

## Walker 331

### Chapter 331 - Involvement Of The Tri Cauldon Peony Sect?

Lin Mu had just finished his dinner and was lounging in his room. The door of the bedroom was wide open and the garden could be seen in front. The sky above was clear and a full moon was visible.

"I got to say, this place is quite good." Lin Mu said feeling satisfied.

He had eaten dinner even if he didn't need to eat food anymore for a long time as it had become a habit which he didn't want to leave unless it was necessary. The ability to stave off the hunger of the nameless technique of the lost immortal was intended for emergencies, so Lin Mu would not want to use up the reserves in just general times.

Spring time was perhaps the best to spend in the Wu Lim city, and a lot of travelers came here during this time period as well. Though this was also the time period when the city made the least amount of money. Their main source of money was none other than the spirit apples which grew in autumn the most.

In the spring time, all the city depended on was the produce from the satellite towns mostly and the things that were sold in the city. But this demographic had been changed quite a bit this year due to the arrival of the Teng Battalion in the southern town.

A lot of people from the other three towns had moved there to take up the jobs till the Teng battalion was here. Even in the city, Lin Mu could see that certain preparations were being done for the marriage of lieutenant Wu Teng.

A lot of the trees in the city were being pruned and the flowering plants were being planted to enhance the beauty of the city. The roads were being repaired, even if they didn't really need it. Most of the roads were quite well maintained if not for the random cobble stone missing in the ground.

Lin Mu was thinking of what to do next now that he had learned of the mayor's involvement in the Blood sacrifice. He wasn't sure of telling the lord Wu Hei and even telling anyone other than that was quite risky.

"Wait, aren't the Tri cauldron peony sect and the Mayor close? Could they be involved in this?" Lin Mu wondered.

"Hmm, the mayor is in some kind of a debt with them from what we know, so it is possible," Xukong spoke,

"But they're an orthodox sect, aren't they? Will they really do something like a blood sacrifice?" Lin Mu questioned with apprehension.

"It won't be the first time that this would happen. After all, in the cultivation world benefits come first, everything else is later. Even righteous sects would do some unsavory thing in the Shadow." Xukong answered.

"But a blood sacrifice and murdering cultivators is a big thing? Will a sect really take a risk like this?" Lin Mu questioned further.

"Well, the more likely thing is that it's not the entire sect that's involved, but rather one of the influential people from it. Maybe an elder is involved in this and is doing this separated from the sect." Xukong replied.

Lin Mu thought over Senior Xukong's words and found them to be quite possible. If it was an elder forcing the mayor to do this, then it would make sense. And then an idea struck Lin Mu which rocked him.

"THE WEDDING!" Lin Mu exclaimed.

"What?" Xukong asked with a bit of confusion.

"What if the wedding is the climax of their plan? It makes sense right since they couldn't just keep on taking mercenaries. With the wedding, a lot of cultivators will be coming to the city, both the ones that the mayor is friendly with and the ones he's not.

If they set it up in a way where they get involved, then they will obtain a lot of blood essence. That too of stronger cultivates that will be in the core condensation realm, or perhaps even above that." Lin Mu explained.

The more Xukong thought over it, the more he found it to make sense.

"While this could work, but it would also bring them very big problems. They will have to reveal their true identities to the whole world and the murder of so many influential people would make them the number one enemy. They simply wouldn't take a risk like this.

I can tell that the people in this region are not that strong. If an incident like this happens which harms both the mortals and the cultivators, no righteous sect will take this silently. Forget them, the king of this kingdom and perhaps even the emperor will get involved.

If they don't, then their reputations will be muddied for years to come and the people will lose their faith in them." Xukong explained his perspective.

Lin Mu fell silent after this and thought even more on this.

"Hmm, Senior there is still a small chance, right? What if they have a way to divert the attention from them, like a scapegoat?" Lin Mu asked.

"Yeah that could work... but the preparation would take a long time," Xukong replied.

"Still, we can't let go of this. We need to investigate." Lin Mu said and stood.

"So where are you intending to go?" Xukong questioned.

Xukong would not stop Lin Mu from something like this. He needed to let him learn and experience things on his own. Especially schemes such as these were important to be known, he would have to see a lot of them in his life; The Jianghu is unforgiving.

"Well, since we doubt the Tri cauldron peony sect, then we should go check out them. If they truly are involved, then the disciples posted here should know something or there should be clues." Lin Mu answered.

"Alright, but you'll need to be cautious," Xukong advised.

"Of course," Lin Mu stated before he started getting ready for the excursion. He changed his clothes to a set of black hooded robes that covered up to his forehead. Then he took out one of the face covers that the culprits had used.

Wearing them all, he was ready to leave.

### **Chapter 332 - Killing The Innocent**

Lin Mu blinked a few times and appeared on the roof of a luxurious house that was on the side of the lake. Right across the house was the stronghold of the Tri cauldron peony sect.

It was a six layered courtyard and was one of the biggest properties in this district. It was also attached to the lake and was nearly the size of the lord, Wu Hei's Mansion. Lin Mu looked at the insides of the courtyard and couldn't see anyone there.

"It's a type of illusory formation array, it shows the contents of the location it's placed on but hides the people living in it," Xukong informed Lin Mu.

This was a lower version of the formation array that Lin Mu had set up in his house and was much more affordable. It couldn't be forgotten that the only reason Lin Mu had been able to set one up was because Jing Wei had given him pre-made materials.

Lin Mu didn't know that even the top sects would not be able to set up an illusory formation array of the level that Xukong had set up. Perhaps they would, but they would have no knowledge of how to do it, anyway. This was also why Lin Mu was so trusting of the formation to protect his house.

Lin Mu had no thoughts of breaking this formation array as the courtyard was relatively open. He could just enter using his skills. He first chose a relatively hidden area that was least likely to have people. And even if there were people there, Lin Mu would be able to take care of them quickly.

