pawns to use and the Gu Legion made use of him to transfer a lot of wealth to them.

Him being in their control was essential to all this. And since he was kept in the prison, he would stay safe as well, not needing to worry about him." Wu Hei added.

While the two of them talked, they had already gone past several jail cells. These jail cells were isolated and the prisoners inside couldn't see or hear who was outside, thus Lin Mu and Wu Hei didn't need to worry about being seen or heard.

As for the guards of the prison, they weren't here due to the fact that most of this place was controlled with formations. Of course, the guards still patrolled it several times a day, but it was mostly to send food.

Wu Hei easily managed to enter the prison due to the authority he had.

It was a surprise to Lin Mu that the warden of the prison was also a part of the Gu Legion. And it wasn't that he was being, but he truly was a member. The original warden had been killed, and this man had taken his place.

Of course he too was killed, and the authority was passed on to another person, but Wu Hei's command token still stood. Allowing him entry to the prison. He just couldn't take anyone out of here.

"Here it is," Wu Hei said, stopping at a wall.

"Here?" Lin Mu narrowed and observed it finding that it was actually a false wall.

Wu Hei took out a command token and touched it on the wall.

~SHUA~

The wall disappeared with that, and another corridor was revealed behind it.

"This is a prison room?" Lin Mu was stunned.

At the end of the corridor there was a large hall rather than room and was decked with luxuries. A large bed, several couches, golden curtains and many more things could be seen.

"Like I said before... this is Lu Gao's home. The rest of the prison is more like a 'safety wall' around it." Wu Hei answered.

"I see..." Lin Mu didn't expect there to be such privilege for a prisoner.

It truly was just like Wu Hei had said, Lu Gao was in his home.

Lin Mu's eyes darted around but didn't see anyone in there.

"Is he even in here?" Lin Mu asked.

"He should be..." Wu Hei furrowed his brows.

The two of them walked closer and finally entered the hall.

"LU GAO!" Wu Hei called out.

~CRACK~

~SMASH~

The sound of something falling and breaking was heard, making Lin Mu check it.

"FINALLY!" A shout was also heard.

~rustle~

The golden curtains parted and from behind it a man appeared. He looked to be middle aged and had a well kept beard. But his expression seemed to be a bit crazed right now.

"Do you know how long I've been shouting? Why are you guys not following the regular routine? It's been six days! Where are the ledgers?" Lu Gao ran his mouth.

Lin Mu looked at the man in confusion while Wu Hei seemed to be in understanding.

"We'll get to that if you tell me one thing Lu Gao." Wu Hei spoke.

"What?" Lu Gao asked, feeling a bit pissed.

"What year is it?" Wu Hei questioned.

"What kind of a question is that? It's the fifty-seventh year of Emperor Zhou Wan's reign." Lu Gao answered.

Hearing this, both Lin Mu and Wu Hei smiled, knowing that it was actually the sixtieth year.

"We were right... he doesn't remember." Wu Hei spoke.

Chapter 1145 The Preparations Come To Term

Lin Mu felt pleased at the discovery and the confirmation of their theory.

"Indeed... I can sense the traces of the curse on him, but they are rapidly fading. And his cultivation base is also at the peak stage of the core condensation realm. He fits all the requirements." Lin Mu replied.

Lu Gao watched the two of them talk amongst themselves and felt confused.

"What're are you two doing? Give me the ledgers now! You are supposed to bring them every three days." Lu Gao demanded.

"What is he asking about, though?" Lin Mu asked Wu Hei, ignoring Lu Gao.

"Oh... Lu Gao used to get his business ledgers from his workers. Telling him the updates and how the businesses are operating. All that stopped after Gu Yao took control of him though, as he got Lu Gao to pass on the authority of business to another member of Gu Legion." Wu Hei answered.

"WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU ALL TALKING ABOUT AND WHY ARE YOU IGNORING ME!?" Lu Gao shouted, unable to bear it.

"Oh yeah? What do we do with him?" Lin Mu asked Wu Hei.

"He doesn't really have any uses left. All his businesses and gambling dens were transfered over to the Gu Legion anyway. I think the alliance should be taking care of them, too." Wu Hei replied.