The area he chose to enter was none other than the small space behind the latrines of the servant quarters. Lin Mu's spirit sense wasn't able to pierce the additional barriers that had been set up in the courtyard, thus he had decided to measure the distance directly with his eyes.

Since it was an open area, it shouldn't be much of a problem to him even if he used the fourth Skill 'Fade'. With the path in his mind set, Lin Mu jumped down from the roof of the house and Faded away from the world. He appeared in the parallel void and saw the grey environment.

It was the same as before, completely empty and plain. He started to walk forward with measured steps.

Ten steps...

Sixteen steps...

Thirty steps...

Fifty eight steps...

Hundred and twenty one steps...

Finally, Lin Mu had reached the area that he had chose... or at least he hoped he was.

He deactivated Fade and appeared in the real world. Lin Mu's Sprint sense instantly split into multiple tendrils, scanning three hundred and sixty degrees around him.

"Who..." A faint sound was heard behind Lin Mu as his eyes went wide.

A servant had been standing in the place that Lin Mu had just appeared and had spotted him.

"Dammit!" Lin Mu cursed under his breath.

In the next moment, he used blink and appeared right in front of the servant with his hand gripping the servant's neck. Then Lin Mu did something he had never done before, he forcibly put the servant into the ring. He was able to feel the resistance in doing so and even felt a greater consumption of spirit qi.

In fact, it had taken about ten drops of liquid spirit qi, which was the highest consumption that he had ever seen.

After doing the act, Lin Mu was shocked.

"Why did it take so much?" Lin Mu questioned in his mind.

"The servant had cultivation. Of course, it would cost a lot more. The beasts that you had killed before did not have as strong of a cultivation or they were unconscious or incapacitated, neither did they have a stronger will to resist the spatial displacement.

Even what you did right now was pushing it, if the servant was not at the early stage of the qi refining realm, perhaps you would have not been able to put him in the ring at all. You will most likely fail if you try to put cultivators with stronger cultivation, at least as long as they are fully conscious." Xukong explained.

Lin Mu had heard of the theory behind the storing of things in a spatial treasure before from Senior Xukong, but the mysterious ring was a special exception to it. They still did not know all of its peculiarities and were figuring them out.

Lin Mu had known that putting live creatures in any spatial treasure was impossible as they were incompatible. Only the special treasures that could store beasts were capable of that, or higher spatial tools like the Myriad armament canopy abode.

Still, now Lin Mu knew the risk behind using the ring to put cultivators inside it. Lin Mu did not want to keep the servant in there for too long as the man would die from suffocation.

"Seems like you the servant will not be of much concern now." Xukong suddenly spoke.

"Huh? Why?" Lin Mu asked feeling concerned.

"Take a look yourself," Xukong replied.

Lin Mu looked inside the ring and saw the condition of the servant. His skin was torn in multiple places and some of his bones had been sliced clean. Blood was freely spilling out of his body.

"What the...! How?" Lin Mu exclaimed in his mind.

"The man was ripped due to the spatial displacement because he tried to resist. Seems like even using extra spirit qi was not enough to save him." Xukong explained.

Seeing that he had most likely killed an innocent man, Lin Mu was a bit lost.

"Do not think of it much. There will be far too many innocents that will inevitably get involved in the matters of the cultivators and die. Such is the way of the Jianghu and the karma shall be sowed. You will understand it in the future do not take it to your heart." Xukong consoled.

Lin Mu closed his eyes for a moment and took a deep breath to calm his mind. He did not take the assistance of the calming heart sutra but rather did it on his own. He knew he had to come to terms with it on his own and that's what he did.

### **Chapter 333 - Sneaking In**

It didn't take Lin Mu more than a few seconds to calm down as he could not afford to take any longer time. He was in a sensitive situation and needed to act quickly. He spread his spirit sense around again to check for anyone else that could be in the area and found there to be no one in the twenty meter radius.

Having confirmed this, he switched to a single tendril of spirit qi and scanned a wider area of a hundred meters. This time a few people appeared in his range. Lin Mu had been careful while using his spirit sense, as he did not want to alert them by letting it touch them.

Lin Mu had used a different method and had sensed the faint fluctuations of spirit qi coming off their bodies instead. While this allowed him to see that there was a person there, he couldn't tell their appearance as he wasn't actually touching them.

While this would allow him to also get a rough estimate of their cultivation as well, but if someone was deliberately hiding them, it would make it hard for Lin Mu to know. Still, this was the best he could do right now and he was fine with it.

Lin Mu had sensed five people in the range. Three of them were people with very faint spirit qi fluctuations being at the early stage and were similar to the servant that he had accidentally killed. Seeing that he was in the servant quarters, it was obvious that they were servants.

The other two though were at the mid stage of the qi refining realm and the spirit qi fluctuations coming from them were more rhythmic.

"Those should be the disciples of the Tri cauldron peony sect." Lin Mu muttered.

From what Lin Mu had heard from Hei Wen and the Lord Wu Hei before, there were originally ten disciples of the Tri cauldron peony sect here. But it had increased to twenty five in the recent days and would be increasing even more, apparently.

The mayor had given them special permission because of which the disciples of the Tri cauldron peony sect could freely enter the Wu Lim city. It would have been fine usu sally, if not for the fact that they had been hiding their identity as well.

While their names were recorded while entering, it was not actually spread to the guards. Only a certain few knew about that, and this was not revealed. Just from this, Lin Mu was suspicious about them. If they were secretly gathering their people then it was likely that they wanted to hide their power.

Lin Mu moved from the back of the latrines and got to the next section. Walking through the walls using the third skill Phase made it quite easy to avoid the servants. Still, Lin Mu realized that not all of the walls were passable using phase.

There were some walls, such as the main ones that separated the servant and the main section of the courtyard that had formations placed on them. This prevented Lin Mu from using the third skill Phase on them. He couldn't use Fade either as his spirit sense was restricted either and he did not want to end up right in front of someone.

He crossed another small section and appeared in the part where the two mid stage qi refining realm cultivators were standing. He looked at their robes and saw that they were indeed the disciples of the Tri cauldron peony sect. The servants were wearing different clothes compared to them.

Both of the men were standing at the entrance of the servant section as if acting as guards and watching who passed from there.

"Seems like these guys don't trust their servants either." Lin Mu muttered.

"This is cautious behaviors as these servants are likely not part of their sect and are merely assigned here to take care of the courtyard," Xukong spoke.

Lin Mu only had one way, and that was to pass from the exit, but the two disciples were blocking it. He then looked at what was beyond it and saw that there were a few statues there. They were decorative ones and were just in the range of his Blink.

He thus used the second skill blink and teleported to the statues and phase to stand inside them. He peeked at the two disciples and saw that they were none the wiser. He then looked at the next location that was possible to go and blinked there.

Now Lin Mu was completely out of their sights. But he scanned ahead using his spirit sense and found three more disciples sitting around. This area was the garden area and a few stone tables and chairs were set up here. Two disciples were playing chess, and the third one was observing.

The area in front of Lin Mu was wide open, and there wasn't anything he could hide behind. The only things were some stones that were placed on the ground, but they were not that big, being a size larger than his head.

Lin Mu remembered his earlier excursion of the caves and used phase to enter the ground only to meet resistance after two feet.

"Dammit, the formations extend into the ground as well." Lin Mu cursed.

"This should be an encapsulating type barrier formation. This one prevents enemies from digging through the ground and attacking the residents." Xukong explained.

Lin Mu had no choice but to improvise and enter the ground. After having sunk down for two feet, Lin Mu crouched and moved that way. He went to the closest stone and hid his head inside it.

"This is quite difficult..." Lin Mu internally muttered.

"Impressive move, brother Pei Lao." One of the disciples praised.

"Ah, this is nothing Senior. I merely learned some skills from watching the elders playing the other day." The disciple named Pei Lao replied.

"Perhaps you should take part in the chess tournament in the coming days. Sister Ye Zi Jin's wedding was delayed, so they added that as well in the pre-wedding entertainment. I'm sure the elders will appreciate it too." The third disciple that was observing commented.

### **Chapter 334 - Sneaking In-II**

"Please, I do not dare to display my mediocre skills and dishonor myself. I do not want to lose face for the sect in front of the other peers. Besides, I heard some skilled people have been invited by the mayor to entertain people with their chess skills." Pei Lao spoke in a humble tone.

"Ha ha ha! Junior brother is shy, but do not worry about losing face. The elders wouldn't mind something like this. After all, this is merely a friendly competition and we are just participating for the wedding." The disciple who seemed to be the senior brother replied.

'Oh? So there will be more elders coming here from the Tri cauldron peony sect.' Lin Mu thought after hearing their words.

"Wu Hei did not say that there were going to be more than one elder from the sect coming. Seems like even he did not know this." Lin Mu internally noted.

He then scanned the area ahead and luckily found it to be empty. From what he had seen from the roof, the quarters of the disciples should be to the left of the current area, and the area in front of him was the main hall of the courtyard. This was where the meeting and dinner would be conducted.

Here was where Lin Mu's luck shined. He saw that the main hall was elevated from the ground by half a foot.

"Good, I can hide there." Lin Mu said to himself.

He then looked at the three disciples and waited for their attention to shift a bit. The next area was out of his range of teleportation and he would have to move ahead a bit in the open. As long as he kept his head close to the ground, he shouldn't be easily noticed.

The three disciples continued their banter for a few minutes before focusing on the chess game again.

'Now!' Lin Mu internally shouted and shot ahead.

If someone looked at him right now, it looked as if a rock was moving fast. Because his head was covered with a black cloth and it was rather dimly lit, he appeared similar to a rock in appearance.

"Huh? What's there?" The disciple who was observing the chess game suddenly spoke up and looked around.

Pei Lao and the Senior disciple looked at the alert man and inquired.

"What's the matter, brother Tie Dan?" Pei Lao questioned.

Tie Dan looked around with sharp eyes for a bit and scanned the area with his spirit sense, only to find nothing.

*~sigh~*

"Nothing, brother Pei. I was mistaken." Tie Dan spoke.

"No, no, your concern is valid brother Tie. Please do tell us what you felt was here." Senior brother asked.

"I thought as if I saw a rock moving." Tie Dan answered.

"A rock?" Pei Lao tilted his head.

They then looked around the area for rock and saw that they were simply lying there with nothing moving.

"Did any rock really move?" Pei Lao questioned in confusion.

"Hmm, I can't tell either. I didn't really pay attention to the positioning of rock in the area." The senior brother stated.

"Let it be brothers. Perhaps, I'm just mistaken. It's not like any animal can enter here." Tie Dan spoke.

The three of them sat back down and returned to their chess game.

*~Phew~*

"Almost got caught!" Lin Mu took a breath of relief.

The position that Lin Mu was currently in was very sensitive. He was at a mere foot's distance from the disciple name Tie Dan. His head was of course hiding in a rock again, but this rock did not belong to the garden, rather Lin Mu had taken it out of the ring at the very last moment that he was detected.

This was one of the random items he had obtained from the spatial rifts and had been deemed as trash by senior Xukong. Lin Mu had seen the lesser void and knew that there was no lack of random chunks of rocks and debris floating around in there.

Lin Mu once again confirmed that they were not looking at him, before moving a bit more and then using blink to appear beneath the crawl space of the main house. Now it had become rather convenient for Lin Mu to move around as he could keep his head hidden while using his spirit sense to look around.

Lin Mu moved all around the buildings from there and got an estimate of the number of people that were in the courtyard. In all there were forty two people in here; twelve servants, twenty nine disciples and one elder.

Lin Mu could tell that the elder was at the peak stage of the core condensation realm, just from the dense spirit qi fluctuations that were coming from his body. The elder was in a separate room from the rest of the disciples and was currently meditating.