"So he's just broke now?" Lin Mu chuckled.

"Certainly." Wu Hei agreed.

"DAMN YOU! YOU INSULT ME TO MY FACE?!" Lu Gao couldn't take it anymore and swung his fist at Lin Mu.

The poor man couldn't sense Lin Mu and Wu Hei's cultivation base since they were suppressed and made the mistake of thinking that they were just some mortals.

Lin Mu's eyes tracked the man's fist with ease, finding it to be slow. He was far too used to fighting way stronger cultivators now, and Lu Gao's attack was like a baby's punch.

~SHUA~

Spirit Qi waves spread out from Lin Mu at that moment, filling the entire hall and turning it turbulent. Lu Gao's eyes widened at that before closing.

~THUD~

The man fell face first onto the ground and passed out, unable to bear the pressure.

"Can't believe someone as rich as he was unable to reach the Nascent soul realm." Lin Mu said.

"It was intentional on his part. If he needed to breakthrough, he could do it easily. But if he did that it would attract attention. He was actually going to wait for a hundred years or so before leaving the prison. By then, most of his enemies should have given up on him and another emperor would have taken the throne as well." Wu Hei explained.

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

Having confirmed their theory, Lin Mu and Wu Hei had no reason to stay here, thus they left and swirly returned to the Shuang Qian capital via the Kong plane.

"I'll get Little Shrubby and go back to the Kong Plane. Got some things to do." Lin Mu spoke.

"I'll begin the rest of the windup as well. Now that we know the core condensation realm cultivators can survive, we need to get them in order. There were many good people that were controlled by Gu Yao, so we need to sort them out." Wu Hei said.

"Alright, I'll leave that to you then." Lin Mu said before disappearing.

Little Shrubby was still with Jing Luo and the others. Lin Mu had left him behind just in case something happened. It wasn't that the people there weren't strong, but rather that Little Shrubby would be able to sense and react to any disturbance faster than anyone there.

It was better to be cautious since they were dealing with the northern tribes and there was no telling what they would do. There was after all, a chance that the people of the tribes might find out and attack them.

The ambush might be resisted but at the cost of a few people, which was not what they wanted at all.

~shua~

A red blur could be seen coming over the horizon, which was none other than Little Shrubby.

Lin Mu had simply called him over rather than travel all the way to the border. After all, the teleportation gate wasn't built there yet.

"Come on, time to head to the Kong plane. I'll need you there." Lin Mu spoke.

"Okay~" Little Shrubby growled in reply.

Placing a hand on Little Shrubby's back, the two of them disappeared from the Xiaofan world.

While Lin Mu went to try his own plan in the Kong plane, the rest of the alliance was also hard at work.

Day after day went by as the alliance prepared for the incoming war. The sects also seemed to have been jolted alert by this time, and were cooperating, albeit a bit slowly. It was not known what had convinced them as the Patriarchs of the alliance were sure that they had failed before.

In the northern tribe's capital, similar scenes were seen and people were moving around, carrying goods, armors and many weapons.

Every man, woman and child was involved in it, with nobody slacking behind.

The council members were currently in meeting as well.

"All the preparations are close to done." One of the elders spoke.

"And how is the search for traitors going, Elder Ku Mi?" Elder Gunkao asked.

"No sign of them yet, elder Gunkao. Either they are really biding their time or there is no one. They should have appeared by now, since the formal invasion will start soon enough." Elder Ku Mi replied.

"Hmm... let's hope that stays." Elder Gunkan nodded his head before looking at another elder.

"What about our little guest from the south?" Elder Gunkao asked.

"My clansmen brought them to the capital just last night, Elder Gunkao. And the prince certainly has a lot of news to tell us." Elder Chiu replied.

"Oh? What kind of news?" Elder Niu questioned.

"Seems like we will be facing some opposition and the southerners won't be as broken as we wanted them to be." The Elder answered.

Chapter 1146 The Vermillion Legion's Fall And Imperial Court's Panic

Time passed by and it had been a week since Lin Mu had ventured into the Kong Plane.

At the Capital of the Great Zhou empire, the ministers were all sitting in the imperial court. Not just the ministers, but several important members of the aristocrats, and even the sects were here.

The expressions of a few ministers were tense, and the man dressed as the imperial adviser was sweating visibly.

"What have we been called here for so urgently?" One of the sect ambassadors asked.

The sects actually had a few ambassadors from them assigned to the capital. These people would usually have no authority or a duty other than to listen to the exceedingly important announcements given by the Emperor or the imperial court.

Nearly every major sect had an ambassador posted at the capital. It was not often that they were called to the court as there were other ways to send of information. But if they really were called, it meant that the situation was gravely important.

"Yeah? Has something happened to the emperor?" One of the sect ambassadors asked.

"No... the emperor is still fine." The Imperial adviser spoke.

He was the person who was the closest to the emperor. In a way, he would be the emperor's secretary and would help carry out his orders and more. But since the emperor was currently sick and unable to work on his own, the adviser would do it in cooperation with the ministers.

"Then what is the reason for this?" this time a minister asked.

"I have called you all here to inform you that... The Vermillion legion has fallen." The imperial adviser said, his hands trembling.

As soon as his words were heard, the hearts of everyone shook.

"WHAT?!" the ministers screamed out.

Meanwhile, the sect ambassadors furrowed their brows. There were sect ambassadors from the Long Cloud sect, and others in their alliance too, thus had an inkling of what was happening.

"So it has started..." The sect ambassador from the Black Dune sect muttered.

"Indeed..." The sect ambassador from the Light Harmony sect nodded his head. "Do we even need to inform the alliance?" he asked.

"We may as well, as is our duty. Even if the elders probably found out about it already." The sect ambassador of the Long Cloud sect replied.

A few sect ambassadors that were standing around them and ministers heard their conversation and were surprised.

"Wait! You three knew about this?" A minister asked frantically.

"We did indeed." The sect ambassador of the Long Cloud sect replied.

"YOU KNEW THIS WAS GOING TO HAPPEN AND YOU DIDN'T THINK TO WARN US?!" The minister of law got agitated and rushed to take hold of the sect ambassador.

"You should behave minister of Law..." The sect ambassador stated.

"IT IS YOU WHO SHOULD DO THAT!" The other ministers blew up.

The aristocrats were now trembling and didn't know what to make of this.

"Wait! Please tell us more imperial adviser. If the Vermillion legion fell, what does this entail?" They asked.

While the nobles and aristocrat had an idea about the deaths happening all over the continent and some were even aware of the actions of the Gu Legion, they didn't want to assume the worst.

After all, even the Vermillion legion had the strange deaths and some people were even said to have lost their memories. So unless they had a straight answer, they didn't dare to believe it all.

"The Vermillion legion fell because they were attacked... by the northern tribes!" The Imperial adviser stated truthfully.

~Gasp~

Several loud gasps were heard and a few people simply fell to the ground in shock.

"H-how... how is this possible?" they wondered.

"It is your ignorance that you never listened to the alliance. Nothing can be done now." The sect ambassador of the Long cloud sect said before freeing himself from the minister of law,. "Let's go. Our work here is done."

"Mmhhh... they will either join and accept the reality, or perish to the annals." The sect ambassador of the Light Harmony sect said.

"Maybe it might be better too... the Zhou empire has lasted for far too long... haha~" The sect ambassador of the Black Dune sects said.

The words said by the ambassadors were treasonous and if these were normally spoken, they would have faced grave consequences. After all, even criticizing the emperor or the imperial court could only be done in moderation, especially not to their face.

If the same was said by the high elders of the sect, it would have been fine and the emperor would not be able to do much. But these were merely ambassador that barely had the cultivation base at the peak stage of the core condensation realm.

It wasn't that the sects didn't have someone stronger to send, but that the imperial court wouldn't allow Nascent soul realm and above individuals this close to the court. The danger would be a lot more, after all.

Each and every person in the court had heard their words, but they couldn't really bring themselves to oppose it either. The initial shock was still too strong. And seeing the condition of the imperial adviser, they knew the situation was really grave.