He was also wearing different kinds of robes than the disciples and looked to be older as well. Looking at his appearance Lin Mu felt he was in his late thirties, but the true number was probably much higher than this.

The rest of the disciples were also in their quarters currently and were cultivating or doing certain tasks like writing and refining.

"Hmm, where should we go first?" Lin Mu wondered.

"Perhaps you should go to a place where there are letters and documents placed. But do not go to the elder's room, he will find you easily. His spirit sense is much stronger than yours currently, and you will not be able to fight against him either." Xukong suggested.

Lin Mu nodded and chose the disciples that were writing something. They were sitting in a room that had some furniture such as a low study table, bed and wardrobes placed around. The disciple was sitting on his knees while writing something on a sheet of paper.

To the side of him, a shelf was kept on which a few rolled up scrolls were kept. Lin Mu made his way to the room and popped his head in to take a look. The disciple was at the late stage of the qi refining realm and was fully focused on writing.

"This should be easy..." Lin Mu muttered.

### **Chapter 335 - The Sect's Reasons**

Lin Mu thought for a bit and figured out a way to check out the scrolls that were kept on the shelf. First, he went to the room that was next door and confirmed that it really was empty. He had sensed it with his spirit sense but still wanted to verify it.

Then he peeked his head from the wall in the location that was behind the shelf and started reading the scrolls that way. His alertness was at the top and he was ready to blink away the moment the disciple in the room started showing any abrupt movement.

But luckily whatever the disciple was writing was quite important and he did not want to make a mistake or something like that. Looking from the corner, he had only written a small paragraph in a two foot long, one foot wide sheet.

By the time the disciple finished writing half of the letter, Lin Mu was done reading all of the scrolls that were kept there on the shelf. Thankfully, none of them were sealed or it would have become quite difficult for him.

He would just touch one scroll, store it in his ring and go to the other room to read. He repeated this for all twenty two scrolls and found out quite a lot of information. These scrolls were all official messages between the Tri cauldron peony sect and the disciples that were posted here.

Lin Mu learned the reason behind the posting of the disciples here in the Wu Lim city. There was apparently more than one reason for that. The one reason that Lin Mu knew of was the debt that the mayor owed to the Tri cauldron peony sect.

Lin Mu had originally thought that the mayor had a debt because of asking the sect for help during the plague, but that was not it. Rather, the mayor had been buying a lot of alchemical pills from the Tri cauldron peony sect for years now.

But after the plague, he had bought some high grade healing pills from the Tri cauldron peony sect, and apparently they had been bought using credit. The mayor had yet to pay it in full to the sect and had thus given them certain properties and authority instead.

Lin Mu also found out that in the other smaller cities of the county, the Tri cauldron peony sect owned a lot of proprieties. But all of this had been hidden from the public for a long time. Still, Lin Mu couldn't find fault with the sect for this, they were simply getting the payment for the services they had provided the mayor.

It was the mayor who was at fault here. The mayor had also been giving the yearly funds that he got from the kingdom to the Tri cauldron peony sect. These funds were used for the upkeep of the county's infrastructure and security.

The other reason for the sect for sending their disciples here was for the wedding, of course. Lin Mu found out that this had been decided a long time ago, and they had been planning for this quite secretly. He couldn't find the reason for secrecy in the letters, but it was a bit suspicious.

Then came the reason which was quite mysterious to Lin Mu, but the Tri cauldron peony sect paid a lot of importance on this. It was said in the letter that the disciples and the elder assigned here were to keep a look out for some type of spatial disturbances.

This was the point that intrigued Lin Mu the most.

"Spatial disturbances? What could they be looking for exactly?" Lin Mu wondered.

"I think it should be obvious to you by now." Xukong suddenly spoke in Lin Mu's mind.

"What senior?..." And then it struck him.

"The spatial rifts... I opened in the past year... it's them, isn't it." Lin Mu realized it.

"That's the most likely reason, unless there was someone else also doing that." Xukong replied.

*~Sigh~*

A sigh escaped Lin Mu's lips as he wondered if this was a problem or not. There was nothing mentioned in the letter about capturing or obtaining the source of the spatial disturbing, all there was said was that it has to be reported to the sects.

"But how did they find this out?" Lin Mu wondered.

"Well, considering the impact that the ring makes while opening the spatial rifts, it is likely that they became strong enough at one point that one of the higher elders of the sect found out about it." Xukong replied.

Lin Mu then remembered that senior Xukong had put a restraint on the ring and had masked the fluctuations from going from it.

"But it shouldn't be a problem now, right senior? Since you masked them." Lin Mu asked.

"Yes, there is no way they can find them now, unless they are right in front of you. Or if there are too many spatial fluctuations in the area where you used the ring and they went there." Xukong answered.

*~pew~*

Lin Mu took a breath of relief and was happy that he wouldn't have to worry about anything extra.

Lin Mu put the scroll back and had now finished reading all of them. There were also some minor things in general that he had learned that were not of much importance, but he still kept them in his mind if they ever came to use in the future.

Lin Mu was about to leave the room when Xukong stopped him.

"You're forgetting another letter." Xukong reminded.

"Which one?" Lin Mu questioned.

"The one that is being written right now," Xukong answered in a helpless tone.

"Oh! I... okay," Lin Mu uttered awkwardly.

He then thought of a way to read it discreetly without alerting the disciple. He couldn't take the letter as he wasn't even sure that the letter would be put here. It was obvious that it was going to be sent to the sect, thus he had to do it in another way.

Lin Mu looked up at the roof and blinked there while using Phase. After reaching there, he popped in his head from the top and read the thing that the disciple was writing.

### **Chapter 336 - A Teleportation Formation?**

Lin Mu was a bit shocked after reading the letter, as what it mentioned was nothing but the missing disciples and junior elder Fa Shiu of the Tri cauldron peony sect. Apparently, they were supposed to reach the city a week ago but still had not appeared.

This was the reason why the disciple was writing a letter to the sect, to inform them that they had not reached here yet.

'So they do not know about them either and that Junior Elder Fa Shiu is not here either. That ticks of another thing from my list. At least now I don't have to wander the city scouring for him.' Lin Mu thought.

Lin Mu stayed there on the roof till the disciple finished reading the letter and rolled it up. After that, the disciple melted some wax with the candle that was burning on his table and poured it on the seam of the letter. He stamped the seal of his sect on it and let it cool down.

After that, he saw him store the seal away in the drawer and leave the room. Lin Mu thought of following him, but then stopped. As soon as the disciple was gone, he came down and opened the drawer that had the seal kept in it.

"Just as I expected, there is more than one seal here. They shouldn't mind if I take one of them, I killed a servant anyway. They will eventually discover that." Lin Mu muttered to himself.

Having made his decision, he picked one of the seals from the drawer and stored it in his ring, before sinking into the floor using phase. Lin Mu had been continually using phase for more than an hour now, along with his other skills. This had led to quite a lot of consumption of his spirit qi.

This was the first time Lin Mu was using them so much.

After having sunk down into the ground, Lin Mu followed the place where the disciple was heading towards.

"As I expected..." Lin Mu muttered to himself.

The disciple went to the elder that was meditating in the private room. Lin Mu stayed a sufficient distance away from the room as he was unsure whether the elder will scan the area with his spirit sense. Lin Mu knew that he was a nascent soul realm cultivator and that his spirit sense would be quite strong.

There was a high chance that he could be found thus, he wanted to be a sufficient distance away from there just in case he had to escape using Fade. Lin Mu held his breath and continued observing the room using his spirit sense.

*~Knock~Knock~Knock~*

The disciple knocked on the door gently and spoke.

"It is me elder, Quan Hong. I finished the report you asked me to write." The disciple spoke.

Since Lin Mu could fully touch the people with spirit as he could be found out, he waited for sounds instead.

"Come in," The elder spoke.

*~Phew~*

Lin Mu let out a breath, seeing that the elder had not used his spirit sense. The door slid open and Quan Hong walked in, before kneeling in front of the elder.

"Here's the report, elder. You can send it now." Quan Hong spoke.

"Good job," The elder simply replied before waving his hand, telling the disciple to leave.

Once the disciple was gone, the elder looked at the letter for a few seconds. Lin Mu could feel the fluctuations of spirit qi and immediately withdrew his spirit sense back as he realized the elder was using his spirit sense to scan the letter.

"You can read using your spirit sense like that?" Lin Mu questioned in his mind.

"Yes, as long as your spirit sense is strong enough, it doesn't matter if there are multiple layers of paper on it. The elder is in the nascent soul realm, thus his skill with spirit sense should be quite good. Doing something like this is a piece of cake for him." Xukong answered.

Lin Mu nodded his head and kept on watching. After being done with the letter, the Elder stood up and went to a cabinet that was kept in the room. Lin Mu had not paid much attention to this cabinet before, but when the elder opened its door he felt the spirit qi fluctuations coming from them.

The elder then placed the letter in the center of the cabinet and closed the door. He placed his hand on a pattern that was carved on the top of it and closed his eyes. Strong waves of spirit qi emanated from the elder, and his full aura was released.

This was the first time Lin Mu was feeling the aura of a nascent soul realm cultivator. Still, while it was quite strong, it felt minuscule to Lin Mu as he couldn't help but compare it with old man Jing Wei's aura. He didn't even bother comparing it with senior Xukong, as that would be ridiculous.

The patten carved on the cabinet glowed, and then suddenly Lin Mu felt the spatial fluctuations coming from it.

"Is that a..." Lin Mu muttered.

"Yes, that's a teleportation formation," Xukong confirmed.

Lin Mu nodded as an idea came to his mind. He continued watching and focused on the spatial ripples that were spreading in the area. Wherever the ripples went, Lin Mu felt as if layer upon layer were revealed. These layers were nothing but the fabric of space.

Lin Mu could sense a mass of energy coming from the cabinet and traveling through the spatial fabric while creating a path. It was not traveling in a straight path, but rather a very complex and winding one. Seeing its speed, Lin Mu was a bit surprised.

"Is a teleportation formation really this slow?" Lin Mu asked.

"It's a low grade one and is being manually activated. It hasn't even sent the letter yet, right now it's only forming a spatial transmission channel." Xukong informed.

The elder kept pouring his spirit qi into the formation for about two minutes before he stopped. The pattern carved on the cabinet continued glowing even after the elder lifted his hand from it. Lin Mu could feel the mass of energy getting farther and farther away from the courtyard.

### **Chapter 337 - Thief?**

Sensing that the Teleportation channel will take a while to form completely, Lin Mu decided to see the rest of the courtyard. He still hadn't seen the Bride to be- Yi Ze Jin.

Lin Mu had already sensed where all of the disciples were, thus he went to the disciple quarters again. This time his destination was a room that was separated from the other rooms. This one was also quite big than others and had a small attached garden of its own.

One could tell that it belonged to someone that had a higher status than the other people in the courtyard. Lin Mu had sensed that there was a single person that was living here, and they were in the room. Lin Mu got near the section and entered the ground to sneak in.

A blink later, he was right below the room. He used his spirit sense to verify that everything was safe before deciding to take a peek. The person in the room was cultivating like most of the other people. Lin Mu saw a beautiful looking woman sitting in a meditative pose with her eyes closed.

She had a gentle beauty and was one of the most beautiful people that Lin Mu had seen. Still, he couldn't help but compare it with the other women he had seen till now that were beautiful. Hei Wen had a mature and sleek beauty, while Duan Ke was colder and fierce.

Comparing to those to Lin Mu find her to be a bit lacking, but he didn't know why. This was pure appreciation on his part, but he didn't think much of it.

'Hmm, I guess that's it?' Lin Mu thought in his mind and went back into the ground.

"The elder that was sitting in the other room should be her father, Yi Deng. He is indeed quite Strong compared to the others that I've seen." Lin Mu muttered to himself as he traveled through the ground.