After all, the soldiers in the vermilion legion were among the best in the empire and if they had all fallen, then thing were looking bleak. While the main imperial army did have better experts in them, there was still a limit to what they could do.

Not to mention, even if they wanted to replace the vermilion legion's people with themselves, reaching the frontier was not an easy task and would take a long time.

Unfortunately for the imperial court, there was nothing they could do other than despair. Unknown to them, the alliance was already in preparation and they wouldn't truly be left to die.

At least, the common citizens wouldn't be forced to suffer like that. As for the ministers and aristocrats? They would be left to their own devices.

With the emperor in the current condition, the imperial court was a toothless tiger.

Chapter 1147 Battle On The Horizon

"It is time..." Lin Mu opened his eyes as he heard the message.

He had been cultivating and optimizing himself for the final battle, and now it had finally arrived.

~GRRR~

A growl was heard coming from the distance, and a red blur floated over from the distant mountains.

"Time to hunt?" Little Shrubby asked.

"Indeed... time for the final hunt." Lin Mu replied as he stood up from the rock.

He had used up every cultivation resource he could use to further himself and was now at his best.

'Hopefully this will be enough...' Lin Mu thought to himself as he got onto Little Shrubby's back.

The two of them flew towards the nexus and took a newly built teleportation gate.

~SHUA~

When they reappeared, they were standing atop a small hill that was hidden with several illusory formation arrays.

"You arrived just on time." A voice was heard, making Lin Mu turn around.

"How could I be late for this?" Lin Mu chuckled at Jing Luo.

"Mhmm... and neither is anyone else, thankfully." Jing Luo said, his eyes looking at the horizon.

"Everything went well, I assume?" Lin Mu questioned.

"On our end? Yes. The empire? Not so much." Jing Luo answered.

"Oh? Did they cause any trouble?" Lin Mu asked, while furrowing his brows.

He knew well that the imperial court was mostly in turmoil since the poisoning of the emperor and him being unable to do anything. The princes were already trying to capture power and the nobles were looking to cut out a part of the cake for themselves.

The objective that Gu Yao had set out to do with respect to the emperor was already accomplished.

"More like they are crumbling. The Vermillion Legion has been annihilated." Jing Luo replied.

"What?" Lin Mu was surprised, but then a certain person came to his mind. "Is Wu Hei?"

"The soldiers with injuries and those that were in the infirmary are fine. They were moved by Wu Hei beforehand." Jing Luo answered.

"That's good..." Lin Mu said, but his brows didn't ease up.

He thought for a moment before speaking.

"Why would the northern tribes attack the Vermillion legion? Wasn't their plan to use the passage?" Lin Mu questioned.

"We don't know... but what we do know is that after attacking the Vermillion legion, the northern tribe's people didn't actually go further. They seemed to have retreated." Jing Luo answered.

"Hmm... this doesn't seem right... if they eliminated the vermilion legion, they have an open route." Lin Mu spoke. "At least they think they do, we after all, have our people hiding there too." He added.

"We discussed about it and can only guess that it was a power statement; a threat." Jing Luo said.

"That does seem like something they might do." Lin Mu replied. "Or... maybe it's a distraction?" Lin Mu suggested.

"A distraction from the passage? Hmm... that does seem reasonable. After all, even if they think the passage is secret, they still can't bet on it. I would probably do the same in their place." Jing Luo said, understanding Lin Mu's mind.

"Exactly. And it also helped to panic the imperial court. They are now useless. If we were not in the alliance, it could have been a great blow." Lin Mu agreed.

"What about the new 'allies'?" Jing Luo asked.

"Oh, they are ready. They'll be here in a minute's notice. We simply need to wait for the right time." Lin Mu replied.

"Good... you should talk to the rest till then. Who knows... it might be the last." Jing Luo said.

Lin Mu's expression turned firm, and he nodded. Even though Lin Mu hoped to win, he still knew coming out of this with no casualties was impossible. Even high level experts of theirs would perish inequitably.

Lin Mu thus looked around and saw a lot of his friends and acquaintances that he had gathered over the past few years.