Lin Mu sensed the teleportation channel and found that it had gone quite far now, almost beyond the city's limits. He wouldn't have been able to tell this if it were not for the spatial sensing ability of the mysterious ring.

It was now that Lin Mu had an idea pop in his mind.

"If I follow that teleportation channel, will it lead me to the Tri cauldron peony sect, eventually?" Lin Mu wondered.

"If you are able to keep up with its speed, then yes. But know this, even if it looks slow now, it will randomly speed up depending on the structure of the spatial fabric in that region. It can travel hundreds of kilometers in the span of a second if the region is stable.

The current reason for it being slow must be because of all the minor disturbances that were caused in the region because of you opening the spatial rifts." Xukong explained.

Lin Mu didn't know that this was something caused by his actions as well, and was thus feeling a bit surprised.

"We've seen the courtyard and couldn't really find any proper clues that link the Tri cauldron peony sect to the Blood sacrifice. Should we leave then?" Lin Mu asked.

"Yes, that would be for the best right now," Xukong advised.

"Yeah, I want to intercept that letter too." Lin Mu replied.

"The letter? You got something in your mind?" Xukong asked curiously.

"Yes, Senior. I got that identity seal for a reason." Lin Mu answered.

He then got to the wall that bordered the outer wall of the courtyard and used Fade. He appeared back in the grey world, but this time could see something new here.

"Huh, what's that?" Lin Mu questioned.

Lin Mu could see a trail of black going from one point of the parallels void to far in the distance.

"Wait! Is it?... the teleportation channel?" Lin Mu realized.

"Hmm, this is strange..." Xukong said.

"What senior?" Lin Mu questioned.

"The Teleportation channel shouldn't really appear here. It's supposed to be in a different layer of the void." Xukong stated.

Lin Mu went ahead and probed the black trail with his spirit sense, only to find it to be illusory. His spirit sense easily passed through it as if it were air. He then tried touching it and found the same result.

"So it's a trace, but not the actual teleportation channel. Hmm, this is rather unique, seems like your skill fade brings you to a much different layer of void than I first thought... no wait that's not it! The layer is the one that I felt, but the trail is actually being shown by the ring." Xukong analyzed.

"Oh! So that's how it is." Lin Mu uttered with understanding.

He noted this information in his brain before continuing ahead. He had little time left in the skill's duration and had to leave quickly. He ran to a far enough location and the skill ended. Lin Mu reappeared in the real world but was stuck in an awkward position.

"Oh... no." Lin Mu muttered.

In front of Lin Mu was an old man sleeping on a bed along with a much younger woman. They were covered with a blanket, but from the arms and legs that peeked out of the edge of the blanket, Lin Mu could tell that the woman was naked under it.

"I overestimated the distance." Lin Mu said, feeling a bit embarrassed.

He scanned the area with his spirit sense and found that he had gone two houses too far and had ended up in this one. This house was also relatively big and luxurious. Lin Mu stood still and avoided making any sound. He was just about to turn around when he heard a slight groan.

"Mmmngh..."

"Oh, no..." Lin Mu uttered under his breath.

But before he could blink away,

"AAAAAAA, THIEF!" A woman shouted.

Lin Mu was dressed in black clothes that covered his body fully and was even wearing a mask. It was obvious that people would think he was a thief.

"Dammit!" Lin Mu muttered as he used Blink, but then.

~Thud~

### **Chapter 338 - Unfortunate Conflict**

Lin Mu's slammed into the wall of the house, creating a loud noise. If the scream of the woman had not woken up the people in the house, this definitely did.

'Dammit, what happened?' Lin Mu thought as he probed the wall with his spirit sense.

There were now formations active on the wall, but they were concealed inside it. They were not fully active before and thus Lin Mu was able to use his spirit sense on them, but it seemed like the woman had activated the defensive formations.

This had blocked Lin Mu from leaving the house even when he used blink in combination with phase. Suddenly Lin M felt danger and dodged to the side.

*~kling~*

A blade was stuck inside the wall that Lin Mu was standing in front of before. He looked back and saw that the old man who had been sleeping had woken up and was the one who had thrown the blade at him. Meanwhile, the woman was standing behind the old man and had covered herself with the blanket.

The old man was only standing in his underwear right now, which was a scene Lin Mu did not want to see. He quickly checked the old man's cultivation and found him to be a peak qi refining realm cultivator. But when Lin Mu did this, the old man's expression changed as he felt the spirit sense.

"You dare enter the house of Lord Cai, Thief!" The old man shouted.

A second later, more people rushed in from the door of the room. Looking at their get up, Lin Mu could tell that they were the servants and guards.

Lin Mu was now stuck here due to the defensive formations. While he could use fade to leave again, he did not want to risk repeating the same thing that he did right now. And he did not want to kill the people here either, as they had done nothing.

There was no way he could explain why he was here either, as that was even more suspicious.

Looking at the old man and the others who had drawn out weapons, Lin Mu knew that he would have to fight his way out. He withdrew his short sword and got ready.

"When I get my hands on you, you will regret ever coming here!" The old man stated.

"Leave this to us, lord Cai." The servants and guards spoke.

"Haa!" one of the guards yelled as he lunged at Lin Mu, which he easily dodged.

Lin Mu had already scanned all of the people here and knew their cultivation bases. Except for the old man, all of the people here were either at the mid stage of the qi refining realm or lower. The servants were not even cultivators and were mere body refining realm commoners.

"Let me leave and no one will get injured, this was a mistake." Lin Mu said, trying out his luck.

"HA! You dare to steal from me and speak such words, do you think I'm stupid?" The old man replied.

*~Sigh~*

"Seems like I'll have to take the hard way today..." Lin Mu muttered to himself.



His eyes under the mask turned serious, and he moved at great speed. Lin Mu slapped away the few servants that had approached him with the flat end of his short sword and knocked them away. While this wouldn't kill them, it would crack some bones and leave some nasty bruises.

"Take this!" A guard spoke as he slashed from behind Lin Mu.

Lin Mu didn't even turn around. He extended his left hand to his back and caught the incoming sword in his fingers.

*~Crack~*

*~Shatter~*

Then exerting a bit of strength, Lin Mu broke the sword in his hand. Seeing the ease with which Lin Mu broke the sword, the guard was shocked and so was the old man named Lord Cai.

"You! Who are you?" Lord Cai questioned, "no... it can't be... did they send you to assassinate me?!"

Lin Mu was confused upon hearing the old man's words but didn't pay much attention to it as he had a few more guards coming at him.

He kicked the guard whose sword he broke and probably broke a few ribs in the process. The guard flew back and slammed into two of the guards that were coming.

*~Crash~*

The three guards slammed into some furniture, breaking it. Lin Mu found that he was actually feeling a bit pressured. Not because his current foes were strong or anything, but rather because he had to control his strength greatly so as to not accidentally kill them.

Lin Mu had still not gained full control over his strength after reaching the peak of the body tempering realm, and with his body's 95% cells turning into Xiantian physique cells, it was taken up by a few more notches.

Lin Mu did not even dare to use his spirit sense for the fear that it will cause more fatalities. He fought a few more guards and incapacitated them. Some had fallen unconscious while the rest were groaning in pain, unable to move.

Seeing that his servants and guards were all taken care of, the old man was infuriated.

"USELESS IMBECILES! Can't even do one thing correct..." Lord Cai said before approaching Lin Mu.

During the fight, he had taken an Axe that was hanging on the wall and was now wielding it. He ran towards Lin Mu and swung it at him.

*~Clang!!!~*

Lin Mu's short sword and the old man's axe collided, creating a loud noise. While the old man had exerted his full force, Lin Mu had not budged from his place one bit.

"I told you before, stop this. I'll go away peacefully," Lin Mu said again.

"You think I'm a fool to believe that!" The old man said before swinging the Axe again.

Lin Mu once again blocked it with ease and deflected it. The old man stumbled back and his back hit the bed.

*~Huu...Huu...Huu~*

### **Chapter 339 - Escaping The Conflict**

Lord Cai took labored breaths, and it was obvious that he had exerted quite a bit of strength. The old man had amplified his strength with spirit qi and Lin Mu had done the same but just for defending. He didn't dare to use too much either, or the Axe of the old man would have been cut in half with the short sword slashing into his body.

Seeing that nothing was working, the old man gritted his teeth and held onto a pendant that he was wearing.

"Let's see you handle this!" Lord Cai shouted.

As soon as he said that, the formation lit up and small discs started forming in the air. The discs seemed to be made out of energy and glowed with a pale white color. Their numbers soon started to increase and in a few seconds reached a hundred.

"What is that..." Lin Mu muttered.

"Get ready to defend, that's an offensive formation!" Xukong warned.

Lin Mu's eyes went wide as he jumped back.

*~shing~*

The place he was standing at was hit with a disk. Looking at it one could tell that it was sharp and could easily cut someone's limbs off. Lin Mu dodged the discs, but a few of them were still able to cut him due to the sheer number of them.

"You won't escape now!" Lord Cai taunted.

Lin Mu gritted his teeth and was now seriously considering taking the old man out. He had tried giving him a chance, but this was too much.

But then suddenly Lin Mu felt the fluctuation in the formation array.

"Its... getting weaker?" Lin Mu realized.

"The formation is consuming a lot of spirit qi right now, and the energy source is probably getting low now," Xukong said.

Lin Mu quickly probed the old man and while he could tell he had depleted some of his spirit qi, it was still at seventy five percent.

"Looks like the source is spirit stones rather than his own spirit qi." Lin Mu concluded.

Lin Mu had now left the room he was in and was going through a long corridor. There were rooms on both sides of it, but he couldn't afford to switch his direction with all the disks attacking him. They were able to appear out of the walls and he couldn't do much.

"Dammit, I didn't want to do this..." Lin Mu uttered.

He kept on running and got ready. Spirit qi circulated in his body and gathered in his arm. By the time he reached a large wall, he was done.

Boulder collapsing fist: Second form-Piercer!

*~Swoosh~*

*~BOOM~*

The needle like spirit qi pierced the barrier that was placed on the wall with ease. It was this that was preventing Lin Mu from leaving the house, and while he knew he could destroy it, something like that would cause a big commotion and bring more attention to him.

That's what he was intending to avoid, but now he had no choice. The needle exploded the wall after it entered it and opened up a seven feet wide hole in it. Lin Mu could see the outside area with it and was now free to leave.

"WHAT! HOW?" Lord Cai yelled in shock.

Lin Mu paid no attention to him and blinked away. A few tens of blinks later, he had gone far away from the site of the incident and was now in his courtyard.

*~Phew~*

Lin Mu took a breath of relief after reaching the room. He quickly changed from the black robes he was wearing into his normal clothes.

"I made a mistake using Fade there." Lin Mu stated with a little resignation.

"While you did make a mistake, it is completely fine. You will make a lot of mistakes, what is important you learn from them." Xukong advised.

"I understand Senior." Lin Mu appreciated.

While Lin Mu had escaped the entire conflict, the people who were involved in it were still in shock.

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Back at Lord Cai's house.

There were a lot of city guards standing around while a few were checking the nearby areas. The people that lived in the neighborhood were awake due to the loud explosion too, and some were out checking it themselves, while a few had sent out their servants.

The disciples of the Tri cauldron peony sect had heard the explosion too and were a bit disturbed due to it. They came to check out as well and approached the guards who were currently talking with Lord Cai.

"What happened here?" Tie Dan questioned with a fierce face.

The cultivation session of a lot of disciples was interrupted due to the explosion, and they were pissed due to it.

The guards saw the uniform of the disciples and immediately became alert.

"Seniors, there was an attempted robbery in Lord Cai's House." The guard explained while cupping his hands in greeting.