There were the patriarchs, the elders, the clan members of the Fenlong kingdom, several merchants who were also strong and had decided to participate, some independent powers and even mercenaries!

Lin Mu didn't even know that the mercenary unions which had been forced by Gu Yao to disband through trickery were now working for the alliance. There were simply too many people in the alliance, thus Lin Mu couldn't know all of them.

About ten percent of their manpower was composed of the independent experts and powers who had joined. This also included itinerant cultivators and people like Jiao Fang.

Lin Mu spent a couple minutes with each important person, talking about the present and future.

But in all these, Lin Mu realized that there were two people missing. Returning to Jing Luo, Lin Mu couldn't help but ask.

"Where's your grandfather and Duan Ke?" Lin Mu questioned.

"Oh, they will be arriving later..." Jing Luo answered in a low voice.

"Hmm..." Lin Mu could guess the rest of the part. "And they'll be hiding till the right moment?"

"Indeed... after all, grandfather holds one of our biggest trump cards. It is not something that can be easily revealed. That sword will alert every strong cultivator in the world upon its appearance. Which would also mean the northern tribes." Jing Luo stated.

"That is for the best. There is still the ancestral bell we need to be careful about." Lin Mu agreed.

~SHUA~

And just as he said that, Lin Mu sensed a very faint flicker in the space.

His eyes sharpened and he looked at the sky in distance.

"What happened?" Jing Luo asked, seeing Lin Mu's sudden actions.

"I... don't know... but the space just trembled weakly." Lin Mu replied.

He was about to use spatial perception to check for anomalies, when a strong wave of spirit Qi was felt coming from the distance.

"THEY'RE HERE!!! THE HILLS ARE DISAPPEARING!" A voice announced loudly.

Lin Mu and Jing Luo's eyes snapped at the hills, while Lin Mu's spirit sense soared quickly and reached the area.

Chapter 1148 The Army Of The Tribes Arrives

The announcement was merely a formality and everyone that was here could see that the enemy was about to arrive. The hills and mountain started to disappear and a large path opened up there.

It was nearly four kilometers wide, giving more than enough space for a large army to pass in a single wide rank or several narrow ranks. But that was not all, as Lin Mu and the rest could see a large number of people appearing.

"What in the..." The Patriarchs of the Alliance couldn't believe their eyes.

Lin Mu narrowed his eyes and sensed several auras that were alarming to him.

"This... is far more than we estimated." Jing Luo spoke.

"Indeed..." Lin Mu agreed as his spirit sense extended as far as possible, scanning over all the enemies that had appeared.

The area behind the path was covered entirely with black dots. These were none other than the people of the northern tribes that looked small from this distance. But the sheer number of them was massive.

"How much is this?" Someone couldn't help but wonder.

"Roughly around five million..." Lin Mu said, before taking a pause. "And more come." He added upon sensing more appearing from the barrier surrounding the forbidden continent.

His spirit sense could go up to a hundred kilometers but not here as it was stopped by the barrier. He could sense more and more of the northern tribe members appearing from it.

"Heavens! Did they bring in their entire population?"

As far as they knew, the number of able bodied cultivators in the Northern Tribes shouldn't have been this many. It was simply impossible due to the lack of resources. Even if Gu Yao had been supplying them with resources in these few years, these many humans simply could not be birthed and grown in that time.

The number in the army thus seemed to be a little too much.

But a minute later, Lin Mu finally sensed something.

"The pills of grace... They've used pills of grace!" Lin Mu discovered.

"What? So many of them?" Patriarch Mingliang asked in surprise.

"Yes, but it is mostly the leveled cultivators that are at the Qi refining realm and core condensation realm that have taken them. They might have used the pills of grace to inflate their numbers.

They've really forced their normal tribesmen to join in this fight." Lin Mu explained.

His spirit sense could probe the bodies of the northern tribesmen and sense the muddled Qi of the pills of grace in it. Thankfully, the ones that had taken it were just the weaker cultivators.

"They might have split the pills for the lower members instead of focusing them on a few to raise Dao Treading realm or other high leveled experts." Jing Luo guessed.