"A robbery? Did they catch the thief?" Pei Lao who had come with Tie Dan asked.

"NO! These imbeciles can't even do their jobs and let that wretched thief escape!" Lord Cai uttered with spite.

"The thief escaped?" Uttered the senior brother, as he scanned the house of Lord Cai with his spirit sense.

"Defensive, barrier, offensive disk, and restrictive formations," The senior brother accurately stated.

Lord Cai was surprised by this and finally took a closer look at the disciple that was in front of him. He had not clearly paid attention to them as he was too bothered by the thief escaping, but now that he saw the patter of the peony flower over three cauldrons he recognized them.

"Ah! Disciples of Tri cauldron peony sect, forgive my misbehavior." Lord Cai said in a calm tone as he cupped his hands in a salute as well.

He had heard that the disciples of the Tri cauldron peony sect were in the city, but this was his first time meeting him. Though he had heard that they had visited his establishment.

"It is fine," The Senior brother stated as he waved his hand. "What I'm more interested in is how a thief was able to get away despite all these formations? Even a core condensation realm cultivator would have a hard time."

### **Chapter 340 - Lord Cai's Suspicion**

Lord Cai nodded his head in agreement. He was also wondering the same thing and couldn't figure out the cultivation base of the thief. Him being able to easily break through the formation like that and exploding a wall was not something he would have ever imagined.

"So what did he steal... or rather, what did he come to steal?" Pei Lao asked again.

"Hmm, that is what I am unsure about too. When I discovered him he was in my bed room and was standing quite close to me. I have no idea how he got inside in the first place, despite the alarming formations. We couldn't find what he came to steal either." Lord Cai answered.

"Senior brother, to get past these formations one would need special spirit tools." Tie Dan spoke.

"Indeed, and he says the thief did not steal anything either... perhaps his aim was something else." The senior brother replied and looked at Lord Cai with a knowing look.

"I had that thought as well. But the strange thing is, not one of my servants or guards were killed, even if they were injured." Lord Cai answered.

"What? Even after you attacked him?" Tie Dan questioned, feeling doubtful.

"Yes, we attacked him with the intention to kill and he still did not act according to that." Lord Cai answered.

"That... is a strange kind of a thief..." Tie Dan said feeling confused.

"Well... there was one thing he said which I did not believe back then," Lord Cai stated.

"And what was that?" The Senior brother inquired with raised brows.

"He said that it was a mistake and if we let him leave no one would get hurt." The old man replied.

"A thief with morals, huh?" Pei Lao chuckled.

"No, it is not like that." Senior brother said while shaking his head.

"Do you think there could be some other reason, senior brother?" Pei Lao asked.

"Hmm, it is a bit unlikely, but I think the thief actually made a mistake. It's possible that his target was not that house, but rather something else." Senior brother responded.

"How can a thief make a mistake about robbing the wrong house?" Tie Dan wondered.

"What if... he was not a thief?" This time Lord Cai spoke.

"Not a thief? What do you mean, do you perhaps have some suspicions?" The senior brother questioned.

In response to this, Lord Cai looked around and saw all the people that were intently listening.

"Seniors, it would be better if we discuss this someplace else, the information is a bit sensitive." Lord Cai said in a low voice.

The Senior brother raised his brows, but then nodded.

"Alright, that would be acceptable." The senior brother agreed.

"If you all are fine with it then, I'd like to invite you all to spend some time at my Establishment. I guarantee you will enjoy your time." Lord Cai said in a slightly elated tone.

"Oh? And what is your establishment?" Senior brother questioned.

"I am the owner of the Alluring Wisteria Pavilion. I believe, seniors have been there..." Lord Cai said in almost a whisper.

The disciples' eyes went wide as they had not expected this old man to be the owner of a pleasure pavilion.

*~Cough~*

"I believe that would be fine." The Senior brother said while Tie Dan and Pei Lao nodded.

"Please come with me, seniors." Said Lord Cai before ordering, "get the carriage, you imbeciles!"

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Lin Mu meanwhile was sitting in his room. He was trying to sense the teleportation channel again and could not feel it anymore.

"Seems like it has gotten quite far." Lin Mu said.

"Hmm, it should be connected fully soon. If you want to do something, you need to act quick." Xukong stated.

Lin Mu nodded and then took out some paper from his ring. He had bought a lot of things today and this was one of them, which he had not expected to be using so quickly. The paper was of a similar quality compared to the one that the disciple Quan Hong had written.

Lin Mu had read the contents of the letter and still remembered them. He started writing the content of that letter while changing some of the parts of it. Namely, the part about the disciples and the junior elder Fa Shiu not reaching the city.

He changed the parts where it said that they were missing, and no news of them was known. Lin Mu had to write a bit slowly as he was trying to imitate the handwriting of Quan Hong. Lin Mu himself was not that skilled in writing, and using his hand to do it seemed a bit awkward to him.

*~sigh~*

"It is so much easier to write using my spirit sense." Lin Mu muttered.

Unknowingly, Lin Mu's control over his spirit sense had gotten better than his handwriting.

"Well, there are spirit tools that are specially made for writing too," Xukong added.

Lin Mu nodded his head and made a note of acquiring one in the future if he so got the chance. A few minutes later he was done writing and melted some wax in a heating cup over the candle. He then poured it on the letter's edge before stamping it with the identity seal he had stolen from Quan Hong's room.

The wax cooled, and just as this was done, Lin Mu felt something.

"It's happening!" He uttered as he shot up.

Lin Mu appeared on the top of the roof and looked around. Soon he felt a few spatial fluctuations appearing.

"The letter should pass soon, I can feel it." Lin Mu said before he jumped down and went in the direction of where he felt it could be.

He was running on the roofs when he soon spotted the small black dots appearing the area. They seemed to be arranged in a random pattern, but Lin Mu could sense the teleportation channel that was linking them. The black dots were nothing but the weaker points in the channel.

A couple of minutes later he had found the perfect spot.