"Seems like it. They do need the low leveled cultivators as the major part of their army." Lin Mu agreed.

From what Lin Mu could observe, around sixty percent of the army of the northern tribes was composed of Qi refining realm cultivators, thirty percent were core condensation realm cultivators and the rest was higher realm cultivators,

Lin Mu couldn't really probe those higher realm cultivators as of now as that might alarm them, thus simply estimated using the others. The Qi refining and core condensation realm cultivators couldn't sense him after all.

The army of the tribes was progress faster that what a normal army would, but it was still taking them a while to reach the point at which the alliance could begin its attack.

'Our numbers are not a match quantitatively, but we might be able to match with quality. So far we do seem to have the higher number of Nascent soul and higher realm cultivators,' Lin Mu thought to himself.

The alliance roughly had two thousand Nascent soul realm cultivators among them right now. This was a massive number and it had only risen to this level in the recent couple of years.

It was the Kong Plane and the resources that arrived from it that which helped raise many to such a level. Just two years before, the number of Nascent soul realm cultivators in the entire alliance, including the independent powers, would have been at merely eight hundred or so.

Of course, right now, most of the Nascent soul realm cultivators were only at the Infant Soul stage. With only the minority being in the adult soul stage, most of them being from the sects.

As for the Dao Shell realm cultivators, they numbered in the fifties, greatly lower than the amount of Nascent soul realm experts. And as for the Dao Treading realm cultivators, there were only thirteen.

This included Lin Mu, Little Shrubby, Jing Wei, Daoist Hua, Patriarch You Yi, Patriarch Mingliang, Patriarch Shandian, Jiao Fang and the rest being the supreme elders and high elders of the sects.

They had tried their best to match the expected number of Dao Treading realm experts of the Northern tribes, which from what they knew about their council was at eleven. Though they also had doubts that there would be more and were prepared for it too.

Lin Mu watched on as more and more tribals arrived, now their numbers, including higher realm cultivators at the Dao Shell realm as well.

His brows furrowed as he spoke, "The top three sects... are they going to join or not?"

Lin Mu was truly infuriated by them at this point and if they really didn't come even now, he wouldn't leave them be after all this was over. If Lin Mu failed, they would get destroyed anyway too.

Jing Luo's expression turned stern upon hearing this as well and he replied, "they have been cooperating before and were told of the location for the ambush as well. If they have any sense, they should have arrived... but it seems like they haven't yet."

Seeing the number of the northern tribesmen, Lin Mu knew that they needed as much support as they could get and the three top sects being here would certainly help out a lot.

Chapter 1149 Massive Numbers!

Even if Lin Mu was highly confident of being able to take out a lot of the experts on his own, with his experience of fighting the multiple Dao Treading realm experts from before, he didn't think the same would apply to the Immortal Ascension realm experts of the tribes.

"I just got some news!" Daoist Hua spoke up.

"What?" Lin Mu and many others looked towards him.

"The Ancestor of the Centennial Sword sect is on his way!" Daoist Hua announced.

"Good." The people couldn't help but say.

"What about the other two?" Lin Mu questioned.

"Even if they don't arrive now, once they sense the presence of the Tribes Immortal Ascension realm experts, they shouldn't sit still. They will be the first ones to arrive, even if their own patriarchs and elders don't." Daoist Hua answered.

"Mhmm... even if the current leadership of those sects is crooked, the ancestors have lived through the wars of the past. They know about the true dangers and will act the moment they deem it worthy." Patriarch Shandian chimed in.

"Still... to wait this long." Lin Mu said, feeling unsure.

"I have my doubts that it is not that they don't want to appear, but they might be forced to. All this only makes me think that the ancestors of the Sky precepts sect and the Rainbow Pill sect aren't fine. They might already be running out of their lifespan." Patriarch You Yi expressed.

"So this might as well be their last hurrah?" Jing Luo said, his expression complex.

He knew that his grandfather was similar to that too and actually didn't have that long to live. That was if... he didn't breakthrough.

Pushing these thoughts away for now, he decided to focus on the task at hand.

Lin Mu did the same and started calculating the right time to activate their traps.

'At the rate they are moving, they should reach the decided point in about five minutes. Though with their increased numbers, the traps might not be enough.' Lin Mu thought to himself.

He looked at the multiple large gates in the distance and only hoped that they work just as he hoped.

'If they arrive at the right time, we might have the issue of numbers solved for the time being.' Lin Mu thought to himself.

Everyone's expression were tense as they started at the approaching army. With numbers this high, this might as well be the biggest war the Xiaofan world has seen in several thousand years.

Perhaps only the great war against the invaders might match it or exceed the numbers.

Time seemed to be fleeting and everyone was on the edge when the northern tribesmen finally reached the chosen location.

"Should we start?" The formation masters asked.

"Hold!" Lin Mu said.

"Are you sure?" Patriarch You Yi and the others looked on in doubt.

"Yes... the old location won't be right for so many. Let them approach more. We'll be able to get more of them that way. Plus, our new 'allies' will arrive soon too..." Lin Mu explained.

"Alright, alliance leader." The leader of the formation masters said.

They were the ones in charge of activating the traps and thus would listen to Lin Mu's commands.

Two more minutes passed as the army continued onwards.

Within the Northern Tribe's army, their elders were alert.

"Seems like our passage was fine." One of the elders said.

"Hmm... it was a good idea to keep our juniors posted here. They ensure that this place was not discovered." Another elder said.

"Don't forget the attack at the Vermillion legion. That should have thrown off the southerners. They are likely thinking we are going to come through there." An elder at the Dao Treading realm spoke.

"Yes, of course. Still... I never would have thought that our ancestors would have kept such a secret hidden. I just hoped that we could have used it in the past." A Dao Shell realm elder said.

"That would have been too much of a waste. We all know we simply didn't have enough power back then. Our people were also too weak and could not have made good use of this opportunity." Another Dao Shell realm elder replied.

Several elders nodded in agreement, finding that their original plan truly was the best one.

"Still... we can't forget Gu Yao's contribution. Even if his plan still failed in the end." A Dao Treading elder that had bones wrapped around his arms spoke upon his arrival.

"That is true. He will get his revenge as a reward. Even if he is dead, he shall be vindicated."

"HAHAHA! Perhaps as a tribute to him, we'll build a monument with the bones of the southern experts!" Someone said with excitement.

"That does sound rather nice." The elders couldn't help but agree.

Each and everyone here held a deep grudge against the southerners and had it imprinted into their very bloodline itself. Their life's end goal was to get rid of the southerners and take revenge for all the humiliation their predecessors had suffered.

~whoosh~

A gust of chilly wind could be felt, making most of the people nearby shiver. All the elder present quickly cupped their hands and looked towards the back as a new person arrived.

"Greetings Council Elder Gunkao!" The tribesmen all said with fervor.

"Put your focus on the conquest at hand. Do not get complacent just because we've had some initial success." A cold voice was heard.

Elder Gunkao was the strongest elder of the council, and his cultivation base was said to be very close to the immortal ascension realm. Many even expected him to breakthrough soon enough and some even said that he was already half step into the Immortal Ascension realm.

He was the absolute authority of the Northern tribes, below the Immortal ascension realm elders who mostly kept to themselves.

"We shall do as the elder say—" The people were just about to reply when a cacophony of screams and explosions were heard.

~KABOOM!!!!~

Chapter 1150 Triggering Traps

Lin Mu had his eye on everything and was waiting for the right moment. The army of the Northern Tribes progressed steadily at first, but the newer ones that were coming from the back had slowed down a bit.

"Who is that?" someone questioned.

Lin Mu's spirit sense suddenly picked up on several strong spirit Qi fluctuations coming from the back and his eyes went wide.

"Dao Treading realm... They are the council members!" Lin Mu announced.

There were about four Dao Treading realm cultivators that he could sense openly, but he was sure that more were hiding or keeping their spirit Qi fluctuations controlled. That was normal since there was always a chance that they might affect their own people with it.

A high leveled cultivator would exert passive pressure on lower leveled cultivators just by the mere virtue of their presence. This was usually fine when they were in low numbers, but when multiple of them were present, this pressure would multiply.

And in a setting such as where an entire army consisting majors of Qi refining and Core condensation realm cultivators was marching, this could get very problematic.

Having known this, Lin Mu tried to track the other Dao Treading realm cultivators. Even if he couldn't sense their spirit Qi fluctuations, there were other ways to find them after all.

The easiest being to observe how the others behaved with them. The soldiers would be venerated towards these elders. Soon enough, Lin Mu found three more Dao Treading realm elders hidden among the army.

"There are seven Dao Treading realm experts among them right now. More might be coming." Lin Mu stated.

Jing Luo and the others nodded their heads, taking note of this information as it was really importance.

Another minute passed, and Lin Mu raised his hand.

"They are in position, ACTIVATE THE TRAPS!" He ordered.

"ACTIVATE!"

"ACTIVATE!"

Several formation masters gave out the subordinate's orders and almost simultaneously thousands of formations were activated.

~KABOOM~

In less than a second, the sounds of explosions could be heard as the explosive trap formations were the first to activate. The effect was almost instantaneous as blood and flesh splattered around as hundreds of Qi refining realm and core condensation realm cultivators died all at once.

More and more explosive traps activated, and the commanders in the army started to realize the situation. They wanted to give the order to rush and scatter, but didn't know just how far the traps were spread apart.

Many of the soldiers ran on instinct, but were still caught in the explosions.

After about twenty seconds, the explosion came to an end as all the explosive traps were used up. But that was not the end.

"RUSH OUT! RUSH OUT!" The commanders in the army ordered, not wanting to stay here any longer.

They could easily guess at this point that they had been ambushed and that the enemy knew exactly where they were coming from.

"Elders! What do we do?" one of the higher ranked commander asked the Dao Treading realm elders.

The Dao Treading realm elders were at the very back and were not afflicted by the formations. In fact, there were no formations present here either. If there were any, they would have definitely sensed it.

This was also the reason why Lin Mu had not asked to put traps at the very back as they would only get found out.

It was evident that the effect on the Dao Treading realm elders was very profound as anger appeared on their faces.

"WHO DARES!!!!" One of them shouted before rising up into the sky.

~WHOOSH~

The very air shook as strong spirit sense scanned over the area. In just a few seconds, the elder found out about the traps and discovered where all of them were.

"FUTILE EFFORT!" The elder shouted as he took out a long bone.

The bone was polished on one end and sharpened into a stake on the other. The elder held the bone firmly and chanted something before throwing it towards the ground.

"BREAK!"

~RUMBLE~

The bone stake drilled into the snow covered ground and let out a strong wave of spirit Qi. The ground shook lightly, making one think as if it were a weak earthquake. The Qi refining realm cultivators that were close to the place where the Bone Stake fell directly spat out blood and fainted.

The pressure was simply too much for them. The elder didn't care for this either as they had already sustained casualties. If he didn't stop the traps quickly, many more would fall.

~SHUA~ SHUA~ SHUA~

As the wave of spirit Qi from the bone stake spread, the runes started to reveal themselves.

But when the Qi refining and core condensation realm cultivators saw this, they were stunned.

"This... what is this... the entire field is filled with formations?"

Since they could see all the trap formations clearly now, they saw the other traps that were yet to be activated.

~SHUA~

But they didn't get to look on for long as the formations started to break down. With the bone stake as the center of the circle, the wave of spirit Qi spread from it, broke apart every trap formation in its path.

"What do we do now?" The formation masters questioned.

"Activated all of the traps, even if the enemies are not in range. They are going to get destroyed anyway." Lin Mu ordered.

The formation masters nodded and tapped the formation plates planted into the ground. This was the control center of it all and could manage all the formations they had planted all over the field.

~HUMM~

In the next second, the second flurry of traps activated. But this time it was a mixed bag as various effects occurred.

Flames raged, winds blew, ice spread, poisons burst out!

Most of these had been weakened by a bit since the supporting formations were broken, but the effect was still enough to kill a couple thousand more Tribals.